



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Eighth Parliament
First Session**

Thursday 19 October 2023

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday 19 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

INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION AMENDMENT (MINISTERIAL DIARY DISCLOSURE) BILL 2023

Second Reading Speech

Debate resumed from 12 October 2023.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (10:19): I re-apprise the House of the essence of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Amendment (Ministerial Diary Disclosure) Bill 2023. The bill acts on recommendations from the ICAC's Operation Eclipse. The bill seeks to enshrine in legislation the recommendations from ICAC that seek to require ministerial diary disclosures in relation to lobbyists and extends that requirement to parliamentary secretaries. I will continue my second reading speech from where I was interrupted. As mentioned, the bill is not about pointing fingers; it is about highlighting and minimising corruption risks. If this Labor Government does not want to make the mistakes of the last Labor Government, it will back the bill.

This legislation is not specific to New South Wales; other jurisdictions have examined these matters. In Tasmania the Hon. Meg Webb, the Independent member for Nelson, in a recent notice of motion sought to mandate the regular and routine disclosures of all ministerial, Cabinet secretary and official diaries. She cited support for such transparency from the Centre for Public Integrity, the Grattan Institute and the Tasmanian Integrity Commission. She also pointed out that international jurisdictions such as the United Kingdom, Spain and the European Union require regular publication of government ministerial or senior staff diaries.

In the great State of South Australia, the Freedom of Information (Ministerial Diaries) Amendment Bill was introduced in the Legislative Council by the Hon. Robert Simms on 1 June 2022. That bill aims to amend the Freedom of Information Act to require Ministers to publish their diaries every month. Internationally, the ICAC report referred to best practice and case studies in Canada, Ireland and Scotland. I turn now to the detail of the bill. The details are by their very nature self-explanatory; however, I will take the House through them. Schedule 1 amends the Independent Commission Against Corruption Regulation 2017, specifically the appendix to the New South Wales ministerial code of conduct, and proposes to insert new part 4A:

- (1) In this part, a **relevant meeting** means a meeting or discussion, whether or not scheduled in advance, involving—
 - (a) a Minister and an external person, and
 - (b) a matter that may be considered by the Minister, whether formally or informally, in the Minister's role as a—
 - (i) portfolio Minister or member of Cabinet, or
 - (ii) Parliamentary Secretary.

Note—In this Code, Minister includes a Parliamentary Secretary—see this Code, clause 11.
- (2) A relevant meeting may take place—
 - (a) in person, or
 - (b) by video conference or teleconference, or
 - (c) by telephone.
- (3) In this clause—

external person means a person other than—

- (a) a Minister,
- (b) ministerial or parliamentary staff,
- (c) a government official,
- (d) another person representing or engaged by the State or another jurisdiction.

Proposed new section 22B requests summaries of relevant meetings to be published each quarter. This section states:

- (1) A Minister must, no later than 1 month after the end of each quarter, give to the Secretary a summary of relevant meetings attended by the Minister in the quarter.
- (2) The summary must include the following information in relation to each meeting—
 - (a) details of the purpose of the meeting,
 - (b) the name of each individual who attended the meeting,
 - (c) whether the individual attended the meeting—
 - (i) in a personal capacity, or
 - (ii) as or on behalf of a third-party lobbyist, or
 - (iii) in another capacity,
 - (d) if an individual attended the meeting as or on behalf of a third-party lobbyist—the name of each person represented by the third-party lobbyist at the meeting,
 - (e) if an individual attended the meeting on behalf of a third-party lobbyist—the name of the third-party lobbyist,
 - (f) if an individual attended the meeting in another capacity—details of the capacity.
- (3) The summary must be in the form approved by the Secretary.
- (4) The Secretary must publish the summary on the website of the Cabinet Office.
- (5) In this clause—

Secretary means the Secretary of the Cabinet Office.

third-party lobbyist has the same meaning as in the *Lobbying of Government Officials Act 2011*

Proposed new section 22C covers excluded meetings. It states:

Clause 22B does not apply to the following meetings—

- (a) a meeting at which only personal, electorate or party political discussions take place—

To be clear, that mirrors current arrangements. Having been a Minister and having been subject to the Premier's memorandum, which came into place in 2014, that is standard practice. That should clear up questions from members and Cabinet officials about the matter. Section 22C continues:

- (b) a social or public function or event at which a relevant meeting does not take place,
- (c) a meeting held overseas,

Note— Meetings held overseas must be disclosed in accordance with the *Government Information (Public Access) Regulation 2018*, clause 6(1)(b)—

The bill does not exclude overseas meetings; that is already a requirement. It simply makes it clear in the legislation. The section continues:

- (d) a meeting for which there is an overriding public interest against disclosure under the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009*.

The ICAC report directs us to the OECD's 10 principles of transparency and integrity in lobbying, the first of which states:

Countries should provide a level playing field by granting all stakeholders fair and equitable access to the development and implementation of public policies.

The report states that such transparency ensures activities can be scrutinised by the media and by civil society more broadly. Two more definitions from the ICAC report which emphasise the importance of the bill state:

Transparency in public administration refers to the public, or at least organisations acting on behalf of the public, having access to timely and reliable information on decisions and performance in the public sector. Although not always explicitly defined, the need for transparency is implied; for example, in government recordkeeping.

Accountability in public administration refers to the obligation on public officials to document the basis for significant decisions and actions and report on how public resources are allocated, and be ultimately answerable to the public for the proper discharge of their functions. Where accountability is fragmented, there is a higher risk that corrupt conduct will go undetected.

Given the broader issues that can be extracted from Operation Eclipse, particularly as outlined in submissions—including challenges in regulation and compliance, foreign influence, intersections with the lobbying Act and regulations—the bill puts in place a simple but essential requirement to ensure public trust in our institutions. There can be no greater concern. There can be no more egregious conduct than to have breached the trust and confidence vested in us by the public of New South Wales. While every member in this Chamber takes their role very seriously, the genesis of this ICAC operation was about identifying corruption risks and seeking to address them. In many respects the bill is like the closed-circuit television of crime fighting, but on a corruption level. It is about deterring corruption and identifying and capturing evidence of that where it occurs.

Some Ministers have a policy of not meeting with lobbyists. I have no issue with Ministers meeting with lobbyists as long those meetings are properly disclosed. I know members of Parliament meet with lobbyists. Because members of Parliament who are not members of Cabinet do not have decision-making functions in the same way, they were not captured by the previous Premier's memorandum and I have not included them in the bill. There have been no calls from the ICAC or any political party to capture members of Parliament within such legislation. But members of Cabinet have decision-making capacity. They make decisions, as they are entitled to, through legislation passed by this place without reference to Parliament. Sometimes those decisions involve substantial sums of money or the exercise of significant influence on behalf of others. Therefore it is important that the public can have trust and confidence that those decisions were unfettered by undue influence.

We must ensure that the safeguards recommended by the ICAC are not simply part of a memorandum but are in the law. The law that we pass in this place is not just about a requirement of compliance; it is a statement about the values that we believe in, the goals to which we ascribe and the standards that we believe we should set, not just for the public at large but particularly for ourselves. That is what I seek to do with this piece of legislation: to act not off my own back but on the basis of the recommendations from the Independent Commission Against Corruption.

While there have been debates about decisions of the ICAC and the role it plays, I support the ICAC. I have always supported a strong corruption watchdog. I believe we should have an indefatigable organisation that shines a bright light into the dark areas of public administration. But the work of the ICAC is not simply about identifying corruption; it is also about education. That is where the ICAC report came from. It sought to ensure that we identify corruption risks and strengthen public accountability, integrity and transparency. That is what this bill seeks to do.

I make no apologies for coming to this Chamber as a member of Parliament who wants to see greater transparency and improve public trust in government. Legislation like this seeks to ensure that no matter whether the blue team or the red team is in government, the focus of government and Ministers is on the betterment of the people of New South Wales—not some group of people exercising undue influence in the darkest corners or backroom offices of this building without the public being made aware of that influence. This will deter corruption and strengthen public accountability and trust. I hope this particular bill enjoys the support of every member of this House who believes in killing off corruption and any of the auspices or avenues where it can be found. I thank the Leader of the House most sincerely for facilitating my speech last week. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES AMENDMENT (RENT FREEZE) BILL 2023

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 29 June 2023.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields—Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Innovation, Science and Technology, Minister for Building, and Minister for Corrections) (10:31): On behalf of the Government, I oppose the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Rent Freeze) Bill 2023. The bill seeks to impose an immediate freeze for two years on all existing annual residential tenancy agreements, with rental increases prohibited. These proposed changes would have significant adverse implications for the New South Wales residential rental market and for renters themselves—the very people we are trying to help. They will inflict further pain and add more pressure for renters in a tight market. Whilst the Government and the member for Newtown have recently worked collaboratively on rental reforms, unfortunately this is an area where we do not agree.

This Government has been frank about the challenges in the rental market. We know that renters are hurting in a market where rental properties are in low supply; indeed, this low supply is adding more pressure and driving

up rents. The proposition that we should impose price caps, price ceilings or rent freezes—whatever you want to call them—is not without risk or impact and actually hurts the very people we are trying to help. Freezing rents, as attractive as it might sound superficially, would only make the problem worse. As the old saying goes, if something is too good to be true, it often is. Right now housing demand is exceeding supply by a significant amount and vacancy rates are at record lows. Of course, this is a core part of why renters and the rental market are experiencing so much pressure: We have more post-COVID migration.

People are seeking more space and there are more single-person dwellings. The supply of new houses and apartments is indeed falling behind demand. The shortfall in supply has been building for some time. This imbalance, as well as increased mortgage costs due to interest rate rises, is driving the rent increases that are hurting so many people in our community. The bill's stated intention is to assist renters in the current rental crisis. In actual fact, I believe it would have the opposite effect. It would make things worse and not better because it is not addressing the factors contributing to rental increases. Rather than making things better for renters, these proposals will worsen supply and lead to poorer outcomes for renters. They will add more pressure, creating more stress for people who are already doing it tough. The bill completely fails to recognise the complexities around renters and the rental market. Introducing a rent freeze is not the panacea some believe it to be.

There are multiple problems with a rent freeze. Firstly, it would exacerbate supply problems by deterring building and investment in the property sector at a time when we need high-quality standard supply to come on as quickly as it can. Increasing supply will be the greatest contributor to ensuring that we put more downward pressure on the rental and housing market. Further, a rent freeze also acts as a disincentive for owners to update existing housing stock, meaning rental properties may not be maintained to the standard that renters deserve, let alone be improved. It risks reducing the quality of amenities that renters deserve. They pay the rent to a property owner for a property that suits their needs at a standard of quality they are entitled to. A rent freeze also risks adding to the interest rate pressures that are already seeing many owners having to sell up, which can permanently remove properties from the rental market. As I said, this further reinforces why a rent freeze has an effect adverse to its intention.

This Government has already demonstrated that it is ready to take action as far as rental reform is concerned. We have already passed the rental fairness bill and appointed a new Rental Commissioner, Ms Trina Jones, who is doing an excellent job consulting and engaging with all stakeholders from across the spectrum in the rental market—property owners, landlords, real estate industry associations, tenants unions, advocates for the homeless and homes and shelter, and affordable housing and social groups. The whole gamut of what we are doing in this space is extensive, deep and consultative. We are committed to easing the pressure for renters in New South Wales by implementing rental reforms that actually improve renters' rights.

It is important to note that giving renters certainty is also about improving amenities and giving them confidence in the longevity of the property that suits their needs. All our reforms are done with one overarching principle in mind: We must do nothing that reduces supply. Of course, a reduction of supply in an already tight market will only add more pressure, both financially and emotionally, on the very people we are trying to assist. The previous Government left a legacy of lagging building approvals, increased development application waiting times and a lack of housing supply. This shortage of supply has built up over the past 12 years. We have reached a crescendo where the demand is now greatly exceeding the supply, leading to more pressure on renters, the rental market and the housing market in general.

The Labor Government believes it is a shared responsibility to address this crisis. We have announced significant reforms. For the benefit of members, I will point out a few major things we have done. We have brought in new approval pathways to allow the Land and Housing Corporation, the Aboriginal Housing Office and Landcom to increase affordable housing. We have opened access to the State significant pathways for private developments worth more than \$75 million that include at least 15 per cent affordable housing. Those projects can also access a 30 per cent extra floor space ratio and a 30 per cent height bonus above local environmental plans.

We have increased rental housing in regional New South Wales through our build-to-rent pilot program on the South Coast and North Coast of the State. We have ordered an audit of all government-owned land to identify where that land could be used for housing, and ensured that suitable sites are developed with a minimum of 30 per cent affordable, social and universal housing. These measures are the best way to increase housing supply and improve affordability and accessibility for renters and the housing market in general. They will also support the recently agreed target of the national Cabinet to build 1.2 million new homes over five years from 1 July 2024. Our rental reforms will increase certainty for renters and protect their rights without impacting the viability of the rental market. For those reasons the Government opposes the bill. I will now expand on those reasons.

A rent freeze does not target the source of the problem as it fails to address the factors contributing to rental increases and increasing pressure on the rental market. Instead, it risks exacerbating supply problems and creating negative and unintended consequences for renters and property owners alike. Low housing supply is impacting affordability for all renters. Housing and rental affordability does not exist without availability. Affordability and accessibility increase when availability increases. This is the core equation that we need to address.

The Reserve Bank of Australia has identified that the number of newly listed rental properties declined sharply from the onset of the pandemic and has generally remained at low levels, both in regional and metropolitan areas. The CoreLogic Rental Pulse report of May 2023 found that rental vacancy rates in Sydney in April 2023 were at 1.2 per cent and in regional New South Wales at 1.5 per cent, and its report of July 2023 noted that in July 2022 the rental vacancy rate in Sydney was 1.9 per cent. The current rate is significantly lower than the 3 per cent vacancy rate, which most commentators would consider to provide a healthy balance between demand and supply, and a much more balanced equation between property owners and renters. A rent freeze will reduce the confidence of investors to enter the property market and risk owners leaving the market. That outcome is not in the best interests of renters. It would add further pressure to the rental market and the prices for those who are seeking to rent out their properties.

The Government's stance on rental freezes is supported by a number of experts. On 11 August the former Reserve Bank Governor of Australia, Dr Philip Lowe, told the Standing Committee on Economics that the solution lies in increasing supply. Dr Lowe made it clear a cap on rents would not boost supply. He said:

When housing prices were rising quickly, people were saying, 'Well, we need to give people more money to help them.' And when rents are rising quickly, people say we need to cap rent increases. They are short-term fixes. Both of them, in my judgement, make the problem worse. What I would like to see is a longer term focus on this because the short-term responses are not solutions and generally giving people more money or capping prices doesn't help with the balance of supply and demand in the market

On 15 August, in an opinion piece in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Brendan Coates and Joey Maloney from the Grattan Institute outlined the devastating impact of a rent freeze. I have always found the publications, research and policy advocacy from the Grattan Institute to be par excellence. It does great work. The Grattan Institute publications address not only rental issues, but also other public policy challenges facing New South Wales and the nation. I quote from that opinion piece by Brendan and Joey:

While it may seem attractive to renters facing steep rent rises, it'll end up doing more harm than good.

...

Ultimately, if we freeze rents, more Australians could become homeless, not fewer.

Political slogans about rent freezes are not the panacea some people would have us believe. In fact, a rent freeze would end up hurting the very people we are trying to help. On 26 July 2023, in an article in *The Australian*, independent economist Mr Saul Eslake—who many people know as an eminent commentator on economics and a well-respected public policy advocate—is quoted as saying rent freezes were:

... a fairly arbitrary measure, and one which will probably act as a deterrent to investment in residential property.

He also said:

It also will probably discourage landlords from undertaking repairs and maintenance and could lead to deterioration in the quality of the rental housing stock.

In the same article Metropole Property Strategists director Michael Yardney was quoted as saying:

To freeze rents will only limit supply more.

He also said:

Rent freezes will also dissuade investors from improving their properties, meaning they will bring down the standard of accommodation and we'll have less. They will have the unintended consequence of making it worse for tenants, rather than better.

Those eminent and nonpartisan people in our community are undertaking evidence-based research and making well-articulated arguments about what it means and the adverse impacts that rental freeze may have. It may sound simple but, as the saying goes, if it sounds too good to be true, it often is. The core part of the argument is that we need a long-term solution to ensure a good quality flow of supply to reduce the pressure. Increased supply will increase the bargaining power of renters in the market as they search for properties. Short-term fixes are not the answer in a very tight market; nor is adding more pressure to people who are already doing it tough.

The member for Newtown argued in her second reading speech that owners leaving the market would increase supply for renters wishing to pursue a home to live in, particularly first home buyers. While that may be for those lucky enough to be able to afford a home, that does not help renters one bit. In answer to such a claim I again refer to independent economist Mr Saul Eslake's comment in *The Australian* where he said that a rent freeze:

... certainly won't increase rental stock, and to the extent that it leads to landlords selling, that's a fairly brutal way of achieving a higher rate of home ownerships, if it has that effect at all.

Further, the bill may also deter owners from entering into or renewing a longer lease during the freeze period. This could leave many renters unsure of their tenure and at the expiry of the freeze period renters are very likely to experience a surge in rent prices, as has been seen in other places which have chosen rent control. The Australian Capital Territory is often referred to as the beacon for controls on rental increases or price freezes. However, the *Australian Financial Review* has highlighted the problems with rent control. A 29 June article stated:

Rent controls in Canberra have not stopped lease costs in the national capital growing faster than the national average over the past four years ...

The article also stated that rents in Canberra have increased by 14 per cent since the rental cap laws came into effect in early 2019, compared to only 4.6 per cent nationally. Those figures speak for themselves and would obviously be a huge concern for renters here in New South Wales. There are also examples from overseas we can look to where price controls on rentals simply just do not work.

On 16 August, in an opinion piece in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, William Bennett backed the comments by the former Reserve Bank Governor, Dr Philip Lowe, that rent freezes will ultimately make the situation worse. The article points to numerous American studies that showed rent freezes or caps did not help renters, and I quote:

A 2015 study of New Jersey rent controls found that over 40 years from 1970 to 2010, rent controls did not have any statistically significant effect on housing markets.

A 2019 study out of Stanford University found that when rental controls were introduced in San Francisco, while tenants benefited in the short term, landlords reduced housing supply by 15 per cent and likely drove up rents in the long term. as a result.

Then a 2022 study from Minnesota found that rent control caused property values to fall sharply and didn't benefit low-income renters as much as high-income renters.

How much more evidence do we need that rent freezes or caps are not in the best interest of renters and the rental market? They do not create availability, which also reduces the affordability and accessibility for renters and in the housing market in general.

The New South Wales Government went to the last election with a set of firm commitments to improve the situation for renters in New South Wales and it is taking the steps to deliver them. The first important step the Government took was one of the first bills to be introduced in this Parliament: the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Rental Fairness) Bill 2023. The Act strengthens rent bidding laws in New South Wales by extending the ban on solicited rent bidding by agents to owners and third parties, such as online application tools, further closing the loophole based on the bill that was passed late last year. This ensures that the Government captures the whole gamut of the residential market because people can rent properties from a range of avenues, not just real estate agents—for example, they can go directly through a landlord. As technology improves and is made more available, the Government needs to make sure that laws are contemporaneous and keep up with the changes in the market and the different actors within that market.

The bill lays the groundwork to ease the cost pressures renters face when they move into a new property by including regulation-making powers to support the implementation of a portable rental bond scheme. As members will know, a portable rental bond scheme makes sure that as people move from property to property, they do not have to fork out the average four weeks' rent. It is estimated that some four-week rental bonds are about \$2,000, which is a significant amount of money and equivalent to about 10 to 11 weeks' worth of groceries for some households. I note that our friends down south in the Victorian Government are also looking to implement a portable bond scheme, which we have already passed in New South Wales, which is a good sign that the reforms are needed. We need to find every single way to reduce pressure on renters, not only in direct pricing transactions but also in the ancillary transactions that a renter experiences when they access a property or move from one property to another.

Since passing the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Rental Fairness) Bill, the Government has wasted no time on commencing work to implement its other rental reform commitments, including requiring owners to give a reason for ending a tenancy, making it easier for renters to keep pets in a rental home, and protecting a renter's privacy and personal information. To shape those changes, the Government is seeking input from all stakeholders and the public. We want to make sure every stakeholder—whether they are property owner, an association, the Tenants' Union, or those who are involved in social and affordable housing—has a right to their say. The Government wants to bring everybody on this journey, and collaboration and corporation is needed. It does not want to get into an adversarial situation where renters and tenancy advocates are pitted against property owners and associations. There can always be a happy medium when people come with goodwill, an open mind and a willingness to ensure a good balance that does not pit one against the other. This will ensure a good, well-balanced market that supports both renters and property owners, because property owners putting their

properties on the market is the most important principle behind reducing the pressure on renters and the rental market.

Government has completed its initial consultation on our rental reform agenda. I am pleased to inform the House that nearly 16,000 responses were received in a relatively short period to the online survey and more than 400 people did their research and took time out of their day to advocate for their point of view in a written submission. I am pleased that the responses have been not only great in the number but also broad in the avenues through which they came—from tenancy advocates advocating for social and affordable housing to those in the property sector. Finding a happy medium is an important part of introducing reforms that are acceptable and address the long-term pressures that are adding to the rental market.

The Government is reviewing the submissions as we look to implement further reforms. We will be making renting fairer and much more modern to give renters greater certainty in what is a tight market. So many people in our community are now renting. On average I think it might be one-third, but in some areas in New South Wales it is higher. We need to make sure that rental laws are contemporaneous and meet the living arrangements of so many people for whom renting is no longer a short-term transition but a more medium- to long-term arrangement. Housing affordability continues to be an issue, which is why the Government wants to move on long-term reform and long-term fixes that find a great balance between renters, tenants and property owners. I have always believed that with cooperation and collaboration, a happy medium can always be achieved.

Importantly, the Government has appointed the NSW Rental Commissioner, Ms Trina Jones, to act as an advocate and a voice for renters. She is the first Rental Commissioner for New South Wales. The commissioner will work with renters, owners and the community to identify barriers to increasing rental housing supply and look at gaps and practices that erode renters' rights. The Government's focus is on implementing reforms that address the supply shortage and strengthen existing renter protections without impacting the viability of the rental market. As I said earlier, ideas that add more pressure and take out supply from the market only hurt the very people we are trying to help. I cannot emphasise strongly enough how important it is not to take any action that decreases the availability of rental properties because that will only make things worse.

It is also important to understand that existing tenancy laws already limit the frequency of rent increases. The Residential Tenancies Act limits the frequency of rent increases to no more than once in a 12-month period for tenants under periodic agreements and fixed-term agreements of two years or more. For fixed-term agreements of less than two years, the rent can only be increased if the agreement sets out the increase amount or the method of calculating the rent increase. Tenants can also challenge excessive rent increases through an application to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. Those important existing measures ensure that there is a better balance and renters who may not be in the strongest position have avenues for protection so they do not experience significant rental increases.

The Government has consulted on several options to ensure that renters are more informed about the rental market, helping them make more informed decisions and be better equipped to challenge rent increases. They include: to make data on rents and rent increases more transparent to allow renters to more easily challenge unfair rent increases, requiring an owner to prove that a rent increase is not excessive in certain circumstances, to amend the criteria that the tribunal may consider when determining whether a rent increase is excessive, and clarification to the existing law on frequency of rent increases when tenants switch between different agreement types.

In conclusion, the Government opposes the bill. In order to lift New South Wales out of the current rental crisis, a fairer system needs to be set up where balanced reforms allow all parties to work together and build trust. The work of the Rental Commissioner—which the Government strongly pursued—through its collaborative consultation process has made sure that all sides of the equation are heard and proper input is received to ensure that long-term solutions to the rental market to reduce downward pressure are found. The Government does not want to just come up with simple slogans and a panacea that does not exist, which will only add more pressure onto the rental market. This would not help the rental market or renters. This is also not the way to do long-term public policy reform, which is required to address such an important issue for people in our community.

We need to ensure that nothing we do reduces rental supply even further. The only solution the bill provides is high rents, low accessibility and low affordability, which add more pressure on the people we are trying help. It pits renters against owners, creating an adversarial relationship that does not and will not produce the results that we want. It will further constrain rental housing supply in what is already a very tight market. The Government is committed to long-term reform, working with everybody in the industry to create a collaborative and cooperative environment to ensure certainty for renters and the property industry. Increased investment will ensure that quality supply continues to enter the market. On that basis, the Government opposes the bill.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell): It being 11.00 a.m., pursuant to standing and sessional orders, debate is interrupted for question time and the routine of business.

*Members***MEMBER FOR WOLLONGONG****MEMBER FOR LISMORE**

The SPEAKER: I wish the member for Wollongong and the member for Lismore all the best for their upcoming birthdays. I hope they have some wonderful celebrations planned.

*Visitors***VISITORS**

The SPEAKER: I acknowledge some guests who have joined us in the gallery today. I extend a very warm welcome to guests of the member for Drummoyne: Lucy Calogna and her mother, Monica Cologna. Unfortunately, the member for Drummoyne could not be in the Chamber today. I hope you have a wonderful day. I also welcome members of the Illawarra Shoalhaven Breast Cancer Support Group, guests of the member for Kiama. I acknowledge members of the African Australian Advocacy Society, guests of the member for Liverpool. I also acknowledge guests of the member for North Shore, Dr Suzy Green, founder and CEO of The Positivity Institute, and students from Wenona School, North Sydney Boys High School, Cammeraygal High School and Mosman High School. I also welcome guests of the member for Riverstone and the member for Londonderry, legal studies students from Riverstone High School. I welcome the guest of the member for Northern Tablelands, Councillor Jamie Chaffey, the mayor of Gunnedah shire and chairman of the NSW Country Mayors Association. Members will be surprised to hear that the member for Lake Macquarie has some guests joining us today: Paul and Jill Oakman, Terry Callaghan and David Shanley. I welcome everybody to question time today.

*Members***REPRESENTATION OF MINISTERS ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS**

Mr RON HOENIG: On behalf of Mr Chris Minns: I inform the House that today the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces will answer questions in the absence of the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter; the Attorney General will answer questions in the absence of the Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion; and the Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice will answer questions in the absence of the Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport.

*Question Time***DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT**

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (11:06): My question is directed to the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. On 28 June in the Legislative Council, the Hon. Stephen Lawrence called for the DPP to have carriage of cases when a domestic or sexual assault complainant who retracts a complaint is charged and for cultural training for the Police Force in handling matters of domestic violence in Indigenous communities. Has any progress been made on these proposals?

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (11:06): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. I have had discussions with both the Attorney General and the police Minister on this issue. They are the correct people to put this question to.

LIVE MUSIC AND NIGHT-TIME ECONOMY

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (11:07): My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on what actions the Minns Labor Government is taking to bring back live music and ensure that New South Wales has a vibrant and diverse night-time precinct?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:07): That is a great question from the member for Coogee. Live music is important for a vibrant and exciting city, and we are determined to bring it back to New South Wales. Sydney in particular was the pre-eminent venue for the night-time economy, which is crucial for our economy because it drove jobs and employment opportunities. But after 12 long years of the Liberal-Nationals Government, the nanny state took over and crushed the creative industries. In fact, in 12 years we lost over half of our licensed venues. Between 2011 and 2021 Sydney was the only capital in Australia to have a declining number of working artists, including musicians, writers and performers. That is notwithstanding the fact that we have 280,000 people employed in core night-time economy industries. They may be students doing a shift in a pub or those who are committed to the industry and work in the evenings. Clearly we want to see this industry

grow and thrive, particularly when we consider that the night-time economy in Sydney alone generates \$27 billion a year. This is not a niche cottage industry; it is a monster.

Part of the process is ensuring that, in addition to private capital being invested into the night-time economy, we remove the kind of red tape that stifles live music venues from opening up and, more importantly, staying open if they have been in existence for a long period of time. It will not shock members to know that there are currently seven different agencies responsible for handling noise complaints in New South Wales. If anyone has a noise complaint, they can ring the first number and then the second number and then the third number until they get the answer they want, which more often than not is to close down a particular venue.

We are going to make sure there is just one agency: Liquor and Gaming NSW. One agency will get a better sense of what is happening within a community, including how long a venue has been in place and whether it should stay open because it has served the community for decades or generations even when a resident is desperate to close it down. Another important part of this legislation—which I anticipate will be introduced today—is that preference will be given to the priority of residency. That means that if a pub, club or live music venue was in the suburb first then residents who move in later will not be allowed to try to change the character and nature of that suburb. [*Extension of time*]

Too often, precisely the environment that attracted people to a suburb sees more people join that community and then some hope to close venues down and make the suburb bucolic and quiet, which is antithetical to its original incarnation and attraction. This is welcome news as we head into the Christmas party season, not just for people across New South Wales but for political parties as well. This legislation will not make much of a difference for the Government because the alcohol ban is still in place for the Labor Party.

[*Opposition members interjected.*]

Maybe not. I have not checked on that in a while. It is a shame that this legislation was not in place for the budget, because I know that the press gallery was outraged that there were no drinks in the evening for the budget. It was outrageous. It means that we can go back to that regular routine. I understand that the Liberal Party Christmas party is going to be held in Cronulla, co-hosted by Mark Speakman and ScoMo this year. ScoMo is going to get blamed for the music choice because he gets blamed for everything.

It is a vexed issue for a lot of political parties, particularly One Nation. One Nation Christmas parties are known for vigorous disagreements, with a lot of arguing and a lot of bitter infighting—which will still be the case this year notwithstanding that there is only one member left. There are a lot of disagreements inside that political party. Of course, it comes down to the great National Party itself. They have a room up on the roof and we do not know what goes on up there. They have had it for decades. It was their number one ask at the change of government. But we are concerned about noise complaints from the National Party. [*Time expired.*]

DROUGHT ASSISTANCE

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence) (11:13): My question is directed to the Premier. Areas of the Northern Rivers, including my electorate of Clarence, are now in drought or intense drought. Farming families are in desperate need of support from his Government. What are his Government's plans to offer support to these farming families, and when can we expect to hear from his Minister on this urgent matter?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:13): I make it clear that the Minister for Water and the Minister for Regional New South Wales have been constantly talking about changed weather patterns in regional New South Wales that have increased the chances of drought in regional communities. For the benefit of the House, it is important to note that currently 59 per cent of New South Wales is not in drought, 5.6 per cent is in drought and 34 per cent is drought affected. The most reliable up-to-date information from the Bureau of Meteorology as well as public servants in our own departments indicates that there will be an increase in the number of drought-affected communities in the State.

The New South Wales Government and the Commonwealth Government have committed \$222 million to critical water supply in the State. That is town drinking supply and potable water. That is important, particularly for regional communities. We have committed \$217 million to the Safe and Secure Water Program, and the budget contained further initiatives like that. The Regional Drought Resilience Planning Program and the Farm Innovation Fund were both funded in the budget.

Drought is obviously an issue for regional communities. It was part of the NSW Labor election campaign. It was reported in December 2022, when the previous Government was in power, that there was a 65 per cent chance that Australia would enter an El Niño weather system, which would be characterised by drought periods. One would assume that the previous Government, having been faced with undeniable evidence from the experts, would have put money into the budget for precisely that issue, but nothing was done.

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS: The previous Government allocated money for a dam that would have ended up costing \$3 billion, but it put \$900 million into it. That dam had been promised for the past 12 years. Every time an election came along the National Party would jump up and say, "We're going to produce this dam. Dungowan Dam will go ahead." But every time the election finished it would say, "Unfortunately, we didn't get around to it."

Mr Gurmesh Singh: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr Gurmesh Singh: Families are hurting. They want to know what the Government is doing about the drought, not what we are doing.

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS: If members opposite are so concerned about drought-affected communities, why has every single question been directed to the police Minister about a decision that was made three weeks ago? The only questions we were asked about drought-affected communities were from regional Independents.

Mr Dugald Saunders: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Premier has completed his answer. The member for Dubbo will resume his seat.

TEACHER WORKFORCE

Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (11:16): My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Education and Early Learning. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on how the Minns Labor Government is easing the unnecessary administrative burden on teachers and giving them more time to focus on students?

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (11:17): I thank the member for Heathcote for her question. She is a great champion of educators. I know that she represents a lot of teachers in her electorate, and she does a fine job. Before I begin, I give a big shout-out to Mrs Abrahams and Riverstone High School. The member for Dubbo is laughing, but I do not find it funny. We are committed to making life easier for our public school teachers.

This time last year, as we well know, we had thousands of permanent teacher vacancies, resignations outstripping retirements for the first time ever, and one in five early career teachers quitting within a couple of years. By anyone's standards, there was a crisis in education. We know that teachers were undervalued and overworked, and we have acted urgently in our first seven months of coming into government. We have spoken a lot about the historic pay deal for teachers, and we will continue to speak about it.

While increasing pay is so important to attracting and retaining teachers, reducing workload is vital to stopping them from walking away. Teachers were walking away under the previous Government. We are cutting down on the onerous administrative burden on our teachers. One of the biggest things we have done is to no longer force teachers to re-prove their practice by providing pages of documents to the regulator every five years. That impacts on teachers in all three systems, including our own public system as well as the Catholic and independent system. This is something that teachers have been calling out for years and years, and it took us only a matter of months to act upon it.

It finally brings New South Wales in line with other States and Territories on this important matter. It reflects the fact that most professions have to be accredited, but then they do not have to constantly be reaccrediting themselves. They do not have to constantly prove their reaccreditation. Maintaining that accreditation was an onerous task for teachers and principals, in particular. We have listened, and we have acted. Of course, we need to set high benchmarks for the people who educate our children in our schools, and we are continuing to do this. Teachers will still need to complete the compulsory 100 hours of professional development, but they do not have to keep re-demonstrating it constantly to NESA, the new board of studies, over and over again. [*Extension of time*]

The SPEAKER: Opposition frontbench members will come to order. They will cease having audible conversations in the Chamber. It is very off-putting and quite rude.

Ms PRUE CAR: That is what they do, Mr Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Deputy Premier will be heard in silence.

Ms PRUE CAR: This is an important issue for us, at least. Simply put, from November, accredited teachers will have to complete their 100 hours of professional development and the mountainous tonnes of

paperwork for each teacher will be no more. This is about sensible policy. This is about policy that comes about when we listen to experts and people who are impacted by government decisions. This Government thinks teachers, who are the single biggest contributors to a child's success in life, should be focused on the education of our wonderful young people and not on completing onerous amounts of paperwork.

Mr Paul Scully: What a good idea!

Ms PRUE CAR: It is a novel idea. In fact, those opposite claim to have freed up one hour a week for teachers. When I go to schools and talk to the principals and teachers, they are constantly in search of that one hour a week that the previous Minister continues to go on and on about. They are still looking for it. They now finally have a government that is committed to packing down—

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

Ms PRUE CAR: Those opposite can interrupt me all they like, but they know that they are so behind in this area.

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

Ms PRUE CAR: They have absolutely no credibility in this area. They did nothing but drive teachers into the ground. The shadow Minister is still in denial about the teacher shortage. This Government was elected to do something about it. We are getting on with the business of increasing teacher supply, making sure that teachers stay. We are listening to them about paying them what they are worth and cracking down on their onerous workload, because we need them to teach the next generation of students in New South Wales.

REGIONAL ROAD SPEED ZONES

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (11:23): My question is directed to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads. Recently I became aware of a Transport for NSW policy change regarding speed zone assessments for regional roads. The July 2023 NSW Speed Zoning Standard could see significant regional limit reductions—110 kilometre-per-hour zones down to 100 and 100 kilometre-per-hour zones down to 80. The policy has not been communicated effectively to local government or industries likely to be impacted. Will the Minister inform the House as to how this policy came about and will she pause implementation to allow proper consultation?

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (11:24): I thank the member for Barwon for his question. I also appreciate the feedback that he has given to my office about this, taking up the invitation that I made to all members in this place when I first took on this role. We know that roads are so important. They are social determinants of education, opportunity, jobs and health. The member for Barwon is a great advocate in that space for his community.

I understand that the standard has been developed over the past five years with a variety of internal stakeholders, including the Centre for Road Safety. That said, I appreciate the member's concerns around communication with the broader freight industry. I am advised that it was always the intention to review that standard within six months of implementation. I have also gone back to Transport for NSW to ensure that road freight users and other road users, as well as bodies such as caravan and camping and the NRMA, are consulted about this.

We have an aging road network in regional New South Wales. The member will know about the issues on the Cobb Highway and in other parts of his electorate, with a particular lack of investment in those roads in the past 12 years. Applying to an old road a standard that suits a new road will have a significant impact on freight operators. We are very alive to that. I was formerly a transport operator for more than 20 years before I came into this place. I know what reducing a speed limit can do to the hours and how we can end up with other unintended consequences around fatigue et cetera.

That is why the Government has taken a whole-of-government and a whole-of-transport approach to this, and we are working on that. I have also asked that the speed limit reviews that are implemented be heavily scrutinised, not just within the safety environment and regulation but also within the regional and out-of-metro part of the department, because they have those strong links with the freight industry and to ensure that the Deputy Secretary is signing off on those.

Yesterday and the day before, I talked in this place about safety. That is important to me, and we will always make decisions on the road network around safety. For me, part of that consultation is looking at where we are suggesting there needs to be a speed zone reduction and looking at what other measures might also need to be put in place to improve safety at that location. We want to take that whole-of-government opportunity to speak to our communities, and it is great to have feedback from the member for Barwon on this particular issue.

[*Extension of time*]

I take this opportunity to talk about the idea of a two-State approach when it comes to road infrastructure. It is not a city/country divide. In the past 12 years, those opposite have taken a "yellow-and-blue seats/all the other colours" approach, and that is my concern. We have so many infrastructure projects. The Government will continue the ones that have merit and that are important for local communities. We have also opened up regional infrastructure projects across the board to all communities in New South Wales that are not dependent on whether they voted for the National Party. We are not taking a Barilaro 2.0 approach to road infrastructure upgrades. That is certainly not the way that we negotiate with our local members in the more regional areas of the State. It is important for us to do that.

I invite the member for Barwon to continue the dialogue that he has had with Transport for NSW and with my office on this issue. We have not heard anything from National Party members about their electorates on this matter. I am not sure whether they understand the standard. I do not think they understand anything about road maintenance or safety, because we have not been having that conversation. It is like they missed that standard. I have heard from the member for Monaro about this. These are issues that engaged local members raise with Ministers across all portfolios, because they are engaged with their community. They are not here to talk about the police Minister rather than ask questions about regional New South Wales.

BUSHFIRE READINESS

Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (11:29): My question is addressed to the Minister for Emergency Services. Will the Minister please update the House on the actions that the Minns Labor Government is taking to respond to the fire season?

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (11:29): I thank the member for Bega. He is an outstanding and incredibly compassionate human being, who dealt with fires in his local community as recently as a couple of weeks ago. We have been speaking about this quite a bit, but we know that there has been a lot of fire activity, especially over the past week. It is an early sign of things to come. We are halfway through spring. We have already seen serious fires across the State. An interesting fact is that since 1 July we have had over six and a half thousand bush or grass fires in New South Wales.

As of this morning, 46 bush and grass fires are burning, and 10 of those are uncontained. We have seen 10 days of total fire bans already. Six section 44 declarations are in play across the State at the moment, including in the Kempsey local government area, where firefighters are continuing to work on the Willie Willie Road fire. I acknowledge in his absence the member for Oxley, who is there at the moment as a volunteer firefighter. He has been there this week. I wish him and his community all the best. I updated the House, as did the shadow Minister, on two people who have already lost their lives in this bushfire season. We are doing everything that we can to help communities face those challenges and continue to prepare for a difficult season.

I am really pleased to be able to bring all of my different portfolio areas together to launch the Get Ready website today. The Get Ready website is a verified platform that sits on the nsw.gov.au website. It is live. On the website we have provided to communities all the information we can on preparing for a bushfire or other natural disasters—including storms and heatwaves—such as where to go, what to do, how to set up a personal evacuation plan, how to set up an emergency kit for home and where to go if support is needed. We are taking all of the learnings from the past and bringing them together to ensure that we can at least provide the best information possible.

The website clearly outlines how to prepare, how to find information and where to go. The first stage of the campaign kicks off today. But it will also continue to be rolled out in different ways, including communicating through local media in regional communities, who are the most affected by disasters and who are the most affected at this stage. It is not just about putting it up on a website and assuming that everybody is going to find it and follow it; it is about communicating in many different ways—and in a practical sense. I can talk in the Chamber about having an evacuation plan, but what does that mean? [*Extension of time*]

The Get Ready site is about scaffolding: how to develop a plan, what to include in an evacuation kit, where are the places that you need to go and how to get in contact. For example, two weeks ago there was a fire in Bega. Obviously, the emergency services managed that. But while that was happening, the Reconstruction Authority also started to set things into play.

Mr Paul Scully: Yes, it did a great job.

Mr JIHAD DIB: The planning Minister and I know that it did a great job. While the fires were still occurring, it was already in the process of working with Department of Communities and Justice and setting up evacuation centres. At the same time it also worked on a section 44 natural disaster declaration, which unlocked funding and support for those communities. And all the while the member for Bega was driving up and down the

coast checking in on the local communities. That is what good governance and good government is about. It is not about politics. It is about doing things to support local communities in their time of need. It is about having a really practical plan that works. But unless we communicate that plan to the community, it effectively just sits on a shelf. The website goes beyond that. It gives real, good, practical examples and advice and links to where to go and what to do.

I often say in the Chamber, "This is going to be a difficult season. El Niño is here. It's going to be hot. It's going to be dry." We have seen just recently what happens when the weather turns. My regional colleagues have been telling me about how quickly their areas have fallen into drought, how quickly the green grass has turned brown and how much it is drying. I know that other colleagues who are volunteers in the RFS have been working hard doing everything they can. I remind people to please stay up to date with all of the advice, get the Hazards Near Me app, follow the RFS website and get onto the Get Ready website and share it with the community. The better prepared we can be and the better communication we have, the better we can help communities in this time of natural disasters.

The SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Tamworth, I welcome Councillor Steve Reynolds, who is the Mayor of Muswellbrook, to the gallery.

REGIONAL CRIME

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (11:34): My question is directed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, representing the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. The Country Mayors Association, represented in the gallery today, has pleaded for action to address a crime wave in regional New South Wales. What steps will the Government take to answer calls from country mayors to establish a rapid deployment capability for New South Wales police to target regional crime hotspots?

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (11:35): I thank the member for his question. I start by pointing out that New South Wales currently has the lowest number of police per person of any jurisdiction. In fact, when I was the shadow Minister for Police, in the last couple of years of the previous Government police numbers actually went backwards. That is the context we are dealing with in relation to policing matters in New South Wales. To ignore that context is to be wilfully ignorant of the situation we face.

Mr Kevin Anderson: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: I will hear the point of order from the member for Tamworth, although it is very early in the answer.

Mr Kevin Anderson: My point of order is under Standing Order 129. We do not want a history lesson. What is the Government going to do going forward?

The SPEAKER: The member for Tamworth knows that it is far too early to take that point of order. The comments by the Minister were introductory. I call the member for Tamworth to order for the first time.

Mr PAUL SCULLY: I have no doubt whatsoever that members opposite do not want to hear the history lesson, but it is exactly the history lesson they and the people of New South Wales need to understand the situation when it comes to policing in regional New South Wales. That history lesson gives important context to the exact situation we face. The Government is committed to ensuring police have all the tools they need to uphold community safety and fully supports their regional crime prevention initiatives. State Crime Command's recent surge deployment operation in Kempsey is a great example of how the NSW Police Force is taking a multifaceted approach to targeting crime in regional areas. That model, where specialist squads and teams focus on a particular area for a short space of time, has proven largely successful over this year.

In late September police arrested 20 people and executed 10 firearm prohibition order compliance checks and eight search warrants during a three-day deployment to Kempsey aimed at targeting regional crime and creating a safer community. The NSW Police Force is also working hard to disrupt and prevent young people from engaging in criminal activity. The NSW Police Force is the only police force in the nation with a standalone youth command. The youth command has a strategic focus on prevention and disruption and works in partnership with bodies such as PCYC, education and child protection to establish positive interactions with young people. The Government understands the safety needs of regional communities and will continue to work diligently, cooperatively and responsibly to rebuild our police force and our essential services and keep regional communities, metropolitan communities and all communities in New South Wales safe.

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

SINGLE DIGITAL PATIENT RECORDS

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (11:38): My question is addressed to the Minister for Health, and Minister for Regional Health. Will the Minister please outline the Minns Labor Government's plans to improve patient experience and make health care more convenient and streamlined?

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (11:38): I thank the member for his question, and I look forward to joining him and my colleagues from south-west Sydney when I head to Fairfield Hospital soon to talk about the redevelopment of that hospital for the first time. It was committed to by Labor. It is underway in south-west Sydney in a community that I know means a lot to the member. I look forward to heading there. The way we manage patient records in New South Wales is clunky, and it is not good enough. When I first came to this job six or so months ago, I had an initial discussion with Owen and the team at eHealth who look after the electronic health system that we use to navigate and distribute information and patient records. I learnt at that time that we had nine separate platforms involved in managing patient records. We had 10 operating or administrative systems. We had five systems that related to pathology. It was not working, to be brutally honest.

Members understand that the continuity of patient care is an issue. They have probably had constituents talk to them about some of the frustrations that occur when people might live—and let us just talk about my local community—in the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District but might seek care in Sydney at one of the big hospitals like Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, and the two systems are not talking to one another. It is particularly frustrating for me because time and again I hear complaints from people who are saying things like, "It was frustrating having to repeat the same information over and over again." It is traumatic. The frustration is exacerbated for people who are dealing with trauma and who may be in the health system for trauma. The frustration is also exacerbated for people with a disability, vulnerable people and people from a non-English speaking background. The people in the Cabramatta electorate would know that all too well because of the cultural diversity in that community.

With the single digital patient record, we are trying to streamline things so that patients can go from one hospital to another, one pathology unit to another or one local health district to another and have their records, which include their interactions with hospitals, go with them. People will then not be forced to continually repeat what their condition is, what their symptoms are or what treatment they previously had. That is how mistakes happen. That is how gaps occur. That is how incorrect or unsuitable treatment is given. [*Extension of time*]

We need to deliver better health care and better treatment options for clinicians, and we need to focus on our patients. I have said from the beginning that we will use infrastructure upgrades in IT and digital platforms to drive improvements in patient care and improvements in the way clinicians provide that care. We are going to start the program in the Hunter New England Local Health District, and I will tell members why. The Hunter New England Local Health District is the biggest health district geographically. Members who represent communities across the Hunter and New England areas know that all too well. The Hunter New England Local Health District is pretty unique in terms of the types of hospitals it has. It has very large hospitals like the John Hunter, which is a major tertiary hospital; it has medium-sized hospitals like those around Maitland; and it has smaller hospitals like those in rural communities at Moree, where I visited recently with the member for Northern Tablelands.

These hospitals are unique in nature, and the reason we want to start in the Hunter is that area needs to see improvements. I want to see how the single digital patient record moves between differently sized hospitals across the district to ensure that information is as transferable as possible, people can get the care they need and a clinician can get access to their information as quickly and easily as possible. Yes, it is an investment in ICT. From my perspective, it is an investment in the future of health care. It is about better health care, and making it easier for patients to be able to travel and move throughout local health districts and across local health districts and hospitals with a single patient record that will help inform the quality and delivery of care they get, regardless of their location.

The SPEAKER: I recognise former Minister Adrian Piccoli in the gallery. I welcome Adrian. I must say he is looking way too relaxed.

ROYAL BOTANIC GARDEN SYDNEY

Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (11:44): My question is directed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. Small business Ranger Jamie Tours has been running successful school tours in the Royal Botanic Garden since 2018, educating thousands of students about our natural environment and the history of the gardens. It was notified by the garden trust that its licence to operate has been cancelled, effective Friday. Will the Minister intervene to protect this small business and support environmental education?

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (11:44): I thank the member for Vacluse for her question. The Royal Botanic Garden provides an important piece of community infrastructure in Sydney and New South Wales more generally. Members may not be aware that the Royal Botanic Garden is home to the world's second largest seed bank, which exists to make sure that, should anything happen, there is a protected seed supply to renew plants into the future. I appreciate the great work the botanic garden does, both in terms of providing open space and parklands for people in Sydney to recreate in and providing a good research facility. There is also the great research facility at Mount Annan that is operated by the Royal Botanic Garden.

Periodically the gardens need to go out to tender. While I appreciate that members want Ministers to intervene in everything all the time—that is the story of the week—I will speak to and seek further advice from the management of the botanic garden on the specifics of that situation because, as the member would appreciate, it is not a ministerial decision.

RURAL AND REGIONAL ROADS

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (11:46): My question is addressed to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads. Will the Minister update the House on what the Minns Labor Government is doing to deliver on regional infrastructure projects?

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (11:46): I thank the member for Gosford. She is an absolute champion for the regions, and everywhere I go in regional New South Wales people are so pleased when she has been in their electorates.

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order. The Minister will be heard in silence.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: People know she really cares about regional people. The Minns Labor Government does too. We are delivering new infrastructure that will set our regional communities up for the future. I have been talking a lot about the \$390 million Regional Emergency Road Repair Fund, which builds on the \$280 million that members on the other side put aside for the regions. We have extended that. The mayors love it. Jamie in the gallery loves it. Steve loves it too. Thank you so much.

Everywhere I go, mayors across regional New South Wales are so excited. They are excited about the \$334 million regional roads fund, and they are particularly excited because it is going to projects that have been ignored for so long. We are going to fix Cuttagee Bridge in Bega, a project that was funded under the former Government but not delivered—in fact, it was taken away from them. We will fix it. Let us do a bit of a call around the boards. This week I was Wallaroo near Goulburn. The first stretch of the fully duplicated Barton Highway is about to open, and we did the switch. The upgrade will cut travel times and improve safety for thousands of motorists who use those roads daily.

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

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: In Orange, the Parkes Bypass has just hit a major milestone, with the first 30 precast girders delivered to support construction of the new bridge that will form part of the bypass. In Coffs Harbour—and the member for Coffs Harbour will probably interject here—work has fully ramped up on the bypass that has been decades in the making. Blasting is underway on the project, which will remove 12,000 vehicles from the Coffs Harbour CBD.

The SPEAKER: I remind the member for Dubbo that he is on two calls to order.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: In Barwon, we are finally finishing the full sealing of the Silver City and Cobb highways, and I will join the member for Barwon there to celebrate that milestone next month. I am very excited. Down on the South Coast, where we have a great member, it is full steam ahead for the Nowra Bridge project, and that major work is likely to be finished early. I am delighted to advise that, contrary to the fearmongering from the member for Kiama, we have just awarded the major construction contract for the Princes Highway—

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

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: The Opposition talked about it; we delivered the contract. We will deliver the flyover. The Opposition is all talk.

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

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: In Dubbo we are continuing work on the bridge. In Narromine the new overtaking lanes will slash travel times. [*Extension of time*]

We were also in the electorate of the Speaker, Lake Macquarie, where we have work to do. Closer to home for me, in the Upper Hunter, the upgrade to the New England Highway between Belford and the Golden Highway is almost complete. There is more money for overtaking lanes on the Goulburn highway. The Opposition likes that renewable energy zone but it does not like getting things to the REZ. We will fix that for them. We are getting on with the job of delivering the M1 Pacific Motorway extension. Then there is the Hexham Straight project.

All of those projects are supporting thousands of jobs across the regions, improving safety and reducing traffic bottlenecks. They are all fantastic. But there is one risk: Instead of letting our really hardworking transport crews get on with the job of delivering these projects, members opposite are rocking up at worksites unannounced. Recently the member for Coffs Harbour diverted transport resources by turning up at a bypass blasting site to take a selfie. He is blowing his way into the leadership.

Mr Gurmesh Singh: Point of order—

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

Mr Gurmesh Singh: The Minister has misled the House. I ask her to withdraw that untruthful statement.

The SPEAKER: The member for Coffs Harbour will resume his seat. Will the Minister withdraw her statement?

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: No, I will not. It was not untruthful.

The SPEAKER: I think that is a no.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: In Dubbo, Barilaro 2.0 approached transport contractors, demanding to visit the bridge for more selfies.

Mrs Leslie Williams: Point of order: It is a well-known standing order that it is a courtesy, if nothing else, to refer to members by their correct titles.

The SPEAKER: I uphold the point of order. The Minister will abide by the standing orders.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: When I said Barilaro 2.0, I meant the member for Dubbo. I am sorry about that.

Mr Dugald Saunders: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. Before the member for Dubbo takes his point of order, I remind him that he is on two calls to order.

Mr Dugald Saunders: The Minister is again misleading the House. She said that I demanded to be allowed access to the site. I was invited to the site. The Minister might like to withdraw her comment.

The SPEAKER: The member for Dubbo will resume his seat.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: That is not what the Transport people told me. There is no argument between us. We are letting him go there on Friday in good faith. I would really like it if Opposition members would let us get on with the work they did not get on with in their 12 years in government. That is all I ask.

MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT OFFICE STAFFING

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (11:52): My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. The Balmain Labor campaign manager, Kieren Ash, was seconded to the Minister's office at the specific request of her chief of staff as a department liaison officer [DLO]. An email between transport department officials on 4 July stated, "Howard raised with Scott his questions to ensure that Kieren adheres to the parameters of the scope of a DLO role." What were Howard Collins' concerns about Mr Ash's work in the Minister's office?

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (11:53): I thank the new member for Ryde for his question.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order.

Ms JO HAYLEN: I appreciate that the member was handed the question by the geniuses in the tactics committee. What is disappointing is that he not asking about the transport issues affecting his community, for example, in Epping, or the buses in Ryde, or the situation that we have been left to fix because of the former Government. But I am more than happy to answer the member's question about public servants. Members on this side of the House respect and value public servants. They are essential to helping the Government implement the policies that we were elected to deliver. In fact, they are helping us to fix the mess that we were left, particularly when it comes to public transport.

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

Ms JO HAYLEN: Interestingly, the member's question suggests that those public servants who have a private political life are somehow incapable of providing expert, apolitical advice to government to help implement the policies that the people of New South Wales rely on.

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

Mr Alister Henskens: Point of order—

Ms JO HAYLEN: I am still going.

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr Alister Henskens: The question was specific: What were Howard Collins' concerns about Mr Ash's work in the Minister's office? I have not heard anything about Mr Collins' concerns.

The SPEAKER: I heard the point of order. Regardless of the Opposition's desire to hear certain words in the answer, the Minister has been directly relevant. She is just not using words the Opposition wants to hear.

Ms JO HAYLEN: To completely satisfy members opposite, who are struggling with their question time tactics, Mr Collins did not raise those concerns with me. Mr Collins, along with thousands of hardworking public servants, is assisting our Government to fix the mess the Opposition left us. Some of those public servants are the same hardworking individuals who served the former Government, and the Government before that, and the Government before that. Members opposite should be very careful about the accusations they make about the public servants of New South Wales.

HOUSING SUPPLY

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (11:56): My question is addressed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. Will the Minister please update the House on what the Minns Labor Government is doing to ensure that population growth is being shared fairly across Greater Sydney and regional New South Wales, and on how it is investing in the infrastructure that local communities need?

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (11:56): I thank the member for Leppington for the question. The member was excellent in the public interest debate the other day in his defence of the need for housing and the Government's housing initiatives in the face of blatant ignorance from members opposite. Under the National Housing Accord New South Wales needs to build 377,000 new homes over the next five years, or around 75,000 a year. That is our share. To do that the Minns Government acknowledges that we will have to go up. We need greater density. We need to embrace density. Sydney has a date with density when it comes to housing. That is what we need to do.

While looking at the historical legacies in the planning system, I found some strange anomalies that have crept in. Some 1.3 million lots are zoned as low-density residential, or R2 zoning, in New South Wales. That is around three-quarters of residential zoning in New South Wales. If we put a semidetached dwelling on 5 per cent of those lots we would reach about 20 per cent of our housing supply target over the next five years. In terms of building homes, that means people are being prevented from building homes and housing types in areas where they want to live.

Some 85 per cent of low-density residential R2 zones across metropolitan Sydney continue to prohibit both small apartment blocks and terrace houses. The terrace house, which is synonymous with Sydney and is part and parcel of Sydney's housing past, is prevented in large part from being part of Sydney's housing future. Some 20 per cent of low-density residential R2 zones across metro Sydney prohibit dual occupancies, which is a popular option for families wanting intergenerational housing. Some 50 per cent of medium-density residential R3 zonings prohibit residential flat buildings, and that increases to 70 per cent when we go statewide. It is important that we make sure we do all we can to permit housing types and housing typologies in areas where they are needed: in areas where there is infrastructure, in areas where we can provide services and in areas where our vibrancy reforms will make them great places to live.

Recently the Productivity Commissioner reported that the Government can save around \$75,000 per dwelling if we build in infill areas versus on greenfield developments. Now, we are not saying that greenfield development ends. But the priority for this Government is greater density because it delivers climate outcomes, community outcomes and important vibrancy outcomes. [*Extension of time*]

Importantly, it offers people an opportunity to live in areas they are familiar with and where they want to live. It allows younger people to live near their parents rather than being forced to live with their parents because they cannot get a home.

Mr Jihad Dib: Don't give my kids an idea!

Mr PAUL SCULLY: The Minister's children will never move out; they like him too much. However, other young people want to move on. To support this, we have introduced infrastructure contributions reforms that mean the infrastructure needed to support housing supply—the transport, the schools, the hospitals, the open spaces and the like—can be delivered along with housing growth. We are better connecting infrastructure need with housing growth and demand. That is an important part of making sure that we are building communities people want to live in.

While the Government has a clear objective to make sure we are maximising our housing around public transport and infrastructure growth, there is a bit of confusion among members opposite. The Leader of the Opposition is trying to heritage-list his way out of housing. The member for Wahroonga wants no more housing. The member for Oatley sometimes wants housing and sometimes does not, depending on where his electoral boundary is. The member for Vacluse wants a derelict servo instead of 14 apartments. The Hon. Chris Rath in the other place wants nothing but housing—and good on him! The shadow Minister is completely confused. He is happy that there is a discussion. He is happy that his party has a confused and confusing view on housing because he believes his policies do not really matter as those opposite are not in government. This Government is getting on with the task of making sure that communities are built and are vibrant. We are making sure there is live music, housing, jobs and opportunity in areas where people want to live. That is what people want to see in New South Wales.

WHITE BAY POWER STATION

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (12:01): My question is directed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. Considering the welcome announcement that the White Bay Power Station is to host the Biennale of Sydney in 2024, what work will be done to consult with the community on the future ongoing use of this important public building?

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (12:01): I thank the member for Balmain for her question. Recently I was fortunate enough to tour the White Bay Power Station. What a great piece of our industrial past it is. I am from Wollongong so I have a great appreciation for our industrial history; I love it. But I think most people will be surprised when they get the opportunity to go into that place and see the ornate work put into building a power station. At over 100 years old, it is a heritage-listed site and a great asset to Sydney. I am glad that we have been able to repurpose the site rather than let it sit in disrepair or demolish it, as so many other people have speculated might be its future.

The place strategy for the Bays West precinct identified the site as having potential for cultural and community uses, with a vision to develop the facility into one of international status. I acknowledge the team at Placemaking NSW for its management of that site. Currently it is completing the works to repair and remediate the site, which is due for completion in early 2024. I also acknowledge the workers who have been doing that. They have been working in some extraordinarily difficult circumstances. Asbestos, lead and all the sins of our industrial past are concentrated in that area. But because of the advocacy of people like the Mayor of Inner West Council, Darcy Byrne, and others who have been saying that we should be putting the site to better use, it has happened.

After years of the site sitting derelict, I was pleased to announce, along with Minister Graham, that White Bay Power Station will host the 2024 Biennale of Sydney between 9 March and 10 June 2024. That comes nearly 40 years after the lights were last switched off at the power station on Christmas Day 1983. The iconic building will now be able to energise Sydney once again as an arts and cultural hub. The biennale will be the first event to take place in the rejuvenated White Bay Power Station. It will be an important first test of the work that has been done there. Entry will be free, so everyone should take the opportunity to visit. The thousands of people who drive past it every day and wonder, "What on earth could be going on in that building?" will have a chance to go inside and view an industrial masterpiece as well as some more contemporary artwork in one of the longest running biennales in the world, having started in 1973.

Hosting the biennale is a great opportunity for Placemaking NSW to show firsthand how the activation of the site can function, provide insight into its longer uses and provide opportunities. In the short term, it is anticipated that parts of the building will be used for temporary cultural and arts events. It is another site in Sydney to host world-class events, much like Carriageworks. The reactivation of the power station is the first big move. *[Extension of time]*

An advisory committee has been established to develop options for the site's long-term use, but the community will be able to have its say on those long-term uses of the power station. It is important to have that input. Community consultation and suggestions will begin through Placemaking NSW in the coming months, with

more information to be placed on the Placemaking NSW website. While that planning and consultation about the long-term and future uses is still under way, the New South Wales Government is taking the opportunity to let members of the community immerse themselves in the site through the Biennale of Sydney program of events and activations. It will be a great opportunity to test the site as an arts hub and see how the community might interact with it. I am confident the community will recognise the potential for an important cultural institution for Sydney long into the future.

The rejuvenation of the White Bay Power Station and its hosting of the biennale as the first free public activation of that remediated site is a step in the right direction. This Government is pursuing the opportunity to provide quality public spaces for everyone in the community. I look forward to visiting the biennale next year and encourage members of this place to join in. It is free, so those opposite will be able to go along and make sure they have a good look. I know that when the community consultation opens, residents of the Balmain community will be providing their input about how this iconic building in Sydney can be best used for future generations.

INDUSTRIAL MANSLAUGHTER LAWS

Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn) (12:06): My question is addressed to the Minister for Work Health and Safety. Will the Minister inform the House of what steps the Minns Labor Government is taking to create safer workplaces in New South Wales?

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (12:06): I thank the member for Auburn and acknowledge her longtime advocacy for safety at work. The Minns Labor Government is committed to ensuring that workers in New South Wales have the safest workplaces in the country. Last night I announced that the Government will introduce an industrial manslaughter offence. This will be the first time New South Wales has ever had a dedicated crime that applies to industrial manslaughter. Despite years of campaigning by the families of those killed at work, New South Wales is the last mainland State without an industrial manslaughter offence on the statute books. This Government understands that strong deterrence for unlawful and unconscionable behaviour needs to exist to ensure our commitment to safe workplaces.

In making the announcement last night I was joined by Patrizia and Rob Cassaniti. As many members know, Patrizia's son Christopher had just turned 18 when he was tragically killed on a construction site where he worked as an apprentice. In Christopher's case, he suffered fatal injuries after an overloaded perimeter facade scaffolding collapsed on top of him. A fellow worker was also trapped and suffered serious injuries. It was determined at the time of collapse that the scaffolding was overloaded with a live load of more than 18 tonnes. Following the tragic loss of her son, Patrizia started the foundation Touched By Christopher and has been an incredible advocate for awareness about worker safety. The company that caused Christopher's death pleaded guilty but only paid a fine. As Ms Cassaniti put it:

A company can move on from a fine. They can factor it into the cost of doing business. For me, it was a life sentence.

Up until July this will year, 41 workers in New South Wales have lost their lives at work. As we all agree, one fatality is too many. Every worker, whether a food delivery driver or a farm worker, has the right to go to work and come home safely to their family. For 12 long years our State has seen the stagnation of work health and safety regulation. We must do more. This Labor Government will always do more for the safety of the State's workers. The time for watching the progression of other jurisdictions is over. [*Extension of time*]

It is time that New South Wales steps up and leads the way, and that is what we are doing. I hope no-one ever needs to be prosecuted for industrial manslaughter. I hope the law is such a strong deterrent that it is never used, because it is always better to prevent the loss of life in the first place. In the next few weeks the Government will begin an extensive consultation process with employers, unions, legal experts and work health and safety experts, and in particular those who have been affected: the families of those killed at work. We will listen to them and speak to other jurisdictions about how this offence is working in their States. We will also work with the Federal Government. The Minns Government is committed to taking the learnings of other jurisdictions and ensuring that New South Wales has a fit-for-purpose offence. The new laws will carry a very clear and strong message that every life in every workplace matters and those responsible for an offence will be held accountable.

Documents

ROYAL COMMISSION INTO VIOLENCE, ABUSE, NEGLECT AND EXPLOITATION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY

Reports

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: On behalf of Ms Kate Washington: I table the *Final Report of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability*.

*Business of the House***SITTING CALENDAR 2024**

Mr RON HOENIG: I move:

That, unless otherwise ordered, the House meet during the 2024 autumn and spring sittings as follows:

Autumn Sittings: February 6, 7, 8; March 12, 13, 14, 19, 20, 21; May 7, 8, 9, 14, 15, 16; June 4, 5, 6, 18, 19, 20.

Spring Sittings: August 6, 7, 8, 13, 14, 15; September 17, 18, 19, 24, 25, 26; October 15, 16, 17, 22, 23, 24; November 12, 13, 14, 19, 20, 21; and November 26, 27, 28 as a reserve week.

Motion agreed to.

*Petitions***RESPONSES TO PETITIONS**

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

The Hon. Jo Haylen—South-West Rail Link Infrastructure—lodged 13 September 2023 (Mr Nathan Hagarty).

*Personal Explanation***MEMBER FOR COFFS HARBOUR**

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (12:15): By leave: During the answer given by the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads earlier in question time today the Minister made several incorrect, untrue and quite frankly disgusting statements that I had interfered with the safety of the bypass project and had diverted Transport for NSW resources while attending two blasts related to the bypass. I did attend two blasts. The first blast was on a public road. About half a dozen members of the media were present. We were over a kilometre away from the blast site and personal protective equipment was not required at that time by the media. A small number of Transport for NSW staff were there shepherding the media on the site. The second time I attended a blast was again on a public road, 600 metres away from the blast site, with other members of the public also in attendance. I completely reject the Minister's assertions that any resources were diverted in either of those two blasts. I also completely reject that I created a safety hazard, as the Minister said whilst walking down to her seat. It goes to the integrity of the Minister—

The SPEAKER: I do not need to hear more.

Mr GURMESH SINGH: I ask that the Minister withdraw her comments.

The SPEAKER: I have heard the member's personal explanation. The time for his personal explanation has expired.

MEMBER FOR DUBBO

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (12:16): By leave: I make a personal explanation relating to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, who misled the House by suggesting that I demanded to be allowed on the site for the new Dubbo bridge. To put very clearly on the record—

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: I understand that members seeking to make a personal explanation do so at the Speaker's discretion. I am not calling that into question. But the rules and parameters of personal explanations are quite strict in the standing orders. The application of the rules by the Speaker over many years has been quite narrow. Just because someone says something about a member in question time does not give the member the right to correct the record on a factual basis.

The SPEAKER: I thank the Attorney General. I struggled with the personal explanation of the member for Coffs Harbour. I ask the member for Dubbo to deal only with facts, not his opinions about the way in which the Minister made the comments. The member may correct the record if that is what he wishes to do.

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS: I would like to correct the record. The Minister said that I demanded to be on a worksite, when that never happened. I was personally invited by members from the contracting body to attend the site. I have not been to the site. I am planning on going, but I have never demanded to be there. I would like that on the record.

*Bills***RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES AMENDMENT (RENT FREEZE) BILL 2023****Second Reading Debate****Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Winston Hills) (12:19): I make a contribution to debate on The Greens' Residential Tenancies Amendment (Rent Freeze) Bill 2023. I note that my speech has been prepared in concert with the shadow Minister for Fair Trading, Work Health and Safety and Building, the member for Willoughby. The Opposition does not support the bill because rent freezes do not work. The bill offers nothing but false hope. Contrary to their statements, The Greens are not the friends of renters. This policy would only make it harder for millions of renters across New South Wales to make ends meet and afford a place to call home. There is no question that renters, like all of us, are suffering, hurting and doing it tough due to the rising cost of living. The median rent in Sydney has increased by 24 per cent in the past 12 months, and that figure is even higher in many areas. Renters are crying out for a real solution, not measures that only make the situation much worse. We should be doing all we can to ease the pressure, not ignore warnings that proposals such as a rent freeze will only add to the hardship for renters.

The bill seeks to amend the Residential Tenancies Act 2010 to freeze residential rents for a period of two years. It would also limit the rent payable under residential tenancy agreements entered into on or after 30 June 2023 for two years to the existing rent payable on the premises on 30 June 2023 or the median rent for a comparable dwelling. At the heart of the bill is a failure by The Greens to comprehend basic economics at work. A rent freeze is a damaging, radical proposal that will crash the housing supply and heap misery on millions of renters. No-one wins—not tenants, not landlords and not the public. Everyone would be worse off under such a bill. Rent freezes reduce the incentive to invest in and provide rental housing. The supply of rental housing would plummet as investment in the building of new housing stock becomes increasingly uneconomic and existing landlords choose to divest their holdings, selling to owner-occupiers. Lower rental housing stock would mean renters find fiercer competition with fellow renters for the rental properties that remain. Reduced housing supply inevitably means that rents will surge after the freeze period expires and prices will be forced higher and higher in the long run.

International experience has demonstrated that rent control measures do not ease rents or make it easier to secure housing. In fact, they make it harder for renters to find suitable accommodation and push up rents for new accommodation. The existing housing stock also becomes of increasingly poor quality, as maintenance is deferred or becomes unviable for the landlord. There becomes little incentive or capacity for landlords to maintain and improve properties to attract new tenants, invariably meaning that bare minimum maintenance will be performed and, over time, the average quality of stock of rental accommodation will diminish. Let us not make a mistake that will take a generation to correct. These unwanted consequences are nothing groundbreaking. The Greens' plan would do the exact opposite of its stated intention.

The Greens are attempting a nationwide push to pretend that they are friends of renters, but through their actions they do nothing but harm to them, some of whom are the most vulnerable in society. The proposal in the bill should be a nonstarter. It would do nothing but prolong and inflate the pain for millions of renters across the State. The Opposition will not be party to inflicting such an ill-considered policy on the people of New South Wales, who are already doing it tough. I acknowledge that the Government also has the good sense to oppose the bill and the damage that rent freezes would do. New South Wales Rental Commissioner and former Homelessness NSW CEO Trina Jones has also said that she does not support the bill. It is curious that The Greens would propose such a bill with the obvious potential to backfire and cause negative consequences for renters after making the same warnings when the Government attempted to ban secret rent bidding. Perhaps it is time for The Greens to listen to experts such as the former head of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, Professor Graeme Samuel. He said of The Greens' attempt to impose a rent freeze:

The Greens have illustrated that they fundamentally don't understand economics in their demands.

...

It might be populist to talk about rental freezes and rental caps, but they should understand that the fundamental problem we've got is lack of supply.

...

The moment you put a rental cap in place, you just simply exacerbate the supply problem.

The Liberal-Nationals Coalition will always support real, practical solutions that ease the affordability and cost-of-housing pressures currently faced by renters. That is why we proposed a package of reforms in government

that built on our reforming legacy to ease the daily challenges faced by renters, including a rental bond rollover scheme, ending no-grounds evictions, increasing notice of termination from 30 to 45 days, protecting tenants' information privacy, three- to five-year standard agreements, and making it easier to own pets in rental properties. In government we restricted rent increases in periodic leases to once in 12 months, with a 60-day notice period to provide renters with certainty. Many of those good policies have now been taken up by the current Government, which is why the Opposition supports a strong response to boost housing supply sustainably in a well-planned manner that works with local communities and delivers essential infrastructure alongside it.

Vacancy rates are at historic lows. The only real solution to the current rental crisis is to boost housing supply. It is concerning that local communities have been told to get out of the way and that infrastructure investment, such as the Sydney Metro West, which is so vital to delivering substantial increases in housing supply, is currently under threat from this Government. The Liberal-Nationals Coalition calls on the Government to invest in infrastructure and bring communities on the journey to deliver the housing that our State needs. That is the real solution to the crisis facing renters today.

Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (12:25): I oppose the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Rent Freeze) Bill 2023. The bill proposes to amend the Residential Tenancies Act 2010 by immediately freezing rents for two years on all existing and new New South Wales residential tenancy agreements, with all rental increases prohibited. I am the first to acknowledge that there is a lack of housing in New South Wales and that the rental market is very tight. The Minns Government also recognises that. However, freezing rents is not the answer. It may sound like a quick fix, but research indicates that freezing rents actually makes things worse by reducing supply and lowering vacancy rates even further. The last thing that people in my electorate of South Coast need is more short-term rentals.

Dr Peter Swan, a professor at the School of Banking and Finance at the University of NSW Business School, recently stated that the rental crisis would "become far worse for tenants and landlords if this policy came into force". He went on to say:

While it is true that tenants who are not evicted may gain temporarily, tenants as a whole lose as rental accommodation is withdrawn, fewer new places are provided, and maintenance of rent-controlled housing deteriorates. Rental rates rise due to restricted supply, while landlords with sitting tenants suffer. Eventually, a black market evolves with 'protected' tenants unable to move and with the rampant use of sizeable 'key money' paid by prospective new tenants.

We only have to look to other jurisdictions that have attempted to freeze rents to protect tenants, such as San Francisco, New York and even Canberra, to see that this policy does not work. The Manhattan Institute in New York found that cities that implement rent control see substantial declines in the availability of rental housing. It also locks people into their existing rental properties, which may become unsuitable for them. While rent control may benefit existing tenants, it is often at the expense of people hoping to relocate to a city or a region. When analysing San Francisco, the National Bureau of Economic Research found that the city's rent controls resulted in a 15 per cent reduction in rental supply. In cities that have introduced rent freezes it has also been proven that rent control typically benefits high-income households while driving up rents for everyone else, especially the most disadvantaged in our communities.

Rent control is not the way to increase the amount of affordable housing. The solution to the crisis lies in boosting housing supply and implementing the Government's rental reforms to provide more protection for renters. The 2023-24 budget begins the long-term work of rebuilding our social and affordable housing system through the \$224 million Essential Housing Package. Over the next 12 months the initial investment will begin to address the historic neglect of new social housing supply and trial innovative solutions to get people off the social housing waitlist. The Essential Housing Package will help strengthen the safety net for those experiencing housing insecurity and provide wraparound support and services for some of our most vulnerable. The package includes crucial funding to extend access to temporary accommodation to create a better place for people in crisis, along with funding to specialist homelessness services that provide certainty and stability for the people who need it most.

After more than a decade of inaction and neglect from the former Government, the Minns Government is committed to rebuilding our housing system. As a start, it is delivering more homes across our State and improving specialist homelessness services. The Essential Housing Package includes a build-to-rent trial on the South Coast and a \$70 million financing facility to accelerate the delivery of social and affordable homes, primarily in regional New South Wales. The package also includes \$35 million for housing services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and families through Services Our Way, \$35 million to support critical maintenance for social housing, \$20 million reserved in Restart NSW for dedicated mental health housing, and a whole host more. The Government is not only committed to rebuilding our housing system. It is also implementing reforms that strengthen existing renter protections, without impacting the viability of the rental market. The Government's fundamental belief is that renters need good owners, and owners need good renters.

The Minns Government has appointed the State's first Rental Commissioner, Trina Jones. In her role, Ms Jones will be a voice for tenants and will work with tenants, owners and the community to support the implementation of rental reforms. Recently Ms Jones held a roundtable with industry leaders to improve renting for the two million people in New South Wales who rent. The roundtable was held to allow industry leaders to contribute their technical expertise and advice. Ms Jones is also engaging directly with renters and owners to ensure reforms are informed by those most affected. Not only will the Rental Commissioner be a voice for renters; the Minns Government is also moving to implement its election commitments to remove no-grounds evictions, make it easier for renters to have pets, introduce new data protection requirements for real estate agents when they handle renters' personal information, and implement a portable bond scheme that will allow renters to transfer a rental bond from their old rental property before the first bond is released.

The Government has already passed legislation to extend the ban on solicited rent bidding. The Government's reform agenda will implement significant rental reforms to improve renters' rights and ease the pressure in the rental market, while simultaneously introducing measures to increase housing supply. Rent control is not the way to increase affordable housing. Instead it would act to restrict the supply and would be of more benefit to high-income households while driving up rents for everyone else. I oppose the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Rent Freeze) Bill 2023.

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (12:32): I am proud to speak in support of The Greens' Residential Tenancies Amendment (Rent Freeze) Bill 2023. I commend The Greens' housing spokesperson, the member for Newtown, for her work in this space. Rent freezes are not radical. You would think we were talking about something truly radical. It is not radical in Germany, where a three-year rent freeze was recently announced. In 2020 the Victorian Government recognised the housing affordability crisis brought on by the pandemic and froze rents for six months. None of these Chicken Little arguments applied there. A number of other jurisdictions have rent caps in place. In the Australian Capital Territory, where—I am proud to say—The Greens hold the balance of power, the Government has put in a rent cap. The reason those jurisdictions have done so is because we are in an extreme housing crisis.

I said recently that the two existential crises we face are the housing crisis and the climate crisis. My community, sadly, is living through that—as are other communities—on the back of the 2019 Black Summer bushfires and the pandemic, where a mass exodus of thousands of people from the city moved to our region. Unfortunately a lot of those people were then also flood affected. The housing crisis in our area is beyond the pale. I would have thought that this Government would try to pull every single lever. To rule out the idea of a rent freeze seems ideological. While it seems some people are comfortable with the words "rent cap", for some reason the idea of a rent freeze is being demonised. But I can tell members, if they go back to their communities and talk to renters, those people will not be demonising the concept of a rent freeze.

Regarding the spurious argument of supply, I have been in this place for nearly nine years and I am sick to death of hearing this argument, because it lacks any nuance about which houses, who they are for and where they are going. That granularity is essential. To give you an example, my community stridently opposed the development in West Byron, primarily because it is in a flood zone. It is not just a flood zone; it is the Cumbebin Swamp. Unfortunately we did not win that battle. That development was literally touted to our community as the potential for affordable housing. What have we got now? The minimum land value in West Byron is \$1.2 million. Nobody I know will be living in West Byron.

If we manage to finally get the 60-day cap on short-term holiday letting—and we are grateful it has been green-lit again—we are waiting until September next year. We just cannot wait for these things. At the moment in West Byron there is absolutely no incentive for anyone to offer affordable rent or housing. Unfortunately that supply answer does not address the fact that nobody can afford to live there. In my community, we have the legacy of unfettered, out-of-control holiday letting—it still is today. We have the extra layer that any properties that may be suitable for our frontline workers and families to live in or rent are on online platforms, because landlords can make more money that way. Supply alone does not work.

I am very proud of the work that our spokesperson has done, which is well supported by evidence. According to a recent analysis by Everybody's Home, 82 per cent of renters in New South Wales are living in housing stress. I am surprised that the Government does not see that giving renters some respite would be extraordinarily popular. As a landlord myself, I think landlords should be given an incentive as well. We are not demonising landlords. We know that we would not have rental properties without landlords. However, the scale is tipped the other way and is completely out of balance.

As an example, a couple of weeks ago there were 1,100 applicants for a granny flat in Mullumbimby. That tells you that there is an extraordinary imbalance of power. Everyone in our Northern Rivers community has seen the rental crisis close up. Every day I drive past cafes left closed because our hospitality workers cannot find a single affordable rental in the region. We have all seen construction delayed after the floods. In our region

everyone who has kids knows they do not even contemplate buying, or even renting, in the area that they grew up in. They are living with their families.

The Minister for Planning and Public Spaces today talked about intergenerational disadvantage. A rent freeze is an answer. It is a solution. Give it a case study or whatever you want to call it. The idea that we should dismiss it out of hand is absurd. Renters constantly come to me and say that they feel completely powerless. Property investors are entitled to negative gearing and capital gains tax concessions and renters cannot even live with a pet, let alone afford the rent in my region, which is comparable to Sydney. As I said, rent freezes are not radical.

I understand that the Government wants to increase the supply of housing and I understand that there need to be targets for supply. But—and I come back to this again and again—who are these houses for? As our spokesperson said this week, the issue with selling off Crown land, public land and common land and somehow gifting 70 per cent of that to developers is absurd. Developers do not need more incentives. We need to provide incentives that will genuinely offer affordable housing with long leases and below market rates. How can we incentivise that?

The only support for renters that the National Cabinet has on offer right now is a 12-month restriction on how often rents can increase. I have been to visit some of the terribly flood-affected residents in my electorate who are living in the pod villages post-floods, and they are doing it tough. They are trying to transition from those pods back into the community. Many of them are displaced from Lismore. They have found themselves on the coast absolutely unable to transition, and that is horrendous. There are 800 people on a waitlist to be in one of those pods. They have nowhere to go. If a person gets kicked out of the pods, they have nowhere to go. They are on the street. Something has to give. We have to do something. I will not wait while we have another housing taskforce. If I have to contribute another submission to a housing taskforce, I am going to scream. The Liberals, Nationals and Labor keep saying the same thing—that supply is the answer, and it absolutely is. But how is it going for us? It has not worked at all.

Regardless of the outcome today, I encourage all members to contemplate all renters in their electorates. The Greens will continue to campaign on this issue. We have successfully pressured this Government to end no-grounds evictions in New South Wales and my Federal colleagues have secured an additional \$3 billion of immediate spending for affordable housing. Some Federal Labor MPs are saying that The Greens are holding up housing developments, but we got an extra \$3 billion. Quite frankly, the money allocated in the State budget for social housing was absolutely pitiful.

Housing is a huge factor to consider as we enter the climate change apocalypse. The Premier should be spending all of his time on those two existential crises. It is a fundamental right for people to have a safe and secure home and to be protected from what is coming down the line. We have just seen more than 70 fires and another drought off the back of floods. I urge Labor to take this seriously and to look for every opportunity to alleviate the housing stress that our community is under.

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (12:43): All members know that the rental market is in dire circumstances in New South Wales. We have seen massive rent increases and we continue to see incredibly low vacancy rates. That hits our low-income renters hard in many of our electorates. The intention of the bill is to address the current rental crisis; however, the bill does not address the factors contributing to rent increases. Rather, it worsens supply and makes it even more difficult for renters. The bill amends the Residential Tenancies Act 2010 by immediately freezing rent for two years on all new and existing New South Wales residential tenancy agreements, with all rental increases prohibited.

The Government opposes the bill. It is bad policy that failed in San Francisco in 1995 when the rent freeze led to massive increases in evictions, massive increases in complaints about wrongful evictions, and a drop in the supply of rentals by 15 per cent. It also failed in New York, when it resulted in rent to income ratios of up to 67 per cent. In Australia we agree that affordable rent is 30 per cent of a person's income, and 67 per cent is more than twice that. We need to look at the effects around the world and make sure we create the best policy for New South Wales. The reality is that this policy would result in reduced supply, pushing vacancy rates even further.

In my community the rental circumstances are poor. Gosford is meant to be an affordable place to live but a three-bedroom house is now \$535 a week and up to \$560 in East Gosford, with two-bedroom units in East Gosford now \$430. A three-bedroom house is up to \$600 in Kariong and \$550 on the peninsula, with a unit on the peninsula now \$430. We cannot afford to put any more pressure on supply across our communities and have rents go up even further because of the lack of availability.

Rent increases are being driven up by lack of supply as well as increased mortgage costs. The reality is that mum-and-dad owners who have an extra property to try to save for their retirement are now paying for a \$500,000 loan, which is not enough to buy a house in my community anymore. They are paying \$1,500 more a month in mortgage costs than what they were paying 1½ years ago, and that is being passed on to renters. If interest rates were to go up any further while rents were frozen, those mum-and-dad owners would not be able to pay back their loans.

Housing demands are also exceeding supply due to a combination of increasing migration, people seeking more space and fewer people per household. I do not know what it was like when for other members when they were university students, but we used to pack quite a few people into one house. There was no issue with sharing properties to make things more affordable. It seems that young people these days live quite differently; they want to live independently with just one or two people in houses. Things are changing and there is less supply on the market.

It is clear that rent freezes reduce supply. With low vacancy rates driving up rents, the bill will only make things worse for renters. The Government will not implement or support price-setting mechanisms that can have a negative effect on rental supply. The trouble is that a rent freeze is likely to deter landlord investors from entering the property market and risk landlords leaving the market, which would further impact supply. The overarching principle of our Government's policy is that rental reforms should not decrease supply.

Further, landlords being unable to recoup the cost of interest rate rises has the potential to increase the number of mortgage defaults. There are also concerns that supply will be further reduced if landlords seek to circumvent a rent freeze by renovating the dwelling or shifting to short-term or informal letting where the return from unregulated rentals would be higher. The bill would discourage landlords from entering into or renewing a longer lease during the freeze period, causing renters to be unsure of their tenure and experience a potential surge in rent prices at the expiry of the rent freeze period. Various experts across the community have made comments about this in the media. Metropole property strategist Michael Yardney suggests:

Rent freezes will also dissuade investors from improving their properties, meaning they will bring down the standard of accommodation and we'll have less. They will have the unintended consequences of making it worse for tenants ...

He also said that the problem is the lack of supply and that rent freezes would impact the lack of supply. In an article published in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Brendan Coates and Joe Moloney from the Grattan Institute said:

While it may seem attractive to renters facing steep rent rises, it'll end up doing more harm than good.

...

Ultimately, if we freeze rents, more Australians could become homeless, not fewer.

...

Only when housing is plentiful will it also be affordable. That's the plan renters should get behind.

The Premier and planning Minister Paul Scully are committed to increasing housing density and housing supply across Sydney and beyond to hopefully create more property and bring down rental costs for everyone.

Our Government is making the effort to reform the rental situation in New South Wales. I commend the introduction of Rental Commissioner Trina Jones. I also compliment the people across New South Wales who have put forward a record number of submissions to our rental inquiry, trying to reform the rental market. The Government has commenced work to improve rental laws in New South Wales with the passage of the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Rental Fairness) Act 2023 in June this year. The Act extends the current ban on solicited rent bidding by agents to landlords and third parties and includes regulation-making powers to support the implementation of a portable rental bond scheme. Work is also underway to implement other rental reform commitments, including requiring landlords to give a reason for ending a tenancy, making it easier for renters to keep pets in a rental home, and protecting renters' privacy and personal information. Other speakers have also referred to existing tenancy laws that limit the frequency of rent increases, which is important.

The New South Wales Government is committed to implementing effective and comprehensive reform, which will strengthen housing supply and ensure renter protections. This legislation, whilst well intentioned, will have the opposite effect, exacerbating supply and resulting in unintended consequences that will significantly alter the quality of housing for renters. The fact is that this policy does not work. It has been tried in San Francisco, in New York and closer to home in Canberra. It has failed in all of those cases and increased rental costs for renters in those cities. The Minns Labor Government has commenced important work on reforming rental laws in New South Wales, working to improve the landscape for renters in our State. We are committed to quality, evidence-based policy, which will make a difference. The Residential Tenancies Amendment (Rent Freeze) Bill does not meet the bar for evidence-based policy. As such, I oppose the bill.

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (12:51): I speak in support of the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Rent Freeze) Bill 2023. I thank my Greens colleague the member for Newtown for introducing this important bill. As we have heard in this debate, and as members would be aware, we are in the grip of a housing crisis where already astronomical rents across New South Wales are going up at an alarming and unacceptable rate. Given the growing media attention on this issue, it is surprising that so many members from the major parties seem happy to let the market try to resolve it. There needs to be a legislative response that does not allow the weekly rental costs of someone's home to go up in the order of 30 per cent a year at the whim of the market and those who benefit from actively driving up rents, which we know is happening across the State. Rents keep going up at an astonishing rate, and action needs to be taken now.

We have heard Opposition members trying to talk about all the wonderful things that they did when they were in government to try to help renters. When we look at where we are at now, it is clear that nothing they have done in the past 12 years has helped renters at all. That is why the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Rent Freeze) 2023 Bill is so important. It will place an interim, two-year freeze on all residential rents across New South Wales to give renter households some reprieve and allow the Parliament time to sort out the necessary reforms to bring this issue under control. I find it shocking that the Minister and Government members suggest that developers will stop building housing if rent rises are paused. Surely, we can see that the rent rises are high enough at the moment that there is no reason they should stop supplying buildings; they are already making a handsome profit by investing in housing.

The Minister also attempted to tell us that measures like rental caps will not work and suggested that this was demonstrated in the Australian Capital Territory, which has a rental cap. The Minister said that in the four years since 2019, rents in Canberra rose by 14 per cent. That sounds like a lot until we realise that in Sydney this year to June—just that one year—rents rose by an eye-watering 27.6 per cent. I would argue that that example exactly demonstrates why a rental reform is needed and why rent freezes and rent caps are effective, because if Canberra had an increase of 14 per cent over four years, compared with Sydney's nearly 28 per cent increase in one year, they are doing something better than what we are doing in New South Wales.

The housing crisis is an emergency. It is proportionate and reasonable for this Parliament to press pause on unchecked rent increases, relieve renters from the stress of a rent hike, give wages and incomes a chance to catch up, and allow time to do the work needed to get rents under control in New South Wales. Importantly, the rent freeze would apply to rental rates as of 30 June 2023 and will be linked to properties, not to the individuals or households who live in them. These measures will ensure that rents cannot be increased now, in anticipation of the bill becoming law in the future—as we have heard the Premier and the Minister argue—and that the rent freeze rules cannot be flouted by evicting someone from their home.

The bill also requires a review to be undertaken within the first 12 months of the rent freeze to consider its ongoing impacts, as well as whether ongoing limits on rent increases are required to ensure that rents are affordable. This is an important bill for everyone in New South Wales, and it is particularly important for those of us in some parts of Sydney where rents are pushing families out of their homes and breaking up communities. In my electorate of Balmain, where almost 48 per cent of the community rents, I hear far too many heart-wrenching stories from people who are just one more rent increase away from having to uproot their lives and find another home because they will no longer be able to afford the roof over their head. Worse, they are dealing with the fallout from receiving that one rent increase that was simply the final straw, and they are either thrown back into the unforgiving rental market or they are facing homelessness. This has profound implications for anyone who is experiencing it.

Moving house is stressful enough, but having to move because you are priced out of a home is profoundly difficult. People, families, young people, essential workers and older residents are being pushed out of their communities, where they have important social connections, because the rent has increased significantly year upon year. We are talking about an increase in the order of 30 per cent a year. That is not a small rent increase. It is pushing people to the brink, making them uproot their whole lives and move. In my electorate, key workers like teachers and nurses can rarely afford to live in the communities that they serve. How is that acceptable? People reached out to me constantly and repeatedly during the election campaign that elected me as the member for Balmain. I note that this bill reflects a policy commitment that The Greens took to the election in March. The bill clearly has community support.

I acknowledge that, of course, some landlords across New South Wales are also struggling with rising costs. We are in a cost-of-living crisis as well as a housing crisis, and these issues do not exist in isolation. There are instances when landlords who have no other income might need to put the rent up a bit to meet their own cost-of-living challenges. But to own a second home that some other person pays to live in is to be in a position of incredible privilege when compared with those who cannot even imagine that they will one day be able to own their own home, like so many young people that I speak to in my community day after day. For those who cannot

realistically save the tens—certainly not the hundreds, where I am—of thousands of dollars to stump up for a deposit because the rents keep going up, it is cold comfort to think that their contribution is allowing these landlords to hold onto an asset that is both earning a passive income for them and appreciating in value.

I take a moment to share some of the stories that I have been hearing from constituents in Balmain. One young man told me about being asked to leave, evicted by the real estate agent while he was trying to negotiate a rent increase. He had been asked to pay an increase of almost \$200 a week, which was about 35 per cent more than what he had been paying. He was hoping for an amount that was more reasonable and trying to negotiate in good faith, and it failed. The ensuing complications were both unnecessary and unlawful on the part of the landlord, or at least the agent who was acting on their behalf. This man was told that he would have to pay an amount of rent after he had moved out, and, despite seeking legal advice that confirmed this was not true, he ended up having to take the landlord to the tribunal to recover an overpaid amount. This cost him considerably in both time and money, and it reinforced for him the broken nature of renting in New South Wales. None of this would have happened if he had been in a stronger position to negotiate and if the balance of power between renters and landlords was not unrealistically skewed towards landlords.

Another man told me about how he had to move in order to avoid a dramatic rent increase, only to find that his rental bond had been held up with Fair Trading. This man also had to take the matter to the tribunal in order to recover his money. Again, this was at considerable time and expense, despite the fact that his landlord's claim was completely without merit. It has led to deep frustrations with our renting laws, and, while I note we have now changed the law to make rental bonds more portable, none of this would have happened if he had been in a stronger position to deal with the rent increase. There are countless other stories, but these are just two that demonstrate the complexity of the situation that The Greens are aiming to address with this bill. While we cannot help these renters retrospectively, by putting a stop to rent increases for a brief two-year period, we can make sure that more people are not put into similarly difficult, costly and demoralising positions. I again thank my colleague the member for Newtown for bringing this important bill. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (12:59): I join my colleagues on this side of the House in opposing the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Rent Freeze) Bill 2023. I do not doubt the goodwill and good intent behind this legislation. But, like others in this place, I disagree with the need, the impact and the potential effectiveness of this sort of policy. I have listened to a number of arguments in the debate and at the outset I indicate, by way of full disclosure—because I am going to talk about it later—that my wife and I own a rental property, a unit, in Melbourne. I will come back to that. I wanted to disclose that up-front. I agree with the comments made by a number of Government members about the bill not being an appropriate solution to what is a very pressing problem. I note the comments by the member for Ballina about this policy being popular but, as I am sure The Greens have noted on many occasions in this place, popular does not always mean right. In this case, popular does not mean right or effective.

The bill would impose a two-year freeze on rents. I disagree with the member for Balmain about two years being a short period. For many people, it would be quite a long period. The bill would certainly negatively impact a number of people and not solve the problem in the longer term. One of my key concerns is that it essentially treats all landlords the same. All landlords are effectively branded as falling into the same category—as being, I suppose, greedy. I note The Greens members have not said that, but essentially the bill does lump all landlords in the same category. Imposing a two-year rent freeze could be quite unfair on people who have not put up rents to the current market rates. It would be a real concern for many people who have property investments. We need to consider the drivers of rent increases. I am sure some people have seen an opportunity in this market to increase rents and be greedy about it, but we also must acknowledge the drivers of rent increases.

A significant driver over the past few years has been massive interest rate increases. We know that many investors in rental properties take out loans to invest in those properties, and we know that over the past couple of years those costs have increased substantially. I do not think it is reasonable simply to say to those people, "You can't take into account the way that your costs have increased." We have seen different markets in Australia rise at different levels, because there are different levels of demand. We also know that in New South Wales it is absolutely correct to say that one of the key drivers of the problems is housing supply. I acknowledge there is no quick fix for that. The Government acknowledges it also. But we must fix that problem in the long term because constraints on supply is the other key factor driving up rents. Having a rent freeze does not solve the problem of demand outstripping supply. The Government has put measures in place to try to deal with some of those issues.

In regional New South Wales the issues are slightly different again. I represent Jindabyne, which has a significant rent crisis in longer-term rentals for the same reason the member for Ballina talked about: Property owners get a much better return from the short-term rental market and holiday rentals. That has very much affected the Jindabyne community and its ability to attract people to work in the tourism industry, teachers and nurses because it has significantly reduced the availability of long-term rentals and driven up the cost of those rentals. A

rent freeze in Jindabyne would not help because it would drive more of those properties onto the short-term rental market, where they can make more money. It is a negative approach. The member for Ballina spoke about her local council's attempt to limit the number of short-term rentals. I am much more interested in whether that policy can be applied across New South Wales, including in areas with a tourism rental profile similar to that in her community.

From the point of view of a property owner, the bill is a blanket proposal that covers all owners of property. For instance, my wife and I have a property in Melbourne. During the pandemic we dropped the rent by \$100 a week. I am not going to say the exact amount because it is probably unfair on the renter, but we dropped the rent \$100 a week because the market in the area had changed completely. The manager of the property came to me recently and said, "Market rentals have gone up. You could put your property back up \$100 a week." I thought to myself, "Well, we have got a great tenant. The place is clean. It's tidy. It's well looked after. We'll only go up by \$50." Now \$50 a week is still a lot of money for somebody who is renting but, under this legislation, we would have been subject to a rental freeze of two years at an amount way below the market rate for the area when interest rate rises had increased our costs by around \$1,000 a month.

I am not saying, "Oh, poor us", because we are in a position to have an investment property. The issue we need to address is how to engage and undertake work to increase housing affordability overall, and to pursue the objectives the Government has announced to try to get a certain percentage of property available for long-term rental. We are doing that by focusing on Crown land. In the electorate of Monaro, we are focusing on an area in Jindabyne as part of the Jindabyne special activation precinct process. The Government is looking to purchase land from Snowy Hydro so that it can put in the condition of affordable and long-term rentals as a percentage of accommodation. Those sorts of processes take a bit of time, but they are real solutions. We would have liked to have had quite a few underway a few years ago, but we were not in government to do that.

A two-year rent freeze is much longer than any freeze we have ever had before. It is quite different from what happens in Canberra. I am a nearby resident of Canberra. Canberra's rent freeze is actually a rent cap based on inflation plus 10 per cent and it does not apply when a new lease is entered into. That is fundamentally different from the legislation we are dealing with today. A two-year rent freeze is a blunt instrument. It will disadvantage many people. It will discourage people from making their properties available for long-term rental and from investing in long-term rentals. It is not the solution to the problem. It would actually make the problem worse. A number of my colleagues have quoted people who have said that, including a range of experts in the field. I will not go over that information again. I think all members—and certainly those on this side of the House—share the desire to do something about the problem, but there is no quick fix.

A blunt instrument in the form of a two-year freeze on rents is certainly no quick fix. The measure would hurt. It would discourage supply. It would certainly be popular—I will give The Greens that—but "populist" is probably the more appropriate way to describe this measure, and that is not necessarily a good way of making policy. We must continue to get on board with the long-term solutions, discussions and proposals that the Government is having about sensible measures that will ensure renters have more rights when it comes to lease renewals, more protection from lease terminations and reasonable rents. We should do that rather than make a blanket call that essentially all landlords are the same and are being rapacious, not recognising that probably many landlords have continued to charge rents at about the market rate and do not need to be restricted by a two-year freeze.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Kellyville) (13:09): Members will excuse me for not reading the content of the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Rent Freeze) Bill 2023, but I want to pick up on something that the member for Monaro just raised, which is very pertinent to the debate. He suggested that the current cap on rents in the Australian Capital Territory is, if I heard correctly, CPI plus 10 per cent every year. With inflation at roughly 5.9 per cent, that is a 16 per cent increase in rents every year that is currently being proposed.

Mr Steve Whan: It is 10 per cent of inflation.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: No, I think you said inflation plus 10 per cent. That is what I am checking. Sorry, Hansard.

Ms Jenny Leong: It is good to read the bill first.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: I should have read the bill.

Ms Jenny Leong: It is a good bill.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: If inflation is currently at 5.9 per cent and we are talking about inflation plus 10 per cent—

Mr Steve Whan: No, it is an amount and then 10 per cent of the amount.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: Of the amount of inflation?

Mr Steve Whan: Yes.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: Right, okay. Thank you very much. Excuse me for that. I apologise to Hansard. In making a contribution to the debate, I note that both the Opposition and Government have indicated that they oppose the bill. I say from the outset that I give credit to the mover of the bill for bringing forward an option and an alternative, because this is not going to be the last time that we discuss house prices and rents in this House. I imagine members have an idea of how serious the problem is. It is going to be incredibly difficult in the years ahead in terms of the availability of rental accommodation and, ultimately, the availability of houses coming onto the market. The issue is not going to be resolved in the next year or the following year. It may even take up to five years, especially under some of the policy initiatives that have been put forward by the Government.

Alan Kohler was on ABC TV around a month ago talking about the lack of supply of available housing, which has been reported as being a shortfall of around 460,000 homes across the country, combining the needs of each State. Kohler went through Australian Bureau of Statistics records of approvals and commencements of homes across the country, and noted that many approvals have not turned into commencements. He also noted that the current figure of 460,000 homes will become 740,000 homes in the next couple of years. The former Government, which I was part of, firmly believed that the way to address the cost of houses was to increase supply. As a free marketer and conservative capitalist, I believe in delivering more supply as a measure to settle the market so that demand is not outstripped. If we can increase supply, it will bring down the cost of homes.

In 2018 house prices in New South Wales had actually stabilised. They had increased quite a lot, but they had stabilised. If we look at the amount of homes that were coming onto the market then and the amount of approvals that are currently sitting in place, I think—and this is just a personal thought—that had we not had the global interruptions of COVID, the restrictions to supply on particular materials, the problems with tradespeople and the great confusion of the construction industry, which was out of everybody's hands, combined with an increase in interest rates and an increase to the cost of materials, we may well have been in a different situation. Given that there are so many approvals currently available to developers to commence homes that have not been taken up—approvals that would have been taken up and would have been commenced if not for that significant global disruption—I think we would be seeing hundreds of thousands of homes being built across the country if we still had the pre-COVID conditions. I do not think it would take an expert to establish that.

We are in a situation at the moment where there are a lot of home approvals across our areas. The Government will point the finger at the Opposition for not increasing supply, but we increased supply enormously while we were in office, and the number of approvals waiting for commencement is enormous. I represent an area that takes in the majority of the new development in the north-west, and I have watched that development for many years. But even though the area is growing and has the complexities and problems that come with population increase and rapid residential growth, there are still a lot of available blocks of land. There is a lot of medium-density and high-density development that is not turning into product. These developments are not turning into available housing product that would satisfy people who are looking to buy a home, and, ultimately, people who are looking to rent a home once a home is built.

I do not believe restricting landlords is a way of helping stimulate the market, because landlords bring so many homes to the market. It is a conundrum. The one thing I say is if we increase the price of a house significantly, and if we increase the costs to developers, which will be passed on to new home buyers, then those things will have a dramatic impact on whether homes are turned out. The Government has embraced the seven-star rating of BASIX. Builders working in my area tell me that they cannot even source the appropriate materials that have to be included in homes to achieve the seven-star rating. Meanwhile, double-glazed windows and water-saving taps et cetera can add a cost of anything up to \$30,000 on a new home. If we add to that the new infrastructure tax of \$20,000 that the Government has introduced on homes, there is an automatic increase of \$50,000 on the current price of houses. Does any member think adding \$50,000 to the cost of delivering a house to market is going to improve delivery? It is going to have a negative impact!

The Government could have done something to help the delivery of new homes coming onto the market—for example, pushing the seven-star BASIX rating down the track for a year like every other State in this country has done, or not imposing a \$20,000 infrastructure tax on homes. The tax will not even necessarily see the delivery of infrastructure correlated to the homes that have been developed, because there is no required nexus between the two. Those infrastructure contributions can be spent wherever the Minister wants to spend them. The other compounding factor on the problems that we currently have with rent and the price of houses is the million additional people that Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has said will come to this country in the next few years. We have a situation at the moment—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich): The time for consideration of general business orders of the day for bills having elapsed, I set down resumption of the interrupted debate as an order of the day for a later day. I shall now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.30 p.m.

Motions

CENTRAL COAST HOUSING

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (14:32): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that the local Central Coast community faces significant housing pressure in a tight rental market and under an outdated rental system.
- (2) Notes that the Government is taking decisive action on rental reform to create a fairer system for communities across New South Wales, giving renters a voice on the future of rental policy.
- (3) Welcomes the appointment of the first NSW Rental Commissioner, Trina Jones, giving renters across the State a voice for the first time.
- (4) Encourages coasties to have their say about rental reform in New South Wales.

I am very excited to introduce this motion on housing pressures on the Central Coast. Members know that there is a rental crisis not only on the Central Coast but also across New South Wales. We are living through the rental crisis every day. Every single colleague of mine has had people come to their electorate office to talk about rental stress and the massive increases in rents across our community. I remember talking to the member for Cessnock about the changes to the Central Coast rental market. He said to me that every time you have a barbecue you hear that a couple more families have moved from the Central Coast into the Cessnock area as they have been pushed out due to rent increases in our community. During COVID, when Sydneysiders moved out of Sydney and coasties were pushed off the coast, the member for Cessnock said to me that even Cessnock was full. That is the reality I speak of.

There are low vacancy rates in communities across New South Wales. This morning we spoke about a rental price freeze and a lack of supply in housing to buy and housing to rent, which is pushing prices higher. I will point out a few average property prices. When I first moved to the Central Coast it was an affordable place to live. My community of Woy Woy is not so glamorous.

Mr Rory Amon: It is a lovely area.

Ms LIESL TESCH: It is not a high socio-economic place.

Mr Rory Amon: The member for Gosford is saying it's not such a lovely area to live in.

Ms LIESL TESCH: Sorry, I take that back. My beautiful community has historically been a fairly low socio-economic community. Compared with the Central Coast, Woy Woy and the peninsula was not a really expensive place to live. But COVID significantly changed the shape of the housing market on the Central Coast for both purchasers and renters. The glamorous fibros on the peninsula, which used to be worth \$300,000 to \$500,000, are now available for over \$1 million.

Mr Rory Amon: On the waterfront?

Ms LIESL TESCH: Not on the waterfront. These are just fibros. Fibro majestics on the peninsula are now up for over \$1 million. For renters on the peninsula, at Ettalong Beach the average three-bedroom house is now \$580 a week and the average two-bedroom house is \$480 a week. In Woy Woy the average three-bedroom house is \$550 a week and the average two-bedroom house is \$430 a week. Up the hill in Kariong, which is closer to the expressway—and I see the member for Castle Hill shaking his head in disbelief—the average house is now \$600 a week. In East Gosford the average house costs \$560 a week, and the average apartment is \$430 a week. In Gosford the average house costs \$535 a week and in Umina it is \$590 a week.

The rental market really has changed, and it is causing a lot of grief in our community. Vacancy rates are at an all-time low. Vacancies really have not gone up. Realistically, affordable places for our community are few and far between—so much so that the local school principal said to me that the socio-economic status of schools is changing significantly and very quickly because renters in our community cannot afford to live there anymore. It is a really tough environment. Rental stress is huge. People are spending more than 30 per cent of their income on their property. One old fellow came to my office and said, "Liesl, I've been told that our rent will be put up by \$110 a week." People are hanging on and paying more and more because they know that nothing else is available. This comes at a time when we have sold more public housing than we have built over the past 12 years, which is a tragedy.

The Labor Government has committed to hearing the voices of renters. For the first time in New South Wales history we have introduced a Rental Commissioner to listen to the voices of people in the rental market to try to understand what we can do to improve the situation for them. We are moving to implement our election commitments to remove no-grounds evictions, we are making it easier for renters to have pets, and we are introducing new data protection requirements for real estate agents when they handle renters' personal information. The cost of moving house is crucially important. I have a friend, Deb, who lives in a two-bedroom apartment. She is being pushed out because it is being sold. She is not sure whether she will be able to live in our community anymore. But renters really need a portable bond scheme. Deb reckons she will need \$4,000 to move house. People do not have that much cash available. That portable bond scheme is a really important initiative.

Our reform agenda will implement significant rental reforms to improve renters' rights and ease the pressure in the rental market while simultaneously introducing measures to increase housing supply. I commend Chris Minns and Paul Scully for the work they are doing to improve the density of housing across communities and put things in place—at less cost to the taxpayer than the greenfield expansion—to put more houses into the market. In closing, I thank the people in my community and communities across New South Wales who have made submissions about the needs of renters. Not only renters have put those submissions in but also lots of mum-and-dad investors who have a rental property and want to hold onto that investment to improve the lives of renters in our community and give them the best outcome.

Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater) (14:39): I move:

That the motion be amended by omitting paragraph (2) so that the amended motion is as follows:

- (1) Notes that the local Central Coast community faces significant housing pressure in a tight rental market and under an outdated rental system.
- (2) Welcomes the appointment of the first NSW Rental Commissioner, Trina Jones, giving renters across the State a voice for the first time.
- (3) Encourages coasties to have their say about rental reform in New South Wales.

I am pleased to speak in debate on this motion on behalf of the Opposition as the member for Pittwater. I note that the Central Coast seats are my duty seats, so I say to those Labor members on the Central Coast that I am coming for all of them in 2027. I have no doubt that in the years ahead, every single one of those seats on the Central Coast will be blue.

Ms Janelle Saffin: And we're ready for you!

Mr RORY AMON: That means you too, member for Lismore. We are coming for you as well. We are not only going for the Central Coast; we are going for the far North Coast. We shall expand the empire from the beautiful bounds of Pittwater north to the Queensland border. The Opposition agrees that renters should have a genuine voice and we welcome the establishment of the NSW Rental Commissioner. But there is a real danger that this is simply window-dressing and a box-ticking exercise to cover for the Government's lack of any real reform agenda. It is unclear what practical change the commissioner has achieved in the role to improve the situation for renters. This is not decisive action; it is indecisive action. It is not real reform; it is window-dressing. The roles and responsibilities the commissioner will have are unclear. Meanwhile, millions of renters across the State will struggle to find a place to call home.

Renters are doing it tough. We know that rents are up 25 per cent in a year, and it is only getting worse because of the failure of both the State and Federal governments to meaningfully address housing supply. Notwithstanding the Federal Government, this Government has been slow to act with real solutions to end this crisis. The new Government has basically borrowed parts of the former Government's policy when it comes to these matters. We welcome its support for our policy, but those opposite need to actually get on with delivering real reform to make a substantive change when it comes to renters. We support boosting protection for renters' information, removing no-grounds evictions and establishing a rent bond scheme—but those were our ideas, things we had already introduced in regulation. We committed to longer term leases and notice periods. We have still not seen any details on the rental bond rollover scheme. We still have not seen any detail on how the Government will end no-grounds evictions. Despite public consultation to improve access to having pets in rentals having already occurred at the start of the year, the Government chose to delay any reform and yet has established another consultation on the issue.

The only substantive change the Government has made when it comes to renters was its proposal to introduce secret rent bidding. I sat on the inquiry—the Temporary Speaker chaired that inquiry quite well, I might say—into the proposed new section of the Act to end secret rent bidding. That section stated that if a real estate agent receives a bid for a property that is above the advertised rate, it has to tell every single prospective renter or person inspecting the property. All the evidence of every single expert in this space said the only thing that will do is increase rents. The only new thing this Government did was propose a change that would have made things

worse for renters. This Government has come in saying it is going to make things easier for renters, but the reality is it was only proposing to make them harder. Eventually it abandoned that proposal.

The Coalition is arguing for more ambitious rental reform than what Labor proposes. We would have introduced a standard three- to five-year lease agreement to incentivise tenants and landlords to enter into those agreements. The wording would have been settled, the work would have been done for landlords and these agreements could have been easily entered into. There is nothing on that from the Government. We would have extended fixed-term notice periods to 45 days to ensure tenants have adequate time to find a new home, which would have been of benefit to renters. Labor should enact these policies forthwith.

The only way to meaningfully impact rents is to increase supply, but this Government has introduced policies that will make that harder. Its housing and productivity contribution will add at least \$8,000 to the price of new homes in regions surrounding Sydney. Its plan to build new affordable homes will amount to just 88 affordable homes every year, which is not enough. Decisive action is needed. The Premier's budget had a \$14 billion tax revenue windfall, but those funds have been put towards union wage deals rather than easing the impact for renters. We need to get renters into ownership—and this Government is doing nothing to help those people. In fact, when it comes to housing supply, which would make it easier to get renters into ownership, in her inaugural speech the member for Gosford stated:

The people of the Gosford electorate are not "Greater Sydney", and as such the area needs development particular to our needs and identity—

That is, "we don't want development here". On 24 November 2021 the member raised a series of questions challenging and opposing the Peat Island development, which would have seen 267 new dwellings and increased supply. On 30 March 2023 the member stated:

I will work with community groups ... against overdevelopment ...

On 28 July 2020 the member for The Entrance bemoaned development in his electorate. On 12 October 2021 he stated:

The Coast has developed incrementally ... and there is a strong local preference to preserve that look and feel.

That is, no development. But the cake must go to the member for Wyong, who in his inaugural speech on 13 May 2015 said this—

Mr Steve Whan: In 2015.

Mr RORY AMON: It was 2015. I was out of school then, believe it or not.

Mr Gareth Ward: It was his second inaugural speech. He had two goes.

Mr RORY AMON: The member for Wyong stated:

The community of Wyong felt that they had no support from the former member for Wyong so they came to me for help over and again on numerous issues from social housing to fighting against development.

Not even "overdevelopment" or "inappropriate development" but development. This Government's policies when it comes to new homes will not help anyone at all. Its stamp duty exemptions will not help someone buy a property in East Gosford, where the median property price is \$1.01 million. It will not help someone buy a property in Killarney Vale, where the median price is \$830,000. This Government has no substantive reform when it comes to rental controls— [*Time expired.*]

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (14:47): I support and welcome the motion brought to the House by my colleague the member for Gosford. I note the contribution made by the member for Pittwater. I say to him it is cold comfort to the people of the Central Coast and the people of New South Wales to hear from members opposite—the former Government members—about what they were going to do if they had remained in government. They had 12 years to put in place the supply of housing, to keep downward pressure on prices, to protect renters and to make the rental market more affordable, but they never did any of those things when they were in government. On the eve of the election they suddenly found there was a whole bunch of things they promised they were going to do but never did.

I do not think anybody disagrees that this State has been left in a housing crisis by those opposite. Rental supply is at its lowest ever. Housing supply is low. The cost of homes and rents has never been higher. At the foundation of this crisis was the philosophical commitment by those opposite to privatise anything they could to undermine the public sector in New South Wales. Nowhere was that more deliberate and destructive than in the privatisation of our public housing. Figures I obtained from the former Government when we were in Opposition revealed that in 2011 in The Entrance electorate there were 1,147 public housing units. By 2022 there were 1,014

public housing units across the whole Central Coast. Across the Central Coast public housing has shrunk to a lower level than it was at over 10 years ago.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr): The member for Pittwater will come to order.

Mr DAVID MEHAN: That foundation of affordable, good-quality housing had been removed due to the privatisation obsession of those opposite.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr): The member for Pittwater will come to order.

Mr DAVID MEHAN: The member for Pittwater keeps interjecting and talking about opposition to development.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr): For the third time, the member for Pittwater will come to order.

Mr DAVID MEHAN: On 1 August I noted there were six development applications [DAs] approved, without any community opposition, sitting there. These were large, privately-owned parcels of land: over 500 units of housing approved for building, and not one had been constructed in the last 10 years of government by those opposite when the DAs were approved. It seems there is no prospect of those private owners doing anything to progress that development here and now. I have said this to Government members and I will say it to the House: We have a situation in this State where the rights of private property owners are trumping the human rights of people to get into housing.

We cannot have a situation where private landowners are allowed to have DAs and property rights sitting there—with a financial benefit to them—but the wider community is denied access to the housing that they have been given approval to build. That needs to change. This Government is doing all it can to move housing supply forward. It has a suite of measures in place to make renting fairer, underpinned by an ironclad commitment to make no-grounds eviction a thing of the past under the Rental Commissioner. When the history of this Government is written, people will say renting has been made fairer and housing more affordable under the Minns Labor Government.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (14:51): I acknowledge the member for Gosford and thank her for bringing forward the motion. I acknowledge the great work the member for Gosford does, particularly in relation to disability inclusion. She is certainly a dedicated member. On this occasion I do not agree with her motion and I outline why. There are a lot of different things that we in this State Parliament can do to address housing pressures. In my area there is no doubt that housing pressures are biting. The average cost of a property in the Kiama area is around \$1.3 million. For a lot of young people wanting to get into the market, that is a real challenge.

Both sides of Parliament generally agree that unlocking supply is important. There are certainly different ways that we could do that. We need to think about the fact that encouraging people into home ownership—actually owning their own home—will also free up rental properties that can be part of the rental market, which would affect rental prices. For quite some time in the Shoalhaven there has been talk of increasing densities. I share the Government's vision to increase densities in certain locations where infrastructure is present or is invested in to shoulder that additional growth.

Nowra is one of those places spoken of by The Greens mayor of Shoalhaven, Amanda Findley, as needing an increase in height in order to encourage more business and activity close to services and public transport. We have not seen work from Shoalhaven City Council in order to move that along. I encourage the council to work harder with the State in order to achieve greater densities, particularly with things like the expansion of the Shoalhaven Hospital. An extra 800 workers are expected. Where are they going to live? The area will continue to see prices rise, particularly for frontline workers looking for properties to purchase. We need to be serious about a real agenda when it comes to addressing the prices of rents.

Trina Jones has been announced as the NSW Rental Commissioner. She has a lot of things to say, rightfully, because she is very experienced, having been the former CEO of Homelessness NSW. But what surprises me about the Rental Commissioner is it does not have an Act, it has no powers, there is no statutory independence and there is no parliamentary oversight. As a former Minister I established the Ageing and Disability Commission. All of those things were present to make sure that that commission could give the advice to government that it did not necessarily want to hear. The trouble with the Rental Commissioner is that it is not a real commissioner at all. It is simply another public servant to trot out the lines of the Government when it suits it. If those opposite were serious about establishing a rental commissioner with real teeth, there would be an Act, powers and statutory independence, none of which exists for this position.

I share the Government's ambition to see more affordable housing. The problem in the age-old divide in the Chamber is that those in Labor will always want to see more homes to rent; I will always want to see more

homes to own. This divide has been around for a very long time. In fact the 1949 Federal election was not fought over the issue of the banks, as some would say; it was the difference between Chifley and Menzies. Chifley wanted to use State and Federal housing agreements to build homes to rent for returned servicemen, and Menzies wanted to build homes to own. Menzies went on to win that election.

I do not want to see union superannuation funds investing in build-to-rent, keeping people out of the property market. The more that we can invest and unlock things like superannuation to encourage people to own their own home, the more we can ensure that we reduce things like stamp duty, as was the previous policy, to get people into home ownership, and the more we can see properties freed up for rent. The reality is that those opposite see the success of a social safety net as how many people are on it, as opposed to how many people no longer need it. I oppose the motion.

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (14:55): I speak in support of the motion moved by my colleague the member for Gosford that speaks to my electorate of Lismore. I would just change the words "Central Coast" to "North Coast and Northern Rivers", and "coasties" to "country". The housing crisis has crept up over the last decade or more and now regular families cannot afford to buy, let alone rent. Those are the two issues. I have heard members talk about supply. Supply is a problem. It is often not addressed in housing policies to date. People often say the private market will do it—great if it could, but it has not. If it could, it would not be where it is now.

The Minns Labor Government is taking that seriously, because it has to turn the crisis around. The crisis will not be turned around overnight. That will take quite a few years to do, because it has been a long time coming. We have to do two things: We have to work on the supply and the rental at the same time. It is not an either/or. Members have spoken about how we must aim for housing ownership. Clearly we must, but when a property costs \$1.3 million or just over \$1 million, many families cannot afford that. They cannot get a loan and so they are forced to rent, yet rentals are extremely high. We have to work to change that, because if someone does not get to own or rent a home, they do not have security. One of the fundamental functions of any government is human security. There is security at a national level with the Federal Government. At a State level it is about security of housing. Housing should not be seen as a privilege. Housing is a human right enshrined in various documents and iterations—it is clearly a right.

I will provide some statistics about where I live. The number of homeless people increased from 1,300 to over 2,000, particularly increasing since 2017 and 2018 in the Northern Rivers region. There have been few new affordable housing planning initiatives from the New South Wales Government since 2011, particularly in the North Coast area. The Housing Acceleration Fund did not accelerate past Port Macquarie. That was as far as it got. It never reached my area. Statistics show that nearly 4 per cent of the State's population can be deemed rough sleepers; in the north, where I live, it is about 19 per cent to 20 per cent. There are few affordable homes available. People are being forced out. Imagine being told your rent is going up and having to make a decision about whether to become homeless or pay the rent. Even Business NSW is seized by this issue. It is not easy for workers to move to places because they do not have the ability to rent a home, let alone buy a home. I commend the motion.

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (14:59): In reply: I reject the member for Pittwater's amendment to the motion to remove the recognition that the New South Wales Government is taking decisive action on rental reform to create a fairer system for communities across New South Wales, giving renters a voice on the future of rental policy. However, I thank him and the other members who spoke in debate on the motion. The member for Pittwater said that he is coming for the Government, but he should look at what has happened at the Federal level in his own backyard before he threatens the people of the Central Coast. It was nice to hear him talking on his high horse about his "dream policies". I acknowledge that the member for Pittwater was not part of the previous Government, but it had 12 long years to put rental policies in place. I also acknowledge the comments of my good friend the member for Kiama, who is keen to get development happening in Nowra in his electorate. I am sure the planning Minister will be open to discussing increasing housing density there.

Members opposite claimed that the NSW Rental Commissioner has no teeth, but the office is already doing significant work with key stakeholders across New South Wales to have the conversations that are needed, including with the Real Estate Institute, the Tenants' Union of NSW and the Public Interest Advocacy Centre. Who knows what can happen further down the track to the approximately two million renters in New South Wales? The NSW Rental Commissioner received over 400 submissions and 16,000 survey responses from industry, renter advocacy groups and members of the public in response to its initial consultation.

I thank my good friend the member for The Entrance, who in his contribution noted the lack of action by the previous Government on rental supply. He also spoke about the impact of the sale of social housing and the lack of affordable housing for people on the Central Coast, which I also spoke about. I acknowledge the member for Lismore, who hit the nail on the head when she spoke about the issue for Business NSW, which is happening on the Central Coast as well. Business NSW recognises that businesses cannot get workers because there are no

rental properties for them to move to. This impacts nurses moving into our community and food manufacturers on the Central Coast. It really is a tough situation for families across New South Wales.

I acknowledge the work that needs to be done in the future with the new NSW Rental Commissioner. The vision of the Minister for Housing, the Hon. Rose Jackson, recognises that renters need a voice. I also acknowledge The Greens in this space, who also fight for the voice of renters. As a young person I grew up in 13 houses in 15 years on various shores on the western side of Lake Macquarie, so I know what it is like to be upped and moved out of accommodation. Members know that the situation for renters across the State is dire. The pressure is on in the cities, where we need another 46,000 houses.

New people coming to Sydney will put more and more pressure on the regions, as people move out into those communities. A lot of work needs to be done and a lot of thinking needs to go into how development applications are dealt with and how houses get built, and whether those houses are to buy or to rent. People in New South Wales deserve an affordable place to live so that they can get on with their lives, contribute to their communities and the workforce, and have the way of life that we all should be able to enjoy in our State.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr): The member for Gosford has moved a motion, to which the member for Pittwater has moved an amendment. The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes26
Noes41
Majority..... 15

AYES

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

NOES

Aitchison, J	Hagarty, N (teller)	Quinnell, S
Atalla, E	Hannan, J	Regan, M
Bali, S	Harrison, J	Saffin, J (teller)
Butler, L	Haylen, J	Saliba, D
Butler, R	Hoenig, R	Scully, P
Cotsis, S	Holland, M	Shetty, K
Crakanthorp, T	Kaliyanda, C	Stuart, M
Daley, M	Leong, J	Tesch, L
Dalton, H	McDermott, H	Vo, T
Davis, D	McKeown, K	Voltz, L
Dib, J	Mehan, D	Warren, G
Donato, P	O'Neill, M	Whan, S
Doyle, T	Park, R	Wilkinson, K
Finn, J	Piper, G	

PAIRS

Anderson, K	Car, P
Cooke, S	Minns, C
Cross, M	Catley, Y
Crouch, A	Kamper, S
Di Pasqua, S	Li, J
James, T	Kirby, W
Kemp, M	Hornery, S
Preston, R	Harris, D

PAIRS

Thompson, T
Williams, R
Williamson, R

Watson, A
Washington, K
Chanthivong, A

Amendment negatived.

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

Motion agreed to.**CLIMATE CHANGE**

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (15:17): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Recognises the planet is burning, having just endured the hottest July on record.
- (2) Acknowledges the need for action on climate change has never been more urgent.
- (3) Calls on the Government and everyone in this place to make this our number one issue.
- (4) Notes that we must electrify everything with renewable power, stop burning fossil fuels, and keep coal and gas in the ground. The most urgent issue facing New South Wales—and indeed the world—is the climate crisis. Earlier this year the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released its latest report, which brings together seven years of comprehensive research from the world's top experts on climate change. The United Nations Secretary-General labelled the report a "survival guide for humanity", making it clear that while it is still possible for us to limit warming to 1.5 degrees, it will take a quantum leap in climate action. Our current rate of climate change mitigation is too slow and will not stop our community from experiencing the brunt of runaway climate change. I expect that much will be made during the debate of the Government's plans to address climate change. While it is good to see that it is doing something about climate action—discussing the bill in the other place is a good start—we must move faster and be more ambitious when setting our targets.

The Bureau of Meteorology has just identified that we have experienced the hottest September on record. Over the past 12 months Australia has also seen a number of mean temperature records fall. That will only continue to worsen without ambitious and rapid action to address climate change. The climate crisis is not an abstract concept; it is impacting our communities right now. Over recent years we have seen devastating floods, bushfires and heatwaves. Bushfires are currently burning in the State. With another record-breaking summer of heat forecast, our community expects action.

One concrete action we can take is to recognise the need to electrify everything with renewable power. The core idea behind "electrify everything" is to transition most of our energy-consuming activities to electricity. That includes not only obvious applications like electric vehicles and renewable energy sources but also sectors that traditionally rely on fossil fuels, such as heating, cooling and industrial processes. A primary goal of electrification is to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions. By shifting away from fossil fuels and using electricity generated from renewable sources like solar, wind and hydroelectric power, we can drastically lower the carbon footprint of various sectors.

Electrification can lead to increased energy efficiency. Electric motors are typically more efficient than internal combustion engines and electric heating systems can be more precise and controllable, which reduces wasted energy. That efficiency can lead to energy and cost savings, which is desperately needed for a community that is suffering from a cost-of-living crisis. We must also get serious about ending coal and gas mining in this State. Approving new mines or providing funding to help prop up aging coal-fired power stations is unacceptable. We must recognise that climate change is our number one priority and act accordingly. We must take steps to expand renewable energy across the State and leave coal and gas in the ground where they belong.

Last week the Government introduced its net zero bill, which seeks to legislate emissions reductions of 50 per cent by 2030 to reach net zero by 2050 and establish a Net Zero Commission to advise the Government on reaching those targets. While The Greens welcome the bill, it does not go far enough. Sadly, the Government's plan is not in line with current science and is not ambitious enough to stop our community from experiencing the worst impacts of climate change. We want to see ambitious climate targets that are in line with recommendations from climate experts. That is why we will continue to work with the Government and press it to deliver a meaningful plan on climate change.

We know what we need to do: completely phase out coal and gas by 2030. That means a transition to 100 per cent renewable energy in the shortest possible time. We need to stop fossil fuel companies from donating to the major political parties and make them pay their fair share of tax. Throughout all of this, we must look after ourselves and our communities by preparing to better withstand the climate crisis. There is so much that we need to rethink about the way we build and the support that is required for our communities to become more resilient

as we adapt to our changing world. We cannot expect this to happen without a just transition for workers. We do not need to choose between taking urgent climate action and supporting communities that have historically relied on coalmining jobs. We can and we must do both.

We must confront the stark reality that our planet is in the grip of a climate crisis, which is evident from the scorching temperatures of some of the recent hottest months on record. The urgent need for action on climate change has never been more pronounced. It is imperative that this place recognises climate change as our number one priority. All of our decisions must be made through the lens of this climate emergency. We need concrete action through a commitment to electrify everything with renewable energy, phase out fossil fuels by 2030 and leave coal and gas reserves in the ground. Net zero by 2050 is not good enough. The time for bold, collective action is now.

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (15:23): I thank the member for Balmain for bringing the motion to the House. I contribute to debate on behalf of the Government as the Parliamentary Secretary for Climate Change. Firstly, I move:

That the motion be amended by:

- (1) In paragraph (3) omitting the words "our number one issue" and inserting instead "a priority issue".
- (2) Omitting paragraph (4) and inserting instead "(4) Notes that we must transition to renewable energy, stop burning fossil fuels and decarbonise the economy."

We all know that climate change presents an urgent challenge for our State. It is no longer the threat of a future problem, as the member for Balmain pointed out. We are already experiencing the impacts of climate change. July 2023 was declared the hottest month on record, with severe heatwaves and fires across the Northern Hemisphere. Climate change is an existential threat to us all, and strong action is needed. We have seen devastating bushfires and floods in recent years, which have impacted our threatened species and endangered ecological communities. Despite this urgent threat, we have seen a decade of inaction from the now Federal Opposition, and the previous New South Wales Government did not do enough. It failed to legislate targets to bind action, which left New South Wales vulnerable to internal party politics and to the changing whims of governments. Action on climate change should not be at the whim of a single Minister or a single government. The previous Government talked a big game, but New South Wales needs more than talk.

What are we doing as a new government? We are doing more now to urgently act on climate change. We have introduced to Parliament our Climate Change (Net Zero Future) Bill 2023, which fulfils our commitment to legislate our targets to reach net zero by 2050 and to halve our emissions by 2030. Importantly, these targets will act as a floor and not a ceiling on action. We are committed to reaching net zero as quickly as possible. This transition will sometimes be bumpy, but it is important that the Government seeks to make it as orderly as possible.

Legislating emissions reduction targets sends people the strong signal that the need to take action on climate change is urgent and that this Parliament will be making a long-term commitment to deliver on emissions reductions. Further, it provides certainty to businesses and industry to drive the investment that we need to get New South Wales to net zero by 2050. As the member pointed out, the Climate Change (Net Zero Future) Bill 2023 creates an independent Net Zero Commission, which will keep the New South Wales Government and future governments accountable, sitting alongside the legislated targets. Its job will be to advise, monitor, review and report on New South Wales emissions reduction plans and progress across government and industry based on the best available science. Importantly, its reports will be tabled in both Houses of Parliament to support transparency and scrutiny as we decarbonise our economy.

Decarbonising our electricity system is fundamental to reaching our net zero targets. Electricity makes up around 37 per cent of New South Wales emissions. Replacing retiring power stations will provide the single biggest contribution to the New South Wales 2030 emissions goal. To do this, the Government will continue to implement the bipartisan Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap. We will also look at ways to accelerate the rollout of new renewable energy infrastructure. We have committed \$1.8 billion to accelerating energy transition through the Transmission Acceleration Fund. All of this will ensure that we get our renewable energy zones—our modern day power plants—up and running as soon as possible.

While we are making progress on our big renewable projects, we are also making progress for households and communities. We know that we need to decarbonise our homes in order to reach our targets. Ordinary Australians have voted to support political candidates and parties who support action on climate change. That is a fact. They want us to get on with it, and I acknowledge that. Ordinary Australians are putting solar on their rooftops, working to put in community batteries, seeking support to electrify their homes and developing their own climate-resistant microgrids. We need to harness this enthusiasm and support households across the State to benefit from this opportunity.

Recently we announced that we will develop a consumer energy strategy to support households to roll out and support small-scale renewables. This is important because it will support the decarbonisation of our households through a coordinated rollout of rooftop solar, batteries, electric vehicles, virtual power plants and electrification. At the same time, this will support households to lower their energy bills through generating and storing clean and affordable energy locally. We must also begin to adapt to the already present impacts of climate change. That is why we will legislate an adaptation objective to make New South Wales more resilient to a changing climate. This important work will continue, in light of the serious threat that climate change poses to us.

What is abundantly clear is that our energy transition cannot be delivered by one Minister. Across government, we are working through issues like planning, housing, workforce and skills development, opportunities for local manufacturing, transport and procurement as we bring all of those levers of government to bear. I appreciate that people want things fixed yesterday. Our Government is committed to strong climate action and taking that action as quickly as possible. We will deliver on our election commitments. We will move New South Wales to net zero as fast as possible, which I know is a goal shared by members across the political spectrum. I look forward to working with them on these important challenges.

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (15:30): I thank the member for Balmain for bringing this important motion to the House. I move:

That the amendment be amended by omitting paragraph (1) and inserting instead:

- (1) Recognises the impacts of climate change on communities across New South Wales are frequent and severe.

The former New South Wales Government was committed to taking decisive and responsible action on climate change. That is why we set a goal of net zero emissions by 2050. That is why we released the *Net Zero Plan Stage 1: 2020-2030* and set on an ambitious goal to fast-track emissions reduction over the next decade and prepare the State to take further action in the decades to follow.

In 2020 we acknowledged that getting to net zero would not be easy. We said that action on climate change must be grounded in science and economics, not ideology. The plan that we set out recognised that in parts of our economy low-emissions technologies were, and increasingly are, becoming commercially viable alternatives to the traditional ways of doing things. Scaling up those technologies will play a critical role in getting to net zero. It also recognises that more work needs to be done to get us to our 2050 goal.

The former Government set this State on a world-leading pathway. In November 2019 we published the NSW Electricity Strategy, introducing the Energy Security Safeguard; in March 2020 the net zero plan was launched; in November 2020 the Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap was announced; in December 2020 this Parliament passed the Electricity Infrastructure Investment Act 2020—and on it goes, year after year. For example, in May 2022 the State Infrastructure Strategy was published. In June 2022 the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy was released, the Sustainable Farming Program was launched and the Zero Emissions Buses Transition Plan was announced—it goes on.

We are seven months into this new government, which has absolutely overpromised and underdelivered on many counts in government policy, let alone one in climate change. The rhetoric versus the action has been utterly disappointing. Those on the other side had 12 years in opposition to think about what they would like to do, and all they have done so far is govern by media releases. That is illustrative of this Government as a whole: fixated in the rear-vision mirror, looking at what we did as a government and direly missing its own plans or ambition. We can feel the State lurching into a deep freeze.

Mr Steve Whan: The world started in March!

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN: Those opposite had 12 long years to think about what they could do and here they are, continually looking in the rear-vision mirror. What has this Government done? It commissioned the energy check-up and accepted some of the recommendations. It scandalously and absolutely let down the renewable energy industry by extending the life of Eraring, to which no answer has been provided on how long and how much that will cost. Importantly, it deleted the former Government's 75 per cent net zero target. Shame on them.

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (15:34): I start my contribution by thanking the member for Balmain for bringing this motion to the House and recognising her commitment to addressing climate change. Addressing climate change is not just about our net zero transition. There are so many more opportunities presented to us as a State. The New South Wales Government is committed to taking action on climate change and to making the most of the economic opportunities associated with the net zero transition. We support new investment in a clean economy on a massive scale. We are investing in innovation, deployment of new technologies and building new infrastructure. Those investments are not only good for the environment, but they

also support jobs and businesses across our economy. Green hydrogen, zero emission buses and net zero manufacturing are just some of the areas where the Government is taking action.

The New South Wales Government is progressing a nation-leading hydrogen strategy. Green hydrogen has a range of potential uses in decarbonising our economy, including as a source of energy where renewable electricity is not an option. One way we are supporting the growth of this industry is through our hydrogen hubs. The Minister for Climate Change recently announced a commitment of \$45 million to establish the Hunter Valley Hydrogen Hub. That project, led by Origin Energy Future Fuels in partnership with Orica, and with funding from the Commonwealth and New South Wales governments, will be a regional cornerstone of the hydrogen industry, accelerating New South Wales's shift towards clean energy and net zero emissions.

The Hunter Valley Hydrogen Hub will produce green hydrogen through electrolysis, which will be used to store energy and as a feedstock in industrial processes. The hub is expected to be operational by 2026, with an aim to almost double its capacity over the next decade. The hydrogen produced by the hub will be used by industry, with the majority going to Orica's nearby ammonia manufacturing facilities to help decarbonise its operations. The New South Wales Government is investing \$109 million in hydrogen hubs in New South Wales. We will be supporting the establishment of hubs in Moree and Port Kembla, as well as the Hunter Valley. The Hunter Valley project is expected to deliver up to 150 direct jobs and up to 65 indirect construction jobs in the Hunter.

A green hydrogen industry in New South Wales has the potential to support 10,000 new jobs and add \$6.4 billion in gross State product. We are also supporting the development of new skills and businesses through our multibillion-dollar program to transition the State's 8,000-plus buses to net zero technology. As a first step, the Government is introducing 1,200 new electric buses for Greater Sydney customers by 2028. The rollout of these new electric buses will support over 1,300 jobs each year. That includes roles across construction, bus assembly, supply chains and manufacturing industries.

There is no time to waste in acting to combat climate change. We are strongly committed to reaching our 2030 emissions reduction target and net zero targets, and we are legislating them, unlike the previous Government. We will support the innovation and investment needed to achieve those targets, bringing new economic opportunities and greater and new jobs. We are working across all sectors and with stakeholders to make this transition a successful one for all. As previous speakers have said, we have been elected to this place to address climate change. That is what this Government is doing.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (15:38): My understanding is that time for this debate is about to expire. I believe we will have agreement on the amendments. Therefore, I move:

That the question be now put.

Motion agreed to.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr): The member for Balmain has moved a motion, to which the member for Blue Mountains has moved an amendment, to which the member for Manly has moved a further amendment. The question is that the amendment of the member for Manly to the amendment of the member for Blue Mountains be agreed to.

Amendment of the member for Manly to the amendment of the member for Blue Mountains agreed to.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr): The question now is that the amendment of the member for Blue Mountains as amended by the member for Manly be agreed to.

Amendment as amended agreed to.

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

Motion as amended agreed to.

Budget

BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS 2023-2024

Debate resumed from 21 September 2023.

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (15:41): In this House on Tuesday 19 September the Government handed down its first budget. During the election campaign we committed to a fresh start for New South Wales and the budget did, indeed, unveil a fresh start for the people of this State. The 2023-24 New South Wales budget sets out the Minns Labor Government's plan to start the work of repairing our State and its finances in a way that is sustainable, rebuilds essential services and, most importantly, helps New South Wales

families with the cost of living. Budget repair begins with a \$4 billion improvement in the bottom line over the forward estimates. The budget is forecast to run to a modest \$844 million surplus in 2024-25 after five years of deficits under those opposite.

Mr Steve Whan: Shame on them.

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY: Shame on them indeed. The 2023-24 budget reduces the growth of debt by \$14.8 billion by 2025-26. Reducing debt by that figure will save taxpayers \$2.3 billion in interest alone. Those savings can and will be directed to supporting essential services in the State. About \$13 billion in savings have been found through the Comprehensive Expenditure Review and redirected. Those savings include \$700 million from freezing the pay of politicians and senior department bureaucrats. Again, we on this side of the House were happy to take one for the team, so to speak. It is a clear instance of the Government leading by example and tightening our own belts for the betterment of the people of this great State.

I also mentioned cost of living. We have spoken multiple times in the past two weeks—whether during public interest debates, other debates or question time—about people doing it tough due to the cost of living. But, again, the budget provides responsible support to help people with those cost-of-living pressures. One of the main reasons for the cost-of-living pressures is, of course, a decade of privatisation under members opposite. But, again, the Government is seeking to fix that. In the 2023-24 budget year we will provide more than \$8.2 billion in support through over 130 different cost-saving measures.

In relation to housing, we will implement our policy to help 1,000 first home buyers under the First Home Buyers Assistance Scheme. I remember announcing that policy at Edmondson Park with my colleagues in January this year and it is great to see it put in place. We are also providing rental assistance through programs such as Rent Choice, Advance Rent and Rentstart Bond Loan. Eligible people will be able to get into or maintain a rental lease as a result. There is the pensioner concession rebate scheme, which provides up to \$250 off council rates and charges for domestic waste management. We obviously want people to stay in their homes and not deal with cost-of-living pressures. I note that the program has been funded jointly by our friends in local government—the level of government closest to the people, as they like to say.

On the education and early childhood front, we have a new program providing \$500 in fee relief per child to help with the cost of having three-year-olds in long day care. We know that if families are provided with relief for day care, it results in more parents, especially women, getting back into the workplace. So that is a fantastic initiative. We are also continuing to provide \$4,220 in fee relief per child for children aged three to five to attend community preschools and \$2,110 in fee relief for kids aged four to five in long day care. In relation to energy, we know that, with the war in the Ukraine and a bunch of other factors, power bills have gone up and are putting immense pressure on families both in New South Wales and around the country. But bill relief will be extended from 1 July next year for families, seniors and households struggling with those rising costs. The Family Energy Rebate and the Seniors Energy Rebate will both increase to \$250. The Low Income Household Rebate and Medical Energy Rebate will rise to \$350.

We will cover the cost of equipment under the Life Support Energy Rebate. No-one with a medical issue should have to worry about keeping their life-saving medical equipment on while also having at the back of their mind what that will do to their power bill. It is a very important scheme and I commend the Government for it. All of that is on top of the National Energy Bill Relief payment introduced in July this year, which is in partnership with our friends in the Federal Parliament, the Australian Government. That will provide support to 1.6 million eligible households through a \$500 energy rebate, which will be applied automatically to bills before 1 July. It is not like one of the schemes that the previous Government announced—when there was much fanfare in the media and many television cameras—which people had to apply for and which we found out after it ended had low participation rates. This will be applied automatically. That is a much better way to provide relief to the families of New South Wales. But it is not just limited to households and families; there is energy relief for 300,000 eligible businesses, which will get a one-off \$650 bill relief payment.

Our health system was struggling. Members who are regular readers of the Bureau of Health Information statistics every quarter like I am would have seen that, for a very long time under the previous Government, those metrics were going in the wrong direction. Elective surgery waitlists blew out. Ambulance waiting times went in the wrong direction. In my neck of the woods, too many people were leaving emergency departments before receiving treatment or before finishing their treatment. In this budget we are funding free ambulance services for certain concession card holders, and creating exemptions from ambulance fees for people who are victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse. People who are in circumstances that are beyond their control should not have to worry about their hip pocket when they are under immense pressure and going through trauma, or going through a terrible patch in their lives.

There is also relief for new parents. We will be continuing the receipt of baby bundles of essential items, free dental care at schools via mobile dental clinics, and a \$250 pre-IVF fertility testing rebate for eligible couples. On tolls, which was another big topic during— [*Quorum called for.*]

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

Before I was rudely interrupted, I was turning to one of the more riveting and exciting parts of my speech— tolls. We all remember toll mania, which the State is slowly recovering from. Toll mania impacted my community in south-west Sydney immensely. The electorate I represent and live in is at the junction of the M5 and the M7 toll roads. On my trip into the city each day I have to pay a series of tolls.

On Saturday I was at a booth for the referendum at the wonderful Dalmeny Public School. Before the gates opened there was a long line, and I had a good chat with three or four people. One of them said, "I voted for you in March. What's happening with tolls?" I said to him, "In January 2024 we will be introducing our \$60 weekly toll cap." His demeanour improved rapidly. Several businessmen and workers told me they pay in excess of several hundred dollars a week in tolls. They were happy to hear that come January 2024 their toll bill will be reduced to \$60 a week thanks to the Minns Labor Government. The cap will take cost-of-living pressure off more than 700,000 motorists. That is on top of the existing toll rebate scheme and the M5 cashback scheme.

While I am on the topic of Leppington, it was a great budget for the people of Leppington, who were, to be frank, neglected for 12 years by the Liberals-Nationals Government. I said in my inaugural speech that for too long the people of Leppington were treated as a fringe corner of another member's electorate and did not get the services and infrastructure they needed. But come last September and the delivery of the Government's first budget, that changed.

In Leppington we will fund the start of the upgrade of Fifteenth Avenue. We will build a new public high school. Leppington has had immense growth over the past five to 10 years but does not have a single public high school. We will also upgrade the existing high school at Eagle Vale and turn it into a sports high school. That will be a boon for the people of Macarthur. They have a performing arts school and several selective high schools, but now students in the parts of the Macarthur area that are in my electorate and beyond who have a talent for sport will be able to go to a sports high school within walking distance.

We are also upgrading a suite of schools across the electorate, including Austral Public School, Leppington Public School, Greenway Park Public School and Dalmeny Public School. As recent as last year, those last two schools were close to 100 per cent over their capacity. Schools that had capacity for about 400 or 500 students actually had about 800 or 900 students. Investment in the budget will help deal with overcrowding and demountable classrooms across both campuses. It is a great budget for Leppington. It delivers on the commitments that the Labor Party made during the election.

When I was out doorknocking during the election campaign, education was far and away the front-and-centre concern for the people I spoke to. People said, "When is this school coming?" and "Why do I have to travel 20 or 30 minutes every morning to take my children to schools quite a distance away?" I want those people to know that education is front and centre for me and for this Government. We are delivering upgrades to existing schools and building new schools. There are also funds in the budget to start dealing with the problem of a lack of open space, which is another big issue. We have put thousands of dwellings in these suburbs yet have not provided the open space for kids to get outside and kick a ball around with mum and dad.

The budget delivers not just for Leppington but for all of Western Sydney. Of course, I note the Treasurer is from Western Sydney, so I know that Western Sydney is front and centre for him. Government programs that specifically target Western Sydney include \$400 million for the expansion of Rouse Hill Hospital, \$3.5 billion in total for Western Sydney schools, an additional \$1 billion to complete Sydney Metro City and Southwest, \$374.1 million to complete construction of stage one of Parramatta Light Rail and an additional \$200 million to expedite planning for stage two of Parramatta Light Rail. In addition, together with the Australian Government there is \$7.9 billion in funding for the Sydney Metro Western Sydney Airport. I have spoken in this House multiple times about the aerotropolis.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell): It being 4.00 p.m., debate is interrupted. Government business having concluded, and there being no petitions debate, community recognition statements will now proceed. I set down resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a later day.

Community Recognition Statements

FRANK PANGALLO

Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (16:00): I wish a very happy eightieth birthday to Frank Pangallo. Frank is a very prominent Queanbeyan resident. Having first

been elected to council in the 1970s as one of our first Italian immigrant councillors, Frank was our mayor for 16 years. He provided that diversity to our local community for a very long time. He has a fabulous record in Queanbeyan and is well loved. He has been retired from council for a while now, but he is still a very prominent figure around town. He is always the first person to knock on my front door when he feels that I should run for something. It is great to see him reach his eightieth birthday, though one would not know he is that ripe old age from looking at him. I wish Frank all the best on his eightieth birthday and thank him for his lifetime of service to the Queanbeyan community.

JOHNSON BROS MITRE 10 MONA VALE

Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater) (16:01): I congratulate Johnson Bros Mitre 10 Mona Vale on winning the Independent Hardware Group award for Best Large Hardware Store in New South Wales. Johnson Bros has been operating for over 65 years, providing our community with exceptional service. Since its move in 2017 to Bassett Street, Mona Vale, Johnson Bros has gone from strength to strength, expanding its services while maintaining its reputation as a family-friendly, family-run business. The team at Johnson Bros has consistently shown dedication to providing top-quality products and services to help our community build, maintain and improve our homes and gardens. Beyond the shelves, which are stocked with essentials, the active involvement of Johnson Bros in community initiatives, including significant sponsorships of sports clubs and other organisations and events, has had a profound impact. Our community's love for Johnson Bros is clear, from the rave Google reviews to Facebook comments. Pittwater knows how lucky it is to have the Johnson Bros. I congratulate Michael, Robert, James, Ged, Peter and the whole family on yet another esteemed acknowledgement.

LIVERPOOL LITTLE INDIA

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (16:02): I acknowledge the newly established Liverpool Little India, a community network that connects South Asian clothing and accessory businesses in Liverpool. For over 30 years George Street in Liverpool has been known as a bustling hub for South Asian shopping stores, attracting shoppers from across Sydney and beyond looking to fulfil their fashion needs. With outfits, accessories and tailors all available on the same street, the emergence of George Street's Little India has turned shopping into a cultural experience. The presence of Indian restaurants and nearby stores has allowed for a one-stop cultural trip. For that reason, Liverpool Little India was formed to advocate collectively for the interests of George Street vendors and to provide reciprocal marketing and promotion with an aim to build George Street as a regional cultural destination. Bearing in mind south-west Sydney's growing South Asian population, I commend this fabulous initiative by small businesses in Liverpool and I eagerly anticipate the establishment of our local fashion industry.

WOLLONDILLY ROAD SAFETY CAMPAIGN

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (16:03): I highlight Wollondilly's community efforts to promote road safety through its Think of the Five, Arrive ALIVE campaign, founded by John Van de Putte and Linda McCarthy. Coloured balloons have decorated Wollondilly for a week, reminding us to drive safely and honouring the five teens who were lost in a tragic crash last year. Local businesses and residents have rallied together, creating art and even donating vehicle stickers. The campaign's Facebook page has gained nearly 2,000 likes since its inception. Support has even crossed State lines, indicating the campaign's potential for national impact. Ms McCarthy sums it up best, stating the overwhelming support makes her "feel like a very proud member for Wollondilly". This initiative raises awareness about road safety and plans to expand its scope to include professional driving courses, benefiting young drivers and the wider public alike.

EDEN WHALE FESTIVAL

Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (16:04): It has been a whale of a time for the beautiful town of Eden, in the electorate of Bega. From 13 to 15 October, after three years of cancelled events, the much-loved Eden Whale Festival returned. The festival opened at the Eden Killer Whale Museum and included a street parade, street stalls and information booths. The Royal Australian Navy Band entertained guests at a formal dinner at the Seahorse Inn. Then, in a story to challenge *Free Willy*, there was the news of the successful freeing of a seriously entangled humpback whale by the Sea World Foundation team. It was great to hear that this huge cetacean was liberated from the ropes and chains of a waverider buoy. Finally, the family lineage of Old Tom, our most famous killer whale, has been revealed by DNA technology. The beowas of Eden were considered brothers by the Thaua people, who communicated with them in song. Modern science has shown that Old Tom's heritage is most similar in connection to the modern-day killer whales of New Zealand. Bega is not only the most beautiful electorate of New South Wales but also the whale capital of the State.

SARAH ARNOLD

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (16:05): I recognise former Menai High School student Sarah Arnold on her success representing the school and Australia at the International Science and Engineering Fair in Dallas, Texas. Sarah was one of nine students selected for the Australian team at the International Science and Engineering Fair for her HSC science extension project entitled *Running Away from Cancer: An investigation into the dynamic metabolism of cancer cells under increasing extracellular lactate concentration*. Sarah explained her research to eight international judges and attended a panel consisting of the Nobel Prize laureates, all while building up a global network with many young scientists from around the world. Additionally, Sarah has previously worked with the Garvan Institute founders to learn about how lactate concentrations affect cancer cells. This work saw Sarah selected to present at the [EX]plore conference in September at Macquarie University. Bright minds like Sarah are our future. I commend Sarah on her incredible success and extend my best wishes for the future.

BANKSTOWN MEALS ON WHEELS

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (16:06): I acknowledge the silent army of volunteers who dedicate their time to delivering Meals on Wheels across my community. Bankstown Meals on Wheels began in 1966 with just 16 clients. It now boasts more than 150 volunteers, delivering a remarkable 55,000 meals a year, benefiting many clients in the East Hills electorate. These volunteers truly are the unsung heroes in our community, delivering hot meals with a warm and friendly smile, and providing a patient ear, as often Meals on Wheels recipients have limited contact with the outside world. Meals on Wheels provides nutritious and healthy meals to residents who are either permanently or temporarily unable to cater for themselves and have no other reasonable source of assistance. I acknowledge the sad passing of Cathy Safranco, a lovely woman who volunteered for over seven years with Meals on Wheels. I recognise her kindness and warmth, and dedication to caring for the vulnerable in the community. I am grateful to Cathy and the many volunteers for the work they do and the meals they deliver to the elderly and vulnerable residents in my electorate.

DASHAIN FESTIVAL

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst) (16:07): The cultural diversity of the Bathurst community was highlighted at the Dashain Festival, which I attended. Organised by the Bathurst Nepalese community, Dashain Festival is a celebration of the rich and diverse heritage of Nepal. It aims to promote cultural exchange and understanding among different communities in our city. With more than 600 people of Nepalese origin in the Bathurst region, it was great to see such camaraderie at the event. The celebration included traditional music, dance performances, literature, authentic cuisine and various cultural dresses that showcased the beauty of Nepal's traditions and customs. Dashain Festival is now a regular event on our local calendar. I really enjoy the fact that our Nepalese community has proudly settled in and integrated and appreciates all that life in the Bathurst region has to offer. The outpouring of hospitality at Dashain Festival was just incredible and typifies the Bathurst Nepalese community's motto of "serving the community". Cultural events like these bring people together. That is great for social inclusion in the city of Bathurst, which is renowned for welcoming people of all nationalities to the region.

INDOCHINESE AGED CARE SERVICES

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (16:08): On 22 September 2023 I had the pleasure of presenting my congratulatory messages alongside those of the Prime Minister of Australia, the New South Wales Premier and the Speaker to the residents of the Indochinese Aged Care Services in Bonnyrigg who have reached the wonderful age of 90 and beyond. I also presented congratulatory messages along with His Majesty the King and His Excellency the Governor-General for residents who have celebrated 100 birthdays or more. It was a great delight to see everyone in good health. They were thrilled with their special birthday cards. After speaking with the management team, I found out it was also the aged-care provider's twentieth anniversary. I commend Indochinese Aged Care Services for its ongoing commitments and efforts to providing our senior residents with excellent, national-standard aged-care services while at the same time meeting the physical, mental, social and cultural needs of many residents in my electorate.

WORKING TITLE WRITERS GROUP

Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (16:09): I congratulate the northern beaches based Working Title Writers Group, which has completed the national children's fiction competition "Write a Book in a Day" challenge, which raises money for the Kids' Cancer Project. The challenge pits teams of writers against the clock to write, illustrate and typeset a full children's chapter book within a 12-hour period. Writers are given a theme, three characters, a setting and an issue, and are challenged to weave them into a kids' storybook before the day is over. The finished books are then added to the Children's Hospital at Westmead library. Over the years the group has raised over \$15,000 to fund childhood cancer research. Last year the team won the open category's national Best

Book prize and it is hoping to clinch the prize again with its story entitled *Queen Ruby's Lottery*, a Narnia-like tale set in Manly featuring a ferry pulled by camels and a gorilla queen. The team plans to publish the book later this year. I wish the Working Title Writers Group the best of luck with these endeavours. You guys rock.

AUSTRALIAN TAMIL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE ANNUAL GALA

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (16:10): I was pleased to attend the Australian Tamil Chamber of Commerce annual gala on 10 September 2023. The gala provided a great opportunity to hear from eminent Indian and Sri Lankan speakers, including Aachi Group founder, Padmasingh Isaac, and GOFRUGAL Technologies CEO Kumar Vembu. Sharing their journey from "Wannapreneur to Entrepreneur" were Manjula Viswanath, Rasika Dance Academy Director; Ramesh Pemmasani, Power IT CEO; and Dr Avnesh Ratnanesan, Energesse CEO, who led an insightful panel discussion. The Australian Tamil Chamber of Commerce helps entrepreneurs grow Western Sydney local businesses by offering skill expansion, platforms to increase visibility and opportunities to network with Tamil communities. It fosters development of trade relationships with India and Sri Lanka to see Western Sydney businesses succeed in the global market. I thank president Anton Fernando and Australian Tamil Chamber of Commerce members for championing this cause.

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS HUB

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (16:11): Today I acknowledge the mental health organisations that made themselves available to provide advice, information and professional guidance at yesterday's mental health awareness hub held in the Jubilee Room at Parliament House. The event was held during Mental Health Month to showcase the services provided by some of our well-identified organisations and also to introduce Hawkesbury organisations that have a big profile with the local community. Understanding what gap these mental health groups fill and hearing about the need for future funding are important conversations to listen to. I recognise and acknowledge Lawrence Muskitta and Harry Grant from Black Dog Institute; Agostino and Domenico Gattellari from the Australian Man Cave; Diane Russell and James Fleet from Hope 4 U Foundation; Priscilla Brice, Peter Schmiedgen and Julian Clarkson from Being; Nikita Ridgeway from 13 Yarn; Richard Bramble from Lifeline; Sharon Grocott, Alicia Brightwell, Mary Tuisalega and Caryn Shipp from Wayahead; Chaplain Rob McMaster from Greater West for Christ; and Susana and Michael Bluwol from Bipolar Australia. I thank the House.

TRIBUTE TO ERIC TWEEDALE

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (16:12): Today I celebrate the life of Eric Tweedale, the oldest living Wallaby, who has passed away aged 102. On emigrating to Australia his family settled in Merrylands, in my electorate. He went to Guildford Public School and then Parramatta Intermediate School. He played his first game of rugby on Cumberland Oval in 1937, and at 17 was selected for Parramatta Two Blues. His talent led to his selection for the Wallabies in 1946, where he donned the green and gold with pride and represented Australia in 10 tests. Mr Tweedale's commitment to the Western Sydney Two Blues was unwavering as patron, captain, coach and president. I extend my deepest condolences to his family. His memory will live on through the Eric Tweedale Stadium at Granville Park in my electorate.

PINK INK AUSTRALIA

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill) (16:13): I recognise and congratulate Pink Ink Australia on its launch event at Castle Hill on 14 October. Pink Ink is a not-for-profit charity organisation that was founded to help women and men who have undergone breast cancer surgery, mastectomy and chemotherapy treatment. The charity provides breast cancer survivors benevolent relief, support and assistance through medical, cosmetic or artistic mastectomy tattooing. Its focus is on the recovery side of cancer treatment, helping patients physically and mentally in their journey. The founder of Pink Ink, June Belkovskis, stated, "I am looking forward to changing lives one tattoo at a time to help survivors reclaim their bodies, so they can tell themselves that they are in charge, so they no longer see scars and are not reminded of their trauma. Instead they will see their very own masterpiece and this will help them become this new, beautiful and desirable version of themselves." I congratulate the board of Pink Ink: June Belkovskis, Jacky Miller, Karin Murton, Linda Gunek, Michelle Byrne, Sonya Phillips, Alison Neil and Susan Cliff. I wish Pink Ink the very best with its wonderful work.

SARASWATHI SASHI

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (16:14): Every community has a local hero who makes a positive impact on the lives of the many. The 2023 Westfield Local Hero program recognises the efforts of select individuals in a community for making a difference. I congratulate Saraswathi Sashi, this year's winner of the Westfield Parramatta Local Hero program, on her incredible work in counselling and guiding local members of our culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Saraswathi is a volunteer life coach and holistic counsellor from Sewa Australia, a not-for-profit organisation that provides humanitarian aid and community development

programs. For 25 years Ms Sashi has provided face-to-face counselling, led workshops and held advocacy events for victims of domestic violence, especially women and children. Ms Sashi is to be commended for her selflessness, having trained more than 20 community members as counsellors. She has also assisted in the aftermath of natural disasters, in particular providing emotional support to victims of the 2022 Lismore floods.

JAMBEROO RED CROSS

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (16:15): Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises the Jamberoo branch of the Red Cross, which recently won two significant awards at the Red Cross New South Wales annual general meeting: the Patterson Cup and the Chairman's Shield. The Patterson Cup is presented annually to the top-performing branch in New South Wales. The Jamberoo branch of the Red Cross took home the cup for the second consecutive year, beating a total of 157 branches. This achievement was attributed to its fundraising efforts, having raised \$54,000 during the 2022-23 financial year. With just 74 members, the Jamberoo branch serves a community with a population of slightly under 1,700. In addition to its Patterson Cup win, Jamberoo Red Cross emerged as co-winners of the Chairman's Shield, sharing the award with Tweed Heads. The Chairman's Shield recognises branches that excel in the Red Cross Calling campaign; Jamberoo's contribution of \$10,000 was instrumental in securing this honour. I acknowledge, thank and congratulate president Barbara Adams and vice-president Amanda Large. Jamberoo Red Cross also appreciates the ongoing support it receives from the local Jamberoo and Kiama communities.

LEURA VILLAGE ASSOCIATION

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (16:16): Today I acknowledge the fantastic Leura Village Association and the committee that organises one of the two big events that is held each year in the mountains, Leura Village Fair. Each year in early October Leura Mall is lined with a whole range of fabulous stalls. The scene is vibrant with the cherry blossoms of the springtime season and people come together for the ultimate celebration of spring in lovely Leura. I acknowledge the work that goes into such a huge event. The sun was shining this year. Kudos to a fantastic committee, the Leura Village Association and all who made the Leura Village Fair a wonderful weekend.

JANARANJANI INC. TENTH ANNIVERSARY

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (16:17): Community radio is one of the most important ways for locals to stay informed. Today I acknowledge a very significant local radio station in my area, Janaranjani Inc., part of the 2NBC radio program. Running its first broadcast in 2013, recently Janaranjani celebrated 10 wonderful years of broadcasting. That is such an impressive milestone. Not only does Janaranjani aim to keep the community informed about local matters but it also promotes the importance of Telugu and related Indian languages and cultures. I have been a great supporter and friend of this marvellous radio program over many years and have had the privilege of being a guest on the station many times. The work it does in our community is so important. I thank all the broadcasters and hardworking volunteers. Sustaining a community radio show such as this is certainly not easy, yet day after day the dedicated team of volunteers at Janaranjani continue to do a fantastic job. I look forward to watching it continue to grow into the future. I wish them all the best for another 10 years.

THE ENTRANCE RECLAIM THE NIGHT

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (16:18): I say a massive thank you to everyone on the Central Coast Domestic Violence Committee for the fantastic Reclaim the Night gathering and community event at The Entrance Memorial Park last Friday night. It was a fabulous celebration, a festival standing up the rights for women and children to be safe everywhere. It was amazing listening to Sarah Williams from What Were You Wearing? talk about her experiences, the attitudes to victims of domestic violence and the work that she has been doing through the eyes of a young person to confront and challenge the barriers to changes we need in our society. It was also fabulous to hear from Renee Marie Simpson on the great work she and her community network have done establishing a domestic violence survivor hub on the beautiful Central Coast. I congratulate her on her book and on the initiative and support structures she has established to support women escaping domestic violence in our community. I also thank all the other people involved in the great community groups who work to support women and children escaping domestic and community violence. I also thank the Little Quirks, a Central Coast favourite, the rhythm community and all the other street performers involved.

AUSSIE HAY RUNNERS

Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (16:19): There are times when one cannot thank some people enough. Last weekend my electorate of Upper Hunter experienced one of those occasions. I offer thanks and gratitude to the Aussie Hay Runners [AHR] for their delivery that assisted 125 local farmers. The Aussie Hay Runners support farmers affected by disaster events and transport donated hay to whoever needs it. Scott Stevens and the Heyfield Lions Club, Ray Akers of Gippsland Hay Relief, Steve Carter of Denman Lions Club, and AHR

founder Linda Widdup, with her amazing team of volunteers, introduced the Hay Runners to the Upper Hunter for the first time. The NSW Rural Assistance Authority's support enabled the 34-truck convoy to transport 1,200 bales of premium hay valued at \$114,000. It was timely, as the latest seasonal update shows 100 per cent of the Hunter Local Land Services region—which includes the electorate of Upper Hunter—is either in drought or drought affected at the end of September.

ST CHRISTOPHER'S RUGBY LEAGUE CLUB WOMEN'S TEAM

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (16:20): I congratulate the St Christopher's Rugby League Club women's team on their triumphant grand final win this season. The squad, comprising both returning athletes and new talents, demonstrated its determination throughout the season, culminating in a fourth-place finish that secured its spot in the semifinal series. Not only did it navigate these crucial qualifiers with success, but also it triumphed in a well-fought grand final. It was a fiercely competitive match and I had the privilege of witnessing the team's solid performance as it secured a commanding 40-10 victory against Glenmore Park Brumbies. Captain and Player of the Match Louisa Yarranamua stood out as a player to watch in the future. The amazing result was a collective team effort. The entire team, under the guidance of its coaching staff, played with remarkable grit. Congratulations to the St Christopher's women's team on its outstanding season. I cannot wait to see what the future holds for this remarkable team.

LIFELINE BOOK FAIR

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill) (16:21): I recognise the work of Lifeline in Castle Hill. Due to COVID-19, the book fair was not able to run for three years. Now the beloved book fair has returned, to the joy of the people of Castle Hill. Lifeline Harbour to Hawksbury Sydney held a book fair from 7 to 9 October at Oakhill College, with 70,000 books on sale. Throughout the three days, Lifeline and the book fair volunteers saw a constant stream of customers coming in to enjoy the sales and to support Lifeline. All profits made at the book fair are used to support the many services provided by Lifeline. I thank the team of volunteers who brought back this beloved book fair and made it possible. I recognise the hard work of the team and thank them for the wider work they do in providing these services to the people of Sydney. Well done and congratulations on the success of the event. I look forward to next year's book fair at Barker College in Hornsby from 9 to 11 December.

NGOC HUONG TRAN

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (16:22): I acknowledge the hard work of Ms Ngoc Huong Tran, a small businesswoman in Campsie. Ms Tran owns Thinh Phat fabric shop, a business that sells fabric and clothes. Ms Tran was born in Vietnam and migrated to Australia in 1979. Ms Tran later opened her fabric shop in Campsie in 1987, and for 36 years has been serving the community. It was a privilege to visit Ms Tran's shop and congratulate her on her hard work. She always says that even after 36 years of hard work she still enjoys it very much because she has always felt supported in the community in Australia, and that is why she loves Australia. Ms Tran raised two daughters, who have now married and are raising families of their own. Ms Tran is semi-retired and operates her shop for only half a day from 12.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m. Congratulations to Ms Tran on her fantastic service to our community.

NORTH SHORE YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH ROUNDTABLE

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (16:24): This morning I welcomed student leaders from local schools in my community to Parliament to take part in the annual North Shore Youth Mental Health Roundtable. I host the forum each year with local schools. This year we brought them into the Parliament to shake things up, with the aim of raising awareness about mental health among local teenagers and discussing ways to equip young people with the tools they need to live happy, positive and fulfilling lives, as well as helping them to develop projects with experts that can be implemented at school to enhance student wellbeing. I give a special thank you to Sybilla Delaney and Alice Austin from Loreto Kirribilli, Sienna Gasparre from Wenona School, Mia Yule and Jessica Cronin from Monte Sant' Angelo Mercy College, Minh-Tam Dinh and Jerry Yuan from North Sydney Boys High School, Orlando Tribe Aviles and Salma Catanho Martinez from Mosman High School, Chloe Pang and Triyah Radhakrishnan from North Sydney Girls High School, Zoe Bragg and Chloe Hogan from Cammeraygal High School, and Nicholas Gong and Charlie Corbett-Jones from Shore School. I also thank Dr Suzy Green from The Positivity Institute, Matt Purcell from Social Kung Fu and Michaela Young from Burn Bright for all their assistance with the future of these young people.

ST MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC PARISH THIRROUL CENTENARY

Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (16:25): St Michael's Catholic Parish Thirroul in the electorate of Heathcote will celebrate its 100th anniversary on 31 October. The parish was officially established by the Archdiocese of Sydney on 31 October 1923. The actual church was built two years earlier and dedicated to

Saint Michael and Saint Molua. The church originally formed part of the parish of Bulli until that historic day on 31 October 1923. The parish is now in the care of two local Franciscan friars, Father Ken Cafe and Father Andrew Grank. The parish will hold a celebration at the end of this month to celebrate its 100th anniversary. I am sure the event will be attended by many who are eager to celebrate the parish's contribution to the local community.

JESSICA FRANCIS

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (16:26): I bring to the attention of the House an incredible local teacher in my electorate of Ryde, Jessica Francis from West Ryde Public School. Jessica is the recipient of the 2023 Premier's University of Sydney Mathematics Scholarship and will soon be embarking upon an exciting study tour where I understand she will be returning with exciting new ideas and opportunities for students with respect to gardens and the natural environment. The event was held at The Mint in Sydney on Tuesday 17 October and it was an honour as the local MP to be present and witness the success of one of our own. As an educator, Jessica's impact extends beyond the classroom, influencing students and colleagues alike. The Premier's University of Sydney Mathematics Scholarship not only acknowledges Jessica's past achievements, but also signifies a commitment to supporting her future endeavours in enhancing student education. We look forward to witnessing the continued positive influence of Jessica Francis as she carries forward the torch of educational excellence, and I look forward to visiting West Ryde Public School upon her return to see the product of her learnings. Congratulations Jessica.

TWEED SHIRE COUNCIL MAYOR CHRIS CHERRY

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (16:27): I congratulate Tweed Shire Council Mayor Chris Cherry, who was honoured recently as the winner of the 2023 Climate Ambassador Award at the Cities Power Partnership Climate Awards ceremony held in Melbourne. The award was bestowed upon Mayor Cherry for her advocacy work through media to government and in the community. I can attest to that—she does it superbly. Mayor Cherry was further recognised for her flood advocacy, sustainable development in procurement work and the Climate Ready Tweed project. She was also recognised for discouraging bottled water use and for advocating recycling and re-use in clean-ups and big, growing events in the Tweed shire, including Tweed's World Environment Day Festival. Mayor Cherry has been active in flood recovery and I am proud to work with her in that space. I congratulate her on her great work.

TRIBUTE TO JANET MARIAN JOLLY

Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater) (16:28): I pay tribute to the late Janet "Jan" Marian Jolly, aged 84 years, late of Mona Vale. Jan was the wife of Maxwell—affectionately known as Max—loved mother of Wade and mother-in-law to Kym, devoted nanny to Emma, Renae and Nathan, and cherished great-grandmother to Aspen. Jan passed recently in Mona Vale surrounded by family and friends. She was someone whom I only recently got to know as a member of my branch of the Liberal Party. She was the kind of lady who always had a smile on her face when she walked into a room. She was always grateful for everything and complained about nothing. She will be deeply missed. I know that she will be looking down upon us as she dances with the stars.

CENTRAL COAST TUBULAR MUSIC AND ARTS FESTIVAL

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (16:29): I feel very honoured to talk about a one-of-a-kind festival on the Central Coast, which is the product of the passion and vision of a group of extremely talented people. The Tubular music and arts festival will be held for 10 days across the Gosford CBD and surrounding areas between 16 and 26 November. It will be an extraordinary display of arts and culture in the heart of the coast. With the aim to celebrate and excite participants with light, sound, food, art, connection and community spirit, the festival will take place at 12 different venues, where 13 workshops will be held. On top of that, more than 34 talented artists will perform at 18 different events during the festival period. I applaud and praise the team of directors—Greg Carey, Ben Pierpont and Ngaiire—for bringing their passion and expertise to this festival in my community. This dream team has experience working across and producing prestigious events nationally and internationally, such as Vivid in Sydney and others. I am thrilled to invite the community to experience a degustation menu of light, sound, art, food, creativity, connection and community spirit, and immerse their senses in this fabulous event.

CROWS NEST FESTIVAL

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (16:30): Last Sunday thousands of locals joined together to enjoy a beautiful Sydney spring day at the much-loved annual Crows Nest Festival. With more than 150 stalls to choose from, including my own, there is always something fun for the family to enjoy, whether it is taking in some culinary delights down the food alley, letting the kids go wild at the petting zoo, or enjoying one of the many musical performances or boutique marquees on offer. Personally, I love the fire displays by the local fireies. I joined in the fun again this year, as I always do. Holding a stall is a great way to interact with my local constituents. There is always plenty of conversation as they raise local issues or concerns with me. Excitingly, this year I was

just next door to the Sydney Metro marquee, which is coming to Crows Nest and Victoria Cross in North Sydney very soon. I was also near the police and fire. Lots of kids enjoyed climbing in and out of the fire truck and the police car. I acknowledge the incredible work of Crows Nest Mainstreet, which is the owner and organiser of the festival. It takes an incredible amount of work to get these events just right, and it was another terrific day enjoyed by all. I thank the Crows Nest community.

Bills

REVENUE, MINING AND ENERGY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2023

JUSTICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (MISCELLANEOUS) BILL 2023

Returned

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell): I report receipt of messages from the Legislative Council returning the bills without amendment.

Private Members' Statements

RYDE RENTAL FORUM

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (16:31): My fantastic electorate of Ryde has a very high and growing proportion of renters at over 40 per cent. Some 37.2 per cent are private renters and 3.1 per cent are in social housing. They make a wonderful contribution to my community. The apartment building where I live in Meadowbank is part occupied by long- and short-term tenants. I have become quite close to some of them in recent years. I am highly conscious of the trends that exist in the current rental market. Ryde is a wonderful place to live. People want to move there from all over the State and the country, and some come to Ryde as their very first place when they migrate as a new citizen or migrant from another country. Why wouldn't you? There is so much on offer: a great university, beautiful natural bushland, an incredibly well-connected community and, most importantly, a cohort of citizens who are compassionate, hardworking and aspirational for the future. There is a lot that brings people to Ryde, and it is no wonder that a high proportion of them choose to rent because the circumstances suit them.

However, I am conscious that the rental system has left many people worse for wear. It is an old, complicated system which, if I can speak frankly and honestly, is not necessarily set up in people's interests. This has been brought to my attention in my previous role as a mayor and a councillor, and certainly also since I have been the local member. I am very pleased that discussions around housing, property and rent are occupying the attention of this House and the Parliament. That is part of the reason why on Sunday 29 October I will be hosting a Ryde rental forum, or expo, at the Maris College Eastwood school hall.

The purpose of the forum is to give members of the community the opportunity to meet with local service providers, better understand their rights and the responsibilities, and get help and assistance with many of the often complicated processes that impede a tenant living in my community. The forum will seek to provide advice on resolving tenancy issues; filling in complicated tenancy forms; and preparing for NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal hearings if, unfortunately, someone finds themselves before that body. It will also offer advocacy and support around talking to lessors or agents if a renter finds themselves in trouble; housing application and maintenance assistance for when things go wrong; financial counselling and coaching; support for culturally and linguistically diverse communities, including translation services; tenancy and housing assistance for Indigenous Australians; and, of course, emergency and domestic violence crisis support.

I am grateful to the wonderful local community organisations and providers that are coming along to participate and offer their support. I give a particular shout-out to the Northern Sydney Area Tenants' Service, Link Wentworth housing, Community Legal Centres NSW, The Northern Centre, The Salvation Army, Christian Community Aid, Birribee Housing, Ray White and the Community Migrant Resource Centre. I recognise that no government has got this issue right. Part of the purpose of the forum is not only to help people with their existing issues, but also to hear from them, to gain important feedback and to consult with them to get their ideas and suggestions for how we can improve this complicated system and make it work better for the tenants who live in the community.

As I mentioned, I am pleased about the discussions that have been had in this House, because the key issue with rentals is often around the affordability and access via supply for these important premises. That is one of the reasons I have called on the new Government to urgently get rid of no-grounds evictions. This issue affects people across the State, not just in Ryde. A ban on no-grounds evictions enjoys the support of the Liberal-Nationals Coalition and the Labor Party. It should be introduced quickly because it could make a real difference to people who find themselves on the wrong side of an eviction notice.

I also reassert my support for doing more to reduce the attractiveness—as I said in my inaugural speech—to foreign investors who choose to retain vacant properties in this State. The 2021 census showed that there are around 300,000 vacant properties in New South Wales, a large number of which are in my electorate of Ryde. I encourage members to spend an evening walking through any of Ryde's high-density suburbs, where they will see these vacancies firsthand. We need to reduce the attractiveness of leaving these properties vacant in order to get people into them now. Housing supply via development applications and new builds is spoken about a lot—and, of course, that is important—but new supply could be on the market today if existing properties were occupied by people who need housing now. I call on this Parliament to continue to improve its efforts to make those properties available.

PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDS OF ARMENIA DELEGATION

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (16:36): Rape, murder, ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity and genocide—these terms are all too familiar to Armenian Australians in the electorate of Prospect and the wider Armenian diaspora. The Armenian-Assyrian-Pontian genocide was 118 years ago, but we are still seeing these crimes against humanity repeated—this time in Artsakh, where 120,000 Armenian Christians have been ethnically cleansed from their indigenous homeland by the dictator of Azerbaijan in the past few weeks. From 24 to 28 September 2023 I co-led a joint delegation from the New South Wales-Victoria Parliamentary Friends of Armenia to the Republic of Armenia.

I was joined by six MPs from New South Wales and Victoria, former Federal MPs, and business and community leaders. We were guided on the trip by members of the Armenian National Committee of Australia, namely executive director Michael Kolokossian and his colleagues. It was wonderful to be back in Armenia for the first time since 2019. We visited so many wonderful places and enjoyed the hospitality of a wonderful people. I love the time I spend with my local Armenian community in Prospect and Sydney. I especially love visiting this beautiful and free democratic country. Sadly, the trip was overshadowed by the crimes of Azerbaijan and its actions to ethnically cleanse 120,000 Armenians from their indigenous ancestral homeland of Artsakh—or, as the Turks call it, Nagorno-Karabakh. When the parliamentary delegation arrived in Yerevan we were briefed that the Azerbaijani army was in control of the Nagorno-Karabakh region and was pushing to take the capital and seize control of all towns.

The elected members of the Artsakh Parliament had refused to leave, and a siege was expected. Tens of thousands of men, women and children were fleeing across the border to the relative safety of the Republic of Armenia. The only exit to escape, the Lachin Corridor, was being controlled by ineffectual Russian peacekeepers, who were in reality the Azerbaijan Armed Forces. They interrogated all persons going through the checkpoints. A blacklist was already posted of members of the Artsakh Parliament, senior military officers, religious leaders and community leaders. Those detained found themselves under arrest and placed in chains. We have seen in the media that they are now prisoners in Baku.

My parliamentary colleagues and I travelled to the refugee camp on the border and spoke with refugees, members of the International Committee of the Red Cross and other aid agencies attempting to assist in the unfolding humanitarian crisis. They told horrific stories of rape, torture, murder, looting, arson, and the destruction of Christian churches, holy places and Armenian cultural heritage, all at the hands of the Azeri military. My fellow MPs and I packed food and essential aid for the refugees. Willoughby and Ryde councils both provided aid funding. I note and thank the Federal member for Bennelong, Jerome Laxale, for his actions to organise \$500,000 in aid commitment from the Federal Government.

On 22 October 2022 the Parliament of New South Wales officially recognised the Republic of Artsakh as an independent and democratic nation. The bipartisan motion had cross-party support. Sadly, today I speak of the death of that nation and the destruction of a democracy at the hands of a dictatorship. My colleagues and I, along with the Armenian community in the electorate of Prospect, stand firm with our Armenian colleagues and friends throughout New South Wales, especially those with family links to Artsakh. We also stand with the Armenian people of Artsakh. Our resolve has not changed. We recognise them as the indigenous and true inhabitants of that ancient holy land. May the Holy Mother of God bless them, comfort them and keep them and their families safe.

HEART HEALTH

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (16:41): In 2020 research conducted by the Heart Foundation revealed an alarming state of affairs for health equity in New South Wales. It found that those in south-west Sydney ranked in the top 10 in New South Wales for hospital admissions caused by heart disease or heart attacks. Heart Foundation NSW and ACT heart health manager Anna Flynn said at the time:

If you live in the state's remote south, north or west, or in a disadvantaged part of Sydney, you have a much higher chance of heart disease, which remains the single leading cause of death in NSW

The statistics are alarming. They show that the rate of coronary heart disease death in south-west Sydney is higher than the New South Wales average and, along with stroke, is the leading cause of circulatory disease death in south-west Sydney.

On average, just over 48 people per a population of 100,000 die due to heart disease in the South Western Sydney Local Health District, which stretches from Bankstown down to Bowral. In a local health district that serves over one million people, that amounts to hundreds of people every year and hundreds of families who lose loved ones due to heart disease, often earlier than they expect. The frequency of heart disease, including chronic heart disease, has fallen over the past decade from just over 167 per 100,000 in 2013, to just over 125 per 100,000 in 2021. The decline in death rates due to chronic heart disease since 1980 has been attributed to a number of factors including reductions in some risk factor levels, better treatment and care, and improved secondary prevention. However, we note that south-west Sydney residents on average have elevated rates of behaviours such as tobacco use, physical inactivity and unhealthy diet that have been linked to poorer health status and chronic disease prevalence such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease and malignant neoplasms.

Cardiovascular disease has the highest level of healthcare expenditure of any disease group in Australia. Moreover, cardiovascular disease is largely preventable and interventions to treat and manage heart disease and stroke are proven to be effective. The South Western Sydney Local Health District outlines prevention of cardiovascular disease as one of its key health challenges. This can be achieved through investments in population health and community-based and integrated care initiatives. As part of its *Keeping People Healthy: Prevention Strategy to 2028*, the South Western Sydney Local Health District seeks to build on currently comprehensive efforts by embedding prevention in clinical service, making equity and diversity central, and enabling innovation through greater quantities of data, evidence and research.

This week the wonderful team from the Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute were in this place conducting heart health checks for many members and staff. In doing so, they raised awareness about the many factors that can impact on our heart health, and the proactive measures that we can take to improve our heart health. I am truly enthused by the recently announced strategic partnership between the Government, the Ingham Institute for Applied Medical Research and the Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute to form a cardiovascular research hub in south-west Sydney. The aim of the new hub is to make a life-saving impact where it is needed most, to drive changes and to boost heart disease research. The hub is the first of its kind in Australia and will enable research to progress faster and deliver new treatments and medications that will improve the lives of people living in south-west Sydney, who have higher risk factors for cardiovascular disease, as well as people living across Australia. The innovative hub was made possible with strong support of the local health district and UNSW Sydney and will significantly boost research and accelerate future scientific breakthroughs in a region with the highest heart-related hospital admissions in the State.

The New South Wales Government has committed \$150 million over 10 years to support cardiovascular research. As part of this investment, \$8.7 million has been allocated to nine research projects involving expert multidisciplinary teams. By attracting quality researchers from interstate and overseas, we are boosting the New South Wales economy, attracting larger proportions of national research funding to the State and making New South Wales the premier State for heart health research in Australia. The collaboration between the Ingham Institute for Applied Medical Research and the Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute will assist in furthering many objectives through landmark investments in research.

COFFS HARBOUR ELECTORATE COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (16:46): The Coffs Coast is extremely fortunate to have many amazing people and organisations who have the best interest of our beautiful city at heart. They are passionate about driving positive change and committed to seeing our community and local residents continue to thrive. Every day these extraordinary locals put their hearts and souls into making the Coffs Coast the very best it can be. An example is the small army of people who are proudly behind the success of the iconic Coffs Harbour Show, which celebrates its 110th anniversary with a new committee and revised show dates of 26 to 28 April 2024. The Coffs Harbour Show Society committee is encouraging members of our local community who have memorabilia and treasures from past shows to share them for a potential historical display in recognition of this 110-year milestone.

The new show society committee comprises president Alice Rehwinkel, secretary Shannon Marsh, treasurer Lorraine Tibbs, vice-president Rob Bradford, assistant secretary Jackie England and assistant treasurer John England. The committee and show society membership brings together knowledge and experience with the contributions of young people. Its plans for future shows include a celebration of Coffs Harbour's multiculturalism with cooking demonstrations and entertainment. There will also be a renewed emphasis on agricultural events, with a focus on old favourites such as the cat fanciers competition, woodchop and a continuation of the Young

Women Competition. As always, the support of Coffs Coast businesses and the wider community helps to make the Coffs Harbour Show a much-anticipated event anyone can enjoy.

Across the Coffs Coast, a growing community movement is on the march. It is a case of gloves on and trowels at the ready as local residents celebrate National Gardening Week, which runs from 15 to 21 October. The enthusiastic members of the Coffs Harbour Garden Club and the Woolgoolga Garden Club are encouraging us all to celebrate the joys of gardens during this special week. The motto of Garden Clubs of Australia is "Friendship through gardens". National Gardening Week is all about promoting the culture of gardening in the wider community for the benefit of all. Local green thumbs suggest taking a walk in your local park or in our magnificent North Coast Regional Botanic Garden in central Coffs Harbour, packing a picnic to share with family and friends, or even throwing a garden party.

Coffs Harbour Garden Club's thriving membership is led by president Esther Koreny, vice-president Sheena Peden, secretary Ruth Reynolds and treasurer Robyne Moulds. Woolgoolga Garden Club's hardworking members are led by president Gwyn Clarke, vice-president Carol Horner, secretary Suzanne Young, assistant secretary Judith Jackson, treasurer and public officer Deanna Twomey, and assistant treasurer Jill Smith. I also encourage Coffs Coast residents to become involved in or visit one of our local thriving community gardens.

I turn now to our waterways. Our ever-vigilant Marine Rescue NSW volunteers perform their duties with distinction across the Coffs Coast as they keep us out of harm's way. In fact, the hardworking members of Marine Rescue Coffs Harbour were front and centre recently at their first ever Marine Rescue Coffs Harbour expo, which I was honoured to officially open at the Coffs Jetty Foreshore. The expo showcased the vital work of Marine Rescue and other emergency service organisations and also served as a fun family day with plenty of food, refreshments and entertainment.

Residents and visitors alike were treated to demonstrations of water safety, explanations of boating rules, displays of marine equipment, demonstrations of CPR resuscitation and the use of defibrillators, and the use of distress flares. They were also able to get up close to rescue vessels and vehicles. Marine Rescue Coffs Harbour's enthusiastic team is led by unit commander Jane Leach and deputy unit commander Paul McLeod. I make special mention of the expo's joint organisers, unit members Kachini Gilcroft and Helen Greenaway. Local emergency service organisations across our city came together in this multi-agency event to increase community awareness of the lifesaving service they provide to the community, while several Coffs Harbour boating dealers displayed their vessels. I thank all of our outstanding community organisations on the Coffs Coast for the important work they continue to do each day to help local residents.

STATE BUDGET AND EAST HILLS ELECTORATE

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (16:51): I welcome and endorse the recent Minns Labor Government's budget, which addresses the teacher shortage problem in New South Wales, acknowledges the importance of essential workers—including our great teachers—and invests in quality infrastructure for our schools. This year we are investing \$4 million to progress upgrades in my electorate of East Hills, with funds allocated to Condell Park High School, Sir Joseph Banks High School and Picnic Point High School. We believe that every child has the right to a quality education. At the heart of this budget is our commitment to addressing the teacher shortage crisis because we know that the biggest resource in our schools and classrooms is our wonderful teachers.

The Minns Labor Government, with the guidance of education Minister Prue Car, is addressing the teacher shortage crisis in our public schools by recruiting and retaining high-quality teachers through a historic pay rise. That agreement is a nation-leading investment in our 95,000 teachers. It will ensure that our children are taught by teachers who know that their contribution is valued. This will be a big relief for our schooling communities across East Hills. It has been far too long. The previous Liberal Government failed to deliver the best education outcomes for my electorate.

We understand the importance of quality infrastructure to deliver the best learning environments. We need quality teachers; we also need quality classrooms—which the previous Liberal Government neglected to deliver for some schools in my electorate. I welcome and commend the Minns Labor Government's \$4 million investment fund injected into school infrastructure projects across my electorate. This includes just under \$2 million for a major upgrade at Condell Park High School, \$1.3 million for major upgrades at Sir Joseph Banks High School and \$18,000 to finalise projects at Picnic Point High School. Those announcements by the Minns Government are not just political spin; they are budgeted commitments that will, most importantly, be delivered. We will fund necessary upgrades based on need. Our \$4 million commitment to public school infrastructure across East Hills is a great start by the Labor Party.

Some 60 per cent of students in my electorate attend a public school. There was a 6 per cent increase in enrolments between 2016 and 2021, and we anticipate that this number will continue to rise. That is why it is my priority to continue working with Minister Car and the Department of Education to fix the backlog of infrastructure projects in our public schools across East Hills. East Hills Boys High School is growing, with over 750 students. I recently spoke with the school principal, Mr Paul Abboud, and he told me that they have been requesting air-conditioned classrooms for many years. During scorching temperatures classrooms can reach 40 degrees, which creates unbearable learning environments. We spoke about the need for East Hills Boys High School to have a school gymnasium, an important piece of infrastructure for the electorate's rapidly growing boy's school. I will continue to work with Minister Car to make sure we get the best outcome.

East Hills Boys High School is not the only school in my electorate that has been neglected. Primary schools such as East Hills Public School need important upgrades to their buildings and classrooms—the list goes on. There have been many missed opportunities for our public schools to benefit from critical upgrades to their infrastructure. I will continue to meet with school principals, P&C presidents, teachers and unions to identify the needs of their schools and schooling communities. I will advocate for our public schools to ensure they receive funding for crucial upgrades that deliver a safe, reliable and reputable learning environment for our students.

In conclusion, I wholeheartedly endorse the recent budget presented by the Minns Labor Government. It marks a significant step towards ensuring that every child, regardless of their location, has access to a high-quality education and it recognises the invaluable contributions of our dedicated educators. It is a start for vital infrastructure improvements in my electorate of East Hills and it emphasises the value of education. We must continue to work together to fulfil our shared commitment to providing the best possible educational opportunities for our children, not just in the electorate of East Hills but across New South Wales.

HOUSING AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (16:56): Today I address a fundamental issue affecting many of us in New South Wales: homes that are not built for the harsh Australian summer. Unfortunately, many homes in our State are ill-equipped to handle the challenges posed by our hot and dry climate. With climate change bringing more intense heat and more protracted heatwave events, we need to address this. Inadequate insulation and poor ventilation can make the insides of our homes feel like ovens during the peak of summer. The stifling heat can be unbearable, leading to discomfort, sleepless nights and even health issues for some people. This not only affects our wellbeing but also drives up energy costs as we crank up our air conditioners in a desperate attempt to stay cool.

Another critical issue is the lack of shading, passive cooling and energy-efficient design. Without proper shading solutions and energy-efficient design principles, our homes become energy guzzlers, contributing to higher electricity bills and increasing our carbon footprint. Water management is another significant concern during the Australian summer. Droughts and water scarcity are persistent issues and homes that lack rainwater harvesting systems or water-efficient landscaping practices not only waste precious resources but also contribute to the strain on our already limited water supply.

But it is not just about the physical discomfort and financial burden; it is about the long-term impact on our environment and the quality of life for future generations. The design and construction of homes that are not adapted to our climate directly contribute to the urban heat island effect, exacerbating the problem and making our cities even hotter. By raising this issue today, I acknowledge the advocacy efforts of organisations like Better Renting and Sweltering Cities. Those dedicated groups, along with the Tenants' Union and other renter advocacy groups, have been at the forefront of pushing for essential reforms and raising awareness regarding the need for sustainable and climate-resilient housing.

Better Renting is committed to improving the rights and living conditions of renters in Australia and has been a strong advocate for policies and practices that ensure safe and comfortable living environments. It has emphasised the importance of minimum standards for rental properties, including proper insulation, effective ventilation and energy-efficient design to protect tenants from the sweltering summer heat. Its advocacy aligns with the belief that everyone, regardless of their housing situation, deserves to live in a home that is adapted to Australia's demanding climate. Its reports draw on the work of volunteer renter researchers, who track temperatures in their own homes. They confirm that renters' experiences are characterised by a sense of powerlessness. They say that they are forced to put up with substandard homes and negligent landlords due to a fear of eviction, rent increases and potential homelessness. I acknowledge the contribution of Susan Hawkeswood, who resides in the Balmain electorate and has volunteered as a renter researcher with Better Renting.

Sweltering Cities focuses on urban planning and development, with a keen eye on climate resilience. It has highlighted the impact of urban heat islands and the contribution of poorly designed buildings to this issue. By advocating for sustainable urban planning, Sweltering Cities aims to reduce the heat stress on residents while

enhancing the overall liveability of our cities. Both of these organisations emphasise the urgency of addressing the inadequacies in our housing stock and the design of our cities. Their advocacy efforts underscore the need for comprehensive and coordinated action at various levels of government, as well as within the housing industry.

So what can we do to address this issue and build homes that are better suited to the Australian summer? We can insist on better designs so that homes take advantage of natural elements, like sunlight and wind, while also protecting against the harsh summer heat. We can require homes to be well insulated and ventilated to promote air circulation. We can introduce mandates to include energy-efficient appliances that run on solar power, water-efficient landscaping and rainwater harvesting systems. We can make better laws that encourage sustainable home construction, retrofitting and renovation, and make meaningful minimum standards for rental homes. In Europe, they have been doing this for many years: building homes to a much greater standard. Homes that are built to withstand the climate and be more comfortable and more energy efficient. They are also retrofitting older homes to deliver the same outcomes.

The Greens also emphasise the importance of community engagement and consultation in urban planning and development, because we understand the need for local communities to have their say in the design and development of neighbourhoods. We need to ensure that the built environment is in harmony with the needs and expectations of the people living there, especially during the Australian summer when climate considerations are paramount.

TRIBUTE TO DONALD MACLEAN MACDONALD

Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (17:00): Donald Maclean Macdonald was born the seventh of eight children into the Clan Macdonald of the Isles in the Outer Hebrides of Scotland. To get there, you catch a ferry from the Isle of Skye for a five-hour journey west into the North Atlantic. The islands are a complex landscape of glacial rocks on the east and superb white beaches and turquoise seas on the west. The hardships of survival over the centuries have bred into its people a character of strength and resilience to survive the harsh winter climate and often brutal social conditions. For centuries until the twentieth century, the land was owned—or stolen—by absentee lairds, mostly English, who considered sheep more economical than the native people. Now community action is returning some communal land.

Donald arrived in Australia with his family on the *Fairsky* in 1961, with the history of his family imbued in his soul and the ideal of fairness and equity part of his blood. As a youth, he worked many different jobs in rural and urban Victoria and at 18 he joined the Royal Australian Army, expecting to learn a trade. Instead, he was sent to Vietnam in 1968 as a forward scout in the 1st Royal Australian Regiment. Coincidentally, his photo as a forward scout is the only display of an infantry man in the Vietnam War display in the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. In the Battle of Coral-Balmoral he suffered a bullet wound, which was almost fatal and required much surgery and two years of recuperation. In the service of our nation, not only did Don suffer the physical trauma of war, but he also experienced the consequences of exposure to Agent Orange with a rare terminal blood disease and lung cancer, as well as the psychological consequences of post-traumatic stress disorder.

After serving nine years in the army, Don joined the Postmaster-General as a technician for many years and then he went into building high-rises. At this time, he was a union member and his political interest developed. He later started his own building business. In his mid-40s he decided on a new life path. He enrolled in the University of Queensland where he studied psychology, anthropology and associated subjects. In 2002 he settled in Malua Bay and developed his longstanding interest in community and progressive interests. In 2012 he joined the Batemans Bay branch of the Australian Labor Party. He was the Batemans Bay branch president in 2017 and 2018, before transferring to the Moruya branch in 2019. During his time with both branches, he held positions as a delegate to the Bega State Electorate Council and to the Gilmore Federal Elections Commission.

Don held the position of secretary of the Eurobodalla Local Government Committee for several years until he was forced to resign in 2022 due to ill health. In that role, he was dedicated to improving the standards of transparency, accountability, honesty and integrity that prevailed within the Eurobodalla council over many years. During Federal, State and local government election campaigns, he was tireless in his contribution to organising and manning of Australian Labor Party street and market stalls, erecting ALP signage in all sorts of places and locations, and other campaigning activities throughout the local area, despite his declining health.

I knew Don for a short time. I respected his commitment, advocacy, sincere advice and mentoring. He had the character of strength and resilience of his heritage. As one of his friends expressed about him, he was a physically slight man but he cast a long shadow with his passion for justice and equity in all levels of government. He was loyal to and persistent in his ideals, very empathetic and generous to his community, family and friends, and he was a fearless and courageous person to the end. He was much loved and is being greatly grieved and respectfully remembered by colleagues, friends and family. He leaves a daughter, Unity, in Western Australia,

and a long-time partner in life, Geraldine Schirmer, and her children, Nicholas and Ingrid. Vale, Donald Maclean Macdonald, 11 March 1948 to 30 August 2023.

OATLEY ELECTORATE SMALL BUSINESSES

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:04): Small Business Month, which runs throughout October, is a great time of the year. It is a time to celebrate not only our local businesses but also the business owners and staff who work tirelessly behind the scenes. From hair salons to breweries, we are privileged to host an array of fantastic businesses throughout my local community that provide outstanding services. Not only do small businesses create employment opportunities for thousands in the area, but they also contribute to a thriving local economy. The theme of this year's Small Business Month is "My Small Business". The aim is to provide tips and tricks for business owners across the State in seven key areas. Resources are readily available for businesses to develop their skills, including branding and marketing, cybersecurity, business health, e-commerce, current market conditions, resilience and teams.

This year I have been promoting local small businesses on my social media platform, rallying members of my community to get out and try something new and different. I have had the opportunity to meet some fantastic people, whilst also reconnecting with some old friends. I have thoroughly enjoyed catching up with all of the wonderful business owners, as we shared the small victories, the struggles and everything in between. Each and every single business owner I have met is incredibly passionate about their business and their community. From Eat GRK in Beverly Hills to Oatley Chinese and Malaysian Restaurant, Crust and Cream in Riverwood, Sugarsalt Espresso in Mortdale, and Cup and Cook in Kyle Bay, we are truly spoilt for choice.

New businesses are popping up all the time and they continue to shape the character of our local area. Small businesses have always held a special place in my heart. Whether it is a favourite lunch spot that already knows your order off by heart or the barber who you can have a chat with each and every time you visit, personalised service is so important to their success. I completely understand the struggles and challenges of small businesses. Sustaining a small business is no easy feat. Owners have to manage staffing and finances, while also ensuring that their business is running to the best possible standard. This often leads to sleepless nights and late hours. I particularly acknowledge business owners and their staff. Their work often goes unnoticed and unappreciated. However, what they do for our communities is second to none.

Small businesses employ 1.8 million people in New South Wales and account for 45 per cent of the private sector workforce. The sector also contributes over \$66.6 billion in annual wages and salaries to employees each and every year. However, small businesses support more than just our local community. For example, coffee shops provide spaces for friends and families to meet and catch up together over a meal; many local hotels provide a refuge for those going through difficult circumstances; and accountants and tax agents take the pressures off households. That allows people to spend more time with their family. It is also important to continue to support small businesses whenever we can, whilst also ensuring that our Government continues to invest in the skills that New South Wales needs to grow.

Amidst the current cost-of-living crisis, it is now more important than ever to lend an ear to small business owners, while learning how to support them in these challenging times. I encourage everyone to get out and support small businesses this October—whether it be buying a bacon and egg roll at your favourite local coffee shop on a Saturday morning or taking the family out to try something new. Every dollar spent at a small business makes an enormous impact. In doing so, we play an important part in promoting the small businesses that make our local community special. Together, we can make this October a month of support and celebration for our unsung local heroes: local small businesses.

Women also account for over one-third of Australian small business owners. That number has grown by more than 24 per cent over the past five years. I encourage everyone in my community who is thinking of starting a small business to give it a shot. They can visit the Service NSW website, which has detailed instructions on the steps to take to ensure their business is a successful one. Once more, I say a special thank you to all our local small business owners and their staff. Their contributions to our community are strong, powerful and invaluable. I look forward to supporting their businesses and seeing them thrive well into the future.

BANGLADESH LADIES CLUB AUSTRALIA

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (17:09): Tonight I highlight the annual Meena Bazaar event hosted by the Bangladesh Ladies Club Australia, which not only celebrates the rich heritage of Bangladesh but also embodies the spirit of community and charity. The vibrant community program is a true testament to the beauty of cultural exchange in Canterbury and across our area, and the power of giving back. I extend a very warm thankyou to the organisers:

president Rahela Arefin, senior vice-president Dr Shaila Islam, vice-president Shamima Alamgir, general secretary Sherin Akther, and treasurer Tabassum Chowdhury.

The Meena Bazaar held last weekend is more than just a cultural event; it is a bridge that connects local community members to the vibrant traditions of their ties to Bangladesh. It is a celebration of a multifaceted and colourful culture that has been passed down through generations to result in a heritage that now flourishes in our own community. I am very proud that in my electorate, particularly in Belmore and Lakemba, there is a very rich cultural, fantastic and amazing Bangladeshi community. The bazaar itself hosted a stunning array of traditional Bangladeshi garments that reflects the rich and diverse textile traditions of that beautiful nation. From vibrant sarees to panjabis, the garments served as a visual reminder of the exquisite craftsmanship of their traditional artisans.

In true Bangladeshi hospitality, the event was accompanied by a range of delicacies embedded with the flavours and spices of Bangladesh to bring the community together. It was an excellent opportunity for our community to savour a slice of Bangladesh in our own neighbourhood. I thank the organisers, who made sure that I took home quite a number of those amazing delicacies. But the Meena Bazaar is not just about showcasing the beauty of Bangladeshis' heritage; it is about giving back to the Australian community that has embraced it. The event has a great philanthropic component, with the proceeds supporting vital charitable programs. It embodies the spirit of giving and solidarity that is an integral part of Bangladeshi culture.

Through its members' diligent efforts, the Bangladesh Ladies Club Australia has initiated various charitable programs aimed at improving the lives of the less fortunate, both in our community and in Bangladesh. The funds raised through the Meena Bazaar are channelled into those programs, creating a tangible impact on the ground. From education and initiatives to support underprivileged families, the Bangladesh Ladies Club Australia's commitment to helping those in need is truly inspiring. I want the Parliament of New South Wales and our great State to know the incredible work of wonderful Bangladeshi entrepreneurs that is happening in my community. It is a celebration of our shared values of unity, compassion and respect for diversity.

As the member for Canterbury, I am immensely proud of the cultural mosaic that makes up my constituency. The Meena Bazaar represents the very best of our diverse community, bringing people from all walks of life together to appreciate and support one another. I acknowledge and commend the Bangladesh Ladies Club Australia members for their unwavering commitment to preserving their cultural heritage, their language and their tradition and for their dedication to extending support and kindness in our community. I am absolutely inspired by them. Let us continue to embrace our rich cultural diversity, strengthen the bonds of community and work together for a brighter and more inclusive future. I congratulate the many women that I met last weekend and thank them for their entrepreneurship and their contribution to our community. I advise all members to make sure that they turn up to one of those small businesses to support those wonderful entrepreneurs.

UPPER HUNTER ELECTORATE DROUGHT

Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (17:15): Tonight I inform the House about the challenging conditions Upper Hunter electorate farmers are currently enduring following this year's dramatic turnaround in weather conditions. I begin first with a huge vote of gratitude for the Aussie Hay Runners, who were in the Upper Hunter for the first time last weekend. Those modern-day good Samaritans travelled 77,600 kilometres in a convoy of 34 semitrailers to deliver 1,200 bales of premium hay to help 125 farmers. The Hay Runners Facebook page states:

... the logistics for these runs is pretty involved, and masterfully coordinated by a small group of volunteers, we thank them for all their hard work.

Aussie Hay Runners are also supported by the NSW Rural Assistance Authority, which provides fuel subsidies, and the Heyfield Lions Club, which handles all the financial transactions. I also acknowledge all those who made the Hay Runners welcome in the Upper Hunter and ensured that they enjoyed some local hospitality over the weekend, including Steve Carter from Denman Lions Club for coordination of the trucks, and the Lions clubs of Aberdeen, Scone and Denman for the meals to sustain the mini army of truckies and their volunteers. I also give a shout-out to the JBS Australia Scone Abattoir, Dimmock's Quality Meats Aberdeen, the Aberdeen RSL and Citizens Club, the Aberdeen Rugby League Football Club, the Aberdeen Men's Shed, the Rouchel and Gundy caterers, and all the local volunteers who helped over the weekend. They are a credit to their community.

I understand that the Upper Hunter will see the Hay Runners again at some stage in the future, and I thank them for responding to our farmers in their hour of need. As I mentioned earlier, I advise the House of the challenge the return of dry weather has brought in the Upper Hunter electorate. What a breathtaking turnaround it is to go from the floods of July last year to the now parched countryside. The NSW State Seasonal Update for September 2023 on the DroughtHub website now puts approximately 30 per cent of the State in a drought category, and that percentage continues to expand. The Hunter Local Land Services region, and more particularly

the Upper Hunter electorate, continues to experience a worsening of conditions. At the end of September, all of the Hunter Local Land Services region was in one of the drought categories.

The Combined Drought Indicator shows the Hunter has experienced six to nine months of dry conditions and further decline in conditions is likely without any substantial rainfall. To put that into context, the eastern half of my electorate from north of the Hunter River at Maitland to Gloucester is classified as being in drought. The remainder is classified as drought affected with an intensifying drought situation. A check of the rain gauges is telling. Weather bureau figures show the weather station at Tocal College, Paterson, registered 113 millimetres in February this year, with the biggest single fall 78 millimetres. Last month it was 19.6 millimetres.

On the western side of the electorate, Scone last recorded significant rainfall in October last year when 139 millimetres fell for the month. This year's best drop was 24 millimetres in August. Last month it was just 14 millimetres. It was evident to me by the middle of this year that conditions were getting tough, so much so that I asked my Nationals leader, and the shadow Minister for Agriculture and Natural Resources, Dugald Saunders, to come to Rouchel, Scone and Merriwa in July to speak with farmers about what they were experiencing. At this stage, despite an invitation from myself, the Minister for Agriculture is yet to get her boots on the ground and see the reality of what is happening.

The time is now overdue for the Minns Government to release details of its plan to assist farmers through the current dry spell. The Bureau of Meteorology's declaration that an El Niño event is underway came on the same day the New South Wales Labor Government handed down its first State budget. Upper Hunter electorate farmers are experiencing the double whammy of low rainfall over the past 12 months combined with a beef cattle market that has been on a downhill run in 2023, with lower prices month after month. I invite both the Premier and the Minister for Agriculture to come to the Upper Hunter and meet with local farmers who have spent the winter battling challenging pastoral conditions to discuss what practical measures the Government can implement. Some good measures used in the past include using B-double trucks to provide access to local roads for haulage of hay. There is a lot we can do.

WOLLOTUKA INSTITUTE

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) (17:20): I have just left a meeting with the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Newcastle, Alex Zelinsky, and Fiona Bastian, who works at the university. They gave me the great news that on 23 November the university will be hosting a special event to celebrate 40 years of the Wollotuka Institute, which is the Aboriginal institute that is part of the University of Newcastle. It is celebrating 40 years of commitment to advancing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and research.

The institute was formed in 1983 and is unique to the Newcastle higher education system, providing a dedicated home and precinct on all the university's campuses for students to access a range of supports in a culturally safe and nurturing environment. The work of Wollotuka is supported by its strong relationship with the University of Newcastle. It has university-wide cultural capability programs and a board of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who advise the executive on all aspects of education and research that affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. The institute has meant that 4.2 per cent of the student body at the University of Newcastle now identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. The university has not just met but exceeded its target, partly due to decades of effort by the community and staff at the institute.

I mention particularly one very important founding member, Aunty Bronwyn Chambers, who has been part of the institute for a long time. Aunty Bronwyn lives in my electorate, and I was informed a week or so ago that she has just retired. Aunty Bronwyn is a well-recognised face, particularly in the northern part of the Central Coast. She does a wide range of welcome to country ceremonies and acknowledgements of country. Her grandson is now taking over that role, and I attended a couple of events recently where he played the didgeridoo and did the acknowledgement of country. It is great to see the role being handed from one generation to another.

The University of Newcastle has done a wonderful job. It has some of the highest numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students anywhere in the country, which is partly because of the strong work of Wollotuka. Members will understand that many Aboriginal students have to travel a distance from home to get to university. So it is a very important asset to have an institute that provides a cultural safety blanket where students can gather, receive support when necessary, get extra assistance to help them keep on track with their courses, find people who can advocate on their behalf, and be involved in research that improves the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. I have known about the work of Wollotuka for a long time, but I had not realised that it had reached 40 years of service. It is pretty amazing.

From memory, 1983 was the year I left high school. I studied education at what was then called the Newcastle College of Advanced Education, which became the Hunter Institute when I left, before being merged with the university. One of my friends, Maxine Piper as she was then—now Maxine South—went through teachers college. She came from a small Aboriginal community called Brungle, and I know that if she had had the opportunity to benefit from an institute like Wollotuka, it would have been very helpful. To do her course she had to move from Brungle, which is a small village, to live in a much bigger centre the size of Newcastle, which was a big step. I wish a happy fortieth birthday to Wollotuka and congratulate Aunty Bronwyn Chambers on her retirement. Her legacy will live for a long time.

WOLLONDILLY ELECTORATE WATER HARVESTING RIGHTS

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (17:25): This private member's statement is brought to you by the farmers of Wollondilly. Water is essential for growing food in the Sydney Basin, and healthy rivers in the Sydney Basin need healthy, fertile, hydrated lands south of the city where Sydney's water catchment areas are and where potable water is captured. Farming does not reduce potable water for a growing city like Sydney. The Government has decided to reduce harvestable water rights from 30 per cent to a mere 10 per cent along the east coast and in central areas of New South Wales. This decision comes at a time when our farmers are already facing significant challenges, including the declaration of an El Niño event, which threatens to exacerbate drought conditions and put the agricultural sector under even more strain.

There is a glaring disparity between small-area farmers along the coast, where the 10 per cent water harvesting rule has been imposed, versus the large farms out west in New South Wales, where farmers can harvest 100 per cent of the rain that falls on their land. The rural area of Wollondilly in the Sydney Basin is under enormous residential development pressure, which makes it very difficult for farming families to justify their love of producing tasty, quality food with lower food kilometres. The decision unfairly affects Wollondilly farmers, who are already struggling to make ends meet and who face vastly different issues from their counterparts in the Far West. The decision was made without consultation with farmers, following a review conducted in 2021 that increased harvestable rights to 30 per cent.

I am deeply concerned by the lack of transparency and lack of consultation, which has placed further uncertainty and financial strain on our farmers. Restricting the ability of farmers to use water on their land reduces land hydration. That has potentially devastating effects on the land, reducing the health of our waterways and making us less resilient. Water harvesting can be part of the solution, not part of the problem. The vast majority of Sydney's farmers are situated below Sydney's catchment areas. Those who are not perform a vital role in the water network in Wollondilly. The rural dams allow for the capture of more silt and other pollutants, which improves the health of Sydney's major rivers. They also provide water for rural firefighting. In 2019 the Rural Fire Service in Wollondilly used that water to save homes that are fortunate to survive to this day.

Allowing farmers water harvesting rights up to, say, 50 per cent would greatly assist with food production and potentially potable water. The climate crisis will manifest as a water crisis: Who has access to it, who owns it and who decides how much we get? The United Nations white paper entitled "Water for Climate Healing – A New Water Paradigm" explores the notion that an approach to water management starting with the regeneration of landscapes, including farmland, can result in more sustainable farming practices, regenerative agriculture, conservation and greater water security. If the academics get it and the farmers get it, why does the Government not get it? What advice has it taken and from where?

It is evident that farming is now competing with urban areas for limited potable water. The Government thinks this change will save the water in the dams—the ones that are at capacity and upstream, not downstream, from the majority of these farmers. While our cities grow, we must not forget the importance of the agricultural sector, which provides the food that sustains those very cities. The lands of the Sydney Basin are naturally fertile and hold the potential for production to feed a growing population with fresh and nutritious produce.

The reduction in water harvesting rights from 30 per cent to 10 per cent will have a catastrophic impact on farming production. Sydney Basin farming once represented 90 per cent of Sydney's consumption; now it is a mere 10 per cent of Sydney's consumption. That is not only unsustainable but also a missed opportunity to allow smallholdings and farmers of the Sydney region to contribute to our economy, providing food and produce sourced locally, rather than interstate or overseas, and reducing the carbon footprint of the food consumed by Sydney residents. Farmers do not waste water. The best custodians of water are those who see the value in it and who understand the whole cycle, beyond just turning on the tap and expecting the water to flow. Those whose livelihoods depend on water, and those who have been affected by its scarcity, know not to waste it. I trust the farmers with this call and ask that the Labor Party does the same both in this place and federally.

GAZA CONFLICT

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (17:30): I acknowledge the past fortnight has been incredibly tough in many communities, including in my electorate of Blue Mountains, for many families and individuals, but none more so than for those who have been directly impacted by the international conflict. I put on record my wholehearted support for the statement issued yesterday by the NSW Parliamentary Friends of Palestine, which said:

The terrible acts of terror committed by Hamas are deeply inhumane. We call for the immediate release of hostages and reiterate our condemnation of all violence against civilians.

We call on the government of Australia to clearly call upon all actors, including the state of Israel, to comply with international 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 are not involved in the acts of terror that have been carried out by Hamas. Thousands of people have been killed and nearly 10,000 have been injured and displaced, including women, children and the elderly. Food, water, fuel and medical supplies are running out in the Gaza Strip, compounding an already dire situation in one of the most densely populated places on earth. UNICEF noted that Gaza's children are paying the heaviest price, with hundreds already dead.

I note that half of Gaza's 2.3 million people are under 18 years of age, and millions from the Gaza Strip have fled south, but there is nowhere in the south for them to seek safety, so many have turned back to Gaza. Southern Gaza has no means of supporting the millions fleeing from the north. Trucks carrying aid have been waiting for days at the Rafah Border Crossing between Egypt and Gaza. I support the innocent citizens of Gaza and urge the authorities to allow urgent relief, essential supplies and aid workers to enter Gaza safely and to ensure a safe passage for those fleeing the violence. I stand with Palestine—and the Palestinian Australian community—which is currently facing a catastrophic crisis. I am honoured, and I find it necessary, to provide a voice to the many who feel unheard. Here is a message from the CEO of the Muslim Women Association, Maha Abdo. She said:

In an attempt to convey, articulate and communicate what many of us are going through right now, my tears flow quicker than my words. I urge you all to bring your conscience to the fore, to listen with an open heart, and to look for spaces of mercy and compassion in our seeking justice in what can be an avalanche of peace. With a heavy heart, as a mother, grandmother, and community leader, representing the sentiments of countless women whose hearts are shattered by the ongoing atrocities of the ethnic cleansing in Gaza, we can no longer bear witness to the immeasurable pain and heartache inflicted upon the Palestinian people. Do we Not learn from history?! Do we Not know that two Wrongs do not make a Right?! Do we Not understand that to live in "peace and harmony", to attain and maintain real "social cohesion", we must have justice with respect and dignity for all?!

Justice is the key that encourages us to appreciate and understand the essential unity and equality of all humans. These are hard, painful moments we are witnessing at this critical moment in time, where a whole nation is being wiped out, again, homes destroyed and flattened, again, all in front of our eyes. However, all the while, we are told the Occupier/Oppressor has the right to defend itself from the occupied people who are already living under oppression. How does this make sense? We are witnessing ethnic cleansing with no shame or guilt, and all we can do is speak up for justice and the right for all to exist with dignity and respect. This is not a conflict; this is not a war. This is genocide. The depiction of Palestinian men, women and children, all victims, in the media is deeply distressing and fails to capture the true extent of the suffering endured.

Our government's leadership need to use a language that reflects the severity of the situation and to acknowledge the 75 years of oppression and apartheid faced by the Palestinian people. You, our elected members of parliament must take responsibility for your words that should be uniting rather than favouring one group over another. Our struggles and fears must not be overlooked. They must be acknowledged, alongside our pain and anger, facilitating a safe and trusted space for the expression of our suffering, where our voices are not silenced or belittled. Rallies and protests should be supported as essential platforms for the expression of freedom, not as threats. They represent the fundamental right to peacefully demonstrate and speak out against injustice.

Let us come together to advocate for a future that embraces justice, because without justice, there can be no peace or dignity for anyone. I hope that we can sincerely pave the way for a world where no mother or child has to endure the horrors of violence and oppression, where we come together with AUTHENTIC engagement, holding the principles of fairness, justice and compassion for ALL, waging peace and together sowing seeds of hope in all hearts.

CAMDEN HAVEN SHOW

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (17:34): I am delighted to inform the House that one of the premier events on our local calendar, the Camden Haven Show, has returned after three consecutive years of cancellations as a result of the pandemic and wet weather. The towns of Kew and Kendall were literally abuzz over the past week, as thousands flocked through the gates on Saturday and Sunday to take part in a jam-packed program comprising impressive exhibitions, thrilling entertainment, amusement rides, judging, live music and delicious food. I was honoured to be invited to attend the grand opening and stand beside life member Ray O'Neill as he officially opened the show and recalled its rich history since its beginning in 1949.

I recognise the committee and its volunteers, who worked exceptionally hard to ensure the event's success in 2023. They include president Ronnie Porter, vice-president Allan Hudson, secretary Alison Haylett, treasurer Rheannon Chapman, stand-in treasurer Allan Phelps, assistant treasurer Fiona Holtkamp, junior vice-president

Eden Kaminski, show coordinator Doug Pope and the many stewards who supervised the various categories, from ringmaster, to photography, to woodchopping. Well done to Jenny Atkins, Steve Tisdell, Terri Maddock, Margaret O'Brien, Carol Hall, Pam McLeod, Lyn Groves, Helen Brown, Kay Dollery, Kim Barry, Faith Bell, Matt and Gail Pickett, John and Sue Carter, Ronnie Chapman, Karen Hanlon, Peter Rosten, Don Brown, Heath Porter, Diane Pope and Darren Chappie Chapman.

I single out Doug and Diane Pope, who were instrumental in the show's success, coordinating all the sponsorship prizes, organising entertainment and supporting the stewards. The show ran seamlessly, largely due to Doug and Diane's outstanding contribution. As we all know, a show is nothing without its exhibitors. I announce the major award winners from the various sections. In the beef section, supreme exhibit of the show was awarded to Mundoo Jezebel, grand champion female was also claimed by Mundoo Jezebel, grand champion bull went to KJ Hill Tank, grand champion steer was won by Craig A, reserve champion steer was presented to Camden Haven High School, champion parader was claimed by Phoebe Southwell and reserve champion parader went to Ella Saul.

The champion junior judge of the show was won by Jorja Barnett, representing St Paul's College, Kempsey, and reserve champion junior judge, on equal points, was presented to Ella Saul and Bailey Whitton. Champion herds person was Riley Blanch, representing Camden Haven High School, and reserve champion herds person was taken out by Jorja Barnett from St Paul's College, Kempsey. The major winners in the horse ring included Brittany Coates in the supreme working stockhorse category, supreme breed ridden horse of the show was won by Alyson Thompson, supreme champion rider under 17 years was claimed by Mackenzie Dowse, supreme champion rider over 17 years was presented to Dani Althem and supreme champion ridden horse of the show was claimed by Priscilla Looker.

Champion off the track horse was won by Chloe Dwyer, champion prep dressage was presented to Coralee Flanagan, champion preliminary dressage went to Jessica Bergantin and champion novice dressage was taken out by Elise Zammit. Highest junior pointscore showjumping was claimed by Joe Seddon, highest senior pointscore showjumping went to Brooke Atkins, champion junior grand prix showjumping was presented to Joe Seddon and champion senior grand prix showjumping was won by Jodie Hollis. The senior arts overall champion was presented to David Little for his painting entitled *Glen Davis Farm*, and the judges' overall choice for drawing went to Katherine Hanlon for her stunning abstract portrait of a male actor from *Grey's Anatomy*.

North Haven Public School student Bayden Sargent took out the judges' choice for overall painting work for his striking portrait. The judges' choice for collage was presented to the talented Sierra McNiel from Hannam Vale Public School. St Joseph's Primary School student Eli Walker won the sculpture section for his impressive works. Country pantry's most successful exhibitor went to Warren Matthews for his jams and preserves. The most successful exhibitor for the needlework and yarn work section went to Elizabeth Watson. Elizabeth submitted an astounding 23 entries. The fruit and vegetable section saw Paul McKinley win both the major categories with his locally grown produce. In the cooking section, local man Ben Chin took home the major award for the men's chocolate cake.

Claiming grand champion in the pot plants and cut flowers section was Loan Holfacher-Iam for her stunning Brassia orchid. Most successful exhibitor was Doug and Diane Pope, winning six first places and three second places. In the photography section, champion junior photographer was presented to Kendall Chin, who entered a photograph of her beloved dog in the sports and action section. Champion senior photographer of the show was claimed by Ben Chin for his photograph in the seascapes section, capturing an evening photo across the ocean.

In the poultry section, grand champion bird of the show went to Molly Handsaker for a Rhode Island Red cockerel. Reserve champion bird of the show was presented to Mitch Towle. The woodchopping saw David Reumer take out the New South Wales title in the 275-millimetre standing block championship. The New South Wales title for 250-millimetre combo champion was won by Chris Owen. In summary, the show was a resounding success thanks to president Ronnie Porter and his dedicated team of volunteers. I again thank them for their contribution, which is all about the community and gives meaning to the reason why we all love to call the Camden Haven home.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr): I congratulate the member for Port Macquarie on getting through all of that.

THE BUTTERY

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (17:40): I congratulate The Buttery and, through its wonderful CEO, Ms Leonie Crayden, all the wonderful staff and volunteers, and the voluntary board of directors, through its chair, Mr Sandy Lockhart, for the fantastic work they do, in their words, "enriching lives". Ms Crayden is an awesome

CEO of five years' standing. She has taken The Buttery from strength to strength. For some 50 years The Buttery has been in operation. A little while ago it had a celebration dinner to mark all those years of continued and committed service in rehabilitation, including for drugs and alcohol, and mental health support.

I can remember The Buttery's early days in our area. From memory, Captain John McKnight, who I think was a Salvation Army officer—I know he was part of a Christian faith—thought we needed something in our area and established it. The centre has had 10,000 people through its residential programs and 20,000 through its community outreach programs. I know Ms Crayden has said there is a waitlist of up to about 80 people and we need another 100 rehab beds in the Northern Rivers. The Buttery is an iconic organisation in our area, well known and well respected by all. The Buttery achieves lasting change through its programs. I can attest to that, as quite a few local community members I know have benefited from being a program participant.

The centre does its utmost to respond to individual need. Again in The Buttery's words, it offers services for people seeking support for addiction, mental health conditions, relapse prevention, post-traumatic stress disorder and family relationships. It provides short- and long-term residential rehabilitation. Again, I know people whose lives have been changed through the residential rehabilitation program. I will mention three other programs. A lot of the community outreach programs are done online, in the modern way we do things. Those programs cover the Northern Rivers and the mid North Coast. The youth programs are helpful for those dealing with substance misuse, rehabilitation and mental health. Finally, there is the family and carer support program. The goal of The Buttery is to reduce harm and support recovery.

One of the centre's unique offerings is its social enterprise, The Buttery Private. There is the public facility and the private facility. The private facility is a four-week, user-pays drug and alcohol, health and wellbeing program. All the profits from it are reinvested into the centre's free services. It is quite a good model because some people can afford to pay and are willing to pay, and that money goes back into helping people in the community who do not have that money to pay. Ideally everything should be free, but we know it does not always work like that. Ms Crayden has been able to develop a good model there. She has taken The Buttery from strength to strength and been able to raise funds. As I said, she has got a terrific board—who are voluntary, by the way.

A little while ago The Buttery had a celebratory dinner to mark its 50 years of service. I could not go and was sorry to miss it, but I know a lot of people attended to thank the centre for the service it provides right across our region—and people from out of our region also go there. One of The Buttery's mottos is that "addiction is not a consequence of choice but recovery is". I note that recently on its website it was seeking members to join its lived experienced advisory group, which is an active group. Again, I know people who are on that group or have served on that group over a number of years. I feel fortunate that we have a service such as The Buttery in our area.

LAKE MACQUARIE ELECTORATE ROADS

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (17:45): Road-related issues are one of the most frequent, if not the most frequent, matters about which my office currently receives complaints. I dare say I am not the only member in this place who has this problem. But with one of the highest growth rates in an already highly populated area of the Hunter, we have a glaring problem. If there is one thing that makes residents infuriated—and understandably so—it is sitting day after day in the same traffic bottleneck with no plans in sight to resolve the problem. While traffic congestion may seem like an inconvenience that is simply part and parcel of the modern world, it has a real day-to-day negative impact on our lives and our economy. Traffic congestion takes away from our precious time with our families and loved ones. It causes stress and frustration, it can affect our mental health and it impacts the economy by increasing business costs and lowering productivity.

Along with education, health and emergency services, road and transport infrastructure and maintenance are some of the most important responsibilities of government. I acknowledge that road responsibilities span all levels of government—local, State and Federal. Sometimes this shared responsibility works to exacerbate delays and seemingly absolves particular governments of responsibility for projects. But while we argue around whose responsibility a project is or how much funding is allocated by a particular level of government, projects are delayed and the frustrations of community members grow.

Two essential road projects in my electorate—the Speers Point roundabout and the Mandalong Road upgrades at Morisset—are currently experiencing significant delays. This is causing frustration and anger within my community. Both the Speers Point and Morisset areas of my electorate have experienced significant residential development and growth over recent years, but planning and construction of infrastructure projects to support this expansion have not kept pace with residential growth. Residents are now stuck dealing with daily traffic congestion seven days a week.

Much to the relief of residents, in recent times funding announcements were made in relation to both these projects. But, since those announcements were made, the community has not received updates and has not seen any further progress on these projects. In the 2022 budget the Government at the time announced \$5 million in funding for the Speers Point roundabout upgrade, with the current Government committing to \$6 million in funding early last month. In 2022, \$56 million of Federal Government funding and \$20 million in State Government funding was also announced for the Mandalong Road upgrades at Morisset. In last month's State budget the Government announced funding commitments for both of these projects.

I appreciate the Government's commitment to both of these essential projects. However, I note a lack of clarity around these funding commitments within the budget. For example, the Speers Point roundabout previously had \$5 million allocated with an additional \$6 million, but we cannot now find the original \$5 million. Rather than a combined \$11 million, it appears we only have \$6 million. I have written to the Minister's office seeking further clarification around the funding commitments and I eagerly await her reply. I understand costings for infrastructure projects are a difficult science, particularly with rising construction costs over recent years. But significant changes in funding commitments substantially limit options available to planning bodies in terms of solutions that can be proposed to address these congestion issues.

My constituents have welcomed the announcements made in respect of both projects, but they are becoming increasingly and understandably frustrated. The community has waited long enough for some clear plans on how these significant issues will be addressed. The community needs to see action. The community needs to understand that there is an end in sight to the frustrations and delays. As we await details and plans for these infrastructure projects, housing and industrial projects are approved and already-approved developments are completed. Congestion further increases, as does the community's fears and anger about the Government's commitment to these projects and the prospects of these projects being shovel ready anytime in the near future.

While we desperately need to increase our housing supply in the State—and no-one can argue Lake Macquarie is not carrying its fair share of housing development—there is also a point when further private development and growth is inhibited by the lack of infrastructure, or plans for infrastructure, to support proposed projects. I fear we may have reached that point in Lake Macquarie. I want to work with the Government to ensure the Mandalong Road and Speers Point roundabout projects get underway as soon as possible. The first step is to clarify the details of the funding commitments to both those projects and the planning timelines. These details will at least give my community some comfort that work is progressing and that there is a light at the end of the traffic tunnel. I look forward to working productively with the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads.

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER VOICE

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (17:50): As all members know, last Saturday the nation went to the polls to vote on enshrining constitutional recognition of an Indigenous Voice to Parliament. I proudly voted yes and have previously spoken in this place about my support for the Voice. We live in a democracy and I respect the view of the population of Australia. I acknowledge the incredible hard work of the yes campaign, particularly in my neck of the woods. They worked day and night, having thousands of conversations on people's doorsteps, at train stations and at street stalls. They spoke at churches, mosques, temples, community halls and other places of worship. I note also the week of mourning by leaders in the Indigenous community. I cannot begin to imagine the impact the result has had on First Nations people.

Following the weekend's result, there has been much discussion amongst some professional opinionistas and the Twitterati—as is the way—on the reasons for the result and what it means. Frustratingly, the usual denigration of the people of Western Sydney has come with the blame game and finger-pointing. While I am disappointed the referendum did not pass, I am also disappointed to see the people of Western Sydney labelled as racist, bigoted and ignorant for expressing their democratic will. I have previously spoken in this place about the dangerous consequences of inadequate communication by government institutions and the media. It can lead to feelings of isolation and neglect and erode community cohesion. We saw this most strikingly in Western Sydney during the COVID pandemic and lockdowns. Despite thoughtful and understandable intentions, not every person in Western Sydney, or Australia, is reading *The Guardian* or watching *Q+A* or *The Drum*. If those channels are used to communicate and the intended recipient does not use them, they are not to blame.

I spent referendum day at a booth in my electorate. That booth voted 60 per cent no. By comparison, I received a 68 per cent two-party preferred vote at the same booth in March. The mood on Saturday was pleasant and friendly, and I had plenty of chats with my constituents about a whole host of issues throughout the day. There was no anger, bigotry or ignorance. The voters I spoke to were not there in contempt, but to cast their vote, to fulfil a democratic right—a right that many who came here as refugees know the precious price of. Following my election in March, many people were curious and interested in the coalition of supporters I had coalesced to win my seat—members of many different communities, religions and backgrounds, advantaged and disadvantaged, young and old, socially conservative Christians and young same-sex couples. I built this coalition over many years

through my work in the community, by having an open door, by listening to diverse points of view and, most importantly, by not instantly dismissing views I did not agree with—instead seeking to find common ground.

On First Nations issues, I am confident there is common ground on Closing the Gap. Around 34 per cent of the total health gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians is due to social determinants, and 19 per cent is due to individual health risk factors. From 2017 to 2019 the suicide rate for Indigenous Australians in New South Wales was twice as high as non-Indigenous Australians. For those aged 25 to 44, it is triple the rate. Additional funding of \$131 million has been allocated to 28 Closing the Gap initiatives to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander outcomes. That includes \$34 million to tackle over-representation in the out-of-home care and justice systems, and \$25 million to promote health and wellbeing in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Existing targeted programs were allocated \$1.5 billion in the budget, including \$375 million in Communities and Justice to fund early intervention programs.

I know many are hurting after the weekend's result, and with difficult losses it is often easier to wave one's hand and simply dismiss a chunk of the population. Perhaps those that have denigrated my community should look closer to home; perhaps their ability to communicate to the majority of Australians might not be as effective as they previously thought; perhaps it is not my community that is out of touch. Although the Voice did not pass, I respect the result, I respect my community's decision and I stand committed to continue to work with First Nations people on genuine reconciliation and to Closing the Gap.

NARRABEEN AMBULANCE STATION

Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater) (17:54): Last month in this place the Minister for Health announced plans to close the Narrabeen Ambulance Station. This announcement blindsided our community. Despite the best attempts of the Government to close the station quietly, the northern beaches community, particularly those north of Narrabeen, have made their concerns heard. The Government has attempted to justify the closure of Narrabeen Ambulance Station on the basis that a new station would be built at Dee Why. But when the first budget was handed down on 19 September, there was not one cent of funding for a new ambulance station at Dee Why. When we look at the budget we see line item after line item for new ambulance stations, but no funding for a station at Dee Why. The closure of Narrabeen Ambulance Station and the failure to fund the promised new station is postcode politics at its worse. Labor is happy to fund emergency and health services in its electorates or those they could win, but not in Pittwater. It is playing postcode politics with people's lives.

Even if the Labor Government had some decency and funded a new ambulance station at Dee Why, it has not provided any clarity on how those vital services in Narrabeen will be redistributed once it closes Narrabeen Ambulance Station. Will it simply move paramedic services from Narrabeen to Dee Why? Will the Government sell the Narrabeen Ambulance Station to developers? I have asked the Minister, but no answer has been provided. The problem—and a government with knowledge of on-the-ground issues would know this—is that there are no intensive care paramedics north of Narrabeen. If we move the intensive care paramedics to Dee Why, there will be no intensive paramedic coverage from Dee Why to Palm Beach. A further problem is that there are no night shift paramedics at Mona Vale Ambulance Station and we only have one paramedic team around the clock at Avalon Ambulance Station, but it does not treat intensive care patients. When those crews are at the hospital having completed a job, there is no coverage north of Narrabeen.

A government genuinely interested in serving all of New South Wales would be aware of the lack of services north of Narrabeen. A government genuinely interested in the wellbeing of the northern beaches community would have notified and consulted local paramedics of any plans to close a station or redistribute services. Instead, Labor has failed to offer any commitment to maintaining service levels for Pittwater and the northern beaches. Labor has failed to provide a timeline on the closure of the Narrabeen Ambulance Station and, given the lack of funding and the required lead time to build a new station at Dee Why, my community fears that Narrabeen will be closed without any additional services being provided. The absurdity of this situation is that no site or land has been identified for the new station at Dee Why.

Labor has also failed to provide any clarity on what the Narrabeen Ambulance Station site will be used for in the future. It has yet to commit to keeping the asset in public ownership and for public benefit. It is clear that the Government does not care about health and emergency services in Pittwater and the northern beaches. If it cared, it would offer more than platitudes and empty promises to consult with the community, which it has not done. If it cared, it would have formally announced the closure alongside the release of a comprehensive plan for maintaining service levels north of Narrabeen.

Instead, the Government attempted to sweep the matter under the rug, blindsiding local paramedics and our community, promising to build an ambulance station at Dee Why but not providing any funding or details for such a station. Not even nine months into its term, the Government has made it clear that it is not interested in governing for all of New South Wales, only those whose votes they hold or can win. It is playing postcode politics

and risking people's lives. I will continue to advocate for my community against Labor's cuts to our essential infrastructure services and I will continue to fight for Narrabeen Ambulance Station to remain open or, if it is to close against community and paramedic wishes, I will fight to ensure that services are maintained and improved as required north of Narrabeen.

TAMWORTH LEGACY

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (17:59): It is a great privilege to speak about the work of Tamworth Legacy, which is a wonderful volunteer organisation that is coordinating a year of events to commemorate the centenary of Legacy, from 1923 to 2023, upholding a promise made over 100 years ago. Legacy was established in 1923 as an organisation to support the families, widows and dependants of soldiers who lost their lives on the battlefields of World War I. The returning military personnel recognised the importance of supporting, in a practical sense, those so devastatingly affected by the war service of countless veterans of World War I. One hundred years later, Legacy is still a vibrant organisation, supporting widows, dependants and now young veteran families. The support provided is coordinated from donations. The last events in this centenary year are happening as we speak, with the final events in Melbourne, Victoria.

The centenary of the Legacy torch relay originated in Pozieres, France. After the flame was lit, it travelled to London and then on to 44 Australia locations, one of which was Tamworth. Tamworth Legacy supported several events, including a race day and a bowls day, and invited Melbourne well-known historian Lambis Englezos to speak to schools and at a centenary dinner about his prominent work finding the lost diggers of Fromelles. With financial support from the previous Government and the philanthropic support of JobLink Plus, Tamworth Legacy ensured that its centenary was marked in a grand way in the City of Tamworth. The industrious committee of Tamworth Legacy coordinated a magnificent opening, which included the unveiling of an art installation in Bicentennial Park, where a pool of reflection boasting 1,000 poppy-laden crosses was dedicated. Students carrying lanterns in a coordinated lantern parade supported the event.

Reference was made to the involvement of First Nations soldiers and coincided with NAIDOC Week activities. Legacy showed its willingness to involve the community through its partnerships with Challenge Community Services, local pottery groups, Tamworth Regional Council, Tamworth Regional Gallery, the RSL, local schools, JobLink Plus, Rotary and Lions clubs, and St Edward's Catholic Parish with the unveiling of Tamworth's newest commemorative belltower. As the local member, I had the privilege to visit Challenge Community Services when the teams were constructing the crosses. A torch relay saw scores of torchbearers from throughout the Tamworth Legacy area and volunteers carry the flame of remembrance throughout Tamworth. The local light horse led the contingent throughout the streets, supported by serving officers from the armed services.

A magnificent Legacy concert was coordinated and supported by the award-winning Gunnedah Shire Band, which partnered with the Tamworth Choral Society to entertain the 300-plus attendees. At the concert prominent singer-songwriter Wendy Wood released her single *The Promise*. The song was recorded without cost and supported by the vibrant local music industry. This week Wendy is performing her song at the very last Legacy torch relay event in Melbourne. Tamworth Legacy is an excellent example of a community organisation that honours an important milestone whilst continuing the work of its original ideals. Legacy's centenary is a magnificent achievement. It caught the torch and continues to hold it high in Tamworth. Well done to Tamworth Legacy.

GAZA CONFLICT

Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy) (18:03): Peace and blessings be upon you, Mr Speaker, and all in this place. Tonight I speak on an issue that is of great concern to the people of New South Wales and the Holsworthy electorate. The war in the Middle East has horrified many of us. We have witnessed images and videos and heard stories that are hard on the soul. When innocent Israelis were attacked and taken hostage by Hamas, I grieved for the loss of innocent life and knew that in the Holy Land death brings more death. As a global citizen and a pacifist, I am troubled by all forms of violence. I condemn the violent terror attacks by Hamas on innocent Israelis. I am also troubled by Israel's response, which has led to a significant loss of Palestinian life, sadly many of whom are children. I am not here to give a lecture on the history of the Balfour Declaration, the Oslo Accords and the Abraham Accords, nor am I here to give a lecture on morality and humanity. If a person does not believe all human lives are equal, and if they believe killing and violence are acceptable and it is okay for humans to be collateral damage, then I pray for them to have wisdom, compassion and empathy for all of God's creations.

The horrific events abroad have drastically impacted on the social and multicultural cohesion of our State. Emotions are running high, and many citizens and communities feel a little less Australian. It is like they do not matter and their voices are being misinterpreted as being supporters of a terrorist organisation, all while they are speaking up against the horrors of war and for the equality of all people. They have hopes, dreams and aspirations

for the Palestinians. I note that these people feel hopeless and traumatised. I will share some personal experiences that have been shared with me from Australians in my electorate. One person wrote:

I have nightmares, and then like a deranged person, I wake up and watch my children sleep.

Another wrote:

I had a nightmare that I was in Gaza and a missile hit. I woke up with a trembling heart and ran to check on my children. I cried whilst I watched them sleep.

A third person wrote:

Today I have lost hope for humanity, and I have lost hope for the Palestinians. It's over, Gaza is gone. Nothing matters anymore. Too many children have died.

This is not the experience of just Israelis or Palestinians; this is the literal, real experience right now of all innocent victims—the men, women and children—in a Holy Land that has turned into a living hell. Viewing the conflict from one perspective will not advance the cause of peace and progress. The humanitarian crisis unfolding in Gaza right now is hitting home with many Australians, who are feeling guilt that they are able to move on with their lives and have their everyday needs met—water, food, electricity, medical aid, and safety and security. Some are feeling guilty but also grateful that their children are alive and safe. People are shocked at world leaders not standing up for the innocents and feel like a war is being encouraged.

To be clear, compassion, empathy and recognition should be spread equally amongst the Israeli and Palestinian communities. When I say Palestinians, I do not mean Hamas. This is not a zero-sum game. Neither group should be mutually exclusive. All the Palestinian community wants is the Australian principle of a fair go applied to them, both here and abroad. The only way self-determination and peace can be achieved for both Israelis and Palestinians is through an enduring two-state solution, where all can live in peace and security within internationally recognised borders. I might sound like a dreamer, but those who strive for peace strive for humanity and a better tomorrow. May the beautiful, innocent children who have been killed forever rest in peace. I wish those left behind the ability to move forward and hope far away from the horrors of war. I will end by quoting Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states:

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

I thank the House.

The SPEAKER: I thank the member for Holsworthy for her thoughtful, measured and deeply empathetic private member's statement. The member for Holsworthy may be a dreamer, but I hope her dreams come true.

Bills

BUILDING LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2023

First Reading

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

The SPEAKER: I order that the second reading of the bill stand as an order of the day for a future day.

STRATA LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2023

First Reading

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

The SPEAKER: I order that the second reading of the bill stand as an order of the day for a future day.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 18:10 until
Tuesday 21 November at 12:00.**

Written Community Recognition Statements

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

RASIKA DANCE ACADEMY, PERFORMANCE OF 9 SHORT STORIES

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)—The Rasika Dance Academy performance of '9 Short Stories' was held at the Riverside Theatre on 01 October 2023. Rasika Dance Academy is a not-for-profit Academy teaching classical Indian dancing within the north-western region of Sydney. I was pleased to join the Mayor of the Hills Shire Council, Dr. Peter Gangemi to witness the dance skills of young dancers. The young dancers showcased

their talents in a wonderfully performance which included an array of colourful costumes, jewellery, music, and dance movements. The performance was choreographed and flawlessly narrated by the founder of Rasika Dance Academy, Guru Manjula Viswanath. The performance of '9 Short Stories' establishes the Rasika Dance Academy as one of the leading dance academies teaching Indian classical dance. I was extremely pleased to support to Ms Viswanath, Rasika Dance Academy and all dancers involved in the wonderful production. Well done to everyone involved in the production. I wish the Rasika Dance Academy and all students every success in future performances.

TIONA HOLIDAY PARK

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)—I would like to congratulate Tiona Holiday Park for being named a finalist in the NSW Tourism Awards 2023. This recognition reflects their commitment to excellence, innovation, and outstanding customer service. Tiona Holiday Park's dedication to providing exceptional tourism experiences has enriched our community. They are known for being family and pet-friendly, offering glamping, camping, caravanning, and cozy cabins, providing a unique haven amidst the natural beauty of the lower Mid North Coast. Tiona Holiday Park is situated between Seven Mile Beach, Wallis Lake, and Booti Booti National Park, creating a space for relaxation, exploration, and connection. Their waterside wedding and event centre contribute to our community's vitality, providing a beautiful backdrop for special occasions that unite people with nature. I wish the dedicated Tiona Holiday Park team success at the Gala Dinner in November. Congratulations on this well-deserved recognition and thank you for being such a valued part of our community.

JENNY PITHER

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)—I would like to recognise Jenny Pither, the founder of Allied Health Admin & Consulting. With over 25 years of experience in Allied Health Administration, Jenny launched Allied Health Admin Services in 2016. Since then, her and her team have been a support for Allied Health practitioners, offering comprehensive administrative services. Jenny's dedication and achievements have gained well-deserved recognition, with her business being named a finalist in multiple prestigious awards such as the AusMumpreneur Awards, the Australian Women's Small Business Champion Awards, the Remote and Rural Business Awards, the Beam Awards, the MidCoast Business Awards and most recently the Roar Awards. This year Allied Health Admin & Consulting was awarded the silver winner for VA Business of the Year in the 2023 Beam Awards. Jenny, thank you for your contributions to the Allied Health field and the communities it serves. Congratulations on all your achievements. You are an inspiration!

THE POINT BAKERY CAFÉ

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)—I would like to recognise The Point Bakery Café owners, Chloe and Tyson Frame for their contribution to the Hallidays Point community. Chloe and Tyson have blended their love of cars with the pleasure of coffee to create a monthly event, aptly named 'Cars & Coffee.' On the last Sunday of each month, this event transforms the Hallidays Point village shopping centre carpark, into a vibrant gathering place for local car enthusiasts to showcase their cars and bikes. The participants are in the running for a trophy for 'Best in Show' and café vouchers for the 'Crowd Favourite' and 'Runner Up.' In addition to their monthly gatherings, The Point Bakery Café also played host to the Australian Annual Supra Meet, featuring an impressive display of over 30 Supras. This event marked a milestone, with the biggest 'Cars & Coffee' turnout yet. Thank you, Chloe and Tyson, for bringing excitement and serving delicious coffee to the Hallidays Point community. 'Cars & Coffee' has become an integral part of our community, and I look forward to more memorable gatherings in the future.

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—Fulfilling a lifelong dream is something all Australians aim to achieve and for one lucky Cowra local this dream is about to become a reality. Brendan Tidswell is ready to make waves and fulfill his lifelong dream by making it onto the prestigious Australian Water Ski Racing Team. Brendan is ready to represent Australia at the World Championships in November this year. Brendan's father was also a keen water sportsman so it was inevitable that Brendan would follow in his footsteps. Brendan was introduced to water skiing when he was 12 years old and after eighteen years of hard work and dedication, Brendan has successfully secured his position on the national team. Thanks to the support of Brendan's friends and family, Brendan has been able to make the journey to Sydney each weekend since April to meet up with his fellow teammates so they can train for the upcoming championships. Brendan and his team have undergone rigorous training to prepare them for the challenges they will face during the race. I wish Brendan and his team the very best of luck at the World Championships

RECKELL JONES

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—Congratulations to Ardlethan local Reckell Jones on her effort in raising funds for Can Assist. Initially hoping to raise a \$1000, Reckell was astounded at the support of her local community and raised a staggering \$30,543 for Can Assist. Reckell was diagnosed with breast cancer in June of this year and because of her treatment Reckell knew her hair would eventually start falling out. With this in mind, Reckell decided to shave her head prior to it falling out to raise money for Can Assist. Reckell is the Treasurer of the Northern Jets Football Netball Club. Reckell shared her fundraising idea with the club. The Club were in full support and together they organised a fundraising event which saw Reckell's head shaved in front of a huge local crowd. Players of the Northern Jets Football Netball Club also decided to shave their heads in support of Reckell to raise even more funds. With bids of \$2,000 to \$3,000 offered for others to join in the action. Congratulations again to all involved on this fantastic achievement.

GAIL PLATZ

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—I wish to congratulate Gail Platz on her dedication to the West Wyalong Show Society. After 37 years of continued support, Gail has decided to hang up the stirrups this year. Gail's service did not go unrecognised and as a result was presented the prestigious Royal Agricultural Society of NSW, Agricultural Shows Award during the official opening of 2023 West Wyalong Show. Gail was presented her award by President, Mr Rob Logg for her substantial and selfless service to the local community and committed support for agricultural shows. Gail originally signed up to volunteer on the show society for a year and said the honour the show provided has kept her motivated and coming back year after year. During her acceptance speech, Gail thanked Michelle Jolly and Susan Low for all their help over the years as well as the past and present Presidents, Secretary Diane Redman and all the volunteers who she said, "do a mighty job putting on the show". Without volunteers like Gail Platz our Rural Agricultural Shows would not be possible. Thank you again Gail for your many years of invaluable contribution.

HILL TOP'S RIVER ROAD ACADEMY SHOWCASES YOUTH CREATIVITY

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)—Hill Top Community Centre became a platform for young creative minds to exhibit their talents recently. The showcase featured 20 exhibitors displaying 22 works of art, including paintings, photography, and live music performances. These works were the culmination of a 10-week creative drop-in program led by River Road Creative Academy, based in Tahmoor. The program received support from the Hill Top Community Association and Wingecarribee Shire Council, aiming to provide a nurturing environment for youth to explore various artistic mediums like urban art, music, and photography. Patrick Nellestein, owner of River Road Creative Academy, emphasised the importance of such exhibitions in allowing youth to articulate their unique perspectives through creative outlets. The paintings used a variety of techniques, from spray art to acrylic abstracts, revealing the artists' perspectives on their emotions and the world around them. Meanwhile, the photography on display showcased inventive use of light and exposure settings, resulting in images with embedded light figures. Music performances during the event involved improvised sessions structured in specific keys, enabling real-time creative expression and sound exploration. The works from the exhibition are also available for online viewing at River Road Creative Academy's website.

CELEBRATING SEVEN DECADES OF LOVE: GEOFFREY AND JOY GARDINER'S UNBREAKABLE BOND

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)—In a world where enduring love often seems elusive, Geoffrey and Joy Gardiner of Orangeville stand as a beacon of hope and inspiration for us all. Celebrating their 70th wedding anniversary, this remarkable couple has not only seen seven decades pass by but has also grown stronger in love and companionship throughout these years. From witnessing significant historical events to embracing personal milestones, they've experienced it all, hand in hand. Geoffrey and Joy have traversed the complex journey of life, watching the world evolve and change around them, while their love remained a constant, unwavering force. Their enduring relationship serves as a model for younger generations, proof that love can indeed stand the test of time. Whether it's adjusting to new technologies or adapting to societal shifts, they've navigated life's challenges together, which makes their bond truly commendable. As they celebrate 70 glorious years of marital bliss, their story encourages us to believe in love that stands the test of time, something we all can aspire to achieve. Congratulations to Geoffrey and Joy on reaching this extraordinary milestone! Here's to many more years of love and togetherness.

KUNGLA CO-OPERATIVE: A LEGACY OF RESILIENCE AND OPPORTUNITY

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)—The iconic KUNGLA sign in Thirlmere is more than a name on a building; it's a tapestry of culture, enterprise, and community. Established in 1938, the Kungla Farmers' Association became a cornerstone for Estonians who arrived post-World Wars with little but hope. They founded

a poultry industry in Thirlmere, with the co-op serving as a logistical backbone. By the 60s and 70s, the area was known as NSW's "Largest Egg Producing District." The name 'KUNGLA' holds cultural weight, taken from the Estonian epic 'Kalevipoeg' and symbolising a land of opportunity. Despite its wind-up in 1982 due to economic challenges, its legacy endures. The sign remains a heritage item, thanks to the Estonian Cultural Foundation of Australia and Wollondilly Shire Council. The recent opening of the Kungla storyboard saw the Estonian community break into spontaneous song, a touching tribute to this resilient community. The event was a nostalgic nod to pioneers who turned adversity into opportunity, proving that while the co-operative's operations may have ceased, its spirit lives on.

ROSS AND KATHLEEN WADDELL

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises Mr Ross and Mrs Kathleen Waddell from Gerroa who recently celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on 12th October 2023. Kath grew up in Corrimal and Ross grew up in Berry. Together they are a formidable and loving couple and respected members of the local Gerroa community. In order to celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary, Ross and Kath invited their original wedding party for a celebratory lunch at Shell Cove. I would like to acknowledge and congratulate Mr and Mrs Waddell from Gerroa whom I have known, admired and respected in our local community for many years now. I congratulate them both on reaching this rare and distinguished 60th wedding anniversary milestone which was celebrated with their original bridal and grooms party, along with family and friends in the Gerroa, Berry and Shoalhaven community. I also wish them both well for their ongoing endeavours and many more years of happiness together.

ST MARY'S STAR OF THE SEA MEMORIAL GARDEN IN GERRINGONG

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises the custodians of the St Mary's Star of the Sea Memorial Garden in Gerringong. I acknowledge and thank Mr Steve Pearson and Mr Paul Fogarty who have both cared for the garden in Fern Street, Gerringong, since it opened in 2016. The original concept for this garden initially came from Paul's mother, Bernice Fogarty, who suggested in 2014 that a memorial garden be constructed. Two years later, the garden became a reality. Chris Lester from Gerringong Garden Maintenance served as the project manager for the garden's construction, while Grant Findlay from Unreal Rocks finished the wall with sandstone. Grant also hand-crafted the statue of 'Our Lady' which was donated by the Matthews Family. The garden's concentric circle design was inspired by the Pope's actual garden located in the Vatican. Prior to the garden's construction, the area had become overgrown which surrounded the grave of the church's first parish priest, Reverend Dean Malone. The garden has 456 interment plots available to place ashes in the raised garden and a further 200 places to fix memorial brass plaques to the wall.

SHOALHAVEN HEADS PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises Shoalhaven Heads Public School. The 2023 Southern Stars performance was an incredible journey for thirty-eight Southern Stars dancers from Shoalhaven Heads Public School following hours of dedication and rehearsals from these students turned into four spectacular entertaining shows at WIN Entertainment Centre in Wollongong where these dancers performed alongside 3,000 other students from across NSW. Four of Shoalhaven Heads Public School's indigenous students had the pleasure of being involved in the Yanggaa Garaba cultural dance ensemble. I acknowledge Ms Viney, Mr Farrow and Mrs Bradshaw who made this all possible for these Shoalhaven Heads Public School students to be involved in and embrace the performing arts experience that Southern Stars is. On 19th September 2023, Kindergarten and Years 1 & 2 had a wonderful time watching the Possum Magic Show at the Shoalhaven Entertainment Centre in Nowra. The Shoalhaven Heads P&C School Fang Run is a major fundraising event this year on 3rd November 2023 to raise funds for a school bus to transport students. I acknowledge and thank the school's much loved and dedicated Principal Sarah Baker along with the schools passionate and dedicated teachers and staff.

ORANGE THUNDER TOUCH FOOTBALL CLUB

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—Speaker, the Orange Thunder touch football club was recently named the NSW Red Rooster Community Club of the Year, an accolade presented by Touch Football Australia. This commendable win puts them into the running for the National Community Club of the Year Award. Since its inception 25 years ago, Orange Thunder has experienced substantial growth, in recognition and numbers. The club's success isn't solely rooted in its representative player program, but it mirrors its performance at community level, encompassing junior and senior divisions. Over the past several years, the club has witnessed an incredible surge in participation, growing from 60 junior teams to well over 150. Schools like Kinross Wolaroi and Orange Anglican Grammar have notably contributed to this growth. In fact, their representative teams have expanded from just a couple in 1998 to 10 age groups. Orange Thunder is committed to nurturing talent, reflected in seven of its players representing NSW and four members going on to earn Australian representation. Their broad array

of competitions ensures every player gets an opportunity to achieve higher accolades and I congratulate Orange Thunder on its NSW Community Club of the Year honour.

CANOWINDRA CWA 2023 - CENTRAL WEST VOLUNTEER TEAM OF THE YEAR

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—Speaker, I would like to recognise the Canowindra branch of the Country Women's Association. The Canowindra CWA proudly clinched the title of 2023 Central West Volunteer Team of the Year during an esteemed ceremony in Orange on 21st September. This recognition is a component of the NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards, hosted by The Centre for Volunteering, marking it among Australia's premier acknowledgements of volunteer dedication. Gemma Rygate, CEO of The Centre for Volunteering, commended volunteers throughout the Central West for their tireless commitment to fostering vibrant and cohesive communities. For nearly a century, the Canowindra CWA has been an emblem of stellar community service not only in Canowindra but also in the broader Central West region. The branch's current members, aged between 51 and 85, support various community initiatives, such as sports events and the notable Bicycle Challenge 5 - Ride to Mandurama. CWA's accolade has also earned them an invitation to the Gala State Ceremony in Sydney, where the 2023 NSW Volunteer of the Year will be announced. Congratulations to the Canowindra CWA for their unwavering dedication.

MARK BYRNE

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—Speaker, I wish to recognise an amazing display of loyalty between the Orange City Bowling Club and retiring head green keeper, Mark Byrne. Mr Byrne's dedication to the club is exceptional – in August he pulled up stumps after just over 50 years looking after its pristine greens. A student at Orange's De La Salle College, Mr Byrne finished school in 1972 to take up an apprenticeship with the club, which had moved to its home in Warrendine Street just four years earlier. In fact, he finished school on the Wednesday, started at the club on Thursday and has dedicated himself to its greens since that day - often working seven days a week. During his 50 years at the club Mr Byrne estimates he has trained 11 apprentices, worked with 11 secretary managers and experimented with a range of turf to keep the club's playing surfaces in championship condition. He also deflects praise to the club itself, crediting former president, the late Dave Brown for giving him the head green keeper's job when others thought he lacked the experience and adding he is grateful for the club's backing since then. I congratulate Mr Byrne on his amazing career.

THE HILLS DISTRICT RURAL FIRE SERVICE AWARDS

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)—I was delighted to be invited to attend The Hills District NSW RFS Medal Presentation Ceremony on 14 October. It was a pleasure to see the brave men and women of the RFS being recognised and awarded for their bravery and their dedication to the community they serve. The recipients of the medals were Joshua Codrington for the Humanitarian Overseas Service Medal; Andrea Davies, Brett Wheeler, and Andrew Boyd for the National Emergency Medal; Antonio Papallo, Amanda Benstead, Colin Walsh, Alan Seymour, and Gregg Tregear for the Long Service Medal; and Paul Boddy, Shuan Bruce, Joshua Codrington, Phillip Dunn, Christopher O'Sullivan, James Visione, John Telec, Dennis Coker, Suzanne Talbert, James Smith, Brian Healey, Donald Langdon, and Darryl Bice for the National Medal. These members' bravery, sacrifice, commitment, and service is admired and appreciated by our community and by our nation. And it is right that we should award them and honour them for all that they have done in service of us all. Thank you to all members of The Hills District RFS for all you do for our community, and congratulations to those members who have been recognised for their service.

BAULKHAM HILLS SHIRE ASSOCIATION NETBALL AWARDS

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)—On 8 October 2023 I attended the Baulkham Hills Shire Netball Association Presentation Night. The players who play for the Association live in the Hills and many within my electorate. I recognise the following award recipients: Spirit of Umpiring, Malachi Young; Coaches Service Awards, Rachel Horne, Kelly Heys, Helen Oliver, and Courtney Richmond; Coaches Incentive Award, Amelia Belcastro; Coaches Recognition Award, Courtney Richmond; Spirit of Coaching Award, Di Bowden; Senior State Titles U/15 Reps MVP, Addison Hickey; Senior State Titles U/17, MVP, Charlotte Rousell and Eve Vaitusi; Senior State Titles, Opens, MVP, Emily Harding and Madison Kelly; Individual Achievement Award, Kiri Bowcock; Mangers Recognition Award, Michelle Robertson; National Bench Officials, Karen Wilson, Monica O'Callaghan, Jenny Pike and Leanne Spears; Junior State Titles, 12 Reps, MVP, Amelia Bisoglio and Hayley Compton; Junior State Titles, 13 Reps, MVP, Angelina Touma; Junior State Titles, 14 Reps, MVP, Caitlyn Martin; Metro League Division 1, MVP, Lateisha Van Den Nieuwboer; Metro League Division 2, MVP, Jewel Goggins; Metro League Division 4, MVP, Emily Stoodley; Metro League Division 5, MVP, Olivia Morales; Collen Rennie Award, Louise Horne; Presidents Award, Glenwood Netball Club. I thank club for another wonderful netball season.

SYDNEY FOR YES

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)—Sydney congratulates "Sydney for Yes" for achieving a remarkable result of 70% for YES in the federal electorate of Sydney for the Voice Referendum and convincingly won every polling place. Sydney for Yes was all about building bridges, forging connections and making a difference in the most joyful and uplifting way possible by supporting a First Nations Voice to Parliament. Sydney for Yes volunteers had conversations in-person, by phone, standing at train stations and markets, going business-to-business, and home-to-home to get the message out that a voice enshrined in the constitution was sound. In particular, I recognise Jacob Cook, David Errington, Rosemary Noonan, Declan Savage, Simon Byrnes, Josh Pallas, Savanna Peake, Luke Pratt, Daniel Kirkwood, Frances Timpano, Phil Boulten, Jo Holder, Bernadette Foley, Chris Young, Maree Bowman and Dennis Foster. I also thank the thousands of Sydneysiders who actively campaigned for YES, Federal Member for Sydney, Tanya Plibersek, the City of Sydney and Lord Mayor Clover Moore for their support. It is only with people power that change happens and I urge everyone involved in Sydney for Yes to keep building the movement to ensure better lives for First Nations Peoples.

BEYOND THE BRONCOS

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Today I congratulate the team at Beyond the Broncos, who do amazing work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in years seven to twelve to maximise positive outcomes in school attendance, effort and behaviour. The program has been recognised by those that have completed it as providing a home away from home, and an opportunity to learn more about themselves and grow as a person. It was an amazing privilege to take First Nations students Chelsea, Calista, Priscilla and Natalia from across the Northern Rivers on a tour through NSW Parliament this week, as part of the Beyond the Broncos Mentoring Program. Thank you to Reihana from the Broncos, Chris, Aunty Gail, and Lisa for supporting these students and joining them on their tour of parliament.

RILEY MCKECHNIE

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I extend my heartfelt congratulations to Mr Riley McKechnie for his remarkable dedication in raising funds for the Top Blokes Foundation through the Lift the Load Challenge. During the month of October, Riley committed to running 50 kilometres while carrying a 10-kilogram weight on his back. All the funds raised by Riley have been generously contributed to the Top Blokes Foundation's mentoring programs, which play a vital role in helping young men enhance their mental well-being and cultivate stronger connections with those around them. Riley initially aimed to raise \$500, but I am thrilled to share that as of the 11th of October he has achieved an outstanding fundraising total of \$1,740 for the Top Blokes Foundation. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour electorate, I wish to convey our heartfelt gratitude and admiration for Riley's remarkable efforts in generating much-needed support for the Top Blokes Foundation.

TARZAN CASTRO

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I would like to congratulate Tarzan Castro, from Lakelands Public School, who is taking up the challenge in October to Run for Autism. Tarzan has committed to Run for Autism 2023, with the aim to run 17 kilometres, and will be challenging himself to raise much-needed funds for Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) to help create a world where no-one on the autism spectrum is left behind. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour community, I would like to express our congratulations to Tarzan and wish him all the best to achieve his goal of running 17 kilometres for this worthy cause.

OAK FLATS HIGH SCHOOL – STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I would like to congratulate Oak Flats High School's Student Representative Council who initiated the Wear a Jersey for Mental Health Day to raise money for much needed youth mental health services. Oak Flats High School Captains Cheyenne and Beau were delighted to hand the money raised over to representatives from Headspace. The student's timely initiative has sparked a wonderful opportunity for collaboration between Oak Flats High School and headspace as they open up a new centre in the Shellharbour area later this year. Headspace provides free services for early intervention, mental health, drug and alcohol, and work and study support for young people aged 12 to 25. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour community, I would like to express our congratulations to Oak Flats High School's Student Representative Council for their collaboration with Headspace and money raised for much needed youth mental health services.

LAURA BOUZIDI

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)—I would like to recognise and acknowledge the incredible work of prolific volunteer, Ms Bouzidi. Ms Bouzidi 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 power to handle life's struggles by providing relevant and tangible support.

Ms Bouzidi is primarily involved with the organisation's food parcel program. Laura 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 Laura, many of our most vulnerable community members would most likely go hungry. The fact that Ms Bouzidi 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 Laura's selfless hard work serving the vulnerable people of the St George community for many years. I wish to sincerely thank Ms Bouzidi for the wonderful work she does to support our community, for which we are extremely grateful.

KRIS KWAN

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)—I would like to recognise and acknowledge the incredible work of prolific volunteer, Mr Kris Kwan. Mr Kwan has been giving up his 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 power to handle life's struggles by providing relevant and tangible support. Mr Kwan is primarily involved with the organisation's food parcel program. Kris and his 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 Kris, many of our most vulnerable community members would most likely go hungry. The fact that Mr Kwan sacrificed his health and wellbeing to continue delivering food parcels during the COVID-19 pandemic exemplifies his unwavering dedication and commitment to serving his local community. It is such an honour to be able to recognise the selfless and tiring work Kris does serving the vulnerable people of the St George community for many years. I wish to sincerely thank Mr Kwan for the wonderful work he does to support our community, for which we are extremely grateful.

SPENCER HARDING

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)—I would like to acknowledge the talents of one of Lake Macquarie's budding Futsal champions 10-year-old Spencer Harding from Cooranbong Public School. Nicknamed Fancy Feet by his teammates, young Spencer began playing futsal two years ago at Morisset PCYC, before joining in the more competitive Northern New South Wales Futsal League. For the past two years Spencer has been selected to play in the Central Coast School Team at the National Tournament in Queensland. During the gruelling competition teams play up to three games, and Spencer's outstanding performance this year didn't go unnoticed. His stand-out talent saw him selected to represent Australia in the Under 11s Australian Futsal Team that will tour China in the Jiangmen International Futsal Cup at the end of July 2024. The tour is a 10-day event where teams take on competitors from across China. Congratulations Spencer on this amazing and well-deserved achievement, and I wish you every success when you represent Australia next year.

NAMOI VALLEY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)—Namo Valley Christian School of Wee Waa has recently celebrated its 40th anniversary. The school started out with just 7 students in 1983, and today they have more than 100 students attending. Going from just 1 classroom with first grade students, to now having library facilities, gardens, and now covering to year 8. Old and current students attended the celebration, going down memory lane and raising money for a landscape project. I congratulate Namo Valley Christian School on reaching their 40-year milestone of education. The school has shown great commitment to the community of Wee Waa and this shows with the growing numbers throughout the years.

TONY HARE

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)—Tony Hare has recently retired with NSW Ambulance after working with them for over 45 years. Tony started his career as an honorary ambulance officer in Yass and since then he has worked across the state and in 2016 moved to the Gilgandra branch. During Tony's long career, he has been superintendent, set up rescue units at Hillston and Wagga Wagga, an educator, and trained in rescue and remote operations. Tony also did some time working in Wilcannia during the COVID pandemic. Tony is now going to use his skills to work with Careflight in the Northern Territory. I thank Tony for the years of dedication to NSW Ambulance. Your skills and commitment has helped and saved so many lives and I wish you all the best on your new journey.

KELLIE STUBBS

Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote)—Awareness surrounding mental health has certainly improved in recent decades. The stigma that was often attached to a mental health condition has been removed in many cases. And that is largely due to mental health advocates like Yarrawarra's Kellie Stubbs. Kellie has dedicated much of her time and energy into helping people in the Sutherland Shire through organisation, the Gotcha4Life Foundation. Kellie, who is a community ambassador for Gotcha4Life, was recently named a finalist in the

Westfield Local Heroes program. As a result her organisation, which also happens to be Gotcha4Life, will receive a \$5000 grant. The grant is also an acknowledgement for the incredible work Kellie has done throughout the community in relation to mental health. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare states that 44 per cent of Australians aged 16-85 have experienced a mental health disorder. That is an incredibly alarming figure and an indication of why people like Kellie are so valuable to their community. On behalf of the entire Heathcote electorate, thank you Kellie for your hard work, and congratulations on being a finalist in the Westfield Local Heroes program.

TWEED VRA TEAM

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed)—I wish to acknowledge the amazing Volunteer Rescue we have within the Tweed Shire Located at Chinderah the Tweed VRA team are this week celebrating a big birthday. For over 51 years we have been lucky to have the services of trained volunteers turning out to help those in need. 17th October 1972 was the day a public meeting was held, and the Tweed District Rescue was formed. Whether it be a major incident or flood the team are there to support their community. Thank you to Drew Carr and his fantastic team. Your commitment to the Tweed is outstanding

JOEL COCHRAN

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)—I congratulate Woollooware's Joel Cochran who was selected for the sixth annual AFL Futures Match. The game was played at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) prior to the 2023 Toyota AFL Grand Final that was held on Saturday 30 September. Sutherland Shire's Joel joined the most talented under 17 age AFL players from across the country. He is among five players from NSW to have had the opportunity to be apart of the Futures Match exhibition. Joel trained at the Sydney Swans Academy, which has provided him professional and age-appropriate development programs. The academy trains up to 700 people per year and has made a strong impact to the growth of the NSW AFL players wanting to showcase their talent. Joel also hopes to make selection for the 2024 AFL Academy Boys Program. All players named for the sixth annual AFL Future's Match are born in 2006 and will be eligible for selection in the 2024 AFL Draft. I commend Joel on his dedication to training and for playing in the winning team, 'Naitanui', and scoring two goals in front of the MCG crowd.

LAMBTON HIGH SCHOOL – OFF-SHORE WIND INDUSTRY PILOT

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—Lambton High School students were treated to an industry-first interactive digital VR experience with offshore wind STEM activities. It was all about energising young people to be ready for jobs and pathways in a developing offshore wind industry, possibly as early as 2029. The Novocastrian Wind partnership will need thousands of workers for the development of the off-shore wind farm. It plans to develop a scalable Unit of Work in collaboration with the NSW Department of Education so that every Year 10 student in the Hunter and Illawarra Region can experience offshore wind. The Lambton High School students are at the forefront of this endeavour. Novocastrian Wind needs to act now to prepare regional workers, the critical pathway for this being through young people in schools. This program was developed in collaboration with a global VR pioneer in education and energy, two Newcastle-based NSW curriculum experts and the local Hunter team from Creative Pipeline. The day was observed by TAFE NSW, University of Newcastle and HunterNet. Theoretical learning in the classroom clarified by real-world experience - fun and learning at the same time. Brilliant!

DR AARON WONG

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—Dr Aaron Wong has opened the doors of opportunity for countless young minds. He is one of 11 recipients of the University of Newcastle 2023 Alumni Excellence Awards. In the 48-year history of the Awards, University of Newcastle has recognised 216 alumni achievers. From international business leaders to creative superstars, research pioneers and human rights advocates, their remarkable stories inspire the next generation of students and future leaders to follow in their footsteps. His award is for Outstanding Volunteerism. Dr Wong studied Engineering and Computer Science and is Artificial Intelligence Engineering Manager of 4AI Systems. He helped create RoboCup Junior, an international robotics competition for the Hunter Region, igniting young minds to the wonders of coding and problem-solving. He later assumed leadership of the rapidly growing competition on a voluntary basis, for more than a decade volunteering countless hours and weekends hosting workshops for students and teachers. Recognising the skills and resourcing gaps within lower socioeconomic schools, he also secured funding for robotic kits, with many of his mentees in the competition advancing to compete at a national level. Congratulations, Dr Wong, on your award and for your dedication to students and STEM.

A SPLASH OF COLOUR

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—To date, 60 women have graduated from "A Splash of Colour Swimming" classes - and there are 300 more on the waiting list. This is a free 12-week swimming confidence program held at the University of Newcastle Forum, initiated by Zimbabwean woman Ennia Jones, who now lives in Newcastle. Ennia saw a lack of diversity in community swimming pools and sought to teach women with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds how to swim - to break stereotypes and to raise their confidence levels. The women are from diverse countries such as Colombia, Mexico, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Uganda, Ghana, Zimbabwe and India. Swimming lessons are provided by volunteer AUSTSWIM trainers and the program also addresses social issues that are unique to a number of CALD women, such as managing their hair (which is sensitive to the sodium hypochlorite in pools) during and after swimming, body image perception, and finding modest, culturally appropriate swimwear. Swimming is an inherent part of modern Australian culture, so congratulations, Ennia, on fostering a healthy sense of belonging and community for these local women.

BETTER BALANCED FUTURES – FAITH LEADERS DINNER

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—I was pleased to attend the Faith Leaders Dinner hosted by Better Balanced Futures on 3rd October, in Sydney Olympic Park. Better Balanced Futures is a charitable organisation committed to fostering robust, mutually respectful relationships between faith communities. Engaging with all levels of government, they strive to build a socially cohesive society that upholds religious freedoms. Better Balanced Futures not only respects, but celebrates diverse faith, for its invaluable contribution to enriching the social fabric and collective identity of our community. Their multifaith religious leaders and educators play a vital role in teaching tolerance and interfaith understanding to the next generation of leaders and professionals. It was great to join many of my exceptional Parliamentary Colleagues to mark the passing of Religious Vilification Legislation. Bringing together members of the Hindu, Islamic, Buddhist, Christian and Jewish faith communities and our leaders to share a meal was a true display of how interfaith practice fosters unity. Thank you to CEO Murray Norman, Co-Chairs Darren Bark and Surinder Jain, Secretary Sheikh Shadi Alsuleiman, Treasurer Bishop Michael Stead and the dedicated team at Better Balanced Futures for your efforts to champion religious diversity and empower our communities.

VICTORY IN THE PACIFIC – CABRA-VALE DIGGERS

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—Thank you to the Cabra-Vale Diggers for a moving Victory in the Pacific Commemoration on Monday 14th August 2023. Victory in the Pacific commemorates the end of WWII. On 15th August 1945, after five years, 11 months and 11 days, Australia's then Prime Minister, Ben Chifley, confirmed that war was over. This year marked the 78th Anniversary of this momentous occasion. Almost a million Australians served in WWII. Over 30,000 Australians were taken as prisoners of war and 39,000 never returned home. We pay tribute to the sacrifices made by the Australian Defence Forces personnel and their families to protect our freedom, democracy & sovereignty. Thank you to President Walter Robinson and the dedicated members of the Cabra-Vale Diggers Club for a thoughtful commemoration. It was an honour to join Major Simon Statton, Major General Paul Irving (Ret'd) AM, PSM, RFD, General Mr Matthew McCarty Representative of the American Consul, Colonel Shane Gries United States Defence Attache, Bill Dobbie New Zealand Consul General, Shuichi Tokuda Consul General of Japan, Local and State Members, squadrons and schools to pay tribute to honor Australia's Veterans. Lest we forget.

SOUTH SUDANESE COMMUNITY AND YOUTH ASSOCIATION

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—It was great to join the South Sudanese Community & Youth Association to present a Volunteering Diversity and Inclusion Grant on 10th September in Blacktown. The South Sudanese Community & Youth Association is a grassroots, not-for-profit organisation that embraces unity. The Association values unique perspectives of their members to understand lines of difference and positively address obstacles to change together. Helping emerging community leaders develop the skills they need, the Association provides self-determined, intersectional opportunities to their communities. Providing \$23,520 to the South Sudanese Community & Youth Association, the Grant helps fund the South Sudanese and CALD Communities Volunteering Diversity & Inclusion Project. This Project enhances cultural competency by promoting volunteer opportunities. Focused on volunteer recruitment and recognition, this Program provides invaluable training. It aims to engage and empower volunteers, who will go on to support their communities by delivering much-needed culturally appropriate programs and activities. With an empathetic understanding of lived experiences and selfless drive to help others, volunteers are the heartbeat of our community. Thank you to President Arek Desa and the committed volunteers of the South Sudanese Community & Youth Association for your integral role in Western Sydney.

BOUDDI FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS AWARDS

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—I would like to commend the Bouddi Foundation for the Arts for their ongoing support and fostering of young talent and championing the Arts here on the Central Coast since 2011. The Bouddi Foundation for the Arts recently held its annual Art Awards Presentation for young artists awarding grants and scholarships to 45 successful applicants totalling close to \$80,000. Founded by John Bell who continues in the role of Chair and lead Patron, the Foundation relies entirely on the generosity of private donors to support its work. In this time of financial stress and uncertainty it is wonderful to have a foundation that is helping our aspiring artists and helping them achieve their dreams. Congratulations to all the young artists awarded grants and scholarships.

DAVISTOWN PUTT PUTT REGATTA

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—I would like to congratulate the organising committee of the Davistown Putt Putt Regatta and Wooden Boast Festival and all the local business sponsors for a fantastic community and fundraising event which was held over the weekend of 14-15th October. This weekend marked the 23rd year of holding of this event and whilst poor weather has hampered recent years, the weekend weather was blue skies and perfect water conditions. Celebrating the Central Coast boating culture, heritage and local character, heritage ferries and putt putts were on display with the watercraft making their way from Gosford Sailing Club down to the Woy Woy Channel returning via Paddy's Channel. The crowd cheered on the boats which was won by Galloping Maggot in the diesel class and Taffy in the petrol class. An estimated 17,000 people enjoyed festival on the Sunday which included classic cars display, market stalls and vintage farm machinery and marine related displays. The event is an important fundraiser for Kids with Cancer and the success of this weekend takes the amount raised to almost \$50,000 since the Davistown Putt Putt Regatta & Wooden Boast Festival joined forces with the charity. Congratulations to everyone involved.

NICOLA OLYSLAGERS AND ALLANAH PITCHER

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—I would like to take this opportunity to recognise two outstanding athletes, Nicola Olyslagers and Allanah Pitcher, who both reside from my electorate. Nicola and Allanah are both dedicated and accomplished Australian representative athletes who achieved fantastic results at the recent 2023 World Athletics Championships which was held in Budapest, Hungary. Olympic silver medallist, Nicola claimed bronze in the high jump while competing in her 4th consecutive World Championships while Allanah placed 21st in the 35km race walk during her second Australian team appearance. Both athletes made the Australian athletics community incredibly proud with their sportsmanship and dedication to their craft. It's important to recognise the immense commitment, perseverance and talent that is required to successfully compete at such prestigious international events. Nicola and Allanah have not only demonstrated these qualities but have become a source of inspiration for aspiring athletes in our wider community. These achievements reflect the values and spirit of the nation and acknowledging and celebrating their success empowers the athlete inside of everyone and encourage all Australians to live a healthy and active lifestyle. Congratulations Nicola and Allanah, I wish you both continued success in your sporting pursuits.

TOP OF THE RANGE MEAT COMPANY

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise Top of the Range Meat Company on continuing to grow and expand their Fig Tree Park angus yearling bull breeding enterprise, with the latest edition being the Top of the Range Meat Company, located in Guyra. I congratulate the company's owners Jason Siddell and Laura Penrose on this outstanding achievement, which has been a result of a lot of hardwork and passion. This achievement is on the back of an impressive academic background, with Jason starting out with a Bachelor of Rural Science and specialising in Meat Science and Laura a Bachelor of Livestock Genetics and graduating with first class honours. Combining their passion, they have developed their bull breeding program and extended it into Wagyu beef. I commend Jason and Laura on their distinguishing ethos, that is, to take customers on a true paddock to plate journey with high-quality, ethically raised meat sourced from their doorstep. I also commend Jason and Laura on their commitment to the improvement in Beef Breeding, to the Wagyu industry and to Australian Agriculture.

MOREE RENAL SUPPORT COMMITTEE INC

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise the wonderful achievements of the Moree Renal Support Committee Inc and their volunteers for recently raising over \$57,000 and gifting this to the Moree Hospital, to purchase a new Ultrasound machine. In all, the group has raised an amazing \$496,300 for the hospital to purchase much needed equipment to service the Moree area. I congratulate each of the committee members, including President Will Sabine, Vice President Alan Stevens, Treasurer Madonna McInnes, Secretary Kylie Driscoll, Publicity Officer Margaret Young and members John Driscoll, Barbara Stevens, Sharon Brodie

and Luanne Andrews. Special thanks to the 2002 founders, Sammy Sabine and Nola Shearer, along with Henry and Joyce McLaren. Over time the group has earned an impressive list of awards and deservedly so! I commend all who have supported the fundraising, including the Moree Services Club, who not only host the raffles, but also provided weekly membership gifts, adding to the success of the fundraising. The committee's hard work and tireless efforts are appreciated by the whole community. Regional towns cannot function without the enduring support and commitment given by volunteers such as yourselves.

WALCHA GARDEN CLUB CELEBRATE 75 YEARS

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise Walcha Club for reaching a remarkable 75-year milestone, celebrating with a luncheon at the Walcha Bowling Club. The Garden Club started in 1948 when Mrs Nancy Nivison asked likeminded gardeners would they like to start a club - and the Walcha Horticultural Society sprouted! I congratulate President Di Bazely, Treasurer Jenny Hoy and Secretary Diana Lisle and their predecessors for their ongoing contribution to gardens, festivals and many fundraising occasions. Throughout the year the club is known for its multitude of activities, including garden maintenance of community facilities, bus trips to view gardens, monthly meetings with guest speakers, along with a regular newspaper column. I commend Hep Tozer, Barbara Dunn and Phyllis Hoy on being awarded Life Membership for their years of dedication. A special thank you to Peta Trahar for being the guest speaker, Vicki McIvor for making the cake and to the Walcha Bowling Club for providing the venue for this celebration. Thank you to each member for their commitment to the club and to the Walcha community.

RHONDA BETTS

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—I would like to recognise Dubbo sportswoman Rhonda Betts for her outstanding efforts at the Australian Masters Indoor Rowing Championships! Winning not one, not two, but three gold medals is an incredible testament to Rhonda's dedication, skill, and determination and her passion for the sport she loves! This isn't Rhonda's first time in the. Rhonda represented Australia earlier this year at the World Dragon Boating Championships in Thailand and collecting another gold medal haul in Sydney at the NSW Indoor Rowing Championships. Rhonda, your hard work and talent have truly shone through, and you've made all of us proud. Keep reaching for the stars and continue to inspire us with your outstanding performance. Well done!

STEPHANIE ARPASI

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—I would like to congratulate Dubbo young woman Stephanie Arpasi, who was recently named the National Road Transport Association, Youth Employee of the Year. Not only has Stephanie been recognised for inspiring other young women in a predominantly male dominated industry, the 22-year-old driver-operator has also made a large impact on colleagues in a short period of time. Stephanie has been commended for her skills in safely securing heavy equipment for long haulage and also applies her meticulous approach to driving. Working for Fardell's Heavy Haulage, Stephanie provides heavy haulage, general and bulk freight services, wet and dry plant hire, and earthmoving for the Central West and is clearly excelling in her field. It's one thing to enter an industry where there are fewer women behind the wheel of big rigs than there are men, but to win an award and be recognised on a national level is outstanding. Congratulations again Stephanie, your future is looking very bright!

DUBBO FAMILY DAY CARE

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—I would like to recognise the incredible team & educators of Dubbo Family Day Care for being awarded the Perpetual Star Award in the 2023 Excellence in Family Day Care Awards. Each year Family Day Care Australia selects an educator, coordinator and service that has contributed to the family day care sector for a significant period of time, longer than 15 years, which continues to thrive, and this year, Dubbo Family Day Care took out the top spot! Dubbo Family Day Care has been operating since 1976 and currently has 27 educators that provide a service for over 200 children each week. Each year only one service in Australia is chosen for this award, so this is no small feat. Early Childhood Educators play such a crucial role in the development and happiness of our children, so to see the Dubbo Family Day Care service recognised for the impact they make is very inspiring. Well done on this wonderful accolade!

GOT IT CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—Today, I take the opportunity to recognise both the Mid North Coast Local Health District and the Adolescent Mental Health Service team for their innovative and impressive mental health program supporting children - 'GOT IT' (Getting on Track in Time). The program and the team behind it received State recognition in Sydney at the WayAhead Mental Health Matters Awards. The Mental Health Matters Youth Award was accepted by Mental Health Clinician/Social Worker, Olivia Monk and Aboriginal Mental Health Trainee, Tianna Bailey on behalf of the team. The early intervention program which supports children, parents and staff was delivered at Green Hill Public School in Kempsey targeting students

displaying conduct disorder which is characterised by antisocial behaviour. This program is a proactive, specialised early intervention mental health program targeting children aged 5-8 years. It is specifically designed for those displaying conduct problems such as defiance, aggression and disruptive behaviours. The intervention is multi-purpose designed to reduce the severity and frequency of conduct issues in children and at the same time strengthening the skills and abilities of parents to parent well. Congratulations to the entire team and thank you for your dedication and commitment.

HASTINGS ROTARACT – MENTAL HEALTH BALL

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—Congratulations to the Hastings Rotaract team for coordinating another successful Mental Health Ball held on 14th October at Panthers Port Macquarie. The third annual Hastings Rotaract Mental Health Ball was convened last Saturday night in a decked-out auditorium at Panthers with the theme The Great Gatsby. There was much dapper, suave and elegance on display reflecting what we love about the 1920's. Attendance peaked at 149 tickets, the highest Rotaract has ever sold which is a testament to the new Committee and their commitment to raising funds to support local youth. Attracting a wealth of support from local businesses, the Mental Health Ball collected more than \$1000 worth of prizes which had been donated for raffles. To complete the night and complement the Great Gatsby theme, a five-piece band called the "Dirty Coverz" belted it out on a packed-out dance floor. The night was a huge success with over \$4,000 raised for their chosen charity. Congratulations to the Committee members: Tamar Leibenson, Keiran Rodgers, Tahni Triffitt, Mark West, Sean Pollington, Izzie Woolnough and Emily Brekell-Smyth. It is so inspiring to see the youth of our community dedicated to improving the lives of our most vulnerable.

HUNGRY POINT RESERVE LAND MANAGER MEMBERS

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)—I sincerely thank the former members of the Hungry Point Reserve Land Manager who until last month had collectively acted as the passionate and careful custodians of the beautiful and significant place at the southern point of Cronulla. Most recently their efforts involved painstaking preparation of plans for the Hungry Point Clifftop Walkway. Six of the seven members were hard working and generous volunteers. Outgoing Chair John Rayner PSM is a former long-term general manager of Sutherland Shire Council. Byron Hurst is chair of the Hazelhurst Regional Art Gallery and former Sutherland Shire Councillor. Paul Kelly has more than 20 years' experience as a (former) senior executive in Commonwealth and NSW government agencies. Peter Kerr is a lawyer and Member of the Order of Australia for his service to water polo and the community. Gallie McPhee is a former Qantas travel industry executive and small business owner. Dunstan De Souza is senior partner at lawyers Colin Biggers and Paisley and is an experienced non-executive director for a range of not for profit organisations. The seventh member was ex-officio member Manjeet Grewal, Chief Executive Officer of Sutherland Shire Council.

URSULA CARLILE

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)—Vale Ursula Carlile, a transformative figure in swimming whose legacy is woven into the fabric of Carlile Swimming. As Australia's inaugural female Olympic coach, Ursula, alongside her husband Forbes, revolutionised the sport with innovations such as the pace clock and circle swimming. Their commitment to excellence even led them to prioritise building a teaching pool over a conventional wedding celebration. Ursula's influence extended beyond coaching national teams; she played a pivotal role in shaping Carlile Swimming into a global powerhouse. Her foresight and business acumen recognised the significance of learn-to-swim programs, laying the foundation for a business model that not only thrived but supported elite swimming endeavours. Amidst the pool's waters, Ursula's expert eye guided generations of swimmers. Thousands learned to swim under her watchful gaze, creating a lineage of champions. Carlile Swimming, with Ursula at its helm, now boasts nine teaching pools in Sydney and stands as a beacon of excellence in the aquatic world. In Ursula's passing, we bid farewell to a trailblazing coach and visionary entrepreneur. Her impact on Carlile Swimming, from its humble beginnings to global recognition, ensures her legacy will continue to inspire future generations in the water. May she rest in peace.

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY GRADUATION

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)—I wish to bring to the attention of the House those from my electorate of Ryde who graduated from Macquarie University on 9 October 2023. It was a privilege to attend the ceremony and celebrate the achievements of those who were marking the culmination of years of dedication, perseverance, and academic excellence. In delivering the occasional address, I had the opportunity of sharing a few brief insights and wishing each of the graduates well in their next endeavors. From my electorate in Ryde, I congratulate Elijah Berghofer, Sacon Boyd, and Jessica Su on their Bachelor of Commerce degrees; Hui Zheng on their Masters of Marketing; and Dr Bruce Jahandideh on their Doctor of Philosophy. Each stands as shining examples of tenacity and accomplishment and I know their journey at Macquarie University reflects a commitment to knowledge and a spirit of resilience that will undoubtedly propel them along successful and vibrant paths. As these graduates

embark on new journeys, I wish each and every one of them all the best and know that the work they have put in will pay off. Congratulations on your graduation from Macquarie University!

RIDE 2 WORK DAY

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)—18 October marked a pedal-powered fiesta at Macquarie Park as we joined the nationwide celebration of Ride 2 Work Day. The innovation district transformed into a vibrant cycling haven, welcoming professionals, students, and locals to partake in the two-wheeled revelry. The streets buzzed with the hum of excitement as enthusiasts gathered for a communal coffee and breakfast, fueling up for a day of eco-friendly commuting. Amidst the festivities, the spotlight was stolen by the state-of-the-art e-bike trials. Participants eagerly hopped on these futuristic rides, experiencing the seamless blend of technology and sustainable transportation. Bike tune-ups added an extra layer of care to the event, ensuring that every cyclist's journey would be smooth and enjoyable. In a stroke of luck for 21 local commuters, Lug+Carrie e-bikes became their companions for the month, courtesy of Connect Macquarie Park Innovation District. This initiative not only encouraged a greener commute but also offered a taste of the electrically charged future of urban mobility. Ride 2 Work Day, Macquarie Park stood united, pedaling towards a cleaner, healthier, and more connected community. Thank you to Mark Ames from Connect Macquarie Park and the team at Optus for making it all happen!

ROBERTSON SHOW COMMITTEE

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)—I rise today to recognise the Robertson Show Committee. The Robertson Show, like many of the other regional agricultural shows, supports the vitality of primary production and promotes the development and sustainability of high-quality pastoral, agricultural, horticultural, and industrial activities within the region. In order to remain abreast of best and innovative practices, the Robertson Show Committee recently received a community assistance grant, for a water refill station, which has now been installed at the showground. Working collaboratively with Wingecarribee Council, to remain in line with the new packaging regulations, the show committee have introduced Robertson Show branded bottles, which can now be conveniently refilled at the new water station. The benefits of the water station will extend to also be used by the Robertson Football Club and Pony Club and the many other events held at the showground. These initiatives will also help to achieve the Robertson Show's war on waste, helping to manage the large volume of packaging and cups, which end up in landfill. I congratulate the Robertson Show Committee and applaud their initiative fortitude to continue to make improvements for Robertson and their broader community.

CATHERINE CULLEY

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)—I rise today to recognise Catherine Culley, the Adult Volunteer recipient of the 2023 Southern Inland Volunteer Awards. Ms Culley volunteered endless hours for veterinary care for animals affected by the recent fire which impacted Golspie to Taralga. Catherine also provides many hours to the Crookwell Pups Rugby and St Mary's Primary School. The role which Ms Culley has volunteered is extremely varied and vast, covering many domains within animal welfare, disaster relief, emergency response, education, sport, community services, and many other areas. The individuals, families, communities, and industries who have benefitted from Ms Culley's volunteer activities are, and remain, eternally grateful for her tireless effort and dedication to her varied role as a volunteer. I take this time to sincerely recognise and congratulate Catherine for her dedication to the community.

ANNALISE DENNY

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)—I rise today to recognise Annalise Denny, the Young Volunteer recipient of the 2023 Southern Inland Volunteer Awards. Ms Denny, who dedicates her time to both St John Ambulance, Queanbeyan, and Goulburn Divisions, where she provides both medical emergency training and mentoring to the members of each division. The role which Annalise has volunteered is extremely varied and vast, covering many domains within health, education, emergency response, community services, events and many other areas. The individuals, families, groups, and industries are, and remain, eternally grateful for her tireless effort and dedication to her varied role as a volunteer. I take this time to sincerely recognise and congratulate Annalise for her dedication to the community.

MATILDA MOBBS

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)—In the heart of the Badgerys Creek community, we have a shining star, Matilda Mobbs, whose determination, resilience, and unwavering spirit inspire us all. Matilda, a remarkable 14-year-old resident of Glenmore Park, has faced surgeries and health setbacks with unparalleled courage, never losing sight of her dream to represent Australia as a dual Paralympian. In 2021, Matilda achieved a remarkable feat, breaking a NSW swimming record in the 13-and-under 400m multiclass S8 event—a record that had stood for an astonishing 16 years. Her dedication and relentless pursuit of excellence were on full display. But Matilda's journey doesn't end there. In 2020, she made history by becoming the youngest classified archer in

the world at the Nationals in Melbourne, where she fearlessly took on the Olympic distance of 70 meters. Matilda Mobbs is a true testament to the power of passion, resilience, and the indomitable human spirit. She embodies the very essence of our community—where dreams are not only cherished but realized. Matilda, you are an inspiration to us all, and we stand with you as you continue to aim for greatness on the global stage.

ZACHERY MALPASS

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgers Creek)—In our vibrant community, we find inspiration in the remarkable resilience and strength of individuals like Zachery Malpass, a young warrior whose journey has touched our hearts. At age five, Zachery faces a battle tougher than most could imagine, diagnosed with Leukemia shortly after starting school. Despite the challenges he's encountered, Zachery's spirit shines brightly. For Zachery, toys are more than just playthings—they are lifelines that help him embrace the joy of childhood, providing solace during his hospital stays and brightening his days. They serve as vital tools, keeping his imagination and brilliant young mind active and alive. This festive season, Zachery's remarkable story takes center stage as he becomes an Amazon Playmaker. His connection with the Starlight team and his inspirational journey led to this well-deserved opportunity. Zachery now enjoys the privilege of receiving new toys delivered to his home, where he puts his boundless playing skills to the test alongside his sisters. With enthusiasm, Zachery recommends the Batman Gotham City Guardian Playset—a testament to his adventurous spirit. I extend my heartfelt well wishes to Zachery. Your resilience and radiant spirit are an inspiration to us all.

MAITLAND HOSPITAL STAFF – VANUATU AID MISSION

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)—Thank you to the hardworking team of Maitland Hospital Emergency Department staff who travelled to Vanuatu, in their own time, to provide health care, equipment and education to the community of Vanuatu. The trip was organised by emergency staff specialist Dr Sherozina Sharma who has undertaken several solo medical missions over the last 9 years. Dr Sharma gathered a team of six staff members including two emergency department physicians, three registrars and a nurse practitioner. They partnered with the Vanuatu Ministry of Health and Medical Santo Clinic to help build the capacity of the local health system and provide immediate medical care to the community. Over the two week trip the team treated and educated more than 250 residents and health workers with medical outreach, simulated teaching sessions, identified simple solutions to improve patient outcomes. To support this mission the staff of Maitland Hospital raised over \$4000 to donate medical equipment to Vanuatu, and planning is already underway for 2024. My sincerest thanks to Dr Sharma and her team for all of their hard work and generosity.

UNITED MENTAL HEALTH DAY EVENT

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)—Congratulations to the Uniting Housing and Accommodation Support Initiative for hosting the first World Mental Health Day in Maitland Park last week. Over thirty service providers from across the Hunter came together to show what's available in our region for those experiencing poor mental health. There were stalls to access counselling, psychology, housing, carers, disability support services, legal aid and senior's services. The event was a collaboration between Uniting, the Department of Communities and Justice, Hume Housing, Wellways, Carrie's Place, Drive and One Door who all assisted in co-ordinating the event. Staff from Woolworths at Maitland, Green Hills, Cessnock, Aberglasslyn and Rutherford also ran a free barbecue for attendees. The day spoke specifically about anxiety. Anxiety affects everybody, it does not discriminate by age, gender or culture. The event focussed on bringing people together as a community to connect. A big thank you and congratulations to the Uniting team on running this successful event for the Maitland Community.

MAITLAND REPERTORY THEATRE

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)—Congratulations to Maitland Repertory Theatre on their most recent production, Dorothy in Wonderland. Maitland Repertory Theatre provides an environment for age-specific groups to train in the dramatic arts and perform on stage. This production features Maitland Repertory Theatre junior actors Hayley Bolam, Lilah McAlpine, Ava Geering, Gillis Kelly and Torah Hulbert as well as an ensemble cast. The production was directed by Rhiannon McDonald and her team who pulled together two casts of talented and enthusiastic actors as part of delivering a junior production. The play Dorothy in Wonderland written by Brian Taylor fuses the story of the Wizard of Oz and Alice in Wonderland, a careful adaptation of the works of L. Frank Baum and Lewis Carroll for the Maitland Repertory Theatre. The adapted story sees Dorothy's friends try to help her find her way home, meeting many interesting characters along the way, including Alice, the White Rabbit, Mad Hatter, March Hare, the Cheshire Cat and many more. They face a dangerous new foe, the Queen of Hearts. Dorothy and Alice team up to defeat the queen at croquet and return Wonderland to normal. Congratulations to all involved in this fantastic production.

RENEE TRAYNOR – WOMEN IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AWARD

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)—On Wednesday 4th October 2023, inspirational and talented women from across NSW councils were recognised for their accomplishments at the prestigious Ministers' Awards for Women in Local Government. It gives me great pleasure to congratulate Renee Traynor of Canterbury Bankstown City Council for receiving the 'Women of Distinction Award – Metro' for her outstanding achievements in fostering an accessible and inclusive City. Renee joined the Council as a cadet with the vision to make a difference in the community. Fourteen years on, Renee is a Team Leader for the council's Diversity and Inclusion unit. Since being appointed Team Leader, she has been instrumental in a variety of community initiatives, including establishing the Council's annual Say NO to DV Tug O' War Cup, planning Canterbury Bankstown City Council's 2023 Domestic Violence Summit, developing a First Nations Cultural Hub and Resource Centre, Reconciliation Action Plan and initiating a Social Justice Charter. The annual Women in Local Government Awards recognise the invaluable contribution and achievements of women in the local government sector who are helping increase the participation and advancement of women and breaking down gender stereotypes. Congratulations Renee for this incredible achievement!

ALI FARAJ – AUSTRALIAN MENTAL HEALTH PRIZE

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)—On Monday 25 September 2023, the University of New South Wales announced the award winners for the 2023 Australian Mental Health Prize. Among the four winners was Ali Faraj, a prominent young Muslim leader from Western Sydney. The Australian Mental Health Prize, established in 2016 seeks to recognise Australians who have made outstanding contributions to either the promotion of mental health or the prevention and treatment of mental illness. Ali Faraj was awarded the prize in the category of 'Community Hero' to recognise and celebrate his outstanding mental health leadership in the Western Sydney Community. As the General Manager Community of the GWS Giants, Ali fosters unity and mental well-being through diverse initiatives, particularly among youth. Recognised as 'Case Worker of the Year' by the Migration Council Australia in 2015, Ali's collaborations with schools and government bodies emphasise social cohesion. During the COVID-19 lockdown, Ali's leadership emerged through the GWS Giant initiatives, aiding over 15,000 vulnerable families. Ali's commitment to suicide prevention and mental health is evident through his role as Chairman of Educaid Australia, a leading Mental Health organisation working with culturally and linguistically diverse faith communities across Australia.

ST NICHOLAS 50TH ANNIVERSARY GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATION

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)—On Saturday 7 October 2023, I had the pleasure of attending St Nicholas Church Punchbowl's spectacular Golden Jubilee Ball for their 50th Anniversary at the Grand Vaudeville Function Centre. Led by His Eminence Metropolitan Basilios, the 50th-anniversary celebration of St. Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Church was a momentous occasion for the community, commemorating 5 decades of spiritual guidance, worship, and community engagement. St Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Church was established in 1971 to serve the growing Antiochian Orthodox community in Sydney. Throughout its 50-year history, St Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Church has been actively involved in serving both its parishioners and the wider community through various initiatives aimed at fostering fellowship and promoting cultural heritage. St. Nicholas serves as a spiritual home for its parishioners, providing regular services and organising cultural festivals, music concerts, and art exhibitions that showcase cultural heritage. St Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Church Golden Jubilee Ball not only celebrated its 50th anniversary but also served as a means of sharing its cultural treasures with the wider community. This is an incredible achievement not only for the St Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Church but also for the wider community.

CHARLIE JONACH

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills)—Congratulations to Charlie Jonach of Padstow who recently won the Australian National Irish Dancing Championships in the Sub Minor Boys 8 years category. Charlie has been dancing for 18 months and attends Fiona Gaye Moore Academy in Padstow. It was Charlie's first time competing in nationals and he performed two dances of about 90 seconds each – in soft and hard shoes. It was a combination of his hard work, dedication and a touch of that "luck of the Irish", which saw Charlie snag first prize. Charlie's family has inspired his love of Irish dancing, with his Mum, Kate, having lived in Ireland. Both Charlie's mum and his dad, Chris, also perform Irish folk music. His parents have a love and appreciation of Irish culture and wanted their children, including Charlie's younger sister Elke, to have a connection to their Irish heritage through the arts. My electorate of East Hills also has a historical connection to Ireland – the Bankstown area was once known as Irishtown due to the large number of Irish settlers. Charlie will compete again this year in the State and National Championships, and I wish him every success.

PADSTOW COMMUNITY CARE- SPRING ACTIVE APPEAL

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills)—I recognise the work of Padstow Community Care and their Spring Active Appeal. Throughout the month of October, the group will embark on a remarkable journey to make a tangible difference to the lives of individuals affected by Domestic Violence who are seeking to rebuild their futures. The Padstow Community Care Spring Challenge Team are leading the way in this initiative, with Katie Wendt running/walking towards her goal of 100 km, John Grinsell, cycling towards 300 km, and Mark Bool, also cycling towards 200 km. These dedicated team members are not only pursuing personal fitness goals but are also raising funds to acquire two invaluable support packs: the 'Bag of Change' and the 'Package of Hope.' The 'Bag of Change' and 'Package of Hope' contain essential items that provide a solid foundation for individuals embarking on a new chapter in their lives. These packs offer not only practical support but also a reminder that in the face of significant challenges, they are not alone. I commend this wonderful initiative, and the Padstow Community Care team's commitment to creating a brighter future for those affected by Domestic Violence.

EAST HILLS BOYS HIGH SCHOOL- ONE FOOT FORWARD INITIATIVE

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills)—Congratulations to the 2024 Student Leadership Team at East Hills Boys High School for taking a commendable step to support the community during Mental Health Month this October. Under the guidance of their HSIE teacher, Falahola Manu, this newly elected Student Leadership Team has embarked on an inspiring journey through the "One Foot Forward" initiative organised by the Black Dog Institute. This initiative raises awareness and provides essential support for mental health, a cause that deeply resonates with the team. With their first-hand experiences of friends and family members who have faced mental health issues, the Student Leadership Team have set a goal to collectively walk 150km throughout October, with the admirable aim of raising \$500. Many of them have already taken substantial steps, individually covering 15-20km, and they plan to conclude their initiative with a group walk on 31 October. I am incredibly proud of the work that these students are doing and encourage people to donate to the cause. Together, as a community, we can rally behind these compassionate students in their mission to raise awareness and funds for mental health support.

WESTFIELD LOCAL HERO FINALISTS

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)—Mr Speaker I would like to rise to congratulate the finalists for the Westfield Local Hero award Michelle Mott from Be Centre Foundation and Vanessa Karakas from Women and Children First. Michelle Mott gives hours every week to help Northern Beaches parents make positive changes for their children. As a volunteer Parent Counsellor at the Be Centre Foundation, Michelle provides one-on-one counselling to parents whose children attend play therapy. She provides an emotionally safe place for parents to learn how to improve their home environment. Vanessa Karakas is a Caseworker at Women & Children First, where she goes beyond the call of duty to support Northern Beaches survivors of domestic violence. She always caring and calm when women are most vulnerable, helping them to transition from surviving to thriving. Both organisations that these finalists represent will each receive \$5,000 dollars this will go a long way in their work to make our a community a better place. I again thank and congratulate Michelle and Vanessa for all the fantastic work that they do.

TIM HEWSON WESTFIELD LOCAL HERO

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)—Mr Speaker I would like to rise to congratulate local legend Tim Hewson who has recently been recognised as the Westfield Local Hero. Tim started Mongrels Men to encourage thousands of men on the Northern Beaches to get outdoors to exercise and feel part of a supportive community. He spends many hours of his time working on the charity and attends four or five meet-ups a week for a chat over coffee and a run, walk, swim or game of soccer. In the past 18 months the charity has hosted weekly meetups for men aged 30-70 yrs old in Manly, Dee Why, Bondi and Castlecrag. This award and the \$20,000 dollar donation to Mongrels Men that comes with it is a fantastic way to reward Tim for all the great work he does in the community. However Tim says the best reward is when families tell him that he has helped men become better fathers, grandfathers, uncles, sons, employers and employees.

MANLY WARRINGAH SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION

Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)—Congratulations to the wonderful Manly Warringah Softball Association, which has been providing a community grassroots sporting competition on the Northern Beaches for over 50 years. MWSA has over 800 members from ages 4 and up to 80+ and includes approximately 600 families. The MWSA team continue to work hard to share their love of softball with the broader community. Their recent social media and outreach campaign including 'come and try days', reflect MWSA's dedication to sharing the benefits of softball with as many people as possible. For years, MWSA have worked to create a strong community, nurturing local talent and offering opportunities for players of all ages and skill levels. I recently had the

opportunity to attend round 1 of the Manly Warringah Softball Association's 2023/24 summer season. Thank you to the hard-working committee for extending an invitation and all the work you put into a successful season opener - it was a great day out on the diamond! Thank you to the stellar committee: President – Doug Freeman, Vice President – Janine Rolfe Treasurer – Doug Stracey, Secretary – Gai Cohen, General Committee – Sue Brandenburg, Kat Baldwin, Jess Morley, Nikki Morley, Kim Trim & Alli Wall

NEWPORT, SYDNEY AUSTRALIA COMMUNITY GROUP

Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)—Mr Speaker, many Members in this place will know very well the positive role that local Facebook groups play in connecting local community, businesses and keeping residents informed. The Pittwater community is serviced by many wonderful Facebook groups and the Newport, Sydney Australia Community Group is no exception. The group has over 4,500 members and its success is a tribute to its wonderful admin team: Gordon Dodd, Jake McDonall, Natasha Dann, Taryn Pearce, Jane Gamson, Cherie Sevenoaks, Chris Fesdekjian and Kim Jeffery. As most would be aware, Facebook can be a place where keyboard warriors and anarchy runs rampant. But, thanks to the selfless dedication of the admin team, the Newport, Sydney Australia Community Group remains a safe space and friendly for our community to stay connected. Recent contributions have been diverse, from residents advertising their bathtub repair business to call outs for musicians to perform at local concerts, anyone can find information or services via the group. Facilitating this group takes hours every week. On behalf of the group's members, I thank Gordon, Jake, Natasha, Taryn, Jane, Cherie, Chris and Kim for their service to our community.

MONA VALE TO AVALON TO PALM BEACH COMMUNITY PAGE

Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)—Mr Speaker, many Members in this place will know very well the positive role that local Facebook groups play in connecting local community, businesses and keeping residents informed. The Pittwater community is serviced by many wonderful Facebook groups and the Mona Vale to Avalon to Palm Beach Community Page is no exception. The group has over members and its success is a tribute to its wonderful admin team: Ryan Maloney and Leissa Dawson. As most would be aware, Facebook can be a place where keyboard warriors and anarchy runs rampant. But, thanks to the selfless dedication of the admin team, the Mona Vale to Avalon to Palm Beach Community Page remains a safe space and friendly for our community to stay connected. Recent contributions have been diverse, from residents sharing amazing pictures of Mona Vale beach pool to advertising their overseas yoga retreats, anyone can find information or services via the group. Facilitating this group takes hours every week. On behalf of the group's members, I thank Ryan and Leissa for their service to our community.

MACLEAN FOOTBALL CLUB

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)—Maclean 'Bobcats' Football Club came out triumphant at the recent Football Far North Coast Association presentation with two of its players scooping awards. After making the Women's Premier League Team of the Year for the first time in 2022, Rachel Anderson went even better this year. She was not only named in the Team of the Year for the second season in a row but took out the Golden Boot for leading goal scorer and named FFNC Player of the Year. Rachel is a workhorse on the field with her pace and eye for a goal making her a standout team player. She follows in the footsteps of her mum Natalie who was also awarded Premier League Player of the Year back in 1998 making the first ever parent/child, male or female to achieve the feat in the 75-year history of FFNC. In the men's division, long-time Bobcat player Jarred Doyle was named in the Men's Premier's League Team of the Year to round out another terrific season not only as a player, but as a coach. He continues to be a valuable player with his on-field spark and influence and now stepping up as a coach.

GRAFTON MIDDAY ROTARY

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)—I congratulate Grafton Midday Rotarian Patty Hewitt and fellow Rotarians for their fundraising efforts in aid of Grafton Base Hospital's Maternity Unit. A High Tea event held last year saw \$9000 raised allowing the purchase of a state-of-the-art machine used to assist transport babies requiring specialist care. This vital piece of equipment will be put to good use in the Maternity Unit where it will assist in the transportation of vulnerable infants between Grafton and metropolitan medical facilities. It will also support mothers with premature babies born before 34 weeks by providing ongoing care to the baby whilst in transit and keeping mum and bub together post-birth. Maternity Unit Manager Alison Fels gratefully accepted the donated equipment and said the Unit was very lucky to have people in the community like Grafton Midday Rotarians who actively fundraise to make the lives of others better. I witness time and again the unwavering kindness of people living in our community. Fundraisers like this have a profound impact on the lives of those around us and I thank the Rotarians for their service. A special thank you to the Coutts Crossing Inc. Croquet Club for their donation of \$5000 and South Grafton Women's Bowling Club who donated \$250 towards the event.

JETTS GRAFTON

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)—I would like to acknowledge in the NSW Parliament the outstanding achievement of a local small business in Grafton who are doing some amazing things. That business is Jetts Grafton who have not only been named Club of the Year in the Queensland Network, but has taken out the coveted national title of Club of the Year at the National Gala Back Tie Awards on the Gold Coast. There are 129 Jetts clubs in Australia and I am very proud to inform the House today that Jetts Grafton is now the number one club in the nation. I know that Jo and Cass have been working day and night to make their gym number one in Australia and this is a massive accomplishment. Jo and Cass are deeply connected in the Grafton community. They are terrific community citizens and are very much member outcome-driven. I am sure this has helped them win not only the State gong, but the National Award. Local small businesses really are the heartbeat of any community and the Jetts Grafton team most definitely reflects that. Congratulations again Jo and Cass. I'm sure the much deserved trophies have pride of place in your club.

PARRAMATTA LANES

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)—Come alive at Lanes! From October 11th to the 14th, the City of Parramatta hosted the always vibrant Parramatta Lanes festival. For four spectacular nights, Parramatta's city was transformed into a maze of free after-dark beats and eats. This year the festival featured more than 120 musical acts, over 40 food stalls and 3 giant artworks. For over ten years, the Lanes festival has been successful in awakening Parramatta's night time economy. This year's beats and eats turned the Parramatta CBD into a wonderland with the objective of captivating those leaving work and enticing them to enjoy the unique pleasures of the city. Whether that be the food stalls, bars, the DJ sets, live performances or the grand artworks, the diversity of Parramatta lanes was on full show for all to see and enjoy. Attendees at the festival also had the opportunity to explore rooftop views of Parramatta's CBD, accompanied with live music and indulge in mouth-watering desserts from local vendors like Thirsty monkey, Stroop Bros and KOI. I thank the City of Parramatta as well as all the local businesses and creatives for their contributions in making this free festival the best of its kind in Australia.

WSABE

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)—On October 13 I joined the Premier at the Western Sydney Awards for Business Excellence at Doltone House Marconi. A celebration of the outstanding business leaders and organisations who are actively contributing to Western Sydney's growing economy, the room was filled with the success stories of a wide array of individuals from across our diverse communities. Having been the driving force of these awards for 33 years, I acknowledge the Parramatta Chamber of Commerce for consistently supporting and showcasing businesses in our region. A huge congratulations to all businesses shortlisted, the award winners with an extra special shout out to those award winners based in Parramatta. I want to particularly acknowledge, 'Scanning Pens Australia' who won the award for Excellence in small to medium enterprise. Founded in the UK in 2003 by two enthusiastic tech lovers, the business has grown exponentially right here in Parramatta helping promote inclusive and assistive technology. 'Scanning Pens Australia' supports dyslexia related challenges and is a great enabler that is a game changer to be embraced by all workplaces, communities and individuals. A huge congratulations to Toby Sutton, Jack Churchill and the team. I look forward to following your international success into the future.

NIMBIN HOSPITAL AUXILIARY

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—Today I'd like to honour the Nimbin Hospital Auxiliary, which celebrated its diamond anniversary last year. There is no more passionate group of volunteers in my electorate and I know Nimbin Hospital is very grateful for all the fundraising they do. President Marceliena Brumley has been involved in the Auxiliary for 10 years and tells me the group has about 20 members. Like other volunteer groups the Auxiliary struggled through COVID19 but last financial year they bounced back with a \$12,132 donation to the hospital and attached 11-bed residential aged care facility. Every week the group sells raffle tickets on the main street, they also run sausage sizzles, host trivia nights at the local bowlo and sell baked goods at the annual Nimbin Show. All funds raised go back to the hospital/aged care facility, funding various purchases such as a sewing machine for the aged care residents. The first machine proved such a hit that a second machine was bought this year. The residents used the machines to make a quilt that earned more than \$1,000 for the Auxiliary when it was raffled! Congratulations to the Auxiliary, keep up your great work!

EVOKE EXHIBITION, TENTERFIELD SHOWGROUNDS

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I would like to congratulate Make It Tenterfield, the Rotary Club of Tenterfield and everyone else involved in making the recent inaugural Evoke Exhibition such a success. The exhibition ran from 8th to 10th September at the historic Tenterfield Showgrounds and showcased the work of the many talented over-55s people who live in the Tenterfield area. I was fortunate to attend the opening night on 8th

September, where I met many of the creative locals. Make It Tenterfield is the brainchild of local resident Ruth Rutherford, who with a group of other like-minded women decided to set up a not-for-profit business more than 4 years ago. Last year the group won a grant from the NSW Government to run 12 Evoke creative workshops in Tenterfield, Drake and Liston, and this exhibition was the culmination of that work. Some 51 participants and their tutors took part in the exhibition, and among the creative works on display were clay pottery, printmaking, rugs, wall hangings, floral arrangements, dolls, retro fashion, ballad writing and origami. All proceeds from ticket proceeds will be used by Rotary to host a future function for locals at the nearby Railway Museum.

LISMORE EISTEDDFOD RETURNS

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—The Lismore Eisteddfod was held in August and September this year, for the first time since 2019, and it was the result of a huge amount of effort and determination by the organisers. After two years of cancelled Eisteddfods due to Covid, the event was cancelled again in 2022 after the devastating floods. Lismore lost its City Hall and other performance venues. As well, dance studios and music teaching spaces and so many instruments and costumes were lost or damaged in the floods. But this year the show did go on, due to the phenomenal effort of organisers who found venues around the region to run the full program of Speech and Drama, Vocal, Instrumental and Dance competitions. Congratulations to the Lismore Musical Festival Society Management Committee, President Heather Sidney, Vice President: John Devoy, and Secretary/Treasurer: Rhonda Baker. I also want to acknowledge the loss of Val Axtens, the Committee's secretary of 40 years who passed away this year and is greatly missed. Congratulations to every performer, parent, teacher, adjudicator, accompanist, and all the behind the scenes people who made the event a success. To see our talented young people shine in their performances lifts our spirits.

BEAU MATTHEWS

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)—I congratulate Inaburra School student Beau Matthews on his recent success at the School Sport Australia Swimming Championships. Hosted over several days in late August at the Sydney Olympic Park Aquatic Centre, the event brought together talented young swimmers from across Australia in competition to showcase their abilities. Throughout the tournament Beau competed twelve events in the freestyle, backstroke, butterfly, breaststroke and medley categories, netting himself an impressive ten gold medal and two silver medals. At the same time he achieved a number of personal bests and was named the male Multi-Class Athlete of the meet. Additionally, Beau was recently recognised by the Cerebral Palsy Sporting and Recreation Association with the Dawn Fraser Award for Swimming at their 2023 Annual Awards Dinner. Founded in 1986, the Cerebral Palsy Sporting and Recreation Association works with people of all ages with cerebral palsy and other neurological conditions to support their sporting journeys and has seen over twenty of their members compete for Australia at the Paralympic Games. I congratulate Beau on his incredible success and extend my best wishes for his future sporting endeavours.

MENAI COMBINED PROBUS CLUB

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)—I acknowledge the Menai Combined Probus Club for the important role its members play in fostering friendships and building networks for seniors in our community. Founded in 2001 with the goal of encouraging friendship amongst retirees in the Menai area, the club holds monthly meetings at Club Central Menai to bring together its membership of like-minded individuals who share a passion for social inclusion. The Club also facilitates regular activities for its members ranging from day trips to points of interest including the ANSTO facility, golf days, tennis, cards, walking groups, live shows, movie outings, regular dinners and lunches and trips to regional areas such as Orange, the Murray River and the South Coast. With October being Probus Month, I recognise the Menai Combined Probus Club's committee members for their dedication to facilitating a local network for people of a similar age and interest. I recognise executive committee members President Jan Pringle, Treasurer Ray Mumby, Secretary Barry Metham and Social Committee Chair Suzanne Griggs. I commend Menai Combined Probus Club members for positively contributing to our community and extend my best wishes for the future.

PROBUS CLUB OF MIRANDA

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)—I acknowledge the Probus Club of Miranda for the important role its members play in fostering friendships and building networks for seniors in our community. Founded in 1983, the Club meets on the third Monday of every month at the Sylvania Bowling Club to bring together like-minded individuals who share a passion for social inclusion with guest speakers covering topics such as wills and estates. The Club also facilitates regular activities for its members ranging from day trips to points of interest including the Patonga Hotel Boatshed, picnics, golf days, lawns bowls, walking groups, theatre performances and lunches at restaurants across the Sutherland Shire. With October being Probus Month, I recognise the Probus Club of Miranda's management committee members for their dedication to facilitating a local network for people of a similar age and interest. I recognise Jan McIntyre, Wilma Coleman, Diane Thrift, Margaret Hill, Frances Howell,

Harry Bell, Peter Macris, Barbara Sharkey and Sue Gooch for their efforts. I commend the Probus Club of Miranda members for positively contributing to our community and extend my best wishes for the future.

HONG KONG AUSTRALIA BUSINESS ASSOCIATION NSW

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)—On Friday 13 October 2023 I attended the 24th Hong Kong Australia Business Association (HKABA) NSW Chapter Business Awards 2023 in Sydney. The HKABA was established in 1987 to reinforce economic relations between Hong Kong and Australia. Members of HKABA are both local Australian businesses with strong links to Hong Kong, as well as Hong Kong based businesses that are currently or interested in investing in Australia. I recognise President Sheldon Mak, Vice President Adler Ho, Secretary Bonnie Shek and Immediate Past President Felicia Hon for putting together a very successful awards evening. I also acknowledge all Award recipients and those who were nominated. In our Davidson electorate community, we have a vibrant Australian Chinese community that I am proud to represent in the Parliament of NSW. I hope to make my first visit to Hong Kong in the near distant future.

GLITZ AND GLAMOUR

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)—It is truly remarkable to witness an overwhelming support for the Glitz and Glamour Ball. The sold-out event is a testament to the incredible enthusiasm and engagement from the community in celebrating the 2023 International Day of People with a disability. The glitz and glamour ball is a highly anticipated event that celebrates the International Day of People with a disability. It was a wonderful evening filled with elegance, excitement, and inclusivity. Glitz and Glamour ball aim to raise awareness about disability inclusion and create a space where people of all abilities can come together to enjoy a night of fun, entertainment, and celebration. I commend all involved in providing a chance to showcase the talents and abilities of individuals with disabilities and promote a more inclusive community. This event truly contributes to breaking down barriers, challenge stereotypes and create a more accepting and supportive environment dedicated to people of all abilities, it is incredible to showcase through this event, the wonderful contributions that individuals with disabilities make to our society. The glitz and Glamour ball serve as a shining example of the power of community support and celebration of diversity, and I commend all involved.

TIME2TALK NAMBUCCA VALLEY GOES THE EXTRA MILE FOR VETERANS

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)—I rise today to commend the Time2Talk organisation on their dedication to our veterans and their thoughtful contribution to the veteran's mental health. Time2talk Nambucca Valleys resourcefulness to organise and accompany Nambucca Valley military veterans to the Australian War Memorial in Canberra is highly commendable. Their dedication to opening doors and destigmatising mental health deserves recognition and appreciation. By providing this meaningful opportunity, they have shown their commitment to honour our veterans and promoting their well-being. The dedication to veterans gave an inspiring trip to the Australian War Memorial where Veterans were brought together to foster connections and prioritise their mental health. By having the opportunity to engage in a shared interest, the group were able to support and check on each other's wellbeing. It is truly heart-warming to see initiatives that create a supportive environment for our veterans. The effort of all those involved is truly inspiring. Their generosity and selflessness make a positive impact on the lives of others. I Praise the giving group for their incredible effort.

REMEMBERING JOAN PHELPS DOOLEY

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)—I rise today, honouring the memory of Joan Phelps Dooley who passed away at the respectable age of 102-years, after a rich life filled with selflessness and a call to the community. Joan was born on February 21, 1921 in Neutral Bay Sydney as the eldest of twins. After the war, Joan moved to Kempsey where her father worked on refreshment rooms for the railway, while she focused on a teaching profession. Joan brought students joy, wisdom and knowledge for 28 dedicated years in areas like Casino, Broken Hill, Bathurst and Tamworth. Joan hoped to be a businesswoman with her own store and succeeded in the late 60s with a children's clothing store and following great success, a ladies' clothing store. There was no stopping Joan and her love for travel and learning. Some of Joan's memories included being at the YWCA at the bombing of Pearl Harbour in 1942, and seeing the arches of the Sydney Harbour Bridge link up in 1930. Joan was loved and respected right across the Mid North Coast. She was a beacon of light and will be dearly missed. Vale, Joan Dooley.

JAN MACINDOE

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)—On behalf of the Sydney electorate, I'd like to record the many years of dedicated community service of Jan Macindoe. Jan chaired the Woolloomooloo Neighbourhood Advisory Board from 2007 to 2022 as an independent volunteer, giving social housing tenants a voice and a forum to address community concerns. The meetings gave tenants a way to seek support and progress individual and collective initiatives through communicating directly with government departments and local community service agencies. During the pandemic Jan persevered in adapting the in-person meetings of the Woolloomooloo Neighbourhood

Advisory Board to continue online. Despite many challenges Jan played a key role in keeping members engaged, updated on crucial information, and provided a sense of continued community connection when many were feeling more isolated and alone. In this role Jan was a trusted and reliable constant for Woolloomooloo residents and the community tell me her fair and patient facilitation and was much appreciated. As Member for Sydney, I commend Jan Macindoe for her commitment and service for the people of Woolloomooloo.

NEWCASTLE KNIGHTS NRLW TEAM

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)—I rise to acknowledge to the fantastic Newcastle Knights NRLW team that won the NRLW competition for a second straight season. The first Newcastle Knights team to go back-to-back. The Hunter cannot be more proud of this team made up of outstanding local talent like the Southwell sisters, Caitlan Johnston, Yasmin Clysdale, Olivia Higgins, Tayla Predebon and Kayla Romaniuk. And of course led by the games best player Tamika Upton. I attended the finals week one game in Newcastle which drew more than 12,000 fans to McDonald Jones Stadium. A record for a standalone NRLW game. The success of the Knights NRLW side is a testament to the strengthen and growth of women's sport in the Hunter. Those women are helping to inspire the next generation of female athletes. Congratulations to all the Knights NRLW squad members on a superb season and let's go for three straight in 2024.

DUDLEY REDHEAD JRLFC

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)—I rise to acknowledge the Dudley Redhead Junior Rugby League Football Club, in particular the Under 11's Whites team. Club Committee member Leah entered the Under 11's Whites team into the Telstra 'this is Footy Country' Ultimate Grand Final Experience competition, which the club won. As a result, the team got to play at Accor Stadium during halftime of the State Cup Championship. Along with a moment, I am sure all the young players will treasure forever in presenting the Panthers with their premiership rings after the NRL Grand Final. It was fantastic to see a young local team handing out the Premiership rings this season and I want to thank the NRL for giving young players this opportunity to experience the games biggest day. Thank you to Leah for her advocacy for Dudley Redhead Junior Rugby League Football Club and congratulations to the Under 11's Whites team.

DAN COLLINS

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)—I rise to acknowledge Dan Collins from Redhead Surf Life Saving Club. Dan took out Athlete of the Year at the Surf Life Saving New South Wales Awards of Excellence and will now be nominated for the same category at the Australian Surf Life Saving Awards of Excellence. I wish Dan the best of luck at those awards in November. The Surf Life Saving Awards of Excellence celebrate our amazing surf life savers and Surf Life Saving Clubs, along with the fantastic work they do to support the community. Congratulations to Dan you are a credit to your club and community and thank you to all our surf life savers for the work you do in keeping our community safe.

WISE EMPLOYMENT MARRICKVILLE

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)—I was recently fortunate to meet with the energetic and diverse team at WISE Employment in their Marrickville office. WISE Employment is one of Australia's leading not-for-profit employment services and supports a wide group of people from across the Inner West. They offer invaluable personalised support and training particularly for those who have a disability, injury or health condition that can make finding and sustaining employment challenging. WISE have also established their Rainbow WISE employment program offered at their Marrickville office. This program is specifically designed for the LGBTQIA+ community, promoting awareness and understanding in the employment space and providing dedicated Case Managers and a focused LGBTQIA+ support network. Congratulations to Ms Amy Shell and all the team at WISE Employment and keep up the good work!

THE GENDER CENTRE NEW PREMISES IN MARRICKVILLE

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)—I was recently privileged to meet the amazing, hard working team of community leaders, counsellors and health workers at the Gender Centre's new premises at 10 Lilydale St Marrickville. The Gender Centre has a strong history of advocacy and service delivery supporting the trans and gender diverse community and I am proud to offer my support to their work. Established in 1983, the Centre is the largest transgender and gender diverse organisation in Australia and offers wholistic care for some of our most vulnerable community members. They specialise in crisis accommodation, education, support, advocacy, outreach and training. The Inner West is home to a diverse and inclusive community and the services provided by the Gender Centre are so vital in supporting so many amongst us. I was even fortunate to meet Jack the golden retriever who works hard supporting kids and adults alike as they come to terms with what

they're feeling and work through the next steps on they're journey. Congratulations to all those involved with the Gender Centre we are so grateful for all the work that you do. I wish you well in your new premises.

NATIONAL RECYCLING WEEK – 13 TO 19 NOVEMBER

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)—I strongly encourage everyone to get involved with this year's National Recycling Week, on from Monday 13 to Sunday 19 November. National Recycling Week was established in 1996 by Planet Ark and seeks to educate and drive behavioural change through promoting recycling initiatives and giving people the tools to minimise waste at home, work, or school. This year's theme is "What goes around comes around" asking us all to think about not just what we originally use a product for, but what happens to it when we are finished? How can we do our best to make sure that our recycling comes back as something more than waste? Ensuring that we make the most of all our resources is an issue that I care deeply about, along with many in my Inner West community. It is a wonderful opportunity to join an event near you; at home, at work, with your local school, local council or community group and if you can't find an event consider starting one!

KURDISH COMMUNITY

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)—Today I bring to the attention of the House the work of the Federation of Democratic Kurdish Society Australia, Democratic Kurdish Community Centre of NSW and Sydney Kurdish Youth Association in advocating for the release of Kurdish political leader Abdullah Ocalan. Ocalan, who has played a leading role in working for Kurdish liberation, has been held by Turkish authorities for almost 25 years. Members of the Kurdish community around the world have been calling for his release and it was an honour to be part of this initiative by local Kurdish organisations to demand Ocalan be freed and allowed to played a role in finding justice and democracy for the Kurdish people.

GLEBE ART SHOW

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)—Today I bring to the attention to the House the Glebe Art Society who organised the Glebe Art Show which I had the pleasure of attending yesterday. The Glebe Art Show is a cherished community celebration of emerging and established artists currently living, working or studying in the City of Sydney and Inner West Council areas. I want to particularly thank all the volunteers in the Glebe Art Show Committee, President Peter Griffen and Secretary Carol Yuen. Congratulations to all the talented artists, including prize winners Mark Elliott-Rankin, Chris Gentle, Ross Skinner, Claudia Karskens, Nicola Jane Walker, Julie Keech, Xavier Ghazi and the recipients of the High School Encouragement Awards, Sally Day and Isidora Vesiljevic.

ROBERT SEBES

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)—Today I bring to the attention of the House the life of Robert Sebes who was a cherished member of the Glebe community, founding local institution Badde Manors in 1982. Robert, together with his then partner Judy Backhouse, created a space where people from all walks of life could come together and share in discussion, great coffee from the coffee machines Robert repaired himself, and Hungarian cakes made by Bondi local Bandi. Badde Manors cultivated a culture of inclusivity and acceptance, Robert and Judy themselves having fled Hungary at the age of 9 in the aftermath of the Hungarian Revolution. The recycled booths and fittings re-adapted by Robert from cafes around Sydney still give Badde Manors its distinctive charm. Robert sold Badde Manors in 2004, opening The Bellingen Gelato Bar with his son Danny, which in 2014 expanded into Rozelle. Robert gave so many people in our community a place where they could be themselves. His mark can be felt in Badde Manors, where people whose lives he touched have sent flowers over the last weeks, and beyond in the ethos of community he brought to Glebe. Vale Robert and thank you.
