



**New South Wales**

# **Legislative Assembly**

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)**

**Fifty-Eighth Parliament  
First Session**

**Wednesday 22 November 2023**

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Wednesday 22 November 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 media photographers are approved to cover question time today.

*[Notices of motions given.]*

## *Bills*

### CUSTOMER SERVICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2023

#### First Reading

**Bill introduced on motion by Mr Anoulack Chanthivong, read a first time and printed.**

#### Second Reading Speech

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields—Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Innovation, Science and Technology, Minister for Building, and Minister for Corrections) (10:17):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am proud to introduce the Customer Service Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. The bill deals with three distinct matters. First, the bill will introduce a deemed recognition and compliance model for charitable fundraising in New South Wales. Second, the bill will introduce measures to deal with a significant licensing issue in the property and real estate sector. Third, the bill will enable the operation of retail outlets at the Western Sydney airport. I will now address these matters in turn.

The bill will amend the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 and the Associations Incorporation Act 2009 to introduce a deemed recognition and compliance model. These amendments will significantly reduce administrative burdens for New South Wales charitable fundraisers that are also registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission, known as the ACNC. This model will allow entities registered with the ACNC to undertake charitable fundraising in New South Wales without having to apply for a separate New South Wales authorisation. The bill also removes duplication as these entities will only have to comply with the ACNC's reporting requirements. Once the model is implemented in New South Wales, it will be easier and more efficient for charities and not-for-profits to work across Australia. It will allow charities to focus more of their time and resources on delivering their services.

The nature of fundraising activity in Australia has changed significantly in recent years. Charities have expanded in size and are conducting activities nationally, using both traditional and online means. In New South Wales, charitable fundraising is currently regulated at the State level through NSW Fair Trading as well as at the Commonwealth level through the ACNC. This imposes a duplicative regulatory burden on these entities that must comply with complex, time-consuming and often inconsistent obligations across jurisdictions. Fundraisers operating in New South Wales must hold a New South Wales charitable fundraising authority if they raise more than \$15,000 per year. While the authority is free of charge, authority holders must comply with reporting and auditing requirements under the New South Wales charitable fundraising laws. Registering with the ACNC is a voluntary choice made by the majority of charitable entities. Once registered with the ACNC, entities can apply for charity tax concessions such as income tax exemptions or GST concessions. They can also apply for tax deductible gift recipient status.

ACNC registration confers benefits for charities that operate on a national basis, but also imposes mandatory reporting and auditing requirements that are not fully consistent with obligations in New South Wales charitable fundraising laws. Many incorporated associations that are regulated under the Associations Incorporation Act 2009 are also active fundraisers and have a New South Wales charitable fundraising authority. Many are also registered with the ACNC. As such, many New South Wales charities and associations have

separate reporting obligations for each regulatory framework. Unnecessary regulatory burden is counterproductive and detracts from the important work of charitable fundraisers. The Government recognises that this burdensome framework is detrimental to the efficient operation of the sector. This bill will deliver a resolution to this problem.

In November 2018, New South Wales agreed to lead a national working group to examine options for greater national harmonisation of charitable fundraising. This working group developed the deemed recognition and compliance model for fundraisers registered with the ACNC. Under this model, an entity will be able to rely on its registration with the ACNC to undertake charitable fundraising and meet its reporting requirements in each jurisdiction that adopts the model. During consultation on the model, stakeholders considered the ACNC's registration and reporting requirements to be appropriate for the size and activities of charities, as well as sufficient to ensure accountability and transparency.

In December 2020, the Council on Federal Financial Relations endorsed the model for charities. The model endorses the role of the ACNC as the single point for registration and reporting for charities and fundraisers. Unfortunately there was a lack of urgency from the former Government and legislative changes to implement the model in New South Wales were not brought to Parliament. Stakeholders are understandably sick of waiting. The Government is proud to introduce these important reforms to significantly reduce the administrative burden on charities. Other jurisdictions have already introduced laws to enable deemed recognition and compliance. For instance, Victoria, South Australia, the Australian Capital Territory and Queensland have all implemented a version of the deemed registration model with the ACNC. Tasmania is currently in this process. New South Wales was a laggard under the former Government. This Government will not make the same mistake.

With the reforms in this bill, New South Wales will take a vital step towards greater national harmonisation for charitable fundraisers that is strongly supported by the sector. In New South Wales, there are almost 5,200 charitable fundraising authority holders. Based on the ACNC data, it is estimated that over 68 per cent of these charitable fundraising authority holders are currently required to double-report. These entities stand to benefit from our reforms. The model will be supported by information-sharing arrangements between the ACNC and NSW Fair Trading to ensure compliance and enforcement.

I will now outline the key provisions in schedules 1 and 2 to the bill that will implement the model for charitable fundraisers in this State. The first part of the model is a deemed authority that will streamline the New South Wales registration process for ACNC-registered charities by making their existing dual authority automatic. The bill amends the Charitable Fundraising Act to provide that an entity is automatically taken to hold an authority to fundraise in New South Wales if they are an ACNC-registered entity and have notified the ACNC of their intention to fundraise in this State. This notification process is an existing feature of registering with the ACNC. This amendment eliminates the need for ACNC-registered entities to apply separately for a New South Wales fundraising authority. However, this reduction in administrative requirements on charities will not compromise New South Wales's ability to ensure charitable fundraisers in New South Wales are operating appropriately.

NSW Fair Trading will continue to have oversight on who is operating in this State. This is because the ACNC will provide data to NSW Fair Trading on charities that will operate in New South Wales, including any changes to the registration status of ACNC-registered entities. The information-sharing arrangements that NSW Fair Trading has with the ACNC recognise the importance of cooperation between these regulators to remove unnecessary burdens on charitable entities while retaining transparency and accountability measures. If a deemed authority holder ceases to be registered with the ACNC or loses their ACNC registration, they will need to obtain a New South Wales fundraising authority to fundraise in this State. If they re-register with the ACNC, the deemed authority will automatically come back into force.

The second part of the model is deemed compliance with New South Wales financial reporting requirements for ACNC-registered entities. This is achieved by amending the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 and the Associations Incorporation Act 2009. Schedule 2 to the bill amends the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 to provide that the New South Wales financial reporting requirements do not apply to deemed authority holders. These requirements relate to keeping records, preparing annual returns and auditing accounts for lodgement with NSW Fair Trading.

A deemed authority holder will only need to comply with the ACNC's reporting requirements to be deemed as having met the reporting requirements under New South Wales' charitable fundraising laws. This will reduce the complexities that ACNC-registered entities currently face in meeting inconsistent reporting thresholds across the different jurisdictions. These changes will also better align New South Wales fundraising laws with the other Australian jurisdictions that have implemented deemed authorisation models. Deemed compliance will only apply if an entity remains registered with the ACNC. NSW Fair Trading can cancel or suspend a deemed authority if the entity does not comply with ACNC financial reporting requirements. Loss of the exemption means an entity must then comply with the registration and reporting requirements under New South Wales charitable fundraising

laws. The bill also makes consequential amendments for ACNC-registered entities that currently hold a New South Wales fundraising authority so they can automatically transition to and benefit from the model.

I now turn to the changes made under the Associations Incorporation Act 2009, which are also needed to implement the deemed compliance element of the model. Many charities registered with the ACNC are also associations incorporated under the Associations Incorporation Act. This means they also have reporting obligations to NSW Fair Trading under the Charitable Fundraising Act and the Associations Incorporation Act. Currently this is managed by allowing these associations to provide all required information to the ACNC. The ACNC then provides this information to NSW Fair Trading. However, this does not fully overcome variations in reporting obligations. To simplify these multiple reporting obligations, schedule 1 to the bill introduces deemed compliance with reporting requirements for associations if they are registered with the ACNC for the whole of the relevant financial year. This means that ACNC-registered associations will be exempt from lodging the required financial information under New South Wales laws if they comply with the ACNC's financial reporting requirements.

Another condition of this exemption is that the information an association provides as part of the ACNC's financial reporting requirements must be publicly available on the ACNC register. This is to ensure appropriate levels of public accountability and transparency. If any of the conditions of the exemption are not met for the relevant financial year then the association will be required to comply with the reporting requirements under the Associations Incorporation Act. I highlight that the proposed reforms will not remove any existing obligations an association has to its members, such as the requirement to submit its financial statements and auditors reports to the annual general meeting. This will ensure that associations remain fully accountable to their members.

The bill maintains safeguards against noncompliance by charitable fundraisers. For example, the compliance and enforcement powers found in part 2A of the Charitable Fundraising Act will continue to apply to deemed authority holders and grant express powers of investigation to authorised officers. These safeguards provide for a range of modern and flexible enforcement arrangements, depending on the level of noncompliance. This ensures that offending behaviour does not go unchecked and confidence in the fundraising sector is maintained among the generous people of New South Wales, who donate over \$1 billion a year to charities. Deemed authority holders will also continue to be subject to the New South Wales charitable fundraising standard conditions, such as what people must publicly disclose when conducting a fundraising appeal.

As I have already flagged, the model is further supported by existing arrangements that provide for the sharing of information between the ACNC and NSW Fair Trading. These arrangements will be reviewed before the changes commence to ensure they remain appropriate and adequate. Lastly, if a deemed authority holder fails to comply with the conditions of the New South Wales deemed recognition model, they will then have to comply with the relevant New South Wales registration and reporting requirements. I want to emphasise that the measures in the bill do not undermine the ability of NSW Fair Trading to deal with miscreant behaviour. The enforcement and compliance powers of NSW Fair Trading are retained. The key difference is that duplicative registration and reporting requirements do not apply to deemed authority holders. In addition, if donors want to know about the performance of a charity, the information will be available on the ACNC's public register.

The reforms to charitable fundraising that we are trying to achieve in this bill are exactly what the sector needs: greater harmonisation of State and Commonwealth regulatory frameworks. The model provided in the bill strikes the right balance between the need to minimise unnecessary regulatory burden with the need to maintain transparency and accountability in fundraising appeals and ensure that compliance outcomes are still met in this State. It improves the value per dollar of charitable funds being spent on actual charitable purposes, as less money is spent on overburdensome and inconsistent compliance obligations. In fact, stakeholder feedback noted a deemed recognition model had the potential to remove at least 40 hours of management time spent on registration and reporting annually.

Annual cost savings across the sector nationally were estimated to be about \$15 million, which could be better directed to charitable purposes and appeals. Those are significant benefits to the charitable fundraising industry, which can lead to better outcomes for the communities where these activities work. Streamlining compliance will ensure that the regulation of charitable fundraising stays true to its core intent to provide an open, simple-to-navigate and transparent framework in which honest work and public trust are paramount.

I now turn to the amendments in the bill that will help avoid a staffing and compliance crisis across New South Wales property agencies in March 2024, when thousands of assistant property agents are expected to become unregistered and therefore unable to work in the industry. The bill will amend the Property and Stock Agents Act 2002 to allow a certificate of registration to be extended beyond the current fixed four-year term in exceptional circumstances. On 23 March 2020 reforms to the Property and Stock Agents Act 2002 placed entry-level employees—known as assistant agents—on a professional pathway, requiring them to become fully

qualified and licensed agents within a maximum of four years. Failing to become a licensed agent before the certificate of registration expires results in the assistant agent being prohibited from reapplying for a certificate of registration for 12 months and excluding them from the industry.

When the reforms commenced in 2020, more than 22,000 existing assistant agents transitioned to the current four-year fixed term certificate of registration. While more than 8,000 agents have since completed their qualifications and obtained a class 2 licence, there are still 14,000 certificates of registration held by assistant agents from the March 2020 transition date who have not obtained a class 2 licence. This cohort of assistant agents will either be excluded from employment or risk working in an unlicensed capacity from 23 March 2024.

A large majority of those agents are likely to be working in residential property management as leasing agents. Property managers assess and process tenancy applications, supervise open home inspections, facilitate the payment of rent, and manage repairs and maintenance of tenants' homes. Excluding these property managers from the industry due to their certificates expiring would result in a staffing and compliance crisis for the industry, reduced service to residential tenants and landlords, and a likely influx of complaints. Many residential property managers are employed as assistant agents and have been under stress since the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic in late March 2020. Those agencies still have difficulty attracting and retaining quality staff, even without the potential exodus likely to be caused by the expiry of certificates in March 2024.

NSW Fair Trading has engaged in extensive communications with real estate, strata management, and stock and station agents and their industry representatives about the requirements of the March 2020 reforms and options to address the approaching expiration of certificates. There is consensus amongst the stakeholders that the approach proposed by the amendments in this bill should be supported. Allowing certificates of registration to be extended beyond the current fixed four-year term in exceptional circumstances mitigates the risks to industry and the customers who rely on these services. The extension to the duration of a certificate of registration enabled by these amendments is intended to be used as a one-off measure only, providing an opportunity for assistant agents whose certificates expire in March 2024 to apply for a 12-month extension of their certificate.

The bill also amends the Property and Stock Agents Regulation to prescribe a definition of exceptional circumstances to include a real risk to the effective functioning of the property and stock agents industry. This definition captures the whole cohort of assistant agents who transitioned under the reforms of March 2020, for the reasons I have just outlined. This amendment is crucial as it allows holders of a certificate of registration with a March 2024 expiry date to apply for a 12-month extension if they are unable to obtain a class 2 licence before their certificate expires. Assistant agents, however, will need to make an application and pay the prescribed fee to extend their existing certificate of registration before it expires, or to restore an expired certificate of registration within the prescribed period of three months.

The certificates may be granted, subject to conditions, such as requiring the applicant to be enrolled in the qualification that—when completed—will make them eligible to apply for a class 2 licence. The amendments will also give NSW Fair Trading the discretion to grant a similar 12-month extension to other assistant agents who have entered the industry since March 2020, if satisfied they are in exceptional circumstances. This ensures that the certificate extension applies equitably to all assistant agents who may not be able to complete their qualifications and obtain a class 2 licence before the end of their fixed four-year term due to exceptional circumstances. These assistant agents should not be excluded simply because they obtained their certificate after 23 March 2020. Those other types of exceptional circumstances will be prescribed by further amendments to the regulation in 2024 and may include circumstances such as hospitalisation, domestic and family violence, and absence from the country or misadventure.

The property services sector is integral to the economic prosperity of our State. It is estimated that the direct contribution of the sector to New South Wales is worth more than \$24 billion per year. This Government is committed to raising professional standards and improving customer confidence across the property sector. However, mechanisms to achieve those aims in the licensing regime have not adequately coped with the transition of thousands of certificate holders, so we need the bridging measures in this bill to ensure that the transition can be completed without widescale industry disruption.

I now turn to the amendments to the Retail Leases Act 1994. These amendments will extend a part of the Retail Leases Act to the Western Sydney International Airport. This will ensure the regulatory framework for lessors and lessees of a retail lease are consistent for Sydney's two international airports. Part 9A of the Retail Leases Act includes provisions that apply the Act to retail leases at Sydney Kingsford-Smith Airport. In particular, the provisions reflect the need for lessors to be able to implement airport and airline safety and security measures. This also provides lessors with greater discretion on the granting of leases for retailers intending to operate in the duty-free zone, known as the airside setting, which competes with other international airport retail markets. This includes provision to disclose business turnover, which supports tendering processes for an airside lease.

The Government understands that Western Sydney International Airport intends to commence lease negotiations with prospective retailers from early 2024, to support the operations scheduled for 2026. This amendment will assist the airport and prospective retailers in those negotiations by clarifying the regulatory framework for retail leasing. There has been overall support from key stakeholders for applying a level playing field to retail leasing regulatory arrangements at both airports. I am confident that the measures in this bill are worthy of members' support and endorsement. The charitable fundraising reforms proposed in the bill will deliver practical changes that will be of clear benefit to the fundraising sector within New South Wales and across the nation.

Comprehensive stakeholder input was provided during the public consultation on the model in 2020. Stakeholders in the charity, not-for-profit and related legal sectors strongly supported the model and its introduction in New South Wales. The changes to the property licensing framework are both sensible and vital and will ensure the ongoing operation of businesses in the sector. As I indicated earlier, there has been extensive consultation on the matter and stakeholders agree that the Government's approach is the best way to mitigate the risks to the effective functioning of the property and stock agents industry. The amendments to the retail leasing laws are simple and practical and will facilitate the provision of customer services at the Western Sydney International Airport. Key stakeholders, including the Property Council of Australia in New South Wales, the Australian Retailers Association and Sydney Kingsford Smith Airport, agree with and support the changes. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

### **STRATA LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2023**

#### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields—Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Innovation, Science and Technology, Minister for Building, and Minister for Corrections) (10:40):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Strata Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. The bill implements 31 recommendations from the 2021 statutory review of the Strata Schemes Development Act 2015 and the Strata Schemes Management Act 2015. The bill delivers the first tranche of reforms to implement the review recommendations, providing immediate benefits to people who live in strata and community land schemes. The review, the first since the inception of the Acts in 2015, found that both Acts were generally working well. However, the review also found that the Acts could be improved, and made 139 reform recommendations. The review report was tabled by the former Government in November 2021, but unfortunately stakeholders have been waiting nearly two years for action.

Despite the clear need for reform and the fact that the review report was tabled in 2021, the former Government failed to implement almost all of the review's recommendations. That is simply not good enough. This Government has acted quickly to assess the recommendations and move forward with implementation. I will stress this point for the House: In its first 6½ months, this Government has done more work on strata reform than those opposite did in two years. The Government understands the need for action on reforms that will improve the governance, accountability and effectiveness of strata schemes.

The reforms proposed in the bill will improve the lives of residents living in strata and community land schemes. Why is that so important? There are more than 85,000 strata schemes in New South Wales. That is an increase of almost 9,000 schemes since the development Act and the management Act commenced in 2016. There are now also more than 968,000 strata lots, up more than 162,000 on the numbers in 2016. More and more New South Wales households are choosing to call strata-titled properties their home and we expect that trend to continue. Strata impacts not only residential owners but also commercial, retail and industrial owners and retirement villages. I am proud to say that strata as a form of title is a New South Wales invention dating back to 1961. Since then, we have exported this innovative form of ownership and housing tenure across the globe.

Before I turn to the detail of the bill, I will run through some key features of strata and community land schemes. As most people would understand, strata schemes are a form of community living, typically where an apartment building or a collection of townhouses has been divided into lots. Each person who buys a lot within the scheme owns the inside of the lot and shares ownership of the common property with all other owners. Common property includes roofs, driveways, external walls and gardens. Lot owners automatically become members of the owners' corporation, the legal entity comprising all lot owners. The owners' corporation is collectively responsible for the repair and maintenance of common property and for making key decisions affecting the scheme. To assist in decision-making, the owners' corporation elects representatives to a strata

committee. Owners pay levies toward an administrative fund and a capital works fund for longer-term expenses. To assist in the running of their schemes, owners' corporations may also create rules, known as by-laws, that all people living in the scheme must follow.

In contrast, community land schemes, which are regulated separately under different but comparable legislation, involve subdivisions where a lot owner owns and maintains any buildings constructed on their lot. Lot owners share the use and maintenance costs of other facilities. Community land schemes range from rural subdivisions that can be used for sustainable eco-developments, with shared dams and communal farmland, to large residential communities with private roads and extensive recreational facilities such as swimming pools, marinas and golf courses. The Strata Schemes Development Act 2015 and the Strata Schemes Management Act 2015 work together to provide the regulatory framework for the creation, variation, termination and management of strata schemes in New South Wales. The Community Land Development Act 2021 and the Community Land Management Act 2021 do the same for community land schemes.

The bill amends all four Acts and ensures that community land scheme laws remain in step with strata laws. The bill introduces a mix of straightforward reforms to improve liveability and the overall governance and accountability of schemes. It also contains more pressing reforms. Those pressing reforms are much more complex and will empower owners to democratically decide on how best to manage, vary and terminate the strata scheme they share in a flexible and transparent manner. The Government has brought forward the strata reforms in the bill. The bill is just the beginning. The remaining reforms recommended by the review report will be included in a draft bill for consultation in 2024. They include reforms on embedded networks, sustainability infrastructure, repairs and maintenance and further improving the governance of strata schemes.

Following public consultation, the Government intends to bring a further bill to the Parliament to implement those remaining reforms. The Government will not rush those important reforms. They are complex and significant and we need to consult with residents, stakeholders and industry to get them right. The Government has also recently appointed Mr John Minns as the Strata and Property Services Commissioner. It is abundantly clear that the Government is committed to improving the outcomes for those who live and work in strata schemes. Further, the reforms in the bill will give everyone the confidence to live and invest in strata buildings as the Government moves to increase housing supply and improve the quality of the construction industry.

I now turn to the specific provisions of the Strata Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. As I have noted, the bill introduces some of the more urgent recommendations identified in the statutory review and realigns the current laws with the purposes for which they were originally enacted. To that end, schedule 1 to the bill amends the development Act to restore the balance and create flexibility in the strata renewal regime. Strata renewal was one of the most significant reforms introduced by the 2015 laws. That process allows for the collective sale or redevelopment of a strata building where there is less than unanimous support from owners. Through an intentionally rigorous, staged process, an owners' corporation can develop a plan for the collective sale or redevelopment of their scheme, which must be supported by the owners of at least 75 per cent of the strata lots. In this way, owners are empowered to make decisions about their scheme's future.

The regime's ultimate safeguard is the Land and Environment Court's oversight. Before a collective sale or redevelopment can proceed, the court must be satisfied that the renewal plan was developed in good faith, owners are being properly compensated and it is just and equitable in the circumstances that the scheme's renewal plan be approved. Those provisions were designed to recognise and protect the interests of all owners, particularly those who do not agree with the majority. A key concern was to ensure that vulnerable members of the strata community are protected from intimidation and that their objections and concerns are actually heard.

However, time has shown that not all dissenting owners are vulnerable. We are seeing examples where the collective will of the majority is to pursue the renewal of their scheme, but those owners are being held to ransom by rival developers who are manipulating the protections for their own commercial gain. Such conduct is highlighted by a well-publicised case at Macquarie Park in Sydney's north-west. There, the vast majority of strata owners wanted to pursue a collective sale proposal that had been progressed through a tender process. A rival developer, who had been an underbidder in that tender, bought the lots in the strata scheme and dissented to the renewal proposal.

Using the protective provisions in the existing law, this developer was able to disrupt the process and draw out legal proceedings. This resulted in the owners' corporation incurring substantial costs. However, under current law, those costs could not be passed on to the dissenting developer. The owners' corporation was ultimately forced to withdraw its application for the court to approve the strata renewal plan and the winning developer has abandoned its proposal to purchase the scheme. Today this scheme's proposal remains at a standstill while rival developers continue to hold units in the complex. Even though more than 75 per cent of owners want to pursue a collective sale, the future of the building is in limbo until the current safeguards are revised to prevent this kind of underhanded manipulation.

Unfortunately, this type of conduct is not uncommon. We are also seeing situations where competing developers are adopting a blocking position as dissenting owners, while privately negotiating with other owners in the face of a renewal proposal. Elsewhere, there are reports of dissenting owners who also own neighbouring property seeking to preserve that property's views by objecting to a redevelopment proposal. The strata renewal regime was intended to overcome barriers of the previous termination process, where a single owner could veto the decision of all others to sell or redevelop.

We must remember that while strata owners own their unit, they also own a share in the building and decisions about the building must be made collectively. However, we are now seeing the legislation that was intended to support the collective will of strata owners being used against them to thwart the decisions endorsed by the significant majority of owners about the future of their scheme. This is not what was intended by the 2015 reform. The bill addresses the shortcomings in the current regime with new disclosure requirements relating to conflicts of interest. It will close the loopholes that some developers have been able to use improperly.

Under current laws, only those owners involved in the strata renewal committee charged with developing a strata renewal plan must disclose conflicts of interest. A meeting of the owners' corporation then decides whether that committee member can still play a role in developing the renewal plan. It is now very clear that good faith and disclosure obligations should apply to all owners, not only those on the strata renewal committee. The bill will require all owners to disclose any direct or indirect pecuniary or other interest they have in a strata renewal proposal at key decision points throughout the process. I note that just because an owner has disclosed an interest does not mean they cannot have a say in the process. Their voice will still be heard, but the process is more transparent.

The changes in the bill mean the Land and Environment Court will now have to consider potential conflicts of interest for both strata renewal applications and objections to renewal proposals before making an order to approve a plan or endorse an objection. These new disclosures also support changes in the bill relating to costs of legal proceedings. Currently, there is a presumption in section 188 that the owners' corporation will pay the reasonable costs of a dissenting owner in strata renewal proceedings. However, as the Macquarie Park case highlights, the absence of a cost burden for dissenting owners is having the unintended consequence of protracting disputes.

The bill amends section 188 to make it abundantly clear that the court can award costs against dissenting owners acting unreasonably. In particular, where a dissenting owner has a conflict of interest that makes it inappropriate for the owners' corporation to pay their costs, the court must order the dissenting owner to pay their own costs and any levy contribution for a part of the costs of proceedings. The court can also award costs against a dissenting owner who has not acted in good faith. It is important to note that the bill does not remove the presumption that the owners' corporation pay a dissenting owner's costs of renewal proceedings. That critical protection is still in place. This amendment targets unjustified and frivolous actions, but it remains critical that owners can still raise objections and have their concerns heard.

The strata renewal process relies on balance. Strata owners need to have the means and flexibility to innovate and seize opportunities. At the same time, transparency is crucial to ensure owners have comprehensive and detailed information to make informed decisions, and the court has all information available when making orders endorsing a strata renewal plan. The bill restores that balance. The review also recommended reforms to the strata renewal process. To be effective, the strata renewal process needs to be fair and transparent, but it also needs to be workable. Since the regime began in 2016, only 21 schemes have notified the Registrar General of having reached the required 75 per cent owner approval of a renewal plan. Only one of those schemes has fully completed the renewal process and had its renewal plan approved by the Land and Environment Court. In part, this is because some schemes that start on the strata renewal journey ultimately reach unanimous support from owners.

With unanimous support, the Development Act provides a simpler administrative termination process. The Registrar General has seen a marked increase in administrative terminations since the strata renewal reforms commenced, averaging around 74 per year, more than double the number in the years immediately before the reform commenced. However, consultation feedback has attributed the low uptake of strata renewal to the complexities of the staged process. One barrier is the risk of a renewal plan inadvertently lapsing because of a minor discrepancy or procedural error. Owners' corporations and developers have been hesitant to embark on the renewal process because, currently, a renewal plan could lapse if the prescribed steps are not properly followed. Once a plan lapses, a scheme is blocked from pursuing the same or a substantially similar proposal for at least 12 months.

The bill gives the Land and Environment Court the power to approve a renewal plan even if there is a procedural irregularity in its development. This amendment will make the process more workable and encourage schemes to pursue renewal plans without the fear of inadvertent lapsing. However, flexibility will not come at the

expense of the protective measures fundamental to the regime. Amendments to section 182 of the development Act give some leeway for the court to approve a plan where the process has not been followed strictly, but the court can only do so if it is satisfied that the procedural irregularity has not and will not cause substantial injustice.

More flexibility is created by amendments to section 166 of the development Act, which extends the period of operation for the strata renewal committee that is elected to develop a renewal plan for the strata building from 12 months to two years. This change is needed as it generally takes longer than 12 months to develop the comprehensive and detailed strata renewal plan necessary for owners to make an informed decision. This change mitigates the risk of a renewal committee being inadvertently dissolved if the owners' corporation does not pass the resolution to extend its operation in time.

The change also supports existing requirements for owners to be given comprehensive information about the proposal. Where the collective will of a significant majority of owners is to sell their strata scheme, it is critical that there is an appropriate mechanism to exercise that collective will. This is particularly important as strata buildings age and the costs of repair, maintenance and retrofitting continue to rise. The bill creates the flexibility needed to boost confidence in the strata renewal regime and encourage owners and developers to use the process as it was intended.

A further important reform in the bill relates to making it easier to keep pets and assistance animals in strata and community land schemes. It would come as no surprise to anyone here that pets provide a range of benefits to their owners. They provide love, affection and companionship. They improve the mental and physical wellbeing of their owners. They also help connect communities and promote opportunities for human interaction. Australia has one of the highest rates of pet ownership in the world. That is why the Government is committed to ensuring that residents living in strata and community land schemes do not miss out on the benefits of pet ownership just because they live in a unit or townhouse, or another form of strata or community living.

The amendments proposed in the bill align closely with this Government's election commitment to make it easier to have pets in rentals. Currently, owners' corporations cannot make by-laws or decisions that prohibit the keeping of a pet on a lot, except where the keeping of the pet unreasonably interferes with another resident's use and enjoyment of their lot or the common property. The Strata Schemes Management Regulation 2016 sets out some circumstances of unreasonable interference. They include, for example, where the pet attacks another person or animal, or endangers the health of another resident. The bill extends these laws, and the benefits of pet ownership, to community land schemes. These changes will start in community land schemes once regulations have been developed, in consultation with stakeholders, to set out circumstances of unreasonable interference.

In addition, the bill will prohibit an owners' corporation or association from charging a resident a fee or bond for the keeping of a pet on the lot. It will also prohibit an owners' corporation or association from requiring residents to obtain insurance for an animal kept on the lot. This amendment responds to a number of cases where owners' corporations have imposed a high fee or bond on the keeping of a pet. For example, in one case a strata scheme charged residents hundreds of dollars in fees to consider an application to keep a pet or to allow visitors to bring a pet to their home.

Imposing fees, bonds or insurance requirements undermines the intent of the current laws and results in unjust outcomes for people who have pets. They are costly and may force a resident to give up their pet or pose a barrier to people buying a pet. These costs are unreasonable and unnecessary. Owners already pay levies to finance the administration of their scheme and the cost of insurance for any damage to common or association property. Further, a scheme can already seek remedies if an owner damages common property. The bill will reduce the barriers and costs for people living in strata and community land schemes who want to have a pet. It will ensure that all strata and community land scheme residents do not miss out on the benefits of pet ownership. The bill also strengthens the protection for persons with assistance animals, which play an important role.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** It being 11.00 a.m., pursuant to standing and sessional orders, debate is interrupted for question time and the routine of business. I set down resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a later hour.

*Members*

#### **MEMBER FOR MURRAY**

**The SPEAKER:** I draw members' attention to the member for Murray, who is seated at the back of the Chamber. I wish her a happy birthday. She appears to be in a very good mood. I hope you have a wonderful day, Helen.

*Visitors***VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I acknowledge the many guests in the gallery, and welcome each and every one of them. It is lovely to welcome you to Australia's first Parliament, the beating heart of representative democracy in Australia. I extend a warm welcome to guests from 3Bridges, Kingsgrove Community Aid Centre and Kogarah Storehouse, guests of the member for Kogarah, who just so happens to also be the Premier. I welcome to the Chamber Chantilly Ho, a guest of the member for North Shore, who is doing a work placement in the member's office. I also welcome Jaya Singh, Sara Lofstrand and Lian Sequeira, guests of the member for Gosford. I acknowledge Jonathan Jiang, a guest of the member for Oatley, who is doing work experience in the member's office. I also acknowledge guests of the member for Wollondilly, the Lions Club of Tahmoor and Lily Edgecombe and Alissia Jollie-Poole.

I welcome Yvonne Cheng, a guest of the member for Bankstown. I acknowledge guests of the member for Liverpool, students from Al Amanah College, including Omar, Siham, Ayman, Aiyad, Moses, Maysa, Yara and Jana. I also welcome David Philips, a guest of the member for Oxley. I understand that the member for Kiama has guests, members of the Albion Park Garden Club, whom I welcome. I also welcome Jake Mahemoff, a guest of the member for Leppington. Finally, I acknowledge guests of the member for Drummoyne, Tony Warner, CEO of Variety – the Children's Charity, and others. Members will note that there was not enough room in the gallery for me to bring any guests today. However, I warmly welcome all members' guests to the Legislative Assembly.

*Announcements***MEMBERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**The SPEAKER:** I inform members that NSW Electoral Commissioner John Schmidt and Executive Director of Elections Andrea Summerell will present at our members' professional development session today. The session will provide an overview of the role of the Electoral Commissioner, the Electoral Commission statutory body and their relationships to Parliament. It will also cover information about a time line of key events on the electoral legislation calendar. I encourage members and staff to attend at 1.00 p.m. today in the theatrette. A light lunch will be provided.

*Governor***ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT**

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

*Question Time***MARITIME UNION OF AUSTRALIA BLOCKADE**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (11:08):** My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. In her inaugural speech in this Chamber she said, "The Maritime Union of Australia—whom I proudly call my friends—have had a significant influence in shaping my beliefs". Yesterday the MUA Sydney branch urged attendance at and participated in what became a violent blockade against an Israeli-owned—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Newtown will come to order. All members, including the Premier, will come to order. I do not need advice from any member about how to apply the standing orders. The Leader of the Opposition has the call.

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN:** Yesterday the MUA Sydney branch urged attendance at and participated in what became a violent blockade against an Israeli-owned vessel unloading at Port Botany. Will the Minister condemn the MUA and its members who participated in the blockade?

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (11:09):** It is important that members note in this House that people are allowed to protest and gather on the streets of New South Wales, peacefully and lawfully. In addition to that, all members in the House know that we have now had seven continuous weeks of gatherings and protests on our streets in this city alone. In fact, there have been 73 of those. On every single occasion the police have made it very clear—indeed the Premier has made it clear; I have made it clear—people have the right to protest lawfully and peacefully. But if they do not do that, and if they are outside of the legal framework, they will be arrested. What a surprise last night that the police did their job. The protesters at the port were asked to move on. The police, as I was advised, were very patient in asking them to move on. They refused to do so. And guess what? They were arrested, as they should have been. Because if you break the law, then you should be arrested.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, direct relevance. The question was quite specific about the Maritime Union of Australia. The Minister proudly called them her friends. Now they are the union whose name she dare not mention.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** To the point of order—

**Mr Mark Speakman:** The question is, specifically, will the Minister condemn the MUA and its members who engaged in what became a violent protest?

**The SPEAKER:** I understand the question. I will hear the Leader of the House on the point of order. The Clerk will stop the clock.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Members cannot ask a wideranging question referring to an inaugural speech that went some 20 or 25 minutes and then complain that the response is not directly relevant.

**Mr Mark Coure:** What's the standing order?

**Mr Paul Scully:** He's responding to the point of order.

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

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** I am speaking to the point of order. It is under Standing Order 129. If the Acting Manager of Opposition Business wants a lesson on the standing orders, he should read them. He should also read the Speaker's ruling and other Speakers' rulings about what constitutes direct relevance. Then he would not interject and ask ridiculous questions.

**The SPEAKER:** I thank the Leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition for their contributions. I do not uphold the point of order.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** I also add there have been 55 arrests under Operation Shelter since that came into place from 7 October. That includes the 23 from last night. I talk to cops every day in this city, out in the regions and in remote New South Wales. Do you know what I hear from them? They are sick to death of being questioned, undermined and called cover-ups by the Opposition. They are saying to me that they have had a gutful. They have had a gutful of the mistrust put in them by the Opposition. When members opposite come and sit on my couch and tell me what a good job they are doing, they should think about what their leader is doing.

**Mr Mark Coure:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister has concluded her answer. There is no point of order.

### HOUSING SUPPLY

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (11:14):** My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on the plan by the Minns Labor Government to build more houses in New South Wales to increase supply to help drive down prices?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:14):** I inform the House that the New South Wales Government will move legislation to wind up the Greater Cities Commission in New South Wales. It is essential that we remove the duplication, the complexity, the bureaucratic maze that is in place in New South Wales when it comes to planning to get the economy moving. We are redressing a wrong that had been in place for 12 long years—

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** —with the so-called party of business, the New South Wales Liberal Party, winding this State up in red tape and bureaucracy for over a decade.

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** The ultimate losers from that disgraceful attempt at policy reform from the previous Government were young people in the State. Housing prices exponentially increased and as a result the next generation of young Australians were wiped out of the market. It comes on the back of a range of reforms the Government is pursuing, everything from rebalancing urban density in Sydney so that everybody takes their fair share, to ensuring that we have housing development on public transport lines, to ensuring that there is a land audit on government land, because we have a responsibility to bring on supply. It really comes down to a central point here that we must have supply in Sydney to cope with the growing population. I note that the Federal Government is pursuing population policies and immigration policies to this State. It has been heartily endorsed by quite a few members of Parliament.

On 27 September the Leader of the Opposition said, "We are always chasing our tail when it comes to infrastructure, but I don't think Australia has any strategic choice but to maintain significant population growth." He went on to say, "I don't think Australia can credibly secure or maintain occupation of a continent without major population growth." That was the Leader of the Opposition on 27 September. That is still current, isn't it? That was not too long ago, was it? It was pretty comprehensive. He said, "I don't think Australia credibly can securely maintain occupation of a continent without some population growth," on 27 September. Wrong! He changed his mind. Yesterday he said, "Right now the most sensible solution is a short-term reduction in migration." On 21 November he said "short-term reduction in migration".

**Mr Mark Coure:** Point of order—

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** In September it was a massive increase in population.

**Mr Mark Coure:** All members know the standing order. It is Standing Order 129. The answer does not go anywhere near the question that has been asked by the member for Parramatta.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Oatley will resume his seat. There is no point of order.

**Ms Donna Davis:** I seek further information.

**The SPEAKER:** I grant a two-minute extension of time.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** As irritating as the member for Oatley is, members will notice that no-one is saying, "Bring back Alister." It is all okay. We will keep him here. There may be members in the community—

**Mr Mark Coure:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. I will hear the point of order. Order! Members will come to order. I direct the member for Willoughby to remove himself from the Chamber under Standing Order 249A until the end of question time.

*[Pursuant to standing order the member for Willoughby left the Chamber at 11:18.]*

Government members will cease interjecting; they are not immune from calls to order. I called for order in the House and the member for Willoughby interjected immediately. That is why he was removed from the Chamber. Members will come to order.

**Dr Hugh McDermott:** Fair enough.

**Mr David Harris:** That's right.

**The SPEAKER:** I appreciate the member for Monaro giving an example of what not to do—or was it the member for Campbelltown? Members will settle down. Every member is now on notice.

**Mrs Tina Ayyad:** Point of order—

**Mr Matt Kean:** Tim was not on notice.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Hornsby can start an argument if he wishes, but I assure him that I will prevail. I will now hear the point of order—

**Mr Matt Kean:** It does not give you credibility.

**The SPEAKER:** Thank you, Matt. I call the member for Holsworthy.

**Mrs Tina Ayyad:** I believe my point of order is under both Standing Order 72 and Standing Order 73. The Premier referred to the member for Oatley as "irritating". That is extremely unprofessional.

*[Government members interjected.]*

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order. There will be decorum in the Chamber. I warn the member for Campbelltown that I will not tolerate interjections such as that. It is not helpful. Government members are not immune from calls to order. The Premier has the call.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** That was a trivial point of order from the member for Holsworthy but it still represents the best attack on the Government all week. At the end of the day, you may be one of those members of the community who agrees with Mark Speakman that there is too much immigration, or you might be one of those members of the community who agrees with Mark Speakman that there is too little immigration. The point is, no-one knows what his view is on housing or policy or immigration in New South Wales.

**Mr Mark Coure:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. I will hear the point of order from the member for Oatley.

**Mr Mark Coure:** I take my point of order under Standing Order 129. The Premier is not answering the question from the member for Parramatta. He is on his own little frolic yet again.

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order. The Premier has the call.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** While I am at it, the member for Oatley made a contribution in 2021 when he was still in government, and this is to do with housing. He said:

... the feedback that I receive from the community on a daily basis dictates that we do not want more development.

No more development, no granny flats, no redoing of your kitchen, no conversion of commercial property to residential—just absolutely nothing. This is what we are dealing with at the end of the day.

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** This is surely germane to the question I have been asked.

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. I will hear the point of order from the member for Dubbo.

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. It is all good and well to sledge the member for Oatley—we all enjoy that—but at the end of the day it is about the Premier talking about what the Government is doing. The question was about what the Government is doing.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Dubbo will resume his seat. There is no point of order.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** At the end of the day, the Opposition has five different views on migration. It has five different views on housing. This Government has a united, thought-through reform agenda for housing in New South Wales, and why would we ever go back to the rabble represented by the Opposition in this State?

**Ms Felicity Wilson:** You had five minutes to tell us about it and you did not.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for North Shore will come to order. She was so good yesterday. I ask her to reflect on her behaviour.

#### IMMIGRATION DETAINEES

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (11:23):** My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. This morning the Attorney General said he had not been briefed on the 93 immigration detainees, including convicted violent criminals and sex criminals, who were released following the High Court's decision. Was the Minister briefed straight away on those criminals? What actions is she taking to ensure that the New South Wales community is protected from those particular criminals?

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (11:23):** I thank the member for her question. It is important that we know that a High Court decision was made in relation to this matter on 18 November 2023. I think all members of the House know that. As a consequence of that, the Federal Parliament has moved legislation placing strict conditions around every aspect of those people's lives, including curfews and reporting, and it is my understanding that they will be required to report to the Australian Border Force and the Australian Federal Police because it is that jurisdiction that will be monitoring them.

#### SURGERY WAITING LISTS

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (11:24):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Health. Will the Minister update the House on how the Minns Labor Government has halved the State's overdue planned surgery list?

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (11:24):** I thank the member for that question. I know he has a keen interest in health care, particularly in Karitane, which is in his neck of the woods. We celebrated the work it has been doing recently with the member for Campbelltown at Campbelltown Hospital. It is a fantastic organisation and it spoke highly of the member for Fairfield's advocacy. I congratulate him on that. People may know that when we came into office in March this year, there was a very challenging figure of over 14,000 people who had waited longer than clinically recommended to get essential surgery. Those people have been on a waiting list for a significant length of time.

On day one when the Premier and I visited Liverpool Hospital, we established a surgical taskforce led by surgeons, anaesthetists, nurses and allied healthcare workers to look at how we could drive that number down. Our frontline healthcare workers deserve credit and recognition. I am very glad that as of the beginning of this

month we have reduced that number to around 5,800, substantially down from 14,000 when we took over. That means there are literally thousands more people who are now at home recovering and living a normal, productive life because we have been able to have a focus on elective surgery in New South Wales hospitals.

Apart from recognising the enormous contribution that our frontline healthcare workers have made to get that figure down, I will also discuss the innovative model that we have used. We have had a look at doing same-day surgery for things that perhaps in the past would have taken two days. That frees up operating spaces and allows more throughput through our surgical rooms. We have a strong relationship with our private hospital partners to ensure that we are using the capacity of the health system. We have looked at ways to improve efficiency within our surgery lists to make sure that we are getting through more people as quickly as possible. We have also boosted staffing. We are going to continue to focus on this issue because there is still a substantial way to go. [*Extension of time*]

The waiting list is at just over 5,000. We still have to get it down to as close to zero as possible. The work continues. I get a weekly briefing from my deputy secretary Matthew Daly, who is working on this. I have met with the surgical taskforce group many times, and I have told its members that we need to make that work as sustainable and as embedded into normal practice as possible. That is a challenge but it will be a true reward if we can embed it into business-as-usual practice within our healthcare system. That is what we are focused on doing.

Some areas have done very well. South-east Sydney has had an 85 per cent reduction. South-west Sydney has had a 70-odd per cent reduction. Near my neck of the woods, Illawarra Shoalhaven has had an over 40 per cent reduction, making significant inroads. That means that people have had surgery faster than they would have. They waited too long. We made it a priority, the system made it a priority and our frontline healthcare workers made it a priority, and the outcome is that patients get treated faster and more effectively and they are back home. This is part of our reform. We are doing, and will continue to do, similar work in our emergency departments. I know we have more work to do and I know our health system is under pressure, but the Government has a laser-like focus on these key areas, designed to improve the health, wellbeing and overall health care of the men and women in the communities we are so proud to serve.

#### **SOUTH COAST ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (11:29):** My question is directed to the Premier. Given the announcement of cuts to infrastructure funding following the Federal Government's infrastructure audit, will the Premier recommit to and guarantee the delivery of promised infrastructure projects on the South Coast, such as the Nowra Bypass, the Princes Highway upgrade and the Milton Ulladulla bypass? If not, why not?

**The SPEAKER:** The Premier has indicated that he will take the question on notice.

#### **QUEENSCLIFF FERRY**

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (11:30):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport. Will the Minister update the House on the progress of returning the *Queenscliff* ferry to service?

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (11:30):** I thank the member for Coogee for her question, for her advocacy for great public transport across our city and our State, and for her work as my Parliamentary Secretary working across the State, particularly on bus reforms. For 40 years, Freshwater ferries like the *Queenscliff* have served the Manly to Circular Quay route, which is one of the most spectacular ferry journeys in the entire world. These reliable, Australian-made ferries are much loved by Sydneysiders as well as visitors to our city. I know many members in this place, including the member for Manly, were devastated when those beautiful vessels were put on the chopping block by the former Government. But this Government is committed to bringing them back.

Why are we doing this? It is not just because these vessels are iconic and much loved, but also because their size and scale are needed on our harbour during the busy summer months. The overseas-made Emerald Class ferries, which those opposite bought, do not have the capacity to deal with the booming summer crowds on the F1 route. They have a single gangway, which means they take longer to load and unload, and that puts pressure on them meeting their timetabled departure times. This is why, during what is expected to be a long and hot summer, additional capacity will be provided by our iconic Freshwater ferries, which can carry up to 1,000 passengers each journey. If the former transport Minister and future Senator Andrew Constance had it his way, none of those ferries would be operating at all and passengers would be left stranded in long queues down the Manly Corso and winding around Circular Quay.

It is an exciting time on our harbour because I am pleased to announce to the House today that the *Queenscliff* will be returning to passenger service on Monday morning, leaving the dock at 9.32 a.m. It is going

to be an exciting moment. We want to see the Freshwaters back. The Government made this election commitment and it is delivering on it, and the *Queenscliff* will be carrying passengers on Monday. She has had a beautiful refurbishment, with new seats and new engines, and she has new propellers that are almost taller than the member for Wakehurst! They are spectacular. This is all part of the Government's \$71 million investment to ensure that the Freshwaters are back on our harbour.

It is incredibly important that we provide reliable ferry services on our harbour but also on our river. Recently, I stood with the Premier at the Olympic Park ferry wharf to announce seven new ferries to serve the Parramatta to Circular Quay route. These ferries will be Australian built in Tasmania. [*Extension of time*]

I am pleased to report to the House that progress is well underway. The construction of the first two vessel hulls, which will be available next year, is complete and the rest of the work is ongoing. This is what investing in and delivering a modern integrated ferry network looks like and how this Government is going to bring back reliability to our ferry network, because it is important that passengers have the service they need. Let me compare this with the Leader of the Opposition's approach. His special pet project cost taxpayers nearly \$80 million, more than the \$71 million we are spending on all the Freshwater ferries combined.

**Mr Mark Coure:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129, relevance. This has nothing to do with the question that was asked. It was about the Freshwater ferries and about the *Queenscliff*. It has nothing to do with the question.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** It has everything to do with it; it's a comparison.

**Mr Mark Coure:** It's not a comparison. It is not being relevant.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Oatley will come to order. I understand the member's point of order, but the Minister has been directly relevant. She may not be directly relevant now—

**Mr Mark Coure:** There you go.

**The SPEAKER:** No, that is not how it works. The member for Oatley should be mindful of the fact that he is on two calls to order. I gave the Minister the opportunity to reach the threshold of direct relevance, which she has done. She may now make further comments.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** I think there is a good reason those opposite are uncomfortable about this. It is not just the \$80 million price tag of the Kurnell and La Perouse ferry wharves that the Leader of the Opposition has championed for so long; it is the fact that there is no ferry there at all—\$80 million for some wharves with no ferry service at all. Compare the pair.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Leader of the Opposition rises on a point of order.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** We are returning reliable ferry services to the people of New South Wales. Members opposite backed bad projects again and again. [*Time expired.*]

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister has exceeded her time. The Leader of the Opposition wished to take a point of order, but the Minister has concluded her answer. Therefore, there is no point of order. The Leader of the Opposition can pursue other avenues to deal with the matter.

#### IMMIGRATION DETAINEES

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst) (11:36):** My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. I refer to the Minister's previous answer. When was the Minister first briefed in detail about violent criminals and sex criminals included in the released immigration detainees?

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (11:36):** I have been briefed by the Attorney-General. The police commissioner has also been briefed by the border control commissioner. In addition to that, I have been advised that any offenders who are on the child sex registry will have to report, just as any criminal in New South Wales would have to report, and those reporting mechanisms will be undertaken by the New South Wales police.

[*Interruption*]

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

### NSW POLICE FORCE RECRUITMENT

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (11:37):** My question is also addressed to the hardworking Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. Will the Minister update the House on how the Minns Labor Government is supporting and encouraging new recruits to join the NSW Police Force?

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (11:37):** I thank the member for Liverpool. I know she has a deep interest in making sure that we get as many police out to her electorate as possible. Members on this side of the House are excited that we have finally been able to address the police shortage that we inherited from the Opposition when we came to government. I say for the benefit of the House that we are 1,500 police officers short, which represents 9 per cent of the workforce. That is a very important fact to know. Our essential workers, including police, are out there day and night, working tirelessly to respond to a wide range of complex social issues in our community. But our police feel stretched, and I will not shy away from this problem. I have been very up-front, both in Parliament and in public, about the reality they face.

It is clear that we need to encourage more people to take up a career in the NSW Police Force. As I announced with the Premier at the end of last month, from March 2024 police recruits will be paid to study at the Goulburn police academy. It is the first time that has happened in 20 years. Those opposite had 12 years and did nothing. Student police officers will be employed as clerk grade 1/2 administrative employees on a temporary fixed-term contract and will receive a total salary of \$30,984 over the 16 weeks of their training. That works out to be \$1,360 per week. Of course—we being the Labor Party—that includes their superannuation, which is estimated at \$380 in award-based allowances. Current recruits at the academy will not miss out either. We will make sure that they receive a pro-rata payment.

This announcement has been warmly welcomed by police and by the community right across the State. Officers are telling me—and I know they are telling my colleagues as well—how much they appreciate how the new Labor Government values them and values their occupation. We know this is what is needed. Recent research for the NSW Police Force showed that 67 per cent of people said that they would be more likely to join the NSW Police Force if they were paid to train at the academy. And guess what? It's working! Following our announcement, the NSW Police Force has received 143 applications from people to become a police officer in New South Wales. [*Extension of time*]

That puts applications on track to hit more than 200 by the end of this month. In a month we were able to achieve that. Those opposite had 12 years but got zip. During the same period last year, they only received 78 applications. This particular initiative will more than double that. I say to people right around Australia: If you want to be a police officer, come to New South Wales. It is the best in the country. It is the best in the world. Not only will you be paid while you study, but you will also walk away with an associate degree level of qualification and a job with the best police force right here in New South Wales.

As the Police Association has rightly said, we need to show the people of New South Wales what a fantastic career they can have in the NSW Police Force. I thank the association and Commissioner Karen Webb for their partnership to make this a reality. When you talk to people, you get on with them and you make decisions, you end up with great results. They know and I know we have the country's best police force. We need to promote that and to promote the amazing opportunities that come with a career in policing. We also need to make it as easy as possible for people to become a police officer. This initiative will unlock more opportunities for a diverse police force. We will see a range of recruits come in. We will see people who want to change their career, who have a trade or indeed any other qualification, because now they have the financial security to ensure that they get the best policing experience right here in New South Wales. Clearly there is more that we need to support our police, to get more boots on the ground and to look after them. But guess what? The Minns Labor Government supports them all the way. I put to those opposite that they should start supporting the New South Wales police as well.

### IMMIGRATION DETAINEES

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (11:43):** My question is directed to the Premier. This morning on radio the Attorney General said he had not been briefed on the released immigration detainees. A few minutes ago the police Minister said the Attorney General briefed her. Which one does the Premier believe?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:43):** Honestly, it is so trivial. The member is the king of nitpicking.

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** The member is the king of nitpicking. Honestly, any question about the rolling out of the policy—

**Mrs Tina Ayyad:** Point of order—

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** I get asked a question and it is two seconds into my answer.

**The SPEAKER:** I will hear the point of order.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** Is this going to be a world-record-breaking point of order? I think he wants an answer.

**The SPEAKER:** It could be. The member for Upper Hunter will remain silent. What is the member's point of order?

**Mrs Tina Ayyad:** My point of order is taken under Standing Order 72, offensive words not to be used. The Premier has done it multiple times.

**The SPEAKER:** I am not sure what the member for Holsworthy is referring to.

**Mrs Tina Ayyad:** He said that the Leader of the Opposition is a nitpicker.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Holsworthy will resume her seat. I will not entertain points of order that are intended to interfere with the answer.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** Is this fair dinkum? I know the member for Holsworthy just got here but surely—

**The SPEAKER:** If members take points of order that are intended to interfere with the Premier's answer, particularly when he has just started, then those members—even the member for Holsworthy—may be directed to leave the Chamber without further warning. The Premier will continue his answer.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** Honestly, the member is the king of nitpicking. There are major issues in New South Wales at the moment. We would have entertained and answered any question on continuing detention orders, on monitoring, on negotiations or consultation with the Federal Government, yet the member is obsessed about conversations between the Attorney General and the police Minister. There is no public good as a result of any of these questions. It is just a minute attempt to try to find some kind of inconsistency that the general public could not care less about.

Let me tell you the facts. We have been in discussions with the Commonwealth Government since the High Court decision a week ago. Those discussions have resulted in the New South Wales Government talking to the Federal Government about supplying monitoring devices for those detainees in the community. Is that so outrageous? It is probably on commercial terms. Anyone who has been convicted of a New South Wales criminal offence, particularly a violent offence, and is subject to continuing monitoring—it does not matter whether they are a refugee or they have an indeterminate immigration status—will be monitored by the New South Wales police. Yes, this is a complicated issue, but we have all received briefings on it. The Minister for police and the police commissioner have been in discussions with the Australian Federal Police and the Commonwealth Government. It is a complex situation, but we are meeting the challenge of providing those resources to the Federal Government. If members opposite want an answer about it, they should ask those questions. These personality politics are completely and utterly inane. They represent the simple focus of the New South Wales Opposition, which is obsessed with politics and could not care less about outcomes.

#### GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT AND SMALL BUSINESS

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (11:46):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, representing the Minister for Domestic Manufacturing and Government Procurement. Will the Minister update the House on how the Minns Labor Government is delivering on its commitment to boost government procurement of goods and services from small and medium businesses?

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (11:46):** I thank the member for Riverstone for his question. What a good question it is. He is someone who understands small business because he was a small business owner and operator. In fact, before he came to this place he was the vice president of the North West Business Chamber. As the son of a small business operator, I understand what it is like to not have a government that backs small business. That is how it was for 12 years under the Opposition.

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

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** The Minns Government backs small business. That is why we are making changes to improve small businesses and improve opportunities for small business to thrive, to grow and to employ. There are more than 840,000 small businesses in New South Wales and they are central to the State's economy. They generate \$465 billion a year and employ more than 1.6 million people. Of the private sector workforce, 43 per cent

are employed by small business. Recently the Premier, the Minister for Small Business, and the Minister for Domestic Manufacturing and Government Procurement announced some important changes that provide greater opportunity for small businesses in New South Wales to get a cut of government procurement. The New South Wales Government is a huge purchaser of goods and services. We want to give more small businesses the opportunity to be part and parcel of the supply of those goods and services.

Each year, the New South Wales Government spends more than \$9 billion on goods and services obtained directly from around 46,000 small and medium enterprises. The changes to procurement rules will mean that those businesses, and additional ones, will get a bigger slice of that government pie. A direction has been signed that increases the level at which departments and agencies can purchase goods and services from small businesses directly, increasing it from \$150,000 to \$250,000. It is sensible reform. That ministerial directive was issued to the NSW Procurement Board and requires agencies to implement the change to policy no later than 31 December this year.

We are getting on with the job of providing opportunity for small business. It sends an important signal to the government agencies engaged directly with the small and medium enterprises in our community in New South Wales. Members should get their goods and services from them. Given the diversity of small businesses in New South Wales, government agencies could buy a range of goods and services from them, like catering services, office supplies, maintenance and repairs, and development and training resources. The Opposition could certainly use some training resources on question time tactics. There are probably some great small businesses out there that could help, but we wouldn't know.

**The SPEAKER:** Is the member for Oatley rising on a point of order?

**Mr Mark Coure:** No, I am just getting water.

**The SPEAKER:** I forgot about the member's particular proclivity in that area.

**Mr Warren Kirby:** I seek additional information.

**The SPEAKER:** I grant an extension of two minutes.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** The Government has also eased procurement requirements for insurance. Previously, small and medium enterprises were required to submit proof of insurance when they put forward documents in a tender. Now, proof of insurance will be required if a contract is awarded to that small and medium enterprise, reducing the amount of time, effort and energy that they have to put into tender documents and requirements. The reforms we are making and the opportunities we are providing to small business come off the back of 12 years of neglect by members opposite.

This Government is removing that red tape to give a boost to small and medium enterprises. There will be no more wasted time, energy and effort on those procurement processes. We are concentrating on seizing opportunities, being part of selling and providing services and goods to government, and we are making sure that small and medium enterprises have the opportunity to grow, employ and thrive. That is what this Government is all about. We back small business. Unlike members opposite, our changes to small business rules are about supporting small business. Our vibrancy reforms are about supporting small businesses and having more people engaged in the night-time economy and the hospitality area.

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

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** Our outdoor dining rules make outdoor dining an exempt development, giving more opportunities to small hospitality businesses. We have toll rebates for sole traders. We are backing in domestic manufacturing so that small and medium enterprises can be part and parcel of the manufacturing supply chain that supports domestic manufacturing. That is just to name a few things that we are doing. Small businesses were barely listened to for a decade by members opposite. They claimed to be the party of small business but they were the party of red tape for small business. We are getting on with the job to provide that opportunity. We will back New South Wales workers and businesses every day of the week.

### OFFSHORE PETROLEUM EXPLORATION

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (11:52):** My question is directed to the Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, representing the Minister for the Environment. In light of the Labor-dominated committee's recommendation not to proceed with our bill to block Petroleum Exploration Permit 11 [PEP 11], will the Minister listen to New South Wales coastal communities and take action to block offshore gas and oil drilling?

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (11:52):** I thank the member for Vaucluse. As she said,

I represent the Minister for the Environment in this place. In relation to the decision by the Federal Court to quash the decision to refuse the Petroleum Exploration Permit 11 application, the Opposition intends to introduce a private member's bill to prohibit offshore petroleum exploration. PEP 11 is located in Commonwealth waters, more than three nautical miles off the coast between Sydney and Newcastle. It was issued in 1999 under the Commonwealth Government's Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2006.

Offshore petroleum exploration and mining in Commonwealth waters is regulated solely by Commonwealth legislation. In January 2020, Asset Energy Pty Ltd made an application to vary PEP 11. The application was refused in March 2022 by the Commonwealth-New South Wales Offshore Petroleum Joint Authority and later overturned by the Federal Court in February 2023, with the application returned to the joint authority for determination. The Government will not be pre-empting that decision by providing ongoing commentary.

**Ms Kellie Sloane:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under relevance. I appreciate that this is background and I will let the Minister catch up but, given that during the election campaign everyone from the Premier to the environment Minister to the member for Swansea said that they were opposed to PEP 11, what are they going to do about it?

**The SPEAKER:** I do not uphold the point of order because it contained a debating point.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order: Mr Speaker, you have already ruled on the former point of order. To the latter issue, the Minister is outlining the history so that the Government can indicate its position as to why he cannot make a public comment about this matter. He should not be interrupted. He should be allowed to conclude his answer.

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order. The Minister has the call.

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** Thank you for the opportunity to speak about this matter. It is clear that there will be a response. The Minister has made it. I have gone through the importance and the value of what we have been saying about the application and the process. We are considering new legislation around the offshore area. If we can raise an issue around PEP 11, I know that the Minister has been working on it and has made her view on that very clear. I will leave it at that point.

### DROUGHT SUPPORT

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (11:55):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education in his capacity representing the Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Western New South Wales. Will the Minister update the House on the action the Minns Labor Government is taking to support farmers in the face of emerging dry conditions?

**The SPEAKER:** I call the Minister and apologise for wrongly attributing an interjection to him earlier.

**Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (11:56):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. As you know, I am always so well behaved.

**The SPEAKER:** Mostly.

**Mr STEVE WHAN:** I thank the member for Cessnock for his question. This is an important issue for farmers and rural communities, who are worrying about intensifying drought conditions across the North Coast, north-west, Hunter and far South Coast parts of the State. Currently, the NSW Department of Primary Industries Combined Drought Indicator identifies that 75 per cent of the State is drought affected in some way. That impacts on-farm production as well as the business and mental wellbeing of producers in the affected areas. That is why on Monday I was pleased to see an announcement of a \$250 million fund for farmers to adapt to drought.

The Drought Ready and Resilient Fund is a quarter of a billion dollar commitment to help farmers prepare for tough conditions. That announcement was welcomed by New South Wales farmers, and we will continue to work with them and local farmers to ensure that the producers have the support they need on the ground. Farmers can apply for the low-interest loan of up to \$250,000, which can be paid off over five or 10 years, to fund a broad range of products, activities and services to prepare for and respond to the impacts of drought. The Drought Ready and Resilient Fund provides access to loans for a wide range of farming businesses, including young farmers, new businesses and those that source increased off-farm income due to recent natural disasters and fires.

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** It's the cost of living. They don't need loans.

**Mr STEVE WHAN:** The fund is in addition to the Drought Infrastructure Fund, which is currently offering loans of up to \$1 million. I note the nattering from The Nationals opposite, which is the party that abolished drought declarations when they first came into government in 2011. They abolished the subsidies and

consistently said that farmers should be preparing. The Nationals are loud in this place when talking about it. They are my second favourite party in New South Wales politics because they are always so pleased with themselves. I do not want them to change. I noticed David Littleproud, the Federal leader, at their recent party conference patting the New South Wales Nats on the back for their fabulous election performance earlier this year.

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** Point of order: Mr Speaker, my point of order is on relevance under Standing Order 129. I ask you to bring the Minister back to the question.

**The SPEAKER:** I uphold the point of order.

**Mr STEVE WHAN:** I am sure I could come back to The Nationals but, as I was saying, the Drought Ready and Resilient Fund can be applied to a broad range of activities beyond infrastructure only. Across the two available products, farmers will be well supported. [*Extension of time*]

As I was saying, the Drought Ready and Resilient Fund will support investment in drought preparedness and management through the various phases of drought.

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

**Mr STEVE WHAN:** It will be administered by the NSW Rural Assistance Authority. Applications are open for the Drought Infrastructure Fund and will be open for the Drought and Ready Resilient Fund from 1 December.

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

**Mr STEVE WHAN:** I encourage people to take advantage of the Government's rate of interest. As I was coming back to—

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

**Mr STEVE WHAN:** There is carping from The Nationals on the other side. As I was saying before, they have been busy patting themselves on the back at their conferences recently, saying what a herculean effort the last election was for them.

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Riverstone to order for the first time. I call the member for Upper Hunter to order for the first time.

**Mr STEVE WHAN:** We want them to continue to be happy with their performance. We want them to know that 11 seats in this place is a terrific performance.

**Mr Mark Coure:** Point of order—

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

**Mr Mark Coure:** My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129, relevance. The Minister knows that he is not answering the question that has just been asked.

**The SPEAKER:** I thank the member for Oatley. The Minister understands that he must be directly relevant. He achieved that threshold earlier in his answer. The Minister has the call.

**Mr Mark Coure:** He is out in his little paddock.

**Mr STEVE WHAN:** I say to the member for Oatley that there are not many people in the Opposition who would actually get into a paddock. I was actually in the Central West recently riding my bicycle and I could see that the farmers in that area have been doing a great job in preparing for drought. There is a lot of fodder there at the moment. We need to be, obviously, very aware of those for whom fodder supply has been affected by bushfires and ensure that they continue to be able to access separate assistance. But coming back to The Nationals, 11 seats in this place is actually their lowest number of seats since—when would you think? Since 1925—98 years ago was the last time that they did worse in an election. By all means, they can continue patting themselves on the back and saying that they have done a great job. In the meantime, we will get on with the job of delivering for the people of regional and rural New South Wales.

#### INNER SYDNEY PUBLIC EDUCATION

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (12:01):** Mr Speaker, you are continuing to do a really good job.

**The SPEAKER:** I thank the member for Sydney.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH:** I also think the member for Oatley is doing a pretty good job. Let us hope he starts his own podcast. That would be good.

**The SPEAKER:** Members will remain silent and perhaps tune out while the member for Sydney and I have a personal discussion.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH:** My question is directed to the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Education and Early Learning. How is the Government working to address the public high school needs of inner city and eastern suburbs families?

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (12:02):** I thank the member for Sydney for his question. Through him, I thank the many advocates of his community, and the member for Coogee and her community also, for being so engaged on the future of public education in inner Sydney and in the eastern suburbs of Sydney. I have met with both members since coming to government on a few issues, including the matter that the member for Sydney raises this afternoon. I have also met with Federal member for Wentworth Allegra Spender, the Ultimo Public School P&C and many other campaigners over the past few months. These have been useful discussions about the needs for public education in that part of Sydney.

I know that the members and local communities have been making the case for many years now that the New South Wales Government should increase the provision of public education in the area. They have put forward many ideas to many Ministers for the future of public education in the city and the east, including that we should be looking at service needs in the area, ensuring our public schools are on track to keep up with population growth; that we should be looking at existing school catchments—which have been particularly fraught in that part of the world—and how we can ensure our schools are fully utilised without overburdening local families with longer commutes; and, in the future, that we should be remaining open-minded about how we can get more out of limited land in that part of Sydney, which is obviously a major challenge when considering high school educational facilities and thinking outside of the box, creatively, on this.

It is incumbent on government to take those ideas seriously. The School Infrastructure team is reviewing this area to look at its needs, in particular, including considering the needs of the Pyrmont community and those areas east of the CBD. In New South Wales we inherited a significant school infrastructure backlog from the former Government across the State and we are working very hard to address that important issue.

*[An Opposition member interjected.]*

That is not funny at all. This work will also be informed by the Enrolment Growth Audit, the early findings of which we expect to see this year. This work will include looking at public high school provision, and it is in addition to \$42 million in upgrades that will support a new co-educational offering in the eastern suburbs as Randwick Boys High School and Randwick Girls' High School come together in 2025, following extensive community consultation; the redevelopment of Fort Street Public School, which will deliver 14 additional classrooms; the new Green Square Public School, which will deliver 24 new classrooms; and the planned upgrades at Orange Grove Public School, which will also deliver new classrooms. *[Extension of time]*

We also know that there are schools in some of these communities which have additional capacity. We will continue to work with them to ensure that they have the tools they need to cater for an increased student population in the future. While this work is ongoing, I thank the member for Sydney, the member for Coogee and the Federal member for Wentworth for their continued advocacy. I look forward to working with them to ensure that their communities are getting the public education infrastructure that they deserve into the future. This is a set of quite difficult issues because of the issues relating to land in this part of Sydney, but I am confident that we will be able to work together to increase provision in this part of the world. Every child in New South Wales has a right to public education in this State and I look forward to working with the member for Sydney on making that a reality for his constituents.

## DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (12:06):** My question is addressed to the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, and Minister for Women. Will the Minister update the House on how the Minns Labor Government is taking action to address the scourge of domestic violence?

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (12:06):** I certainly thank the member for South Coast for raising this important question, particularly given the fact that we are almost on the eve of the 16 days of activism. At the outset, I take the opportunity to say that this Government has taken, and continues to take, a zero-tolerance approach to domestic, family and sexual violence. We are working across agencies and with experts and communities to prevent family violence before it begins.

Consistent with our zero-tolerance stand, I am very proud that this Government is holding perpetrators to account. As part of this, we are introducing legislation to amend the high-risk offenders Act to ensure that strangulation is considered a serious violent offence. I thank the Attorney General for the approach that he has taken on this legislation and for the fact that he has taken this issue so seriously. The legislation will put serious non-fatal strangulation in the same category as murder, manslaughter and intentionally inflicting grievous bodily harm. As a result, perpetrators serving a period of imprisonment for serious non-fatal strangulation will be able to continue to be detained or monitored, even after their sentence has been served. This piece of legislation will send a strong signal that our community will not tolerate any form of domestic violence and that this Government is serious about cracking down on the types of violence that can escalate to loss of life.

We know that prior attempted, non-lethal strangulation is one of the best predictors of subsequent homicide. In fact, it increases the risk of attempted homicide by 700 per cent. We have seen too many lives lost to domestic violence and we need to respond. This is one of the important ways that the Minns Labor Government is tackling domestic and family violence. I update the House further on other aspects of our approach. That includes the fact that the first budget handed down by the Government included \$456 million to prevent, intervene in and respond to domestic and family violence. That \$456 million is a significant increase on the \$262.7 million allocated by the previous Government in the last financial year. *[Extension of time]*

We are working with specialist domestic and family violence services and community housing services to provide core and cluster refuges for victim-survivors across New South Wales. The first two tranches of the program are underway and 39 projects have been awarded funding under them. A majority of those—26, in fact—will be in regional and rural New South Wales, including in Albury, the Upper Hunter and Tamworth. Once all three of those tranches have been fully delivered by the end of 2026, there will be emergency housing for an additional 2,900 women and children fleeing domestic and family violence every year.

Finally, I touch on a further recent announcement of the New South Wales Government, which is leading the nation in the historic appointment of the first standalone NSW Women's Safety Commissioner. The commissioner, Dr Hannah Tonkin, plays a critical role in spearheading our whole-of-government approach to domestic, family and sexual violence. The role signals just how serious this Government is in bolstering its approach to primary prevention and early intervention. We know that it is incredibly important to be tough on perpetrators. That is why we are introducing the legislation this week. But we also need them to change their behaviour and for communities to work with us so that the cycle of violence can finally end. I again thank the member for South Coast for her question. I ask that each and every one of us think about how we can raise the issue of domestic and family violence during the 16 Days of Activism.

## IMMIGRATION DETAINEES

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (12:12):** To clarify to the House, when I answered the question on immigration detainees, I said I was briefed by the Attorney-General. I was briefed by Mark Dreyfus, the Federal Attorney-General, which is right and proper. I am surprised members opposite are so confused.

### *Committees*

## COMMITTEE ON THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION

### **Inquiry**

**Mr JASON LI:** As Chair: In accordance with Standing Order 299 (1), I inform the House that the Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption has resolved to review the 2021-22 and 2022-23 annual reports of the ICAC and the Inspector of the ICAC, the full details of which are available on the committee's home page.

## JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON PROTECTING LOCAL WATER UTILITIES FROM PRIVATISATION

### **Membership**

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

That a message be sent informing the Legislative Council of the following Legislative Assembly members nominated to serve on the Joint Select Committee on Protecting Local Water Utilities from Privatisation, as announced on 13 September 2023 and amended on 18 October 2023:

- (1) Ms Liza Anne Butler
- (2) Mr Justin Paul Clancy
- (3) Ms Stephanie Anne Cooke

(4) Mrs Helen Jennifer Dalton

(5) Dr Michael Joseph Holland

**Motion agreed to.**

*Business of the House*

**BUSINESS LAPSED**

**The SPEAKER:** I advise the House that in accordance with Standing Order 105 (3) general business notices of motions (general notices) Nos 512 to 540 will lapse tomorrow.

*Petitions*

**PETITIONS RECEIVED**

**The SPEAKER:** I announce that the following paper petition signed by 500 or more persons has been lodged for presentation:

**Molong Flood Mitigation**

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly urgently allocate sufficient funding for all necessary works to mitigate the impact of stormwater on Molong, including replacement of the Molong Creek railway bridge, received from **Mr Philip Donato**.

*Bills*

**STRATA LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2023**

**Second Reading Speech**

**Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**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) (12:17):** Assistance animals play an important role in our society by supporting those with disability. They aid in providing a good quality of life and independence for many. That is why, under strata and community land scheme laws, a by-law cannot prohibit or restrict a resident from keeping an assistance animal or the use of an assistance animal on a lot or common or association property. Although a by-law may require a person to provide evidence that an animal is an assistance animal, to strengthen the protections for residents and visitors with assistance animals, the bill clarifies that a by-law cannot restrict the use by, or impose an unreasonable burden on, any person in relation to the use of an assistance animal on a lot or common or association property.

That will ensure that by-laws cannot affect the ability of assistance animals to perform their duty. For example, a by-law that requires animals to be carried through common areas will not be able to prevent a vision-impaired resident from using their guide dog to guide them through the common property. The by-law will apply to other residents who do not rely on an assistance animal. The bill also serves to maintain the privacy of persons with an assistance animal by clarifying the forms of evidence that schemes can request to establish an assistance animal's status. It will prevent schemes asking for medical or personal information about a person's disability, which ultimately would become information accessible via a search of the scheme's records. The bill allows for an owners' corporation to require evidence that the animal holds an accreditation or has received the training referred to in the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992, or other evidence prescribed in the regulations. Those important reforms will improve the lives of strata and community land scheme residents with pets and assistance animals.

I now turn to another area of reform, being strata committees. The bill makes amendments to improve the accountability of committee members and the governance of strata and association committees. For simplicity, I will talk about strata committees and the changes made by this bill to the management Act. However, the changes relating to strata committees will also apply to committees under the Community Land Management Act 2021. A strata committee is responsible for the day-to-day running of a strata scheme and for making decisions on behalf of the owners' corporation. Committee duties can include approving renovation applications, approving applications to keep pets, hiring repairers, arranging insurance or issuing a notice to comply with a by-law.

It is important that each committee member carries out their duties for the benefit of the owners' corporation and with due care and diligence. Those duties are enshrined in the management Act, which also requires members to disclose if they have a direct or indirect pecuniary interest in a matter the committee is to consider. The strata committee then determines whether that member can be present or take part in the decision. Most committees do

the right thing. However, some members do not always act in the best interests of those living in the scheme. Some committees may also find it hard to decide if a member with a conflict of interest should not vote on a matter. As a result, that may risk poor decisions, loss of confidence in committee decisions and an increase in disputes between owners.

The bill provides greater clarity about the duties of strata committee members by preventing members from participating or voting on a matter where they have a financial interest. That does not apply in the strata renewal context. The bill establishes a separate disclosure framework for strata renewal, which I have mentioned. That change provides clarity, enhances the accountability of committees, sets high standards about the conduct expected of members and helps to ensure that committee decisions are made in the interests of all owners. The bill also makes it easier to remove a committee member if the member is not performing their duties.

Currently under the management Act, a special resolution of the owners' corporation is required to remove a serving committee member. A special resolution is where no more than 25 per cent of the value of the votes cast are against the resolution. The bill makes it easier to remove a member of a strata committee by lowering the voting threshold from a special resolution to an ordinary resolution, which means that only a majority is needed to remove a member. Reducing the voting threshold ensures that the removal of a committee member still has majority support among lot owners, but prevents a minority from retaining a committee member who has lost the confidence of the majority.

Alongside this change, the bill prohibits a person from serving again on a strata committee for a period of one year after being removed. The changes may appear small but go a long way to improve governance and confidence in the decisions of strata committees. In addition to the changes on committees I have described, the Community Land Management Act 2021 will also be amended to increase the cap on association committee members from nine to 15. Community land schemes are often larger and more complicated than strata schemes because of their tiered structure. The bill gives flexibility to community land schemes to increase the committee size to 15 if they wish to help with the management of the scheme.

I will now outline the changes made by the bill to improve the governance of meetings of the owners' corporation or community association. The changes will encourage active participation and democratic decision-making at meetings. Again, for simplicity, I will talk about the meeting changes relating to strata schemes. However, the changes will also be mirrored in the Community Land Management Act 2021. The first amendment will extend from seven to 14 days the minimum period for giving notice of the annual general meeting of the owners' corporation. Owners' corporations must convene an annual general meeting each year to discuss various financial and management matters, such as the setting of levies and election of committee members.

The meeting can include considering complex matters such as entering into utility agreements, appointing strata managing agents, considering significant repair requests, considering recovery action for unpaid levies and reviewing capital work fund plans. The annual general meetings ensure the continued effective running of the scheme. Feedback to the statutory review indicated that the current seven-day notice period is not sufficient, as it can be difficult for some owners to make arrangements to attend the meeting and to review information before the meeting. The bill will give owners an extra seven days to consider matters. That change will help enable owners' active and informed engagement in the management of their scheme. The change will not increase the administrative burden on owners' corporations or strata managing agents because the same information needs to be provided, but it will have a positive impact on owners.

In keeping with this change, the bill will also require the original owner of a strata scheme, who is often the developer, to provide key documents at least 14 days before the first annual general meeting of the owners' corporation. That also aligns with the amendments to the notice period for the annual general meeting. The current notice period of two days is not enough time for owners, particularly new strata owners, to review important, foundational scheme documents. Many of the documents can be complicated and lengthy, such as valuations, maintenance and service manuals, the initial maintenance schedule, utility agreements and building contracts. Those documents inform decisions, including important decisions that will be made at the first annual general meeting, so it is important they are provided to owners, including new owners, well ahead of the meeting. Owners should have sufficient time to review documents and come to the meeting prepared, informed and empowered to make decisions and ask questions that will impact their finances and the liveability of the scheme.

Another way the bill will improve governance of meetings is by closing a loophole in the current legislation which enables proxy farming by using powers of attorney or company nominees. An owner can give a proxy to another person, granting them the right to exercise the owner's vote at meetings. The management Act limits the number of proxies a person may hold. For schemes with 20 lots or fewer, a person can hold one proxy. For schemes with more than 20 lots, the number of proxies the person may hold is not more than 5 per cent of the total number of lots. The purpose of those laws is to prevent proxy farming, which is when a person holds proxies, and hence

voting power, on behalf of multiple lot owners. Proxy farming allows some individuals or small groups of people to wield disproportionate control over a scheme.

The practice undermines democratic decision-making at general meetings and disenfranchises other owners who participate at meetings in good faith. However, some owners are using company nominees and powers of attorney as a way of getting around the proxy limits in the management Act. In response, the bill places restrictions on how many owners a power of attorney or company nominee can represent. The bill does not restrict who can be a company nominee or hold a power of attorney for an owner. An exception is made in the bill if the holder of the power of attorney is a member of the owner's family. This will ensure a fairer process and that decisions made within a scheme are representative of all those living in the scheme.

I will now turn to the changes in the bill that aim to improve the overall governance of strata and community land schemes. The bill contains three amendments to strengthen and clarify the financial management requirements for schemes. First, the bill clarifies the rules around the repayment of money that has been transferred between the administrative and capital works funds, or has been paid from one fund for expenses that should have been paid from the other fund. The bill clarifies existing provisions that schemes must make a resolution within three months of the transfer or payment at a general meeting about whether the money is to be repaid, and the amount that will be transferred from one fund to the other or raised as a levy.

Secondly, the bill gives flexibility to schemes to request payment of levies in 14 days, instead of the usual 30 days, for repairs that are necessary to mitigate a serious or imminent threat to the health or safety of the occupants, as those funds are more urgent to collect. Thirdly, the bill extends to all strata and community land schemes the current requirement on large strata schemes to obtain at least two quotes for proposed expenditure over \$30,000. This ensures that competitive quotes are obtained for significant expenditure, regardless of the size of the scheme.

The bill also includes amendments to strengthen record-keeping requirements and notices to tenants in schemes. First, the bill will improve record keeping and make it easier to find records by requiring owners' corporations and associations to store records in electronic form. This change will apply to records made six months after the bill commences. It does not apply retrospectively and does not prevent the keeping of hard copies. Secondly, the bill will require a landlord's agent to provide notice of a tenancy to the owners' corporation or association of the scheme. The landlord's agent must also give a copy of the by-laws and other relevant documents to a tenant, unless the strata scheme's by-laws have already been provided to the tenant under the Residential Tenancies Act 2010. Those notice obligations, including penalties for noncompliance, already apply to landlords. The bill will extend the obligations, including any penalties, to agents.

Thirdly, the bill enables tenants to provide their own notice of tenancy to the owners' corporation or association where the landlord or agent has failed to do so. A regulation-making power has been included in the bill to allow further evidence of tenancy to be prescribed, if needed. Strengthening the tenancy notice provisions will enable greater participation by tenants in scheme matters. This will ensure that schemes have updated information about tenants living there and can notify tenants of upcoming general meetings so tenants can attend. It will also assist schemes to identify whether 50 per cent of the strata scheme or neighbourhood scheme's lots are tenanted. This is important because it is the threshold needed to appoint a tenant representative on the strata or neighbourhood committee.

The bill also includes amendments to correct some unintended consequences of the management Act in relation to two-lot strata schemes. The first amendment will allow an owner in a two-lot scheme to issue a notice to comply with a by-law to the other owner without requiring the agreement of that other owner. Currently a notice to comply can only be issued following a resolution by majority vote of the owners' corporation. This is generally impossible in two-lot schemes as the second owner is unlikely to support a resolution against themselves. Secondly, the bill maintains the original owner of a strata scheme's full unit entitlement and voting rights when voting in a two-lot scheme. Under the current Act, the original owner's voting rights are reduced by two-thirds if the original owner continues to own at least half of the voting rights in a scheme. That is to prevent the developer from continuing to control a strata scheme. However, this is not appropriate in a two-lot scheme as an owner would then hold a controlling interest over the original owner.

I will conclude this section about the governance of schemes by highlighting two other changes made by the bill. First, the bill will allow the Commissioner for NSW Fair Trading to apply to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal to seek the appointment of a compulsory managing agent. Owners and certain other people, such as a creditor, can already apply to the tribunal to appoint a compulsory managing agent in situations where the scheme is not functioning or the owners' corporation or association has failed to perform its duties. In those situations the appointed managing agent takes over some or all of the functions of the owners' corporation, the committee, or both. Allowing the Commissioner for NSW Fair Trading to apply for appointment of a managing

agent will provide an avenue for Fair Trading to protect owners or others where a scheme is so dysfunctional that it is not undertaking its core duties.

Secondly, the bill will require strata managing agents to give notice of the expiry of their contract with the owners' corporation or association within three to six months before contract expiry. That gives schemes time to consider renewing the contract or explore alternatives. The change prevents the practice of some agents who are giving notice at the beginning or middle of the contract term. That notice can easily be forgotten, which sees owners' corporations or associations caught unaware when the contract ends. That may limit the time that schemes have to shop around and consider alternative managing agents.

Finally, the bill makes several other minor and editorial changes to strata and community land scheme laws. Those minor changes clarify when changes to strata by-laws take effect; that a consolidation of strata by-laws needs a special resolution, even though the consolidation does not add, delete or vary an existing by-law; and that by-laws made under previous Acts must comply with all relevant provisions in the current laws. Another minor change harmonises community land scheme laws with strata laws so that the appointment of strata managing agents, facilities managers or others who assist with the management, maintenance or repair of association property ends at the first annual general meeting. This was an omission when the community land scheme laws were rewritten in 2021 to align with strata laws. The bill also modernises the laws to support service of notices by electronic means. The editorial changes in the bill include changes to avoid duplication, remove unnecessary words, correct terminology errors and clarify the meaning of certain words. They do not change the operation of the laws.

The bill makes important and urgent changes to strata and community land scheme laws. The changes will improve the lives of those living in strata and community land schemes, which comprise a growing share of housing in New South Wales. In particular, the bill continues to modernise strata and community land laws and addresses pain points identified by stakeholders over the last few years. Importantly, it will help increase confidence in and demand for properties in the strata sector, which is an essential part of the Government's housing supply strategy. The bill's reforms will address significant issues identified in the statutory review, including some developers' manipulation of safeguards intended to protect vulnerable owners in a strata renewal. The reforms will also uplift strata and association committee governance, improve the performance of schemes, remove impediments to keeping pets in strata and community land schemes, and better recognise the unique position and challenges faced by two-lot schemes.

I thank everyone who contributed and provided feedback to the review in 2020 and 2021. I also thank key strata stakeholders whose submissions on the draft bill have helped to improve its provisions. They include the Strata Community Association (NSW), the Owners Corporation Network, the Real Estate Institute of New South Wales, the Law Society of New South Wales, the Tenants' Union of NSW, the Australian College of Strata Lawyers, the Association of Consulting Surveyors NSW, the Australian Property Institute, the Property Council of Australia, NSW Land Registry Services, People with Disability Australia, Animal Care Australia, the Cat Protection Society, Domestic Violence NSW, and the Women's Legal Service NSW.

This bill shows that the Government is not wasting any time and is quick to take action on issues facing strata and community land schemes in New South Wales. These sensible and proportionate reforms are being implemented in a way that limits any further regulatory burden on residents and industry. The bill is just the first step in reforming the sector. The Government plans to bring further reforms to Parliament to implement the remaining recommendations of the review. Unlike the previous Government, it will do so in a timely manner. This Government is determined to deliver reform that improves the lives of the people in our great State, including those living in strata and community land schemes. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

## **HIGH RISK OFFENDERS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2023**

### **First Reading**

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

### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (12:37):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Government is pleased to introduce the High Risk Offenders Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. The bill amends the Crimes (High Risk Offenders) Act 2006 to enable high-risk offenders who commit serious strangulation offences to be considered for post-sentence detention and supervision under the Act. The bill also

makes amendments to the Crimes (High Risk Offenders) Act 2006 and the Terrorism (High Risk) Offenders Act 2017 to improve the operation of these Acts.

The Crimes (High Risk Offenders) Act 2006 enables applications to be made for the extended supervision and continuing detention of high-risk sex offenders and high-risk violent offenders to ensure the safety and protection of the community. Under the Act, where the Supreme Court is satisfied to a high degree of probability that an eligible offender who is nearing the end of their detention or supervision poses an unacceptable risk of committing a serious offence if not kept in detention or under supervision, the court may make a continuing detention order or an extended supervision order.

There are two criteria that determine an offender's eligibility to be considered for an order under the Act. First, the offender must be a person who has, at any time, been sentenced to imprisonment, to be served by full-time detention or intensive correction in the community, following their conviction for a serious offence as defined in the Act. Serious offence, for the purposes of the Act, means a serious sex offence or a serious violence offence. Secondly, at the time of the application for the order, the offender must be in custody or under supervision while serving a sentence of imprisonment for a serious offence or an offence of a sexual nature, or for breaching an extended supervision order under the Act.

Section 5 of the Crimes (High Risk Offenders) Act 2006 prescribes numerous sex offences under New South Wales and Commonwealth law as either serious sex offences or offences of a sexual nature. This includes all offences under division 10 of part 3 of the Crimes Act 1900, which contains sexual offences against adults and children, with the gravity of the offence determining its classification as either a serious sex offence or offence of a sexual nature. Section 5 also prescribes several offences that would not ordinarily be considered sex offences, such as breaking and entering, as serious sex offences or offences of a sexual nature if they are committed with the intent to commit a sex offence.

Section 5A defines "serious violence offence" as a serious indictable offence that is constituted by a person engaging in conduct that causes a person's death or that causes grievous bodily harm to a person, with the offence being committed intentionally or in circumstances of recklessness. Currently, the serious strangulation offences contained in sections 37 (1) and (2) of the Crimes Act 1900 do not come within the scope of the definition of a "serious offence" under the Crimes (High Risk Offenders) Act 2006 and, as such, persons serving terms of imprisonment for these offences are not captured by the Act. This means that applications for continuing detention orders and extended supervision orders cannot currently be made for these offenders.

Section 37 (1) of the Crimes Act 1900 makes it an offence to intentionally choke, suffocate or strangle a person so as to render them unconscious, insensible or incapable of resistance, or to be reckless as to rendering them unconscious, insensible or incapable of resistance. The offence is punishable by a maximum penalty of 10 years' imprisonment. Section 37 (2) of the Crimes Act 1900 makes it an offence to choke, suffocate or strangle another person so as to render them unconscious, insensible or incapable of resistance, and to do so with intent to enable oneself, or to assist another person, to commit an indictable offence. The offence is punishable by a maximum penalty of 25 years' imprisonment. The maximum penalty of 10 years' imprisonment available under section 37 (1) of the Crimes Act 1900, and 25 years under section 37 (2), are the same as penalties available for the reckless infliction of grievous bodily harm and manslaughter, respectively. The offences of reckless infliction of grievous bodily harm and manslaughter both currently meet the definition of "serious offence" under the Crimes (High Risk Offenders) Act 2006.

Similarly, the offence of using an intoxicating substance with the intent to commit an indictable offence under section 38 of the Crimes Act 1900 is capable of meeting the definition of "serious sexual offence" or "offence of a sexual nature" under the Crimes (High Risk Offenders) Act 2006 where the intent was to commit a sex offence under division 10 of part 3 of the Crimes Act 1900. However, committing a serious strangulation offence with the same intent does not currently meet either of those definitions. It is inconsistent with the aims of the Crimes (High Risk Offenders) Act 2006 that offenders who serve prison sentences for strangulation offences cannot be considered high-risk violent offenders for the purposes of the Act.

The prevalence of strangulation as a feature of domestic and family violence and its significance as a predictive risk factor for future severe domestic violence offending and domestic violence homicide are both well established. The Coroners Court New South Wales Domestic Violence Death Review Team's 2015 to 2017 report describes strangulation as a serious domestic violence offence that presents unique risks to victims, including risks of future injury that may not be visible at the time of assault. In addition, the report notes the literature demonstrates a link between strangulation and domestic homicide. In over a quarter of intimate partner homicides considered by the team in that period, the domestic violence abuser had strangled the domestic violence victim prior to the fatal assault.

Offenders who commit serious strangulation offences should be captured by the Crimes (High Risk Offenders) Act 2006 so that action can be taken to address any unacceptable risk of serious reoffending. Although serious strangulation offences in New South Wales protect all members of the community, not only victims of domestic violence, it is particularly important to make these changes because we know that strangulation can be a precursor to domestic homicide. The New South Wales Government is constantly working on addressing domestic and family violence in New South Wales, and this bill is one of the measures that the Government is progressing to tackle this problem and increase protections for domestic and family violence victims.

The remaining amendments in the bill address technical operational and legal matters in relation to the Crimes (High Risk) Offenders Act 2006 and the Terrorism (High Risk) Offenders Act 2017. The amendments clarify that a Federal recognizance release order served with a Federal prison sentence is taken to be part of the sentence for the purposes of the Crimes (High Risk Offenders) Act 2006. The bill also clarifies that applications under both Acts may be made against offenders subject to an overall prison term that contains a sentence for an eligible offence, irrespective of where the sentence for the eligible offence falls in the continuum of the overall term.

I now turn to the detail of the bill. Schedule 1 to the bill amends the Crimes (High Risk Offenders) Act 2006. Items [2] and [3] of schedule 1 make amendments to incorporate the serious strangulation offence under section 37 (2) of the Crimes Act 1900 in the definitions of "serious sex offence" and "offence of a sexual nature" in section 5 of the Crimes (High Risk) Offenders Act 2006. Items [4] and [5] of schedule 1 amend the definition of "serious violence offence" in section 5A of the Crimes (High Risk) Offenders Act 2006 to include the strangulation offences under section 37 (1) and (2) of the Crimes Act 1900 within that definition. These amendments will ensure that offenders sentenced to imprisonment for serious strangulation offences will be eligible for post-sentence detention and supervision, like any other high-risk offenders under the Crimes (High Risk) Offenders Act 2006. Items [1], [6] and [8] amend the Crimes (High Risk Offenders) Act 2006 to clarify that an application for an extended supervision order or continuing detention order may be made against an offender whose overall prison term contains a sentence for an eligible offence, irrespective of where the sentence for the eligible offence falls in the continuum of the overall term.

Under sections 5I and 13B of the Crimes (High Risk Offenders) Act 2006, an application for an extended supervision order or a continuing detention order can only be made in respect of an offender if, at the time of the application, the offender is serving a sentence of imprisonment for a serious offence, an offence of a sexual nature or an offence relating to the breach of an extended supervision order made under the Act. Importantly, sections 5I and 13B of the Act include provisions that state that an application may also be made where the offender is serving a sentence of imprisonment for an offence that is not one of these eligible offences, if the sentence is being served concurrently or consecutively, or partly concurrently and partly consecutively, with one or more sentences for an eligible offence. These provisions relating to consecutive and concurrent sentences were introduced by the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Amendment Bill 2010 to address situations where, at the time of the application, an offender is serving an overall prison term that contains a sentence for an eligible offence that has expired, and the sentence being served at the time of the application is not an eligible offence.

The second reading speech for the 2010 bill stated that the aim of the amendment was to ensure that where there is one continuous period of imprisonment, an application should be able to be made irrespective of where the sentence for an eligible offence falls in the continuum of the overall prison term. However, the effect of the Supreme Court's decision in *State of New South Wales v Avakian (Preliminary)* [2021] NSWSC 245 is that, in order for the existing provisions relating to consecutive or concurrent sentences to apply to a sentence that does not enliven eligibility for an order under the Act, it must be immediately consecutive to, or concurrent with, a sentence for an offence that does. It is not sufficient for the sentence to simply be one in a chain of sentences that includes a sentence for an eligible offence.

Items [1], [6] and [8] of schedule 1 to the bill amend the Act to ensure that sections 5I and 13B operate as they had always been intended to in relation to offenders who are serving multiple sentences. Schedule 1 [6] to the bill makes two amendments to section 5I. First, it amends the section to state that, in addition to sentences for eligible offences, an offender will be considered eligible for an extended supervision order if they are serving a sentence for an aggregate sentence of imprisonment which includes at least one sentence for an eligible offence. Aggregate sentences were also introduced by the 2010 bill and provided judges with the option of imposing a single aggregated sentence when sentencing an offender for multiple offences, without the need to specify the commencement date for each sentence.

In *Avakian*, the Supreme Court found that a sentence for a non-eligible offence had to be immediately consecutive to, or concurrent with, a preceding sentence for an eligible offence in order to enliven consideration for an extended supervision order. In this case, the Supreme Court implied that the situation might have been different if the sentence in question had been an aggregate sentence that included a sentence for an eligible offence.

However, the Supreme Court did not make any definitive statement to that effect. By expressly addressing aggregate sentences, the bill puts the matter beyond doubt.

Second, schedule 1 [6] to the bill amends section 5I of the Crimes (High Risk Offenders) Act 2006 to state that an offender can be considered for an extended supervision order if they are serving a sentence for an offence which is part of a cumulative sentence of imprisonment, with at least one of the sentences comprising the cumulative sentence being a sentence for an eligible offence. This includes if one of the sentences of imprisonment is an aggregate sentence. Schedule 1 [1] to the bill amends section 4 of the Act to define "cumulative sentence of imprisonment" as two or more sentences of imprisonment in which each sentence of imprisonment is served concurrently or consecutively, or partly concurrently and partly consecutively, with one or more of the other sentences of imprisonment.

Schedule 1 [8] amends section 13B, which addresses applications for continuing detention orders, by replicating the amendments regarding aggregate and cumulative sentences made by item [6] to the extended supervision order provision in section 5I. The end result is that where an offender is serving one continuous period of imprisonment that is made up of multiple sentences, an application for an extended supervision order or a continuing detention order will be able to be made as long as one of those sentences is either a sentence for an eligible offence or is an aggregate sentence for multiple offences which includes an eligible offence.

Additionally, the bill amends the Crimes (High Risk Offenders) Act 2006 to clarify that applications for extended supervision orders under the Act can be made against certain Federal offenders subject to Federal recognizance release orders imposed under the Commonwealth Crimes Act 1914. A recognizance release order is a Federal community-based sentence that can be imposed with a Federal prison sentence of up to three years. A sentencing court can set different expiry dates for the recognizance release order and the prison sentence so that the order can continue in force after the prison sentence has expired.

Section 5I of the Crimes (High Risk Offenders) Act 2006 states that an application for an extended supervision order can only be made in respect of an offender who is in custody or under supervision while serving a relevant sentence of imprisonment. Under New South Wales law, parole is the conditional release of an offender from custody which allows them to serve the unexpired portion of their sentence of imprisonment under supervision in the community. There is therefore no doubt as to whether an extended supervision order can be sought in respect of an offender who is under supervision on parole as part of a relevant sentence of imprisonment.

However, the ability of Federal recognizance release orders to remain in force after the sentence of imprisonment has expired has created uncertainty as to whether applications may be made under the Crimes (High Risk Offenders) Act 2006 against Federal sex offenders who have served their prison sentence in New South Wales and who remain under supervision on recognizance release orders after the expiry of their sentence. Supreme Court judgements have differed on whether a recognizance release order imposed with a prison sentence is part of the prison sentence.

Schedule 1 [7] to the bill will amend section 5I of the Crimes (High Risk Offenders) Act 2006 to clarify that a Federal recognizance release order imposed under section 20 (1) (b) of the Commonwealth Crimes Act 1914, in combination with a Federal prison sentence, is taken to be part of an offender's sentence of imprisonment for the purposes of making applications for extended supervision orders under the Crimes (High Risk Offenders) Act 2006. By clarifying in the Act that a recognizance release order is taken to be part of the offender's prison sentence, this amendment provides greater certainty about the eligibility of offenders who are serving a Federal sentence for a Federal sex offence in New South Wales to be considered for an extended supervision order.

I now turn to schedule 2 to the bill, which amends the Terrorism (High Risk Offenders) Act 2017. The Terrorism (High Risk Offenders) Act 2017 allows the Supreme Court to make extended supervision orders and continuing detention orders in respect of an offender who is in custody or supervision if satisfied to a high degree of probability that the offender poses an unacceptable risk of committing a serious terrorism offence if not kept under supervision or detention. As with the Crimes (High Risk Offenders) Act 2006, eligibility for orders under the Terrorism (High Risk Offenders) Act 2017 is partly determined by the offender being subject to a sentence of imprisonment at the time of the application. In the case of the terrorism scheme, the offender must be serving a sentence of imprisonment for a New South Wales indictable offence.

Schedule 2 to the bill makes comparable amendments to those made to the Crimes (High Risk Offenders) Act 2006 by schedule 1 [1], [6] and [8] to the bill. These amendments will ensure that where an offender who represents a risk of committing a serious terrorism offence is serving one continuous period of imprisonment which is made up of multiple sentences, an application for an extended supervision order or a continuing detention order will be available as long as one of those sentences is either a sentence for a New South Wales indictable offence or is an aggregate sentence for multiple offences which includes a New South Wales indictable offence.

These amendments will provide consistency between the two high-risk offender schemes and ensure that technicalities relating to an offender's sentence do not act as a barrier to protecting the community from offenders who pose a high risk of terrorism offending. This bill demonstrates the Government's continued commitment to protecting the community from high-risk offenders. In particular, the serious strangulation amendments in this bill target a significant risk factor in severe domestic and family violence offending and reflect the New South Wales Government's ongoing work to improve the response to domestic and family violence in this State. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

## **GREATER CITIES COMMISSION REPEAL BILL 2023**

### **First Reading**

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

### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (12:58):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I introduce the Greater Cities Commission Repeal Bill 2023. The bill is another step in the Government's commitment to create a clear line of accountability for the operation and management of planning across the public sector and to streamline and create greater efficiencies in the planning system. To achieve this, the bill will repeal the Greater Cities Commission Act 2022 and remove the Greater Cities Commission. The bill also transfers the strategic planning functions of the commission under part 3 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 to the secretary of the new Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure.

The creation of the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure on 1 January 2024 provides an opportunity for the Government to further streamline strategic planning across the State. In addition, the terms of acting chief commissioner Dr Deborah Dearing and Central River City commissioner Mr Peter Poulet expire on 31 December 2023. The confluence of those dates serves as an obvious inflection point to consider the future of Planning and the ongoing role of the Greater Cities Commission and its functions. Strategic planning should be performed by the agencies that are accountable for and resourced to deliver great outcomes for the people of New South Wales. A core goal of the new department will be to facilitate the delivery of more homes in New South Wales. The alignment of strategic planning functions under one roof is critical to the department achieving that goal.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** It being 1.00 p.m., business is interrupted for orders of the day (committee reports).

### *Committees*

## **PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE**

### **Reports**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** The question is that the House take note of the report.

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (13:00):** As Chair: I speak to the committee's *Report on the Parliamentary Budget Office 2023 Post-Election Report*. This is the first report of the committee in the Fifty-Eighth Parliament. The Public Accounts Committee is the longest continually operating public accounts committee in Australia. The committee makes a significant contribution to public accountability and parliamentary scrutiny in New South Wales. It is a key part of the integrity infrastructure of the parliamentary democracy in New South Wales. It is in this context that I present the committee's *Report on the Parliamentary Budget Office 2023 Post-Election Report*. The committee's report contains the 2023 post-election report, prepared by the Parliamentary Budget Officer under section 15 (3) of the Parliamentary Budget Officer Act 2010. The committee considered it important that the Parliamentary Budget Officer report was made available to all members in this place and the public at large. The committee has also made some comments of its own on the report.

The Parliamentary Budget Office plays an important scrutiny and accountability function in the State's election process, providing independent costing and analysis of election policies to parliamentary leaders. We can be proud that New South Wales was the first Australian jurisdiction to introduce an independent Parliamentary budget officer. Mr Stephen Bartos was reappointed as the Parliamentary Budget Officer for the 2023 State election. Mr Bartos provided valuable and considered comments in the 2023 post-election report, which drew on his extensive knowledge from prior experience in this role for the 2015 and 2019 State elections. The committee

thanks Mr Bartos for his contributions as well as for his time briefing the committee on the report's recommendations.

I note that a total of 990 policies were submitted to the Parliamentary Budget Office for costing in the lead-up to the 2023 election, almost as many as the previous two elections combined. Despite this, the average time taken to cost a proposal was only marginally higher than 2018-19, and the Parliamentary Budget Office successfully published budget impact statements showing the total cost of policies for both major parties within the statutory time frame. The 2023 post-election report made several recommendations aimed to enhance the operations of future Parliamentary Budget Officers. I note that a number of those recommendations are aimed at increasing the effectiveness and accessibility of the Parliamentary Budget Officer's work by providing better and earlier information to voters.

The report also made a recommendation around considering whether the role of the Parliamentary Budget Officer should be extended or whether the Parliamentary Budget Office should be made permanent. The committee recommended that the Government consider and respond to all of the recommendations contained in the 2023 post-election report. Given the important role of the Parliamentary Budget Office, the committee will review the Government's response and any implementation of the 2023 post-election report recommendations within 12 months of the tabling of the report. I thank my fellow committee members—the deputy chair, the member for Cessnock; the member for Newtown; the member for Wakehurst; the member for Lane Cove; and the member for Fairfield—for their collaboration and assistance in producing this report. I also thank the secretariat for its support to the committee. I again thank Mr Bartos for his leadership and contribution as the Parliamentary Budget Officer. I encourage all members to read the report in light of the crucial role that the Parliamentary Budget Office plays in enhancing the integrity and robustness of the election process in New South Wales. I commend the report to the House.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (13:04):** I make a contribution to the take-note debate on the Public Accounts Committee's *Report on the Parliamentary Budget Office 2023 Post-Election Report* and acknowledge the comments made by the chair. As a member of the Public Accounts Committee, I put on record that in addition to the recommendation in this report that the New South Wales Government considers and responds to the recommendations made in the report, the committee also included finding 1:

The Committee recognises the importance of the recommendations in the PBO 2023 Post-Election Report and will review the Government's response to and any implementation of the recommendations within 12 months of the tabling of this report.

My reason for putting this on record is that reports by the Parliamentary Budget Office of the last two elections—2019 and 2023—had made similar recommendations around considering whether it is the right approach to establish the Parliamentary Budget Office then disband it, and then establish it and disband it again, between parliamentary terms and elections. In particular, I point to page 37 of the Parliamentary Budget Office report, which talks about an updated mandate for evolving conditions; and page 41, which mentions the role of a permanent Parliamentary Budget Office and the alternatives.

I make those comments because the Government of the day does not consider the Parliamentary Budget Office process to be its highest priority. I recognise that the Government has an agenda to deliver, but the Public Accounts Committee and we as parliamentarians have a role to play. We must ensure that the Parliamentary Budget Office is fit for purpose and is delivering for our democracy outside of a specific government or election process. I hope the committee will take the time to look in more detail at the Government's response to see whether it can use the fact that we have a more diverse representation in Parliament than ever before to steer a way forward to look at an expanded remit for the role of the Parliamentary Budget Office.

I also note for the record that Federal Treasury has just started implementing its Measuring What Matters framework. The first national wellbeing measures that will be undertaken by Treasury will look not just at the cost in terms of the bottom line of a budget but also at the impact on society and the more integrated challenges around how we see that budgeting and costings are done in this State. The New South Wales Parliamentary Budget Office and the Public Accounts Committee could play that role to look at what they could be doing better to address the various matters that take into account what a measure, policy or announcement will cost or the cost of not acting in a certain way. At the moment we are restrained by the fact that the Parliamentary Budget Office has the limitation of being created and then disbanded, which hinders its ability to consider the complexity of those matters throughout the political cycle.

I support the report that has been brought to Parliament today. I look forward to further discussions and debates, both in the Public Accounts Committee and also in this Chamber, about how we can progress with a better approach that ensures that the State's budget reflects the needs of our communities.

**Report noted.**

## LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

### Reports

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** The question is that the House take note of the report.

**Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn) (13:08):** As Chair: It is with great pleasure that I address the House on the Legislation Review Committee's latest digest. Yesterday the committee tabled *Legislation Review Digest No. 7/58*. The committee examined 10 bills and reviewed two statutory instruments, commenting on one. As members are aware, the committee has the important role of reviewing all bills introduced and all statutory instruments tabled in Parliament. The committee's scrutiny of legislation is intended to inform members of both Houses and the community about the potential impact of legislation on personal rights and liberties, and any potential inappropriate exercise of government or legislative power. I draw to members' attention some of the key issues raised in the digest.

The 24-Hour Economy Legislation Amendment (Vibrancy Reforms) Bill 2023 was introduced together with its cognate, the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner Bill 2023. These bills seek to amend various Acts to revitalise the night-time economy and make changes to alcohol and gambling licensing and regulation. The vibrancy reforms bill seeks to amend the Liquor Act to make it an offence for a minor to enter or remain in an area where packaged liquor is sold. The offence carries a maximum penalty of \$2,200. The committee noted that there is no requirement under this provision to prove that the minor knew they were committing an offence. This means a minor could be criminally liable without knowing they are committing an offence. Such absolute liability offences go against the principle of fault that is normally necessary to prove criminal liability. The committee acknowledged that the offence is intended to prevent minors from being in areas where liquor is being sold. However, the committee decided to refer this issue to Parliament given its potential impact on children and young people.

Turning to a private member's bill, the Water Management Amendment (Water Access Licence Register) Bill 2023 seeks to amend a number of Acts to introduce transparency and accountability requirements regarding the holders of water access licences. The bill would establish an identification system for water licences to require an applicant for a water access licence to provide certain identifying information. It also prescribes certain information about these licences that must be made publicly available. The committee considered the regulation-making power proposed to be inserted into the Water Management Act, which would allow regulations to create offences for noncompliance with a code of conduct for the brokers of water licences. No code of conduct has been published yet. The committee is concerned that this regulation-making power could subject an unknown class of persons to certain offences that do not yet exist. The committee has referred this issue to Parliament for its consideration.

Finally, District Court (Civil) Practice Note No. 1, "Case Management in the General List," was issued under the Civil Procedure Act 2005 and is intended to support the just, quick and cheap resolution of civil proceedings in the District Court. The practice note requires eligible parties to a proceeding to use online court to address case management orders, such as setting hearing dates and making directions. The committee commented that it is not clear who is required to use online court as no eligibility criteria are provided in the practice note. This may make it difficult for parties to determine if they must use online court. The committee is concerned that this uncertainty may impact an individual party's access to justice and therefore referred this issue to Parliament. That concludes my remarks. I encourage everyone to read the digest, which is available on the committee's webpage. I thank my fellow committee members, as always. I thank the secretariat in particular for its unwavering support. I commend the digest to the House.

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (13:13):** I update the House on the ongoing work of the Legislation Review Committee and its report entitled *Legislation Review Digest No. 7/58*. I implore everyone in this place to have a good read of it—even the good member behind me. I suggest the member for Northern Tablelands has a crack at that one. He will enjoy it.

**Mr Adam Marshall:** There's not enough pictures.

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL:** There are not enough pictures, but it is okay. All I can do is ask you to enjoy the excellent work of the secretariat. There were 10 bills and one set of regulations that were taken into consideration in the current period under review. Of those 10 bills, four were assessed as having no issues that engage section 8A or 9 of the Legislation Review Act 1987. These bills were the Biosecurity Amendment (Independent Biosecurity Commissioner) Bill 2023, the Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust Amendment (Public Transport) Bill 2023, the Crime and Criminal Procedure Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 and the Sheriff and Court Security Amendment Bill 2023. The committee makes no further comment on these bills. Similarly, the Opposition has no further response.

Two of the other bills are assessed as having issues that engage section 8A or 9 of the Act but, given the counterbalancing considerations, it is unlikely in practice for any issues to be raised. Those two bills are the Independent Commission Against Corruption Amendment (Ministerial Diary Disclosure) Bill 2023 and the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment (Independent Office of Animal Welfare) Bill 2023. Due to the unlikelihood of issues, no further comment is provided by the committee on these bills and the Opposition, similarly, has no further response.

The four remaining bills raise potential issues. The 24-Hour Economy Legislation Amendment (Vibrancy Reforms) Bill 2023 and the application in particular of the law to minors raises issues concerning the absolute liability offence under the Act. The Jury Amendment Bill 2023 raised an issue regarding the right of an accused for a fair trial, and it raises these issues concerning those rights for procedural fairness under the Act. With the Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Automated Seatbelt Enforcement) Bill 2023, the reversal of an onus of proof raises issues concerning the right to a presumption of innocence under the Act.

Finally, the Water Management Amendment (Water Access Licence Register) Bill 2023 raises issues concerning the uncertain application of the offence prescribed by the regulation under the Act. Under the regulations we reviewed the District Court (Civil) Practice Note No. 1, "Case Management in the General List". The issue raised with the mentioned regulations concerns access to justice under the Act. I thank the secretariat for its ongoing and wonderful work. I thank my fellow committee members and the chair for her leadership of this great committee. I encourage everyone to read the report.

#### **Report noted.**

### **LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING**

#### **Reports**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** The question is that the House take note of the report.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (13:17):** As Chair: I note the committee's report entitled *Minerals Legislation Amendment (Offshore Drilling and Associated Infrastructure Prohibition) Bill 2023* was tabled yesterday. The bill was referred for inquiry into whether it raises any constitutional issues and unintended consequences, as well as the environmental impacts of offshore drilling and other related regulatory issues. The committee heard from a range of stakeholders and received 49 submissions from environmental organisations, community groups, industry representatives and private individuals. The committee also held a public hearing on 9 October where we heard from 18 witnesses, including representatives from 11 organisations and representatives from the Government.

Coastal community groups and environmental groups told us about the importance of protecting our coastal environment from the impacts of offshore petroleum activities. Our report reflects these concerns. A number of inquiry participants told the committee that they supported measures to stop offshore petroleum activities. I thank the many stakeholders for their passionate efforts throughout this inquiry and for engaging so constructively with the committee. While the report acknowledges and sets out broader concerns about offshore petroleum, the committee focused its inquiry on the complex regulatory framework and the potential issues associated with the bill. A key aspect of the context surrounding the bill is Petroleum Exploration Permit 11, or PEP 11, as it is more commonly known. Indeed, the member, when introducing his private member's bill, referred specifically to that exploration permit on at least five occasions.

It is important to note that PEP 11 is entirely within Commonwealth waters, which means that it is more than three miles off the coast of the State. That is called the offshore area of the State. This raised the question of whether New South Wales can take action or implement legislation that would prevent activities occurring in the Commonwealth waters, hence the constitutional crisis. To help the committee identify potential constitutional risks, we heard from a range of constitutional law experts. Given the real complexity of the regulatory regime and the issues raised, we also requested that the Clerk of the House instruct an appropriately qualified legal practitioner to obtain independent legal advice on behalf of the committee. To help inform members of the House when they contemplate the next steps, our report has identified the potential risks posed by the bill.

Our report makes two recommendations and 10 findings that address the issues around petroleum activities in the waters off New South Wales. We found that there is significant community opposition to offshore oil and gas projects in New South Wales, largely due to environmental concerns. I shared those concerns personally, but it was not my job as a member of this place or the chair of the committee to pursue my own personal agenda. I needed to find the answer that the evidence took us to. The committee found that the New South Wales Government offshore exploration and mining policy, as it stands at the moment and as was drafted by the former Government, may limit the potential petroleum projects within New South Wales coastal waters—that is, within three miles—that would ever receive approval.

The bill attempts to ban petroleum and mineral activities and prohibit ancillary infrastructure, such as pipelines, in New South Wales coastal waters. We heard that, if the bill interfered with or is inconsistent with Commonwealth legislation, it may lead to a constitutional issue. One constitutional issue concerns the relationship between the New South Wales Government and the Federal Government and the separate jurisdictions over Australia's offshore resources, which affect every coastal State in the country. The bill could upset a longstanding agreement between the Commonwealth and the States known as the Offshore Constitutional Settlement, which recognises the distinct jurisdiction of each level of government to regulate their offshore resources. The Offshore Constitutional Settlement is the agreement between the Federal Government and the State Government on the terms by which they would have shared control of the waters off the coast.

We found that aspects of the bill may interfere with the Executive capacity of the Commonwealth to authorise petroleum activities in its waters. This may be constitutionally invalid under the doctrine of intergovernmental immunity. The committee also found that, if the bill was amended to reduce these risks, it would undermine the core purpose of the bill, as described by the member in his second reading speech. In evaluating these constitutional risks against the benefits of passing the bill, the committee ultimately recommended that the bill not be passed because the risks far outweigh any potential benefits. I acknowledge that some members of the committee supported the passage of the bill with amendment, and I am sure that they will make that case. Recognising the community concerns we heard, we have also recommended that the New South Wales Government work with the Commonwealth to review the environmental assessment standards of offshore petroleum activities more than three miles out.

In closing, I thank my fellow committee members for their valuable contributions and hard work throughout the inquiry. I am grateful for the collaborative spirit and constructive debates that strengthened this report. I also thank the secretariat for its professionalism and support. Most of all, I thank the submission makers and witnesses who engaged in this complex inquiry. The committee greatly appreciates their time and efforts, and thanks them for their valuable contributions to this process. I commend the report to the House.

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (13:23):** I appreciate the opportunity to contribute to debate on the report of the Committee on Environment and Planning on the Minerals Legislation Amendment (Offshore Drilling and Associated Infrastructure Prohibition) Bill 2023. I first thank the secretariat for its hard work and professional conduct during the committee hearing, which was my first committee hearing. It was a good process. I also thank the Chair, Clayton Barr, the other committee members and all the people who contributed time and expertise in their submissions.

I was the sole Coalition member of what was a Labor-dominated committee. I appreciate the opportunity to put on record that I disagree with a key recommendation of the report that the bill should not be supported. It was my proposition, agreed to by one of the Independent members of the committee, that the bill should be supported with amendment. I was disappointed when the bill was originally referred to committee, as were many environmental groups who wanted to see it passed promptly. We had hoped—and those environmental groups had hoped—that through the rigour of the committee process we would identify any potential fault lines within the bill, make it more robust and iron out the creases. We should have landed with a more robust bill, and that is what the Opposition is proposing: small amendments to make the bill valid.

We heard the legal advice before we went into this process—and this legal advice was also expressed within the committee process—that the bill was solid. It is an incredible shame that we have landed in this position and that the Labor-dominated committee did not take the position that we should support the bill. Part of that reason was based on what I considered to be an entirely hypothetical proposition that we could have a future stoush with the Commonwealth. I expressed those views. In my mind, the committee sought legal expertise from some of the smartest brains in the country and their job—and they did it very well—was to identify the smallest possible risks and highlight any possibility that the bill may have troubles the future. Our job as community representatives was to apply a layer of sensibility, to apply what we have heard from coastal communities who do not want offshore gas and oil, and to apply our own risk assessment about the possibility of this happening. We should not be jumping at shadows; we should not be basing our decisions on hypotheticals.

I am disappointed that the Chair's foreword says that the bill was political and intended entirely to stop petroleum exploration permit 11 [PEP 11]. Of course, that is the project literally on the horizon. On the front cover of the report is a picture of an oil rig, but our coastal communities have told us they do not want that. In fact, Labor members of this place—and even in Federal Parliament—told us that they too do not want PEP 11. There is a list of quotes from everyone from the Premier to the Minister for the Environment to members in this place and even the Prime Minister of this country saying that they want PEP 11 dead. We had that opportunity, and we still have that opportunity. Although we did not get the result that we need or that our communities expect, we still have an opportunity to debate the bill. It will be before the House tomorrow. I trust that the Government will

not dodge and weave again and will afford us the opportunity to properly debate the bill and make our own assessment.

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (13:27):** I contribute to debate on the report of the Committee on Environment and Planning on the Minerals Legislation Amendment (Offshore Drilling and Associated Infrastructure Prohibition) Bill 2023. First, I thank all the staff who assisted the committee. A few members had never been part of a committee before, so the work that the committee staff put in was really helpful. I thank the individuals and groups who made the incredible effort to provide submissions. I also thank the rest of the committee, including the Chair, who did an amazing job to take on board all of our opinions. I thank them.

I highlight the two recommendations in the report. Going forward, it is clear that the New South Wales Government will work with the Commonwealth to explore opportunities, as recommendation 1 states, to review existing environmental assessment standards that apply to petroleum exploration. I had an issue with recommendation 2, and I stated that I would support the passage of the bill with amendments. My issue is that I do not know what those amendments are. I make three points about my reasoning. First, while the member for Pittwater was cautioned in the report for not making good legislation because "it was driven by politics and that it was intended to tackle one particular petroleum exploration project known as 'PEP 11'", I am sure that we all understood the intent of the bill. Despite the comment, I am not sure that the recommendations may have been different if the Government had put up a similar bill amendment.

Secondly, the complication is the limit of State powers with regard to coastal waters and at what point does a State seeking to make laws that would affect Commonwealth waters cross into a constitutional crisis. Thirdly, there were some extremely good submissions among the evidence given by many of the community groups and individuals. I am a scientist and, if I take the emotions out of those submissions and take out those that may have had a significant conflict, I agree with the bill's intention. For me, going forward, the biggest issue is that I do not know what the amendments are. I hope that this House will eventually come around to working with the Commonwealth and sorting out a way forward, because I think that, in our hearts, we probably do not want this happening offshore. I thank the whole committee, and I thank the House for the opportunity to speak.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** It being 1.30 p.m., the committee reports take-note debate is interrupted. I set down resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a later time. I shall now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.30 p.m.

### *Condolences*

#### **STEPHEN BRUCE BROMHEAD**

**The SPEAKER (14:31):** Pursuant to the resolution of the House of 21 November 2023, we will now proceed with the condolence motion for Mr Stephen Bromhead, former member for Myall Lakes. I welcome to the gallery his family and friends—his wife, Sue; children, Caroline, Stuart and Trent; sister, Bethany; brother, Gordon; sister-in-law, Gwyn; and niece, Amalia—albeit I would prefer not to be welcoming them under these circumstances. Before I call the current member for Myall Lakes to move the motion, I will say that I served a considerable time in Parliament with Stephen Bromhead. Steve and I always had a good working relationship because he believed I liked rugby union as much as he did. Steve started the Parliamentary Friends of Rugby Union and invited me to be his deputy. I never enjoyed it nearly as much as Steve did, but they were always good times. Of course, I note his work with charitable groups, particularly the Parliamentary Lions Club. As I will not be speaking to the motion, I offer my sincere condolences to Steve's family on their loss. I call the member for Myall Lakes.

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes) (14:32):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Extends its deepest sympathies and sincere condolences to the family of Mr Stephen Bruce Bromhead, who passed away on 16 March 2023.
- (2) Acknowledges Mr Bromhead's years of service as the member for Myall Lakes from 2011 to 2023, and his roles as Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Housing and Regional Transport and Roads, and as The Nationals Whip.
- (3) Recognises with gratitude his contribution to regional New South Wales.

I note that Stephen was also the chairman of the Legislation Review Committee, a member of the Legal Affairs Committee, President of the NSW Parliamentary Lions Club and chairman of the Parliamentary Friends of Rugby Union. I too acknowledge members of Stephen's family who are present today in the public gallery: Stephen's wife, Sue; his children, Caroline, Stuart and Trent; his sister, Bethany; his brother, Gordon; his sister-in-law, Gwyn; and his niece, Amalia. I welcome them all. I offer my deepest condolences to Stephen's family and friends and to everyone who was lucky enough to work alongside him during his 12 years as the member for Myall Lakes. His absence is felt every day.

Stephen was a passionate family man who often shared stories and happy memories with us in the office. I recall a particular memory when Stephen dressed as a pirate, to the delight of his grandsons. The vision of Stephen with an eye patch and a toy parrot on one shoulder giving an almighty "aaarr" still brings a smile to my face. Stephen Bromhead, affectionately known as Brommy, spent his entire life serving and caring for people. In every profession he made an outstanding contribution to the service of his community. Stephen started nursing in Parramatta psychiatric hospital before completing his certificate in geriatric nursing. After working as a registered nurse from 1974 to 1979, Brommy joined the NSW Police Force. He was a dedicated officer, who was very highly regarded. While stationed at Forbes Street in Sydney, he was selected as a probationary constable for the commissioner's honour guard.

At the beginning of 1981 Stephen was transferred to Taree Police Station and the Myall Lakes became his forever home. In 1986 Stephen commenced studying for his legal qualifications, undertaking the solicitors mention board via correspondence through Sydney university, at the same time training and studying to be a detective while working in the Police Force. Such was his work that Stephen was commended by judges in numerous trials for his dedication to duty and his care of victims, particularly in child sexual assault cases. In 1992 he left the force and joined Walker Smith Solicitors and became partner in 1993. In 2007 Stephen started Bromhead Legal. An openly confessed rugby tragic, Stephen's contribution to local rugby is nothing short of outstanding. Initially playing rugby for the Old Bar Clams Rugby Club, he became the vice-president in 1986 and president in 1990. In that year he also became vice-president of the Mid North Coast Rugby Union zone and naturally went on to become president the following year.

Brommy was a founding member of the Manning River Ratz and the Forster-Tuncurry Dolphins. One of his proudest achievements was changing the Forster-Tuncurry rugby club's culture to focus more on families. I will share a story about my first week working for Stephen in his legal firm. I was at the front reception. He approached me with a race guide and said, "How do you feel about horseracing?" I said, "Well, I'm not opposed to it." That served as the green light for Brommy to give me a full introduction into the annual race night fundraiser, for which I was then in charge of finding the jockeys, fixing the odds and picking the horses' names and colours. That fundraiser assisted immensely in the construction of the Dolphins rugby clubhouse. I have no doubt that the memory of Stephen standing proudly at the door of that clubhouse and opening a crisp and effervescent Saxbys Diet Ginger Beer as he watched the mighty Dolphins take to the field will be cherished by many forever.

Joining the National Party in 1986, Stephen was a fierce advocate for regional New South Wales. He served as a vice-chairman of the electorate council and a chairman of the Forster branch, among many other various positions. Elected to Parliament in 2011, his commitment to the people of the Myall Lakes was to ensure that they always received their fair share. Just because someone lives in the country, they should not miss out on the best health care, the best roads and the best education. His commitment to the people of the Myall Lakes never faltered. So dedicated was he to his community that when then Deputy Premier Paul Toole visited him as a friend during his illness and said, "Mate, if there's anything you need, please ask", he replied, "Yes. The public hospital for Forster."

In his electorate office, which I now use as my electorate office, there is a large brick wall called Brommy's Wall. It is filled with successful projects and achievements over the past 12 years. Stephen would often come into the office, sit on the lounge and look at the wall and we would all discuss the next project—the next school or community group that would need help or upgrades to the Manning Base Hospital. And those too in time would make their way to the wall, because Brommy would never stop. Once he had resolved an issue or helped with a project, he would be onto the next, always looking at ways to improve his community.

Every part of the Myall Lakes was his home and he loved it all. But you do not have to look at his beloved wall of achievement still holding pride of place in our office to see the impact that Stephen had across Myall Lakes over the 12 years as its member. It is all around as you travel throughout the electorate: the sporting fields, the community halls, the men's sheds, Forster and Taree police stations, Taree courthouse, the highway, the schools. It is in the conversations you have with everyone that you meet. They have all been touched by his kindness, generosity and willingness to always stop to have a chat, which he did because he cared and was a genuinely good bloke who always put people before politics. Stephen was a true champion of the region, a friend and mentor to me and to so many others in this place.

It would be truly remiss of me when speaking about Stephen not to mention his proud Scottish heritage. Often sighted wearing his custom-made Bromhead tartan tie with pride, he would share many joyous stories of trips abroad to Scotland with the rugby club and, more notably, his aversion to dressing in full regimental attire at the annual Bonnie Wingham Scottish Festival. My greatest joy was surprising Stephen last year at his thankyou dinner with the Manning Valley Pipes and Drums, a community Scottish pipe band that played all Brommy's favourites and was delighted at his request for encore after encore. The bagpipes have never sounded sweeter.

I feel incredibly grateful each and every day for having met and known Stephen Bromhead. His extensive service to the community leaves a lasting legacy. While he may not be here in person, he sits softly on my shoulder and will always be remembered fondly. I thank his family for allowing us all to share in his life. Vale, Stephen Bromhead.

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (14:40):** I am honoured to speak to this condolence motion for our parliamentary colleague the late Stephen Bromhead. I pay respect to him and his colleagues, particularly his National Party colleagues in this place and in the other place, as well as to his wife, Sue, and his children, grandchildren and family members here today. When I found out that Stephen had been a nurse, I realised why I found him to be so caring and gracious. I sensed in him a gentleness and a courteousness in how he treated people in this place and also in his electorate. Given where I live, we shared TV and media, so I knew him through the media as well as through this place. He was a fierce advocate for regional and rural New South Wales. He always advocated forcefully but gracefully. He cared deeply for his community. That was evident in this place and also in other places that I got to see him.

He was quite a ferocious Whip, as you have to be sometimes, but he always carried himself with the best will towards all people in this place. I was quite amazed to see what he had packed into his all too short life. He was a nurse, a police officer, a solicitor, a politician, a parliamentarian and also a community person. I think first and foremost he was a community person. That showed. I only know a smattering of his service, but it was extensive. From all the reading I have done and what I saw Stephen do, he was in everything. He also started everything.

It was not just that he was in everything; he was a doer. He started things and made things happen in the community. I looked up some of the things that he did. For example, he was president of Mid North Coast Rugby Union. The Speaker spoke about their shared love of rugby, and I think Stephen's biggest love was rugby union. I obviously do not have the same passion for rugby union that Stephen had, but I understand it was a great love of his. I heard the member for Myall Lakes talking just now about the horseracing, and that is one love we do share. I grew up in a racing family. But not the rugby!

I read that he was founder of Manning Great Lakes Traffic Offenders program, he was a councillor on Greater Taree City Council, chairman of the Manning Tourism Board, president of the Coomba Aquatic Club and president of Old Bar Beach Rugby Club—I am sure he was proud of that. He was vice-president of the Manning River Rugby Club and president of Mid North Coast Rugby Union. You cannot live in our area and not know of all of these things. He was a delegate for NSW Country Rugby Union, and he was active at the Chamber of Commerce, Taree Racecourse, Forster-Tuncurry Rugby Union Club and Hunter Community Legal Centre, to name just a few things. I know there were a lot more.

I admit I do feel more akin to members who represent rural and regional areas, irrespective of their parties, because people who come from rural and regional areas first and foremost proudly want to represent the region. I know that Stephen, being a National Party member, wanted to make sure that rural, regional and country areas got a better deal. I feel that bond with members who come from the rural and regional areas, and I felt that bond with Stephen in this place. Perhaps I am biased about rural and regional New South Wales. I liked how he was called Brommy. It is very blokesy, but in a good way. We liked that. He was always called Brommy. By all accounts, during the few years that I served here with him, he was a generous, kind and fierce advocate. He worked, he made a difference in his community and his legacy is long. I say to his family that he was well respected and well regarded by everyone in this place, and he is sorely missed. God rest his soul.

**The SPEAKER:** Before I call the Leader of the National Party, the member for Dubbo, I recognise in the gallery the Hon. Duncan Gay. Welcome, Duncan.

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (14:46):** I make a contribution on a personal level, but first of all as Leader of The Nationals, a party that Steve Bromhead proudly represented in his community, as we all know. The Nats were a huge part of Brommy's life. He absolutely loved being a part of The Nationals and we absolutely loved him. It is important for everyone to know that he will continue to be loved, remembered and honoured by the NSW Nationals.

Personally, I only knew Brommy from 2019, when I got elected to this place, but I feel like I got to know a whole lot about the type of person he was and the things that mattered to him, to his family and to the community. I also acknowledge Sue and all the members of the family who are here today, as well as those who will maybe watch this later on. Thank you very much for coming. You were the love of his life, and that is important to know. I reflect back on the first conversation I ever had with Brommy. We have heard about his beautiful, caring nature. We have also heard he could be a little bit gruff as the Whip. My first conversation with Brommy was after I got elected. He was doing the ring around to tell us what was to come.

The conversation went a little bit like this. I answered the phone, "Hello. Dugald here." He said, "Yeah, Steve Bromhead here. Just letting you know, party room," on whatever the date was. "Be at Parliament 9.00 a.m." "Oh, okay," I said, and I went to ask him a question. "Beep, beep, beep." I thought, should I ring him back? I left it a day. I rang him back the next day and said, "Oh, Steve, sorry. I just wanted to check." I had no idea. I did not know how to book a flight or where to stay, or how to get into Parliament. I did not know any of that stuff because Parliament had not yet started in that year. That was the extent of my first chat, and that is where it ended.

I think at the end of the day the memories that stick with me are the ones of a really weird but unique time, and the way that many of us, including some of us who will speak about him today, got to know him in more recent times during COVID, as bizarre as it may sound. We ended up during COVID times not being allowed to all be in the Chamber at the same time. We often had question time or Chamber time and we were not allowed to be here, so we would be up in our offices.

Every single day during question time a group of us would gather—spaced, of course!—and watch the TV together. There would be popcorn and lots of great morale boosting. We would yell at the TV and carry on. Brommy came to every single one of those gatherings. For a lot of us—there were some other newer members like me who hadn't really been here before—that is where we got to know the real Brommy, the bloke who loved rugby and could spin a yarn. He loved to spin a yarn. It was a weird time because we were not expecting to get to know people better, but we did—we got to know each other better. Brommy was one of those people who really relished the opportunity to share some of his experiences and memories, particularly with newer members like me.

They were wild and wideranging memories. One that I think a couple of members will probably mention—I was not here at the time it happened—was of the day he was trying to get the jump in the Chamber and his leg went off like a gun. I will be honest: It makes me feel queasy thinking about it. It is disgusting. But occasionally I used to ask him to tell me about it because the way he would tell it was great. I would say, "No, stop! I can't!" He would tell it and I would laugh.

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** It was sick.

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS:** It was sick, but he loved telling it and we loved hearing it. There are lots of memories. As things were happening during question time, a member would say something and he would say, "Oh, did I ever tell you about the time that this happened?" We would be like, "No?"—and off he'd go. A few other newbies and I certainly had lots to learn from somebody like him. I think we felt like we almost helped re-energise him a little after that period when things had changed during COVID. We were finding a new vibe together as a different group and we got enjoyment from him being part of our little group. I think he got a lot out of that as well. We related to him in a completely new way and he related to us in a different way. I saw that, I felt that and I really miss that.

He talked about other things he had seen and done as a nurse, a policeman, a detective and a solicitor. It was pretty amazing. We cannot mention some of those things he talked about in this place. Of course, he would always happily talk rugby, whether good, bad or indifferent. The other thing he talked about was the national anthem. He would happily have the national anthem back in every school every single day. If you wanted to get him going, you would toss that subject out. That would fire him up for the day, for sure. There were quite a few hopes and dreams that Brommy spoke to me about as we got to know each other towards the end. Some were work related, but mostly they were Sue and family related. He is missing out on those opportunities.

There is no doubt that Brommy was the quintessential Nats member. As members have said, he was absolutely determined to make sure that the people of his Myall Lakes electorate and regional New South Wales got their fair share. He stood up and fought hard for a lot of things, as we've heard from Tanya. The big one where he wanted to leave a lasting legacy was health facilities, and they will be part of his lasting legacy. But it was not just in his part of the world that Brommy was highly thought of. As we have heard today, he was respected by every single person right throughout Parliament. Brommy fought until the very end and leaves an incredible legacy. Personally, I feel that I have benefited from knowing him. Mate, thank you for everything you did for us. You will continue to be dearly missed.

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (14:53):** I too had the honour of knowing Steve Bromhead for only a very short time. When I was elected in 2019, I learnt quickly that Brommy was someone whom I could trust and someone whom I knew had our best interests at heart. I also learnt quickly that Brommy was a fighter. Long before I entered politics we had all heard the stories of that MP down south who won his seat with a 30 per cent margin from a hospital bed. He had a car accident two weeks before the election and still won with a nearly 30 per cent margin on a two-party preferred count. Dugald told the story a little better than I could in his contribution, but I think we got Brommy to tell us that story about breaking his leg in question time nearly once a month.

As Janelle mentioned, he had a really diverse career path all the way through—a nurse, a police officer, a solicitor—but he also had active roles in the Lions Club, on-the-fireground work with the Rural Fire Service and, of course, his various rugby clubs. It shaped him into a bloke you could have a conversation with on just about any topic. A lot of the time his conversations were really long; at other times, as other members mentioned, he could be very economical with his words. I got an identical phone call to the one Dugald got. I rang Frase and said, "Frase, I think he's upset with me!" Frase said, "No, that's alright. You'll be fine. Just ring him back." I rang him back the next day and we had probably a half-an-hour chat about all the things I needed to know.

Certainly Brommy was a respected senior voice in the party room, someone whose opinion carried a lot of weight and someone who had the respect of all his peers. From 2019 until he got sick, he also cooked our Monday night barbeque. He was responsible for cooking that meat to perfection. As an MP away from home, it was a great way to start the week. He really brought that family atmosphere to our National Party barbecues. He was a fantastic role model for new MPs and was always ready to offer a helping hand or some advice. In his valedictory speech last year, Brommy touched on the legacy that he was leaving behind in his electorate. The Myall Lakes of 2023 looks very different from the Myall Lakes of 2011, when he was elected. I know he took pride in the projects and the funds that made his community a better place. We know that through his hard work and his advocacy he was able to leave behind an amazing legacy, including passing the baton to the new member for Myall Lakes, Tanya Thompson.

To Sue, Caroline, Stuart and Trent, Bethany, Gordon, Gwyn and Amalia, and to his many, many friends, we are truly sorry for your loss. His sudden illness was a total shock to so many of us and he was taken from you far too soon. We remember Brommy not just for his achievements and the roles he played but for the person he was—kind-hearted, steadfast and genuinely committed to making a difference. His memory will continue to inspire all of us in this place and remind us of the impact that one individual can have on the lives of so many. Brommy, your legacy will live on in the halls of this Parliament, in the hearts of the Myall Lakes community and in the memories of all who had the privilege of knowing you. Rest in peace, mate. Your spirit, dedication and your commitment to serving others will never be forgotten.

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (14:58):** It is with great sadness that I make a contribution about the loss to this Parliament of Stephen Bromhead. I send my condolences to Stephen's wife, Sue, and all his family, his supporters and community representatives, and also to members of the National Party, who I am sure have worked very closely with Brommy. He was always a fantastic advocate for the regions. As a regional MP, you know that people who live a bit further from the city are always fighting for the best outcomes for their communities. Not only did Stephen Bromhead leave a legacy to the Parliament and in his community, but he also left a legacy as President of the NSW Parliamentary Lions Club. I stepped into huge shoes when I was offered the next presidency because he really made a difference. Stephen was an absolute change-maker in his community. Making changes in your own life is an indication that you are not scared to get up and have a crack at something new.

He really took on the Parliamentary Lions Club. To make a Lions club within the Parliament is no mean feat. We have friends of everything else, but we have an active Parliamentary Lions Club. On behalf of Stephen Bromhead, there are a few members who need to renew their membership. I came in and it was a relief when COVID hit and we did not have to have the fundraiser for tens of thousands of dollars. There will be a fundraiser, but now the member for Riverstone has taken over the presidency. The fundraising standard that Stephen set in the Parliamentary Lions Club is significant. It was a delight to follow behind Stephen as the previous fundraiser for Spinal Cord Injuries Australia. He chose organisations to make a difference in people's lives. He really was a beautiful human.

His legacy is not only the actions he took but also a lot of paraphernalia—as you might know, Sue—that came with the Lions club. My cupboard is still filled with lots of flagpoles, raffle tickets and bits and pieces from the Parliamentary Lions Club. He really was a very generous human who believed in doing greater good much beyond himself. Mesothelioma, which we lost Brommy to, is not something we would wish on anybody. It is a reminder that it can happen to anyone and that we have to look after ourselves and others. I say thank you and vale, Stephen Bromhead. You have left a really important mark on this place.

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (15:00):** It is a great privilege to speak on this condolence motion. Brommy was a special bloke—we all know that. I have got fond memories of him and with him. In a sense, we came in at the same time. He was a new member in 2011 and I was a young chief of staff to a Minister. He was our favourite backbencher and we were his favourite ministerial office. We used to chat a lot. He would come and have barbecues with us. He was a fierce fighter on behalf of his community. In Myall Lakes there were, of course, a range of issues in the Fair Trading portfolio, from retirement villages to caravan parks and strata. Some people in public life are just decent, noble, honourable figures, and he was certainly one of those, without a doubt. We miss him.

His love of rugby, of course, always shone through. I always thought that he looked a bit like Simon Poidevin, who was a great Wallabies player. I thought there was a slight physical resemblance. They were born within a year of one another. Poido was a great flanker and a figure for the Wallabies who did things, including in the Rugby World Cup. I think Brommy would like that comparison. Reflecting on rugby, Stephen Bromhead was a great team player and a selfless contributor to the cause more broadly. We became mates. It followed naturally. We both had a background in law and a shared love of rugby. We both came in at a similar age and stage and we kept in touch. He sent me a lovely note after I lost two preselections, which was extremely good of him. He sent me an even lovelier note when I won a preselection and got into this place. He was a terrific bloke. He was also an outstanding advocate for the local people in Myall Lakes.

There are some dear family friends in the public gallery. They had a really difficult time during COVID, including losing a family member. The son was likely unable to get to his dad's funeral, but with Steve's help, we made it happen. That meant so much to that family and a lot to me and my family as well. For that we thank him. To Steve's family, thank you. We miss him and we salute him. God rest his soul.

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst) (15:03):** I am proud to stand in the House today and speak on a condolence motion that acknowledges a much loved mate, a colleague and a passionate advocate for the people of Myall Lakes. Brommy was a friend to all of us. To all of us he was a beacon of warmth, someone who would actually give us unwavering support. He had an infectious smile and could brighten up the darkest of days. His laughter echoed through the halls of the Parliament, capturing our hearts and leaving a lasting imprint of joy. As a mate he showed sincere loyalty. He stood for what he believed in through thick and thin—a companion who touched so many lives. I acknowledge Sue and Stephen's family in the public gallery today. I say to all of them that I stood by you during those difficult and dark days but you put the hard yards in. I commend you and sincerely say thank you for showing commitment, providing support and looking after our friend during that difficult time.

I was fortunate that Stephen and I came into this place at the same time. He was part of the class of National MPs who entered the New South Wales Parliament in 2011. He was determined to make a difference, and he did not disappoint. Brommy understood better than most what a privilege it was to serve your community, and that when people put their faith in you, you represent them. You take up the fight on their behalf and you do what you need to do to help them. When that fight is won, you do not stop; you go straight on to the next battle. Brommy understood that as a State MP you have a tremendous opportunity to drive change and do good, and that you cannot afford to waste a second, and he did not. Brommy served in this place for three terms—12 years as the Member for Myall Lakes. He made more than 1,400 speeches to Parliament and secured hundreds of millions of dollars in funding for his electorate.

But his legacy is not one that can be measured in numbers. It is a legacy that will be felt right across this electorate for decades to come, by the community groups whose dreams he helped make a reality, by the next generation of nippers training at local surf clubs that he fought to see upgraded, and by patients seeking health care closer to home. No-one fought harder than Steven to ensure the people of that region got the health facilities they deserve. As we have heard, Brommy fought for the upgrades to the Manning Base Hospital, and for ambulance stations at Forster and Old Bar. As a friend, as a Minister and as a Deputy Premier, I would hear Brommy's booming voice in this place, but it was always because he wanted to see the needs of his community met. And that is exactly what he never stopped doing.

I had the opportunity to go to Myall Lakes and talk to different community groups, whether it was the Manning Valley BMX Club to see the investment made into that facility, or the Forster Tennis Club. And what did they say about Brommy? "What an amazing man. Thank you, Brommy, for everything you have done for our community and for our club." The Forster-Tuncurry Dolphins Rugby Club said, "Thank you, Brommy, not only for what you did for us, but also for the entire community." The Manning River Ratz Rugby Club knew that he was a staunch rugby man, but they also said he always had the best interest of the community at heart. That is a testament to somebody who we all know in this place made a difference. I will miss hearing his voice and I will miss hearing him rip into someone when he stood at this lectern in the Parliament on an issue that he was so passionate about. I will miss seeing him behind the barbie in the Nats party room, because Brommy would always be leading the way. As I have said before, it wasn't about the snags; it was about knowing that people came from across the State in regional areas. Coming together was about keeping people together, and Brommy ensured that happened.

It is never easy to say goodbye to a good man, even when you know it is coming. I remember distinctly dropping in to visit Brommy, Sue and their family at their home. There were tough times. There were times when I saw the emotions of a man, but I saw a man who was proud of what he had achieved. I remember sitting with Stephen on a number of occasions when he would fall asleep. He was tired but he was a proud man. I note that the Hon. Duncan Gay, a previous Minister, is in the gallery as well. He would also know that Stephen was a pain in the backside at times because he would not give up on things. He would push for things because he knew they

made a difference. When I would go to their home, we would talk about campaigns, we would laugh about old times and we would talk about others in this place. I also acknowledge Premier Chris Minns. On the day of Brommy's passing, he was the first person to ring me to lend his condolences on behalf of the Opposition at the time. I acknowledge that decency from him.

Brommy joked in his valedictory speech to Parliament last year that he had two speeches, a short one and a long one. The short one, he said, was "Thank you" and the long one was "Thank you very much". I think his service as a registered nurse, a police officer, a volunteer firefighter and an outstanding MP has well and truly earned him a long speech. Brommy, as a friend, on behalf of everyone in this Parliament, I say thank you very much. We will all miss you but we also thank you for the difference that you have made in our lives and in the lives of those people living in the Myall Lakes area.

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (15:12):** On behalf of the Government and the Labor Party, I acknowledge the service of Stephen Bruce Bromhead, known to all of us as Brommy, during his 12 years in this place as the member for Myall Lakes. I also pay tribute to the selfless contributions he made to community outside of this place, both in his personal life and in his professional career. Labor members of this place, present and past, extend our deepest sympathies to Brommy's family and indicate that all who served with Brommy miss him. I thank and welcome those friends and family who are able to be with us in this place where Brommy dedicated so much of his service.

His working career was typified by his selfless public service for his local community and for the people of New South Wales. He became a registered nurse with the New South Wales health service in 1974 before becoming a constable of police then a detective in the New South Wales Police Force. In fact, Brommy's association with New South Wales Parliament started decades before his elected service, not as a political staffer but as a police officer serving on guard duty during the Wran Government. In 1991 he turned to practising law, working as a solicitor and consulting for the Hunter Community Legal Centre.

He was a very well-known community figure long before his entry into Parliament, serving as the founder of the Manning-Great Lakes traffic offenders program, a councillor on the Greater Taree City Council, chairman of the local tourism board, president of the aquatic association and president of the Forster Chamber of Commerce. Brommy was elected to State Parliament with the support of the National Party in 2011, and his dedication to the people of the electorate of Myall Lakes became immediately clear not only to those he encountered in his electorate but to all members of this House.

From his inaugural speech onwards, he was passionate about improving services for his community. In his inaugural speech he highlighted the importance of convenient and accessible regional health facilities and spoke about the need for adequate police staffing in the Manning-Great Lakes Local Area Command. They were causes he championed throughout his time in Parliament. Never did a moment go by in this House when Brommy did not advocate for the need to support police and for the service police perform not only in his local community but throughout New South Wales.

He continued his passions for community and volunteerism as a parliamentarian, serving a variety of roles within this place, including as Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Transport and Roads, Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Housing, president of the New South Wales Parliamentary Lions Club for 10 years, chair of the New South Wales Parliamentary Friends of Rugby Union, and deputy chair of the Friends of the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault group in Parliament. Like many of us, he had carried the past experiences of his professional life with him into this bearpit. From 2015 to 2019 Stephen Bromhead was the National Party Whip. No doubt his experience in law and order, particularly as a policeman, came in handy as part of that role.

As someone close to sporting and community clubs in my own electorate, I acknowledge Brommy's extensive engagement with his own local sporting community. I have come to learn that he was especially proud of his contributions to his beloved Forster-Tuncurry Dolphins Rugby Club, of which he became a life member in 2011. He was also vice-president of the Manning River Ratz Rugby Club, a founding member of the Harrington and Wallamba rugby clubs, and even president of the Mid North Coast Rugby Union. He knew the incredible role sporting clubs play in fostering a sense of community by bringing people together. He did not hide from the challenges his community faced, nor did he dwell on his victories. Instead, with humility and grace, he sought the best possible outcomes for the people of the mid North Coast in accordance with the values he shared with his constituency. His presence is missed by everybody who served with him in this place and across the Myall Lakes area. He is sorely missed by us all. May he rest in peace.

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (15:17):** I contribute to the condolence motion for Stephen Bromhead and extend my condolences and thoughts to all of his family, including those in the gallery today: his wife, Sue; his children, Caroline, Stuart and Trent; his sister, Bethany; his brother, Gordon; his sister-in-law, Gwyn; and his niece, Amalia. Both Stephen and I entered Parliament in the class of 2011. It was an

exciting time. It was a unique time, a unique privilege to be part of a new government. That does not happen often in this State. We were full of spirit, excitement and a determination to turn the State around. Stephen came to this place as a former grazier, nurse, detective and lawyer. He was active in his community, including in rugby union, and determined to deliver for his electorate. What an extraordinary combination. What an extraordinary life experience. His service in this place stands as an example of a model and modern parliamentarian—those who come with life experience and a hunger to deliver for their communities.

In his inaugural speech Stephen spoke of the tranquillity of Myall Lakes, the coastal beaches and the waterways contrasted with the hinterland. In his own words, Myall Lakes is internationally renowned as Australia's water playground. Stephen nominated health and roads as key priorities for his term ahead. The redevelopment of Manning Base Hospital and upgraded roads and bridges across Stephen's electorate are some of the highlights that stand as a testament to his advocacy and his record as a member of this place. He also served for 10 years as president of the New South Wales Parliamentary Lions Club, so, in recognition of Stephen's outstanding service, it is appropriate that I close my contribution by evoking the Lions motto of "We serve".

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (15:19):** I make a brief contribution to debate on this condolence motion for our lost friend. I was lucky enough to be elected to this place in 2015, but I knew about Stephen's character before I arrived in this building because we happened to have some mutual friends: Jenifer Green and her husband, Wayne Cornell. I was told that when I got in here, I had to catch up with Brommy. I was like, "Who is this Brommy guy?" I had to do some research. Everyone was talking about Stephen, and I was thinking, "Where's this Brommy guy?" I was looking for Brommy. The first time I met Brommy, I was taken aback. I had done a bit of research and found out that he was a nurse, a police officer and a lawyer. He had had a very varied career before entering this place. Then I saw the mountain of a man that Brommy was and thought about all those patients who saw Brommy coming towards them as a nurse thinking, "Oh, my gosh! Look at this chap!" That really typified the gentleness and spirit of Brommy.

Shortly after being elected and as a newbie in this place I had the honour of being appointed Temporary Speaker. One of the greatest pleasures in this place is listening to private members' statements. Many times I sat in this Chamber and listened to Brommy's private member's statements about the passion, the love and the care that he put into the Myall Lakes electorate. There was not one organisation that he did not fight for, champion, stand up for or represent. One of the most moving moments I have ever seen was when Brommy walked into the Chamber one night and started talking about what had happened with the fires in his electorate. A chap the size of Brommy breaking down in tears because of what he had seen and the pain his community had gone through—and he stood with them side by side in every one of those moments—was a true testament to the mountain of a man. To see him reduced to tears showed the compassion and the love he put into his community, from one end to the other.

I also noticed that there were two types of Brommy speeches: There was the one where he came with a newspaper clipping and the one where he did not. Members knew that when he did not, he was going to rip into somebody. He did not need notes because he had already worked out what he was going to say and who the target was going to be. It was really interesting. If he had a newspaper clipping then it would be a mild-mannered speech congratulating the pie club—or whatever it might have been—in the Myall Lakes electorate that had done an outstanding job that week, but woe betide the person for whom he did not have written notes. I am sure Tanya used to watch him tear in from the electoral office with the energy and the fight that he knew he had to deliver for his people.

As a regional MP, I watched in awe of the way this chap fought for his region. I thought, "This is the sort of MP that all regional MPs should be." I took so much away from the way he fought for everything. I do not know how many times he spoke about Manning Base Hospital in this Chamber. Some of his proudest moments were delivering for his community. I took away a lot of learning from watching Brommy and what he had done for his community. He really was the quintessential caring politician. Nothing was too small; nothing was too big. He will forever be remembered in this place not only for the dollars he delivered but also for his support, kindness and compassion. I think everybody in the Myall Lakes electorate has had the privilege of having been supported by Brommy in one form or another.

The fires that ripped through his electorate were harrowing. As I said, I will never forget the time that he stood at the lectern and was reduced to tears. That was the compassion of the man. I will also never forget my enrolment into the New South Wales Parliamentary Lions Club, which I used to think was optional. He said, "Crouchy, it's okay. If you can't make it, just give us the money." The funds that Brommy was able to secure as president of the New South Wales Parliamentary Lions Club were astronomical, which fitted with the character

of the man. He delivered hundreds of millions of dollars for his electorate and squeezed thousands of dollars out of politicians. Again, that is a true testament to Brommy.

When I was promoted to Government Whip, Brommy was one of the first to congratulate me. He said, "Good luck. Firm but fair, Crouchy. Firm but fair." As National Party Whip, I have always tried to follow that example. More often than not, I would walk into the Whip's office and there he would be, lounged out on the lounge suite—all six foot whatever of him—usually wearing what I used to call the "McBrommy tartan tie", and he would give me a bit of advice about how the afternoon was going. I respected that because he did it in a positive way. I also made the mistake of once asking him about the story of how he broke his leg. He told me in graphic detail, at which point I wished I had never asked. All members will have heard the story about "the crack". Again, he was able to reflect on that in good humour. Those are the things that everyone in this place will remember of that beautiful man, as well as the commitment he made to everybody else to put himself second.

The other thing I have to tell members is that Stephen had a photo of him and his wife, Sue, walking on the beach proudly displayed on his Facebook page. One day I bailed him up and said, "Mate, that is one of the best retirement village pictures I think I have ever seen in my life." I said, "Are you getting ready?" He said, "Really?" I said, "Mate, Sue looks great; you, not so much." It is a beautiful photo of the two of them walking together and a sign of the love they shared. I thank Sue for sharing him with the people of New South Wales since 2011. The people of the Myall Lakes electorate are so much better off. We also know that they are in great hands for the future. I thank Stephen's entire family for being in the gallery and for giving him to us for so long. We will miss him terribly, but his legacy will live on forever. Vale, Brommy.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (15:26):** To Sue and the family, it is an honour and a privilege to make a contribution to this condolence motion for our mate Stephen Bromhead. Over the past hour it has been nice to sit, enjoy and soak up Brommy—the man we knew, the man we loved and the man we got to know over the years. We started in this House together in 2011. As it turns out, we spent eight years together on level 12 in neighbouring rooms.

**Mr Matt Cross:** Poor Brommy.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** Yes. Those are eight years that I will treasure forever. We spent more time in each other's rooms than we did in our own. He was wonderful at not only organising events but also roping people into organising events. He would say, "Kevvy, come in. I've got an idea," to which I would reply, "Oh, shit, Brommy. What now?" It would go on and on, but it was amazing. I treasure the eight years we had next to each other. When I moved floors after those eight years, Brommy moved into my room, and he was there until the end. When I walk past his office on level 12, he often springs to mind. He stays in our thoughts, which is amazing.

Was there anything Brommy could not do? Was there anything Brommy was not involved in? Was there any organisation Brommy had not fundraised for? I acknowledge Duncan Gay in the gallery. Brommy organised a former members night, which was a big deal. Former members came from all over. Brommy wanted music; he loved music. He said, "Kevvy, grab your guitar. We're going to sing some songs. We're going to have the parliamentary choir." Well, bloody hell! I said, "Okay," and grabbed my guitar. I suggested a couple of songs, but he said, "No, no. Try another one." It turned out that we ended up singing Brommy's favourites. He was very good at doing that sort of thing. Members have spoken about the Monday night barbecues. I was the assistant to him on those wonderful nights.

**Mrs Tanya Thompson:** Get the fire extinguisher ready.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** Yes. I acknowledge the comment of the current member for Myall Lakes about the fire extinguisher. The barbecue on level 12 is on the balcony. It is down the end and you have room for one person in front of the balcony. To get behind and around you have to squeeze a little. So I squeezed behind Brommy. He had his big apron on. I cannot say what was on the front of the apron, but you know what I am talking about. He had a whole thing going on. There was every bovine known to man on this particular plate, with a bit of chicken thrown in as well. Anyway, it caught fire. It was a fair dinkum fire, and we are thinking "shit"—sorry, Mr Temporary Speaker. We closed the lid, but it was still no good. It started coming out the sides. I was at the other end. I looked over the balcony going, "We're both gone here. We're both to going to catch fire." Brommy yells out, "Turn the bloody gas off, Kevvy." So I reach down to turn the gas off and ultimately this thing goes out. Anyway, he is as cool as a cucumber. He picks it up, blows around, does the hand wave and goes, "Well, we've got a couple of well done here"—which was just typical. He was always looking on the bright side. "Who ordered the well done?" he said.

He was a good bloke—he really was. He was great to be around. He was energetic and loved life. He absolutely did everything 100 per cent. We have heard about his past. We have heard about his professions and

his passions. To think that we all want to leave our communities in a better place—well, Brommy actually did that. It was a life well lived. To Sue and family, you are often in our thoughts. You know that. You are always welcome. Wherever we are, you are always welcome. For me, level 12 in the New South Wales Parliament House will never be the same.

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek) (15:31):** I feel honoured to stand up with my parliamentary colleagues and make a small contribution to this condolence motion to bring due honour and respect, love and admiration to our fellow colleague Stephen Bromhead. We all know him as Brommy. I begin by extending my deepest sympathies to Sue, to her children, her extended family and those who may be watching online from the community. What they have heard today is a minuscule part of the full impact that our wonderful colleague Brommy had on not only members in this place but also the community that propelled him to this place in 2011.

I joined this place in the same year as our colleague Stephen. I was on a very steep learning curve, like most of us are when we come to this place. When I reflect on those first years, the two things that come to my mind when I think of Stephen are his smile and his optimism. It did not matter what was happening in this House or what he was speaking about at the lectern. He just had this sense of optimism and this bulldozer effect that he was going to make a difference. It did not matter what or who was in the way. He was going to persist and push through until what he wanted to achieve was delivered. As a fairly timid person initially in this place—not so anymore—I took great strength from that and learnt a lot from that. He probably did not even know that. But to Sue, to the family, to my colleagues here, I just want to attest to his incredible mentorship that he delivered as a powerful and effective local member.

I will also speak of my experience with Stephen when I was honoured to be the Minister for Ageing—it is now called the Minister for Seniors. When I was the Minister for Ageing a few short years ago, there was a time when Stephen knocked on my door before coming straight into my office to say, "Tanya, I don't know whether you realise it but my electorate has the oldest demographic in the State. As such, I put on a seniors concert at Christmas. I'm coming to ask you for financial support for that concert." And he kind of put it in a way that was not a question or a request. It was just a statement. I have to say that it did not take a lot of convincing for me or my team to deliver. That was just a small insight into how passionate and how convinced he was of the investment that he wanted for his community. I really admired that in Stephen: his absolute confidence that he knew what his community needed. He was going to ask for it, no matter what was in front of him.

I end my speech with a quote from Abe Lincoln: "In the end, it's not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years." Stephen epitomised that through and through. He lived many lifetimes in his life here. We have heard it said: He was a nurse, he was a police officer, a solicitor, a member of Parliament, a father, a husband, a colleague. He lived many powerful and impactful lives in his life on this earth. That is something that the family should take great comfort in knowing: that his was a life well lived and that he was someone that we all can continue to look up to and admire and learn from. Vale, Stephen Bromhead.

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (15:36):** It is a great privilege to contribute to the condolence motion of Stephen Bruce Bromhead, known to me—like everyone else—as Brommy. I suspect some members are confused why a member from Sydney's north shore who was only elected in March of this year is speaking on this motion. But in a previous life I worked in the Premier's office. It was quite an interesting and amazing experience to meet so many new members after the 2011 election. Brommy was one of those people. He certainly left quite an impression on me as a young staffer.

There is a story that many people have told, but I will tell it from my perspective sitting over there in the advisers box. I was the staffer in the Premier's office. I had to deliver the questions to whoever was asking questions that day at question time. I know the member for Lane Cove and many on that bench remember. The government of the day had 69 seats, which meant that the Government went from the Government benches all the way across and onto the Opposition side. It was a terrible time to be in opposition.

Brommy actually sat where the member for Tamworth and the member for Albury are sitting on the Opposition front bench to the side there. He sat there for two reasons: One was because of the large majority; the second was because two weeks before the election he had a motor accident, and he was on crutches. Further as to why he was sitting there—he actually mentions it in his inaugural speech—on the first sitting day he came in on crutches through the door. Many of the Labor Opposition were quite confused. They were thinking, "Hey, buddy, what are you doing on this side of the House?" Being a rugby tragic, he said, "When the other team is short on players, of course you loan yourself to them." He certainly had humour.

So on that day I gave him his question. As members know, when you pop up for a question, even though it might not be your turn, you always try to beat members on the other side to it. Brommy had no hesitation in trying to get up really quick and of course all of us heard this massive crack—it was just so loud. And credit goes

to the then member for Macquarie Fields, Andrew McDonald, and the member for Port Macquarie, Leslie Williams. One being a doctor and the other nurse, they attended to Brommy.

I am glad that he told the story to everyone because complete chaos almost took over the House. The second thing I will say about Brommy is that he had such a love for his Myall Lakes community. Members always say that our first speeches will one day be spoken about when we are no longer here. I thought that was a bit of a Brommy thing to say. In his first speech, he said:

Last night I heard the member for Cronulla talk about how good his electorate is. For the benefit of members present, I think a good place and good electorate in a metropolitan city is a contradiction in terms. So I invite him to come to Myall Lakes to see firsthand how good Myall Lakes is.

It is a shame that the member for Cronulla has already spoken because I would have pressured him to find out if he took Brommy up on his offer. He certainly loved Myall Lakes. As we know, in a Liberal-Nationals Coalition the Deputy Premier's office plays a greater role in supporting The Nationals. But Brommy kept going into the Premier's office to talk about Manning Base Hospital and how it continually needed to be upgraded. I am glad that he was able to do that.

Brommy had an amazing perspective. As a young staffer, I went to Brommy from time to time and said, "Look, you're speaking on a motion. Here are your attack points." He was a great believer in using the catchcry that we do not hear much anymore: "16 years". He would always go on about "16 years". As I said, he had an amazing perspective. I echo my colleagues' comments about him being a police officer, nurse, volunteer firefighter, lawyer, councillor and rugby tragic. We heard also about all the other things that he did. He was a true public servant to the people of New South Wales and to Myall Lakes.

As president of the Parliamentary Lions Club, he was so inclusive. I remember one day he was having a huge dinner for the Parliamentary Lions. I was just randomly walking around the Fountain Court. He said, "Oi, what are you doing?" I said, "I am about to go home." He said, "Why don't you come for dinner?" I said, "Are you sure?" He said, "Yes, come in." That showed how warm and inclusive he was. I hate to break it to the current Nats, but he was one of the favourite Nats.

I am glad comments have been made about the barbeque. I do not know why I remember this but when I ran for preselection—sadly, like the member for Willoughby, I was not successful the first go—I actually included a picture of Brommy with me at the barbeque. I sadly did not win that preselection. I will certainly be looking up that photo because that was the Brommy I remember. To Stephen's family who are in the gallery today, please know that his memory lives in all of us. He has certainly left an impression, and his legacy will live on. Vale, Stephen Bruce Bromhead.

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Kellyville) (15:42):** I acknowledge the many friends and family of Stephen Bromhead in the gallery today. Whilst a solemn occasion, it is a pleasure to speak on behalf of a friend, a colleague, an absolute gentleman and a wonderful advocate for not only rural areas but also his important community. I acknowledge also the Hon. Duncan Gay in the gallery. I remind him again that I was, and remain, the best Parliamentary Secretary for Transport and Roads that he ever had—yes, I am as humble as ever.

By way of background, Stephen Bromhead came to this House after being elected in what I call the wave of support for a Liberal-Nationals Government in 2011. It was an historic occasion for many reasons. There are 93 seats in the New South Wales Parliament. I might get these figures a little bit wrong. When we formed government in 2011, there were 20 members on the Opposition benches, and we made up three-quarters of the Chamber. I think there were only two Independents—one would have been the member for Lake Macquarie and the other would have been the member for Sydney. I stand to be corrected on that, but I think they were the only Independents.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** The member for Northern Tablelands at the time, Richard Torbay.

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS:** Not in 2011.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** Yes. He was still here when I got here, Ray.

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS:** Was he still here? I stand corrected. There were three Independents. I make the point that the Liberal-Nationals took up every seat apart from those three—the entire three-quarters of the Chamber. That is historic. That large representation has never happened before. By virtue of that, certain backbenchers were actually on the frontbench on this side of the House. One of those members was Stephen Bromhead, the then member for Myall Lakes. He was sitting where the member for Lane Cove, Anthony Roberts, is sitting now.

The reason I remember that, apart from becoming great friends with Brommy, has already been discussed. I was sitting on the backbench opposite. There is a bit of rivalry when members seek the call. One can imagine that, in this huge Chamber, with all the new members of Parliament, there was a massive amount of enthusiasm. In the early days, members were jumping out of their chairs. All they wanted to do was ask a question in the Parliament, especially to the Premier, and be recognised in *Hansard*. Brommy was one of those members. This has been canvassed before, but no member will ever again witness what happened when Stephen Bromhead launched, like something akin to a missile, out of the seat on this side of the Chamber and broke his leg in half. Not only was it shocking, but we heard the break. It was phenomenal. It showed his great commitment to the cause of getting out of his seat, but it absolutely nailed him. We were lucky at the time that there were a couple of doctors in the House who attended to him until the paramedics took him away. It was one of the most extraordinary things. He has been a part of history in more ways than one.

Brommy and I got on famously. I enjoyed my time as Minister whenever I could visit his electorate. The member for Davidson mentioned in his contribution that we had been in opposition for 16 years; hence the Labor Government had been in power for 16 years. I am pretty sure that Brommy was the member who coined that very quiet catchcry. Whenever a member got up to speak—and it was normally the Premier—about the previous Labor Government, Brommy would just say, "16 years." I am pretty sure Brommy started that, and it became our mantra. I am looking at the Labor members who were very much on the back of that. Every time the Labor Party was named, "16 years" would ring out across the Chamber and it all started with Stephen Bromhead.

Whenever I visited his electorate there was not a great deal to do as the Minister for Multiculturalism, but there were a lot of things to do on behalf of seniors, youth and volunteers. He never missed an opportunity to advocate on behalf of a hospital. One of my dear friends who I have known most of my life and who has a holiday home at Smiths Lake got to know Steve in his capacity as the local member. Lo and behold, the next thing I know, I have my mate ringing me to say, "You know, mate, they really do need a hospital up there at Foster." I thought, "Don't start, mate." It was bad enough putting up with Brommy every time I bumped into him but then I had members in my own electorate advocating on behalf of his hospital as well. Our Chamber is the lesser for his loss. He was a great guy, and I will sadly miss him. It is rare for someone to fall as ill as Brommy did and then get the opportunity to come back to give his valedictory speech. I, like many others, was present that day and that will stay with me for a long time. May he rest in peace. Vale, Stephen Bromhead.

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (15:49):** How do you describe in words a man who left an indelible mark on every person he met in his community, every person he interacted with in this place, and every person who came into his life? As a colleague, I certainly cannot. I am sure his friends, family and loved ones cannot either. I take this opportunity to extend my condolences to each of them for their loss. Politics is a really lonely game, and everyone here has difficult days. We have heard from some members that COVID was really challenging for people in this building. But with someone like Brommy, somehow challenging times did not seem as tough. He was the person who went out of his way to provide words of wisdom, counselling, and love and support to everyone in this place. It did not matter to him which party we are from or what he had going on in his day.

I am one of seven Coalition members from the class of 2015. It was a bit of a different dynamic to the class of 2011 that other members have described. We were a smaller group and less organised. We had to catch up and learn what all of the class of 2011 had done with mass support. It was Brommy who went out of his way to check in on each and every one of us to make sure that we knew what we were doing and that we had support so that we could do our best to be the best we could be. I am a Liberal, so he had no reason to do that. But he did, because he is one of the best people we could ever meet.

Brommy used to tell us all the time about the little things, such as community recognition statements, and getting the most time in the Chamber for our communities. He encouraged us to speak, even if we did not have prepared words. He would say, "Get that newspaper article in your hand and speak from the heart. Speak to what you know, but do not waste a minute in this building." The thing I will never forget about Brommy was that he always encouraged us to come forward—never to take a step backwards. That is very much true to the character of the man that we all knew. He was a charismatic, vibrant and much-loved personality in this place.

Many members have spoken about the way they were roped into the NSW Parliamentary Lions Club. I was elected at 28. At first I was—I think—sweet. Brommy saw an opportunity to get someone who had worked in one of the big four—I worked in tax and I was very comfortable with a spreadsheet. Brommy obviously saw "sucker" written on my forehead because he roped me into doing the accounting for the Parliamentary Lions Club. I had absolutely no clue what I had said yes to. But it was Brommy; how do you say no? I ended up reconciling the accounts and organising the EFTPOS machines and taking care of all of that money—and let me tell you, Brommy raised a lot of money for that incredibly important organisation. I just could not say no to him. He was that person.

In the same way that he would reach out to people and encourage them to either help him or the cause he was involved in, he would also take the time to reach out to people to look after them.

The Nats have spoken about their barbecues, which are a really important feature of how they spend their time in this place. What they have not said is that Brommy used to have his lunchtime barbecues on a Wednesday with Chris Gulaptis and Geoff Provest. What I loved was being invited to have lunch and hang out with the gentlemen before a lot of the new Nats did, but he reached out to everyone. He made us feel welcome. He would sit down and have a chat with us. He would tell us important stories about what he had learnt on his journey across his various career paths and what we could do better for our communities. But he also took the time to put on the silly Christmas hats, sing songs and tell tales. He truly brought joy to this building.

During COVID, as I think the member for Dubbo touched on quite a lot, we sat around in The Nationals party room and shared question time and popcorn and social distance experiences. Brommy made sure everyone was there. If he knew that you were one of the 20 members who were called up to be in the building, he made sure you knew there was space for you in that room. For someone like me, who spent COVID living on their own, that was a really important time.

The new member for Myall Lakes has incredibly big shoes to fill. But Brommy knew exactly what he was doing, because he took the time to find a magnificent woman. He trained her to make sure that she knew that she could do this role, that she could be at her best while continuing his legacy and fighting for their community. I have no doubt that he would be incredibly proud, as I am sure all of us are, of the work that the member for Myall Lake does in this Chamber. Today we all pay tribute to a great man. May he rest in peace. Vale, Stephen Bromhead.

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove) (15:56):** I thank the House for the opportunity to say a few words about Brommy. As Brommy would always say, there is a short speech and a long speech. As Father of the House of 21 years, it is my intention to keep mine to a short speech, and it is a thankyou speech. It is a thankyou to his family for giving Stephen to us and the community for many years. Brommy was a mountain of a man. He was a man for all seasons. We miss him here. In all my time in this Parliament, I have never seen a representative like him. He is a once-in-a-generation member of Parliament. I do not think we will see another Brommy for another couple of generations. May Brommy rest in peace. May his family find peace, knowing that he was a husband, a father and a friend. He was a magnificent individual. Vale.

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (15:57):** I thank the House for the opportunity to make a contribution today to remember Mr Stephen Bromhead. Brommy, as a big man, certainly made a big impact. It is important that today we remember the man that he was. I thank Sue and his family and friends for coming. Albeit being a somewhat sad occasion, if there is one thing that I hope they take from today, it is a sense of pride. We have a sense of pride for him and some of the ways that he worked with us and some of the ways he poked us. He was our mate. More than anything, he made a great contribution to the Myall Lakes electorate and greater regional New South Wales.

My time here overlapped with Brommy for only a short time, but I appreciate those times in the common room during COVID when we were practising social distancing. Brommy shared many words of wisdom during that time. Opposition members can heckle the other side of the House during question time, but in the privacy of our own space in the common room, the good thing was we could heckle both sides. I can remember very many times of amusement sitting on that couch, which is the world's most uncomfortable couch. Brommy was in the chair behind me.

**Mr Adam Crouch:** One and a half metres away.

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL:** One and a half metres away, of course, as was appropriate at the time. He was smart to be sitting in that chair because it was a lot more comfortable than that couch. He was booming from the back and keeping us all amused in amongst all that popcorn we were eating. He certainly spent a bit of time mentoring us through the COVID space and through those barbecues. He was the bloke who pulled us all together. The Nationals family came together. It was a tremendous experience to be part of that and for him to lead in that regard. The people of New South Wales thank Brommy's family for sharing him with us. The members of The Nationals have enormous respect for Brommy. We thank his family as well. He will be up there no doubt playing in the Lord's First XV, making sure that he is taking it to the other side and fighting as hard as he can. I will leave it at that. I thank his family for coming today and for sharing him with us all, because he was a great leader and certainly someone who we will look up to going forward. Vale, Stephen Bromhead.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

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

*Business of the House*

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

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (16:01):** I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to:

- (1) Extend the lapsing date for the Environment and Planning Minerals Legislation Amendment (Offshore Drilling and Associated Infrastructure Prohibition) Bill 2023 to Thursday 14 March 2024.
- (2) Postpone consideration of all remaining stages of the Environment and Planning Minerals Legislation Amendment (Offshore Drilling and Associated Infrastructure Prohibition) Bill 2023 to Wednesday 13 March 2024 at 2.30 p.m.

Members will be aware that yesterday the Committee on Environment and Planning tabled a report on the Environment and Planning Minerals Legislation Amendment (Offshore Drilling and Associated Infrastructure Prohibition) Bill and made a recommendation to the House not to support the bill. I quote from page 34 of that report:

In summary, the proposed section—  
referring to a section of the bill—

could be seen as targeting the Commonwealth's power to authorise and regulate activities in the offshore area of a state. The provision could therefore be characterised as 'altering, impairing or detracting' from rights that have been conferred under Commonwealth laws. To this extent, proposed section 10.17(1)(b) may be inconsistent under section 109 of the Constitution.

That is the Commonwealth Constitution. As members are aware, what is known as the petroleum exploration permit 11 [PEP 11] is currently under assessment by the Commonwealth-New South Wales Offshore Petroleum Joint Authority. Because of that, it would certainly be inappropriate to make much comment in relation to that application. The reason for that is—as members, including former Government members, would know—the application was formally made to the Commonwealth because it is Commonwealth legislation that covers those activities.

Former Prime Minister Scott Morrison made a decision in December 2021 to block an extension of the PEP 11 project permit and remitted it to the joint Federal-New South Wales authority. He made that decision by secretly appointing himself as resources Minister, circumventing the then Minister, Keith Pitt. At the same time, he appointed himself to four other portfolios. Arising from some comments made by the former Prime Minister, the Federal Court found the decision was affected by apprehended bias. I note the Federal Minister has said that the Government respects the proper process and the courts and will not make the same mistakes that Scott Morrison did. The independent legal advice obtained by the committee that tabled that report indicates the complexity and difficulty of the issue.

I note that this Government has not changed the former Government's policy. That policy is that the New South Wales offshore exploration and mining policy provides that it does not support offshore mineral, coal or petroleum exploration or mining for commercial purposes in or adjacent to New South Wales coastal waters and will consider offshore mineral exploration or mining in New South Wales coastal waters only for the purposes of beach nourishment, provided it is for the broader public benefit. That policy is a policy of the former Government. It has not changed with this Government.

However, the relevant Minister is required to consider that application under assessment from the Commonwealth-New South Wales Offshore Petroleum Joint Authority and, as part of that, cannot do what Scott Morrison did and not follow the appropriate processes. This motion to suspend standing and sessional orders, if carried by the House, will move consideration of the bill so that it can be dealt with in finality at the March sittings of this House. It may well be that the matter is finally determined in the intervening period by the Commonwealth-New South Wales Offshore Petroleum Joint Authority. The Government anticipates that will occur and that it will be done in accordance with the appropriate processes.

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (16:07):** I will talk about what can only be described as a gag motion by the Government. It is an attempt—a panicked attempt at that—to stifle and gag debate on a bill that, let us face it, those opposite were never planning to pass. The bill was introduced in this place six months ago and kicked down the road to a committee, but at least there was a possibility that the committee could strengthen the bill and satisfy the Government. Environmental groups were hoping that was going to happen, but members opposite were only going to gag it in the end.

I spoke in this House earlier about my expectation that this private member's bill, which was introduced by the member for Pittwater with the support of his community and communities up and down the New South Wales coast, would be debated tomorrow, as it should be. The Government should allow that process to happen.

But surprise, surprise, here we are. The Opposition received a notice about a potential suspension of standing and sessional orders just over half an hour ago. This is not due process. It is not justice for coastal communities. It is a gag order, plain and simple, and proof, if you ever needed it, that Labor had no intention of supporting coastal communities or of having a real and considered debate about offshore oil and gas. I will go, first of all, to the composition of the committee. There were three Labor members. It was a stacked committee. Again, that goes to the intention; we were never going to have a debate.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** Order! Members will come to order.

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE:** How many coastal MPs were on that committee? Just one from the Coalition—me. I was the dissenting voice. Having heard the legal advice—I did not cherry-pick it, as Labor did—I understood it within the confines of what it was supposed to do, and that is fortify the bill. The Leader of the House made three points. He said that proposed section 10.17 (1) (b) was unconstitutional. Four words can change that. Legal advice to the committee accepted that that would fix the fundamental problem with the bill. We have drafted those amendments, and it should be up to this House and its members to determine whether they are appropriate.

The second point was about some hypothetical future Commonwealth intervention. That is not how we make good public policy in this place. It is a hypothetical that would only be triggered by a series of domino events that are yet to happen. This is another sign, if we needed it, that Labor never had any intention of supporting the bill, despite repeated remarks before and during the election campaign by the Premier, the environment Minister and almost every Labor MP from coastal electorates and beyond. Prime Minister Anthony Albanese himself said he wanted petroleum exploration permit 11 dead. Here is an opportunity for members of this House—those who have talked out of both sides of their mouth; who have said one thing and done another—to make things right for their communities, and to listen to the communities that have said they do not want offshore oil and gas. On the front of the committee report is the photograph of an oil rig. No-one wants that. Labor members in this place have said they do not want that.

But the other thing Labor members do not want is justice. They do not want debate. They want to gag members of this House. I say to those considering this motion today: Think about the real intentions of the Minns Labor Government, which says one thing and does another, which breaks election promises and which seeks to stifle debate in this House. It is outrageous, and the Government should be held to account. Coastal communities and environmental groups will be furious if the Government attempts to kick this can down the road again. It has done it once; it has done it twice. Where will it end up? This is about a weak and panicked Government finding time to come up with more excuses to allow offshore oil and gas exploration and mining. I ask people in this place to vote against the suspension of standing and sessional orders and do the right thing by the citizens of New South Wales.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (16:12):** By leave: At the outset, I acknowledge the Coalition's and the shadow Minister's frustration at the proposal to postpone consideration of the Environment and Planning Minerals Legislation Amendment (Offshore Drilling and Associated Infrastructure Prohibition) Bill 2023 until early next year. I have brought private members' bills to the Parliament. When I did so in the past—and, as members will know, there was much media commentary about it—my legislation was often delayed and processes were put in place to examine it. That is frustrating. But, ultimately, when I think of two of the reforms that I achieved through private members' bills, those bills passed through patience—which at times was difficult to exercise—and processes that I needed to follow with the former Government, which is now in opposition and is seeking to bring the bill forward for debate tomorrow. I think it is important to consider the political reality of the situation, which is that a committee report was just tabled in the Parliament.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** Order! Members will refrain from having audible conversations in the Chamber.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH:** My point is that if we want good legislation to pass, it has to follow a process. Yes, that process can be frustrating. Private members' bills take longer—as I know myself—but the reforms are ultimately achieved. The committee report has just been released. I have not had a chance to absorb it. Part of my referral to the committee empowered it to seek legal advice. I want to know whether such legal advice has been obtained and if there is a way for members in this place to access it. That is a question I put to the Government and to colleagues. Before members vote on a bill that raises a constitutional question, I think they should be able to access any legal advice about it. If we were to deal with this legislation tomorrow, let us be honest, because of the situation that the Leader of the House outlined, the Government is in a position either to talk out the legislation or potentially to vote it down, or the legislation will lapse and we will not deal with it.

Those three outcomes are not acceptable to me. Crossbench members have expressed our views to the Government. We want this legislation to be debated. We want this legislation to be voted on. I want to vote on this legislation. But we need more time to absorb the information in the committee's report, we need more time to

consult constitutional experts, and we need more time, hopefully, to see any legal advice. As much as I want to see the bill passed tomorrow, there are outstanding questions that need to be resolved. The work of the joint authority and what may happen in the intervening period must also be resolved. The proponents of the bill and its advocates in the community should see this as a win. Today we have locked in a time to debate and vote on the bill, and that will occur in the time allocated for Government business rather than private members' business. That is an act of goodwill on the part of the Government towards this reform, and I will support the suspension of standing and sessional orders.

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater) (16:16):** By leave: I thank the Government for granting me leave to contribute to the debate. Frankly, I am exceptionally disappointed by the way the Government has approached this matter. The bill was introduced on 22 June and the Government referred it to a committee on 29 June. That reference was made in the context of—and it might have been the Leader of the House who said this—concerns about constitutional issues. In that context, the Government set the timetable for when the committee would effectively convene and when the report would be tabled in this House. The Government set the timetable knowing full well that this bill would lapse on 2 December.

If the Government was sincere in its approach and its commitment to banning petroleum exploration permit 11 [PEP 11] and ending offshore gas and oil exploration and mining, it would have set a sincere and genuine timetable. But it did not. I introduced the bill. I have worked in other workplaces; I have worked in the law and in courts, and in those workplaces there was something called professional courtesy. Professional courtesy is giving an opponent in circumstances such as this due notice that you intend to move a procedural motion like this one. As the member who introduced the bill, I received 15 minutes' notice that this suspension motion had been sent to the office of the leader, the Whip or whoever it was on my side of the House. It is my private member's bill. The fact that I was not given any notice about this motion is quite frankly discourteous and unprofessional.

The report that was handed down yesterday is very helpful, and I thank the committee secretariat for all its work on it. No doubt it took a long time to put together. It is clear from the report that the legal advice has raised discrete issues about the bill, which amount to a few words. Amendments to address those issues have been drafted. The Government says it needs more time. It has had six months to consider the issues. It has had eight months since the election to do something about them. It has tens of thousands of public servants at its disposal to put to work to deal with the issues. For the Government to say it needs more time is, in my view, disingenuous. The Government proposes to defer the bill to March, but the substantive issue is that the licence holder is progressing seismic surveys and is intent on availing themselves of the privileges and rights they have under their mining exploration licence. By that time, untold damage could be done to marine life through those seismic surveys—and members opposite do not care.

What is even more frustrating is that not one of the Government MPs whose electorates are affected by the PEP 11 survey area is here in the Chamber. They were not on the committee. The three Government members who were on that committee were not affected and their constituents likely did not have significant views on the matter because it did not directly affect them, but those members whose electorates will be affected were not on the committee to have a say. Quite frankly, today's move by the Government can only be seen as political. I will read from the Chair's foreword to the report, which I was quite disappointed with. It states:

In his second reading speech to explain and describe his Private Member's Bill that he was putting forward, the Member for Pittwater made two important declarations about his Bill—that it was driven by politics ...

Nowhere in my second reading speech did the word "politics" appear. Nowhere in my speech is there a reference to the bill being driven by politics. What appeared in my second reading speech was a commitment by the former Government to legislate to ban offshore oil and gas exploration. What appeared in my second reading speech was detail of the environmental devastation that will be wreaked upon our coastline if PEP 11 and offshore gas and oil mining and exploration is allowed to proceed. What appeared in my second reading speech was detailed evidence as to why this bill is important. What appeared in my speech, when the Government sought to refer this matter off to a committee, was detail about all the Labor MPs who supported ending PEP 11. In June 2021 the now Minister for the Environment stated in the Legislative Council:

It is very clear there is strong opposition to the proposed extension of Advent Energy's Petroleum Exploration Permit known as PEP-11. This is a permit that allows offshore drilling for oil and gas in New South Wales. Labor has opposed this federally and our local members have opposed it locally.

Notwithstanding that, members opposite have done absolutely nothing to advance the cause of stopping offshore mining of gas and oil. For them to sit in this Chamber today with their arms folded and seek to put off debate on this bill to March is, quite frankly, unprofessional and incredibly disappointing.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (16:21):** By leave: Today I speak against this motion to suspend standing orders. As a coastal MP who is directly affected by the petroleum exploration permit 11 [PEP 11] permit, I say this is exactly the sort of legislation that needs to be debated.

**Mr Paul Scully:** Blame Scott Morrison, mate. Talk to your mate Scott.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** The member for Wollongong can sit there, chime away and interject as much as he likes, but at the end of the day the now Prime Minister stood at Avoca Beach in my electorate and said that under Labor PEP 11 would be dead. Here we are two years later and the Federal Government has done absolutely nothing. It has burnt \$400 million on a referendum but is not concentrating on PEP 11, which should have been dealt with. It has had two years in Federal government and done nothing.

The member for Pittwater brought a piece of legislation to the House in good faith. It was then kicked off to a committee that was Labor dominated but had not one coastal Labor MP on it. Was the member for Gosford on that committee? No. Was the member for Wyong on that committee? No. Was the member for The Entrance on the committee? No. Was the member for Swansea on the committee? No. Was I allowed to be on the committee? No.

Funnily enough, no Central Coast MP was allowed to be on it. To have the hide to put a committee together with not one coastal MP goes to show the absolute contempt with which this Government treats the coastal residents of New South Wales. There are 365,000 people on the Central Coast. This piece of legislation would protect our pristine offshore areas. As I said before, the Federal Government protested that it would stop PEP 11—it said, "It won't happen under us, we'll kill it"—and yet the Prime Minister has been absolutely silent on this issue for almost two years. The reality is that those opposite were happy to go out when in opposition and stand on every beach and say, "We'll stop this. We'll do whatever we want to do."

**Mr Stephen Kamper:** It was a stunt—

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** It was a stunt, you are right.

**Mr Stephen Kamper:** —by your mate Scotty.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** It was an absolute stunt—and a very poor one—by the now Labor Government. The problem is that every single person on the Central Coast has been misled by the now Prime Minister. What is more, the Premier and the local members said the same thing as well. The reality is that when those opposite have an opportunity to adopt a piece of legislation to provide protection, they squib it. They kick it off to a committee for months and months. They now want to kick the bill off until next year so they do not have to deal with it. The reality is that this Government was totally unprepared. Members opposite had no concept of putting this legislation together in the first place. They kicked it off to a committee because they were caught on the hop. They were too busy focusing on everything other than this issue, which they had campaigned on.

It is totally disingenuous to now say, "It's important we look at this when we come back in March. There are further issues." The people of New South Wales want this bill debated now. If those opposite do not support it, they can simply not vote for it. It is that simple. The debate should come on tomorrow, as it is scheduled to do. Let us have the discussion, and if members opposite do not support it they can then not vote for it. But they should have the guts to do the right thing by walking into this Chamber and debating the issue. As legislators, we are here to debate legislation—not to squib it, kick it off to a committee or delay it through a gutless suspensions motion, which is what is before members today.

Members opposite had the opportunity. Yet again they have failed the test. The member for Pittwater stated that he was prepared to take on all the amendments recommended by the committee. If that is the case, why would those opposite not support this legislation moving forward? It is a golden opportunity to do the right thing. Those opposite should take a bipartisan approach and do what the people of New South Wales want them to do, but they are incapable of doing that. They want to play politics with this issue. They have failed biblically when it comes to negotiating around this issue, beginning with when they gagged debate on the kicking it down to the committee in the first place. They were so scared to have that discussion.

I thank the member for Vacluse, who sat on that stacked committee. She was the only coastal MP allowed to sit on it, which again shows the utter contempt with which those opposite hold the people on the coast of New South Wales, including those in the four Labor electorates on the Central Coast. They have snubbed their nose at those thousands of people and said, "We're going to lie to you and mislead you all the way up to the election, but don't look at that because now we're in government. Don't worry about it, it'll be fine."

They do not have the guts to stand up to the Federal Government. They proved that this week with the billions they lost in road funding. Now they are prepared to put the entire Central Coast region and all of our beaches at risk. Members representing the electorates of Gosford, Wyong, The Entrance and Swansea need to be

here in the Chamber to support debate on this motion. If they do not want to support the bill, they can vote against it. It is not hard. All they have to do is walk into this Chamber tomorrow and do the right and democratic thing. Have the debate and put it on the table. That is what the people of New South Wales elected us to do and that is what they expect us to do every single day we are in this place. Shame on them.

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (16:26):** By leave: I speak against the motion to suspend standing orders. The motion is disappointing. We have a sitting week this week. We have a sitting week next week. We have a reserve week. We then have another sitting week in February. However, members opposite want to suspend standing orders to move debate on a bill all the way to 14 March. I believe that the people elect us to do a job. Sometimes we all have to make tough decisions about whether we are going to vote or not vote for legislation, but at least we are able to get a vote. We have an opportunity for this Parliament to give an up-down vote before the end of the year on the piece of legislation moved by the member for Pittwater. I agree with some of the findings of the committee in its report, particularly two of them. Finding 1 states:

There are serious concerns from the community about potential negative environmental impacts of offshore drilling. Many concerns relate to the impacts of seismic surveying which may be undertaken during the exploration for offshore oil and gas.

Finding 2 states:

There is significant community opposition to offshore oil and gas projects in NSW. As a result, there may be community support for a legislative ban on offshore drilling.

I believe that says it all about the importance of having an up-down vote. I was disappointed that such an important report, which clearly outlines the concern that the community has about offshore drilling, has a picture of offshore drilling on the cover. I would hate to think that this report is about giving a green light to offshore drilling. The Labor Party was once the party of none other than a guy called Richo. Do members remember Graham Richardson?

**Mr Edmond Atalla:** Where's his book?

**Mr MATT CROSS:** Of course, his book. Sadly for the member for Mount Druitt, it is in my office; I do not have it here. Richo was a guy who believed in the environment. He believed in whatever it takes to get pro-environmental policies through, even national park protection. During the 1990 election, Richo believed he could do whatever it took to put the environment at the heart of the Australian Labor Party's election campaign. The Labor Party in New South Wales today is not the party of Richo which had the whatever-it-took attitude. It is so disappointing.

I hate to think that the Labor Party is using delay tactics by not having an up-down vote because it does not believe in making sure that we protect our coastlines. I agree with members. It was extremely disappointing that common sense was not shown—sadly, as we know, common sense is not always that common—and that the committee membership would include members whose electorates would be most impacted by this piece of legislation or, heaven forbid, most impacted if offshore drilling was made legal. The Chair is the member for Cessnock, which I do not believe is a coastal community. I do not believe the member for Camden lives in a coastal community and I do not believe the member for Wollondilly lives in a coastal community. However, the member for Vacluse does.

It is very important. I believe our communities expect that as legislators we have our say. It is sad when it happens that sometimes legislation is not perfect when it comes to the House. This Government already has not put up perfect legislation. What did it do? It took away the rent freeze legislation that even members of Young Labor Left realised was going to increase rents. We are humans. We do not get it right all the time, but our electors expect us to do our job. As I have said, we have three sitting weeks until the end of this year. I do not support the suspension of standing orders.

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (16:32):** By leave: This must be the laziest government in the history of New South Wales. It has got the lightest legislative program in living memory and now when the Coalition has the audacity to introduce sensible legislation in the Chamber, it does everything it can to frustrate it under the fig leaf of some constitutional uncertainty. It is pretty clear that this mob is a branch office of the Albanese Labor Government. Chris Minns and his mates will not stand up to Albo on immigration or infrastructure, and now they will not stand up to Albo on petroleum exploration permit 11 [PEP 11].

Chris Minns and his Government had every opportunity this week to pick up the phone to Albo and say, "Stop gouging New South Wales. Stop ripping billions and billions of dollars out of our infrastructure." They talk the talk but do not walk the walk. We have the extraordinary situation of the member for Gosford cheering on infrastructure being ripped out of her electorate. We talk about housing supply, the housing crisis, housing affordability, rents and prices, which are indeed a grave challenge, especially for young people in New South Wales. But that is a matter of supply and demand. We see Premier Chris Minns not standing up to his mate Albo

on this. Now Labor will not stand up to Albo on PEP 11, because there is a possibility the Commonwealth legislation might override New South Wales legislation. Why would the Government not give it a go? Is it because it will embarrass the Prime Minister in Canberra? Where are the coastal Labor MPs on this? Where are they? They do not want to have the vote against this legislation on them, so they seek to suspend standing orders instead.

**Mr Mark Coure:** Rockdale is here.

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN:** The member for Wollongong is here but I cannot see any other coastal Labor MP. What about the crossbench? This is the chance for the crossbench to walk the walk. The member for Heathcote has just walked into the Chamber. This is the chance for her to stand up for her community and vote against PEP 11. Let us see what she does. Let us see if the crossbench, who talk the talk on environmental protection, side with the Government or whether they walk the walk and protect coastal communities against PEP 11.

There is said to be a constitutional risk, but we have words that can be removed quite easily to eliminate that constitutional risk. If it turns out that the Commonwealth passes legislation or does something legislatively that overrides New South Wales, that is on Albo's shoulders. That is on the shoulders of the mates of Chris Minns. This motion is about protecting Anthony Albanese. It is about not standing up for coastal communities. The Government should be ashamed of gagging this debate and kicking it down the road yet again. The member for Pittwater introduced the bill in June and the Labor Party has kicked it down the road all year. It has had hardly any legislation of its own in the meantime. As we come to the last couple of weeks of sittings for the year, it wants to put this into the never-never because it is all too hard and all too embarrassing for a lazy government that is the branch office of Albanese in Canberra.

**Mr MARK COURE:** I seek leave to make a contribution to the debate.

**Leave not granted.**

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS:** I seek leave to make a contribution to the debate.

**Leave not granted.**

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (16:36):** In reply: Members may well have observed that the Leader of the Opposition made no reference to the merits of the issue. He would be intensely aware of this matter and not just because the former Prime Minister is a fellow Federal member. He would be aware of the same legal advice that the former Government would have received from the Crown Solicitor. As the former Attorney General, he would no doubt know precisely what position the New South Wales Government is in. He would know from his own knowledge and experience as a reputable silk what the constitutional issues are. It is disappointing that a member of his stature bows down to the minions that he sits on that side of the House with and refuses to deal with the substance of the issues. He knows full well that this application is before the Commonwealth-New South Wales Offshore Petroleum Joint Authority, to be determined under Commonwealth legislation. He knows full well that the matter is back before that authority because the former Prime Minister, whom I would describe as an imbecile, who secretly swore himself in as the appropriate Minister, had the decision of that authority refusing the PEP 11 set aside.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** Order! I will start removing members from the Chamber under Standing Order 249A if they continue to interject. The Minister will be heard in silence.

**Mr RON HOENIG:** This matter would have been resolved had the Liberal Party not breached its constitutional, ethical and lawful obligations. They should be embarrassed about the behaviour of former Prime Minister Scott Morrison. That is why we are in this position and why the matter has not been dealt with. While members are bleating about this issue, who is taking the ultimate responsibility for the final decision of the Commonwealth authority which will require the State to make a determination? Not them. I do not know where the Liberal Party has come from. It knows there is a process in place, because the Liberal Party mishandled the PEP 11 application. It knows full well what the Government policy is. It knows that the Government needs to take a particular position to ensure that any decision of the joint authority is not set aside.

The Prime Minister has to ensure that he does not do the stupid things that Scott Morrison did to have the decision set aside. He is being cautious about it, as is the Federal Minister and the New South Wales Minister, to ensure that the people of New South Wales and the coastal communities of New South Wales are properly protected by a proper determination made by an authority. It is pretty clear that that should be the Government's position. For the Opposition to assert that it is being silenced in respect of a bill that has been fixed for debate in Government time where the proposal is that the matter be determined at a date virtually in three more weeks of parliamentary sittings is completely disingenuous.

The only members who are seeking to obtain political capital out of it are members of the Opposition. They are trying to get some sort of political benefit as a result of a proper process that has to be gone through because the Liberal Party and its leaders stuffed up the process in the first place. Members of the Opposition, and the Leader of the Opposition as the State's former Attorney General, know that great care needs to be taken on this matter. As I sat in this Chamber and gave the members of the Opposition a chance to speak to the motion to see whether any of them might address the substance of the matter, I thought that if the people of New South Wales ever had any doubt about whether they made the right decision last March, at least they now know that their view is vindicated. The members of the Opposition have not learnt. When they were thrown out last March, they should have looked at why they were thrown out. The teals are coming for them and they have no defence.

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

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....44  
Noes .....36  
Majority.....8

**AYES**

Aitchison, J	Hagarty, N (teller)	Park, R
Atalla, E	Harris, D	Piper, G
Bali, S	Harrison, J	Quinnell, S
Butler, L	Haylen, J	Saffin, J (teller)
Butler, R	Hoenig, R	Saliba, D
Catley, Y	Holland, M	Scully, P
Cotsis, S	Kaliyanda, C	Stuart, M
Crakanthorp, T	Kamper, S	Tesch, L
Dalton, H	Kirby, W	Vo, T
Davis, D	Li, J	Warren, G
Dib, J	McDermott, H	Washington, K
Donato, P	McGirr, J	Watson, A
Doyle, T	McKeown, K	Whan, S
Finn, J	Mehan, D	Wilkinson, K
Greenwich, A	O'Neill, M	

**NOES**

Amon, R	Kean, M	Shetty, K
Anderson, K	Kemp, M	Singh, G (teller)
Clancy, J	Lane, J	Sloane, K
Cooke, S	Layzell, D	Smith, T
Coure, M	Leong, J	Speakman, M
Cross, M	Marshall, A	Taylor, M
Crouch, A (teller)	Perrottet, D	Thompson, T
Davies, T	Petinos, E	Toole, P
Di Pasqua, S	Preston, R	Ward, G
Hannan, J	Regan, M	Williams, R
Hodges, M	Roberts, A	Williamson, R
James, T	Saunders, D	Wilson, F

**PAIRS**

Car, P	Ayyad, T
Chanthivong, A	Griffin, J
Daley, M	Tuckerman, W
Hornery, S	Provest, G
Minns, C	Henskens, A
Voltz, L	Williams, L

**Motion agreed to.**

*Bills***GREATER CITIES COMMISSION REPEAL BILL 2023****Second Reading Speech****Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (16:50):** As I was saying before I was interrupted, the commission has played an important role in recent years, most notably in relation to developing a strategic vision for the Greater Sydney region. On behalf of the Government, I take this opportunity to thank the commission and its commissioners for their contribution to the State in creating that vision. It has changed the way we think about our cities. I thank the commissioners by name: Acting Chief Commissioner and Eastern Harbour City Commissioner Dr Deborah Dearing, Social Commissioner Ms Natalie Walker, Environment Commissioner Ms Meg McDonald, Economic Commissioner Mr John Lydon, Lower Hunter and Greater Newcastle City Commissioner Mr Matt Endacott, Central Coast City Commissioner the Hon. Robyn Parker, Illawarra-Shoalhaven City Commissioner Ms Jacki Johnson, Central River City Commissioner Mr Peter Poulet and Western Parkland City Commissioner Ms Billie Sankovic. On behalf of the Government and the State, I thank them for their service.

To confront the housing crisis, we must look critically at all aspects of the planning system and ask what is focused on delivery and what is not. Whilst the commission leaves a strong legacy and foundation of research and consultation, it is time to focus all of our resources. It is significant in that regard that the Government's decision to resolve the commission will bring all strategic planning functions under one roof and enable a more coordinated response to emerging planning issues, including the shortage of housing across the State. It will improve the consistency of decision-making and integrated planning outcomes, improve the capacity of the State to facilitate the delivery of housing and infrastructure in both metropolitan and regional areas more efficiently, directly consult with stakeholders and translate that feedback into planning for the future, and remove red tape and improve strategic planning and coordination across the State.

Importantly, the bill removes duplicative functions to simplify the plan-making process without compromising on good planning outcomes. The bill also demonstrates the Government's commitment to removing impediments in the planning system that can delay development assessment time frames, and therefore the delivery of key infrastructure across the State. To address that, the Government has already redirected the bulk of the commission's staff into the Department of Planning and Environment. I reiterate that we have benefited from the consultation and research that the commission has undertaken. That vision will be a foundation for its ongoing work, but we can and should now bring that capability under the new agency, to be established on 1 January 2024. With that work now done, the bill aims at the next logical step of adding more resources focused on delivery while retaining staff to continue working on research and consultation with the secretary.

I turn to the specific provisions of the bill. Schedule 1 to the bill amends the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act to transfer the strategic planning functions of the commission to the planning secretary, as set out in part 3 of the Act. Item [1] makes consequential amendments to the definitions provision of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act by updating or introducing the definitions for "Six Cities Region", "city" and "designated Sydney districts". These changes were required because those terms were either defined under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act by reference to the Greater Cities Commission Act or not defined at all. These definitions provide context for the planning secretary's strategic functions under part 3 of the Act.

Item [2] introduces a new regulation-making power that enables the Governor to make regulations to extend or reduce the size of the Six Cities Region, as and when required. The power to make such a regulation provides the Government with the flexibility its needs to focus strategic planning resources on those parts of the State that require them most. As the strategic planning needs of the State will undoubtedly change over time, the need for flexibility is crucial and will ensure that the Government can respond to those needs as quickly as possible. Items [3] to [7] amend the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act to remove various references to the commission and introduce definitions for "dwelling" and "housing target". The new definitions clarify the meaning of "planning priorities" under the Act. Item [8] transfers responsibility for preparing strategic plans from the commission to the planning secretary. This includes the preparation of both regional strategic plans and district strategic plans under division 3.1 of part 3 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act.

Importantly, the bill does not change the process for making strategic plans and it does not change the content of those plans. It is still a requirement for strategic plans to address, among other things, the basis for strategic planning in the region or district, having regard to economic, social and environmental matters. [*Quorum called for.*]

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

In preparing strategic plans, the planning secretary must still have regard to any environmental planning instrument applying to the region or district, the State disaster mitigation plan and any relevant disaster adaptation plans, as well as any other government policies or plans in force at the time the plan is prepared. At the same time, a district strategic plan prepared for a district within the Six Cities Region must still address the planning priorities, including the number of net additional dwellings required for each local government area within the district for the next five, 10 and 20 years.

The same plan may include a target for development consents to be granted to achieve those additional dwellings. To ensure consistency in the implementation of strategic plans across the State, the bill also provides that a district strategic plan for a district outside the Six Cities Region can also include housing targets for each local government area within the district. Importantly, the bill will make it clear that the publication of housing targets before a strategic district plan has been prepared and published can occur. This enables the Government to set expectations early and work with local councils to deliver on those targets.

Items [9] to [14] and [18] repeal or replace various references to the commission throughout the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act. Where necessary, references to the commission are replaced with "planning secretary". These are all consequential amendments arising from the Government's decision to remove the commission. Items [15] and [16] remove the requirement to consult with the Greater Cities Commission before making an environmental planning instrument. With the repeal of the Greater Cities Commission Act and the removal of the commission, those provisions of the planning Act requiring consultation with the Greater Cities Commission become unnecessary. Item [17] of the bill makes consequential amendments to section 7.31B of the planning Act by clarifying the meaning of "planning priorities". This change was made to ensure consistency with other provisions of the planning Act that refer to those housing targets.

Item [19] of the bill repeals the commission and transfers its rights, assets and liabilities to the Crown. It also abolishes the offices of the Chief Commissioner and city commissioners, as well as all committees established under the Greater Cities Commission Act. Item [19] also includes various savings and transitional provisions consequent to the repeal of the Greater Cities Commission Act. For example, the bill provides that any Act, matter or thing done or omitted to be done before the abolition of the commission, by or in relation to the commission, is taken to have been done or omitted to be done by the planning secretary. It also provides that a reference in a document to "the commission" is to be read as a reference to "the planning secretary". These transitional arrangements will ensure that the important work of the commission can be continued and taken forward by the planning secretary and the department.

Item [20] of the bill inserts schedule 9 into the planning Act. Schedule 9 identifies the Six Cities Region, the cities that make up the Six Cities Region, and the local government areas that comprise the cities. Schedule 9 replicates schedule 1 of the Greater Cities Commission Act without any changes. To be very clear, the bill does not change the land that constitutes the Six Cities Region. Schedule 2 to the bill makes various miscellaneous amendments to other legislation that includes a reference to the Greater Cities Commission Act or the commission. These changes ensure consistency across the statute book and avoid the potential for ambiguity to arise with respect to the interpretation of those instruments. All amendments in schedule 2 to the bill are consequential in nature.

I make it clear that the bill only makes those changes that are necessary to transfer the strategic planning functions of the commission to the planning secretary. The bill does not—in any way—alter those functions in making them the responsibility of the planning secretary. It is time for the Government to push ahead and deliver on its election commitment to reduce red tape, duplication and overlap, and find efficiencies in the planning system, particularly given the challenges facing our State. The bill is a significant step in delivering on the Government's commitment to the people of New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

*Public Interest Debate*

## **DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** I acknowledge the guests of the member for Wakehurst who have joined us today. They are Women and Children First, the Northern Beaches Women's Shelter, the Women's Resilience Centre and the aunt of the member for Wakehurst, former detective sergeant Beth Seedsman. I welcome them all to the debate.

**Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (17:03):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that Saturday 25 November is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and that the sixth annual "Let's end domestic violence" vigil is being held this Friday night outside Customs House from 4.00 p.m. to 5.00 p.m.

- (2) Recognises domestic and family violence remains prevalent within society. Six women were killed across Australia over a 10-day period in October 2023.
- (3) Calls on the New South Wales Government to:
  - (a) consider increasing funding for specialist domestic and family violence services;
  - (b) finalise the New South Wales primary prevention strategy and fund primary prevention services and programs;
  - (c) investigate expanding the Staying Home Leaving Violence program; and
  - (d) work with the Federal Government to create more incentives for private home owners and property investors to rent their properties to victims of domestic violence.

I move the motion to draw attention to the scourge of domestic violence we face in New South Wales and indeed across the country. This is a non-political, bipartisan call to action to eliminate domestic violence full stop. It is timely that we turn our minds to this serious topic. The month of October saw a spike in deaths associated with domestic violence. Recent incidents included the tragic murder of Lilie James, a 21-year-old woman working at St Andrew's Cathedral School, of which members would be all too aware of. Saturday 25 November is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. The sixth annual "Let's end domestic violence" vigil is being held this Friday night outside Customs House, as mentioned, between 4.00 p.m. to 5.00 p.m. I encourage everyone to attend.

The shocking death toll is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to domestic violence. In 2022 over 33,000 domestic violence-related assault incidents were recorded by the NSW Police Force. That is before intimidation, stalking and harassment are included, or the unknowable—but certainly high—amount of unreported abuse. In 2016 an estimated 17 per cent of Australian women aged 18 years and over—or 1.6 million women—had experienced violence by a partner known to them since the age of 15 years. In the five years to December 2021, 43 per cent of all New South Wales murders were related to domestic violence. These are shocking figures from across our State—rural, regional and metro. But statistics cannot communicate the weight of the human suffering caused by domestic violence, which is hiding in plain sight in every single electorate across this State. It is only when you hear individual stories and the experiences of police and specialist domestic violence providers on the ground that you come to understand the gravity and urgency of this crisis.

My interest in the topic comes from my exposure to and admiration for the work of specialist domestic violence services on the northern beaches, through the many dedicated organisations that operate cooperatively as the Northern Beaches Domestic Violence Network. I welcome leaders from that network here today. I also acknowledge those joining us online, CEO Delia Donovan and her staff at Domestic Violence NSW, which is the peak body for specialist domestic and family violence services in New South Wales. Service providers tell me that women's refuges—where women and children go to escape violent households—are almost always full. Women and Children First, for example, who service northern Sydney, are funded to support 208 women per year but last financial year assisted 836. Just four months into the 2024 financial year and they have already assisted 220 women. This does not include the Northern Beaches Women's Shelter, which is down the road.

In listening to service providers, I hear devastating stories of women being brutally physically and psychologically abused, often for years and years. The plight of children in these circumstances breaks one's heart. When they leave, they face the enormous practical and emotional challenges of finding accommodation, navigating the criminal justice system and rebuilding their lives when the cost of living is sky high. This is not how we should treat women or children in modern Australia. The prevalence of domestic violence is a national disgrace, but being outraged is not enough. Federal and State governments must deliver solutions commensurate with the scale of the problem. Our specialist domestic and family violence services are critically underfunded. The New South Wales Government—in addition to the Federal Government—needs to step up.

Stopping domestic violence starts by raising our kids in a culture that supports healthy, respectful relationships and respect for women. This is a shared task for all parents, teachers and adult role models. Most importantly, this involves leading by example. This includes the language and behaviour we use in Parliament. Clearly the State has a crucial role to play in eliminating domestic violence. A comprehensive response must address all stages outlined in the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children: prevention, early intervention, response, and recovery and healing.

The New South Wales Government is yet to release the standalone Primary Prevention Strategy, due by the end of 2023. Today I am calling on the Government to finalise the strategy and also to commit to providing funding to primary prevention services and programs across New South Wales. Domestic Violence NSW has recently called for a \$20 million investment for domestic and family violence prevention initiatives. Effective support at the time of crisis directly saves lives. I welcome the Core and Cluster Program, which is delivering additional secure housing and specialist support, including on the northern beaches. Tranche 2 of the program has recently been open for applications, and I note the concern among the sector about how successful applicants are

being decided. This significant investment should go to specialist domestic and family violence services. I have requested a meeting with the Minister to discuss this more.

I take a moment to talk here about the Staying Home Leaving Violence program run by the NSW Department of Communities and Justice. The program flips the paradigm that the victim must leave the family home to escape abuse by working in cooperation with the police to remove the perpetrator. This means the woman can stay in her home and maintain connections to schools, family and community. Surely that is the best outcome. The success of this program has been widely acknowledged, including as recently as last week when it received an honourable mention in the Premier's Awards for Excellence in service delivery. Unfortunately, the Staying Home Leaving Violence program only operates in some parts of the State. I have added my voice to calls to have this transformational program expanded, including in northern Sydney. That is why I mention it specifically in today's debate. If refuges are full and if finding affordable rentals is next to impossible—as it is on the beaches and elsewhere in Sydney and across the regions—then what are the options for women suffering in oppressive, dangerous relations?

The Staying Home Leaving Violence program offers genuine and better pathways that should be accessible for all women and children. For victims to recover and heal, they need security. Long-term housing is key to that. There is real scope for more creativity in how we incentivise private home owners and property investors to preferentially rent properties to women fleeing domestic violence. I urge the Government to work with the Federal Government to consider tax incentives that will facilitate that. We must all step up to fix domestic violence. This is a crisis. Members of Parliament have an important role to play in making sure constituents know where to get support, advocating for this need to be met in our communities and holding the Government to account. That is what I hope to do today with this public interest debate.

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (17:10):** I speak in support of the public interest debate moved by the member for Wakehurst. I acknowledge the member's passion in this particular area. I have had multiple discussions with him, and they have been good discussions. I thank him for his advocacy. I recognise the hard work of the people in the gallery and thank them for the work that they do in keeping victim-survivors safe and advocating for them. I know that it is incredibly hard work. We need to make sure that the way that we deal with domestic violence is flipped on its head. Only by doing that will we combat domestic and family violence.

I also thank the member for raising the profile of two key events that are fast approaching. The "Let's end domestic violence" vigil outside Customs House is being held this Friday and the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women is being held this Saturday 25 November, which signifies the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, an international way of raising this issue and making sure that people have domestic, family and sexual violence at the front of their minds for at least 16 days every year. I think it should be every moment of every day.

It is timely to be speaking about how we can eliminate domestic, family and sexual violence from our communities. The New South Wales Government is tackling this scourge in multiple ways. The word "scourge" is used fairly often, but I would like to find a word that is much stronger. The Government is tackling it by keeping victim-survivors safe from the threat of violence and by changing the behaviour of perpetrators and holding them accountable. The Attorney General's second reading speech in this place on the Crimes (High Risk Offenders) Act noted the change to ensure that strangulation is considered to be a serious violent offence and puts serious non-fatal strangulation in the same category as murder, manslaughter and intentionally inflicting grievous bodily harm. Perpetrators serving a period of imprisonment for serious non-fatal strangulation may continue to be detained or monitored even after their sentence has been served. We know that prior attempted, non-lethal strangulation is one of the strongest predictors of subsequent homicide, increasing the risk by 700 per cent.

Too many lives have been lost to domestic violence. As the member for Wakehurst's motion points out, six women across Australia were killed in a 10-day period last month. That is a deeply disturbing and confronting number. To shift those numbers, we need to increase the focus on prevention. Prevention programs are key to changing the violent behaviour of perpetrators and ending the cycle of violence. To do that, there are programs like the Tackling Violence program, the Make No Doubt program, a series of men's behaviour change programs, and engagement with schools through the curriculum.

Importantly, as the member for Wakehurst raised, we are working on the New South Wales primary prevention strategy, which is currently undergoing consultation with stakeholders. This Government is committed to finalising and releasing that strategy. We need to make sure that it is well consulted and that it has the support of people who are working in the sector. The member's motion also refers to ways of keeping victims safe from perpetrators. Everyone deserves to feel safe and secure. This Government is investing heavily to ensure victim-survivors can live safely. We are delivering Core and Cluster refuges for victim-survivors and children

fleeing violence. The first two tranches of this program are underway, with 39 projects under contract. Once all three tranches are fully delivered, they will support more than 2,900 women and children fleeing domestic and family violence every year.

We are also focusing on our response to ensure that all Government systems and programs are working in harmony. A few weeks ago, I announced that we are creating the first standalone New South Wales Women's Safety Commissioner, and Dr Hannah Tonkin has recently been appointed. She will be at the heart of our response to making sure that it is a whole-of-government response. I thank the member for bringing this debate to the House and I look forward to continuing this important conversation.

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (17:15):** I thank the member for Wakehurst for bringing this debate to the Chamber. I also acknowledge the visitors in the gallery who are listening with intent. Domestic violence is an ongoing issue that has many tentacles. I know that the previous Liberal-Nationals Government was focused on improving the lives of women who, through no fault of their own, were subjected to the scourge of domestic violence. The statistics are disturbing. As of 31 October 2023, 58 women have been killed in domestic violence incidents this year. That means one woman was killed every 5.25 days. Domestic and family violence also costs the economy \$22 billion per year. Women who experience domestic and family violence are also more likely to have lower incomes and fragmented work histories, and be employed in part-time or casual work.

The previous Liberal-Nationals Government introduced the first standalone offence for coercive control in the country. That was the result of extensive consultation and a public exposure draft that received almost 200 submissions. The Leader of the Opposition, Mark Speakman, in his capacity as Attorney General at the time, spearheaded the bill to criminalise coercive control in intimate partner relationships. I acknowledge the contribution from the Hon. Natalie Ward in the upper House, who was the domestic violence Minister at the time, and the current domestic violence Minister in the Chamber.

Coercive control is a form of domestic abuse that involves patterns of behaviour that have the cumulative effect of denying victim-survivors their autonomy and independence. It is a proven precursor to domestic violence deaths. Our community has grieved with the families of too many domestic violence homicide victims. The perpetrators of domestic violence use this insidious behaviour as a means of control over their victims, which can include controlling behaviour, denying access to friends, family or financial resources, and even the abuse of pets and animals. With the continued increase in domestic violence, continued and increased support from the Government is essential. I support the push from the member for Wakehurst for increased funding for specialist domestic and family violence services.

**Ms Jenny Leong:** Mr Temporary Speaker, may I suggest that we stop the clock for a minute?

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** The Clerk will stop the clock.

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON:** Thank you, Mr Temporary Speaker.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** Take your time.

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON:** I am feeling the love in the room, Mr Temporary Speaker. In Hawkesbury a number of local organisations support those who are subjected to domestic violence. These include the Women's Cottage, Strong Nation Community Services, Link Wentworth, and Nureen Hawkesbury Women's Accommodation and Support. There are also many other organisations that assist victims, such as Lifeline, the RESPECT national helpline, women's crisis line and Relationships Australia. It is a well-known fact that in times of financial hardship the rate of domestic violence increases. The cost-of-living crisis, which is currently afflicting the Australian population, only serves to exacerbate the circumstances under which domestic violence raises its ugly head.

The previous Liberal-Nationals Government assisted vulnerable individuals by supporting programs that help victims stay in their own home, removing the offender, not the victim; providing paid leave for victims—another initiative introduced by the previous Coalition Government—and committing an additional \$69.6 million in its last budget for services that support victim-survivors of domestic and family violence. In fact, the 2021-22 budget invested \$204.9 million in specialist domestic and family violence services. The track record of the Coalition Government must be matched by this Government. I know we all want to work together on this issue. I know we all want to find a solution. The fact is that a gentleman came into this Chamber and introduced this public interest debate, and we had a conversation before he did so.

There is an obvious difference in physicality between the member for Wakehurst and me. There is an obvious awareness of frailty and dominance and the impact that sometimes has on people who have perhaps been subjected to this type of situation in the past. It stays with them forever. They cannot close the door on that. I thank

the member for Wakehurst for shining a light on such an important issue in this State with today's public interest debate.

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (17:21):** I also acknowledge the member for Wakehurst for bringing this public interest debate to this place. Domestic violence is really domestic terrorism. That is what it is for those who have been abused. In 2018 I studied and researched for two years to bring to this place a bill to criminalise coercive control. After two years, I finally brought a bill to this place only for it to be knocked over by those opposite because of "unintended consequences". The then Attorney General, the member for Cronulla and now Opposition leader, advised me in conversation that he did not have an appetite to criminalise coercive control in New South Wales. It was a very good, comprehensive, well-researched bill but those opposite decided they would not support it. Instead, the Opposition watered down the bill following a joint select committee inquiry—which I was a part of—that made six findings and 23 recommendations.

Since 2020, not one of those findings or recommendations was implemented by those opposite and no extra funding was given to any services anywhere in New South Wales. The committee's report was put in a drawer, the drawer was shut and that is where it stayed. I will table the report again this afternoon for those opposite to have another look at it. I believe we need to strengthen existing coercive control legislation. We need mandatory sentencing. We need to ensure that the perpetrators are, in fact, removed from homes. Why are women and children being removed from their family home? Why are children taken out of their schools away from their friends and their teachers and moved to a foreign place where they know nobody? We must change that. We must ensure the perpetrator is removed and is not allowed near those women or children until the perpetrator has gone through the court system or received treatment.

I spoke to hundreds and hundreds of women when I was researching my bill. I looked at best practice in every single Commonwealth country I could. I looked at the Scottish model, which was the gold standard at the time. We had the opportunity to do the same in New South Wales. What did we get instead? We got a watered-down version with no mandatory sentencing, good legislation with no teeth and no extra funding. Since we came to government—and it has been only eight months—we have doubled the funding for every women's centre across New South Wales, and it will be recurrent funding. That was the first important step we took as a responsible government, and it was appropriate.

In addition, I have been working with Sally Stevenson from the Illawarra Women's Health Centre on the first publicly funded trauma recovery centre not just in New South Wales or Australia but in the world. That is happening now. We have the site. The centre is being built, and it is set to open within the next few months. This is a model that we can roll out across New South Wales and across Australia. It is a one-stop shop where victims and survivors can get the treatment they need and where their children can get the treatment they deserve. That is appropriate. In 2023 that should be happening across New South Wales. I salute and thank Sally and her team for their hard work. It did not just happen; it took five to six years of hard work, but we got there because we badgered government not only in New South Wales but also federally for a \$25 million grant. It can be done.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** The member for Shellharbour sought to table a document. Does she wish to lay it upon the table of the House for the benefit of members or does she wish to seek leave to table it formally?

**Ms Anna Watson:** I will lay it on the table of the House.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** Thank you. I call the member for Cootamundra.

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (17:27):** I thank the member for Wakehurst for bringing this motion to the House today. No-one should live their life in fear, but victims of domestic and family violence face that reality on a daily basis. It is not limited to one group, culture, gender or sexuality. It can affect family members and intimate partners across our communities, cause physical and psychological damage and intergenerational violence and, in some cases, contribute to homelessness. It is an insidious cancer on our society, infecting our social fabric by disguising itself in a way that can make it hard for outsiders to detect and for victims to prove. Physical abuse is often the most visible form, but domestic and family violence has many guises, including emotional, psychological, financial, sexual, social, verbal, spiritual, elder and child abuse.

As a society, we have come a long way when it comes to shining a light on this issue, but there is always more to be done. I am certainly pleased to see the New South Wales Labor Government taking the same zero-tolerance approach as the previous Government. The former Coalition Government certainly understood the need for ongoing and eternal vigilance in this space, and our work sent a very strong message that enough is enough. In October 2021 Premier Dominic Perrottet committed \$484.3 million, the single largest investment in tackling domestic and family violence in the State's history.

I was a member of the Joint Select Committee on Coercive Control established by the previous Government at the direction of the former Attorney General and now Leader of the Opposition. Coercive control is complex and sinister and causes untold harm for its victims. Coercive control is a form of domestic abuse that involves patterns of behaviour that have the cumulative effect of denying victim-survivors their autonomy and independence. What I heard as a member of that committee was confronting. It triggered in me a broad range of emotions, from sadness to sheer outrage, to know that a person can inflict such torture on another human being. My feelings soon turned to respect for the brave witnesses who shared their stories with us in the hope of making life better for others. It is only through having those conversations and bringing the issue into the daylight that we expose the perpetrators and free the victims from their cycle of violence.

One of the victim's stories we heard was Sam's. When Sam went to bed at night, her partner would secretly put an electronic sound device under the house so that she would hear noises like constant knocking, ringing and even a baby crying. When she asked her partner about it, he called her crazy. Sam suffered severe paranoia and anxiety as a result of the severe psychological abuse. Another form of coercive control is financial dependence. Coercive and controlling behaviours, like limiting a partner's income, not only cut victims off from their support networks but also make it much harder for victims to leave abusive relationships. During the inquiry process, we heard another victim Talia's story. Talia was financially independent before she met her partner. Before long, her partner convinced Talia to quit her job and forbade her from working altogether, making her financially dependent on him and unable to leave.

I was proud to be a member of that committee and its work, which helped inform the measures the previous Coalition Government undertook to stamp out this scourge. In addition to the investment I mentioned earlier, we introduced landmark law on coercive control, established the "right to ask" scheme and expanded the First Home Buyer Choice scheme to women leaving a domestic violence situation. This Saturday 25 November is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, and it is a timely reminder that we all have a role to play in stamping out domestic and family violence. Coercive control is a factor of and a red flag for horrific and preventable atrocities. I call on the Government to remain eternally vigilant in the fight against this menace.

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (17:32):** I speak in favour of the public interest debate motion moved by the member for Wakehurst. What a good man he is to move the motion. We are all proud of that. Sadly, one woman is battered every nine seconds. I will remain silent for the next nine seconds so that members can think about the one woman who is being battered right now—in nine seconds there will be another. Thank you. If that is not enough, there is always, as members know, the sexual and emotional violence that many people suffer. It is not always as obvious as a black eye and it is often very hidden. I still remember my daughter returning home after leaving a friend's place. When she left, her friend was putting in a mouthguard and putting on multiple jumpers. When my daughter asked why, she said that she knew that she was going to be beaten up that night and that, if she put multiple jumpers on, the bruises would not show so much.

When I talked to the convenor of the Camden-Wollondilly Domestic Violence Committee in my electorate—that wonderful and amazing Tanya Whitehouse—I was horrified to hear that the Macarthur Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service receives the highest referrals in all of New South Wales from police for domestic violence incidents they attend every month. It is almost always the highest receiver in the entire State of the serious threat matters—the women most at risk. If we are not the first, we are second or third—it is not a very proud place to put ourselves. The statistics in Macarthur have never decreased and there is not enough funding to cover the service's workload. It has extra workers funded through alternative means, not through government funding.

The alternative funding is not ongoing and the workload is horrendous. Yet the service never has a waiting list because it never turns anyone away; somehow it manages. Other domestic violence services at some point throughout the year, or on several occasions, will have a waiting list and will not accept referrals, but the Macarthur service always finds a space. It is really interesting being an Independent member in this House. I do not want to particularly hear about what the political parties have done before. I know they have all worked hard on this issue before, but I look forward to working together on a solution. I think we all have that in our hearts. We can speak out and educate, but the most positive action we can take for those suffering is to enhance those women's ability to get into stable housing—as a start. This is a wonderful public interest debate.

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (17:35):** The Greens support the public interest debate motion on this critical issue and I thank the member for Wakehurst for moving it before the House. Every woman has a fundamental right to feel safe and be free from violence, whether she is at home, at work or walking alone at night. But we know that, for many women across New South Wales and Australia, that is not their reality. As many of the other members have acknowledged already, as of Friday last week 49 women have been killed in Australia this year. That is one woman killed every five days. Of those women, 23 were allegedly killed by a male intimate or ex-intimate partner.

Those horrific numbers should drive us to urgent action, but we are yet to see the sort of investment needed in frontline domestic violence services in this State. The recent budget does not reflect the gravity of the situation faced by women experiencing domestic and family violence in New South Wales. While there is heavy investment in things like more police on our streets, there seems to be a reluctance to put sufficient ongoing funding behind evidence-based programs that we know work and behind initiatives that women in our community desperately need. There has been a failure over many years to recognise that we are facing a crisis of men's violence against women. As a mother, I do not want my daughter or my sons to grow up in a world where one woman is being murdered by a man every five days. It is horrifying and unacceptable, and we must do better.

If we are to turn this tide and work to end men's violence against women, then we must start by investing funding to support evidence-based programs and initiatives that help those on the front line and prevent future violence. The calls from the member for Wakehurst to consider increasing funding for specialist domestic violence services should be supported. In particular I call on the Government to urgently increase funding for specialist women's legal services and community legal centres across New South Wales to meet the multiple and complex needs of women and children experiencing violence, including services targeted specifically towards First Nations women; women living in regional, rural and remote areas; as well as women in prison. That should be done as a matter of priority.

We must also ensure that funding is available to help guarantee access in all regions to courts that have specialist judicial officers and prosecutors; provide regular domestic and family violence and abuse training for judicial officers, prosecutors, lawyers and registrars; provide legal and non-legal support for victim-survivors; and make arrangements to enhance the safety of victim-survivors. Those frontline services require significant investment from the Government. We need money to ensure that they are being provided across the State and to ensure that we have trained staff to deliver that frontline support.

The proposal to investigate expanding the Staying Home Leaving Violence program is well overdue. The former Government should have actioned it long ago. I call on the current Government to fully integrate the Staying Home Leaving Violence program with the Safer Pathway reform statewide to ensure that every woman and child who is experiencing domestic and family violence and abuse is given the option and support to stay in their home safely, including being given support with safety planning, improving home security, help in managing finances, support for children and help with legal processes. That is the bare minimum we should be doing in the face of this crisis. I hope to see all members support urgent action on this issue, and I am sure—as we have heard across multiple parties—that everyone is taking this seriously. But the program needs funding if it is to continue to do this important work. With one woman being killed by a man every five days, this should be treated as the urgent emergency we know it is. We cannot continue as we are; we must act now.

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley) (17:39):** By leave: I have been quickly changing my speech because the member for Hawkesbury's remarks just a moment ago encouraged me to tell members a little bit about why a six foot five male who does not feel physically challenged would be standing here talking about domestic violence. There are three main points. Firstly, Kempsey as a local government area has the second highest prevalence of domestic violence in New South Wales. Secondly, this morning a friend of mine spent 40 minutes on the phone to me because she is worried about the next date of her court case. She is concerned that her kids may no longer be with us. Thirdly, as a health professional I have experienced—infrequently, thankfully—women coming into my room, seeing the physical presence of me, realising that the door was closing and then recoiling. I do not think I am that abhorrent—I would like to cheekily think I am a Picasso—but time and time again the response of someone that cannot deal with something in their past is to react to my physical presence. That alone makes me want to speak today.

As we cast our thoughts towards the solemn observance of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, our hearts are heavy with the weight of duty and resolve. This Friday, as the dusk unfurls its crimson shroud over Customs House, many Australians from around the country, including from my electorate of Oxley, will stand in unity as we look to put an end to domestic violence. The numbers from the most recent BOCSAR statistics tell a story that compels us to listen. Last year Kempsey experienced 295 domestic violence related assaults. In Port Macquarie-Hastings, an area I represent together with the member for Port Macquarie, there were 382 assaults. These are small communities, but they are not small numbers. Those figures jump out at me, as each one is a plea for help and a confirmation that we must do more.

The 2013 Australian Bureau of Statistics Personal Safety Survey shows that 21 per cent of women living outside the capital cities, compared with 15 per cent of women living in capital cities, have experienced violence from an intimate partner after the age of 15. Although the trends in my community from 2018 to 2022 that I have described are mostly stable, those terrible statistics show that Nambucca and Port Macquarie-Hastings experienced a 9 per cent increase over that period. With the amount of awareness, funding and programs directed

to domestic violence year on year, that is not the statistic we should be seeing. It is one thing for the numbers to remain stable; it is heartbreaking to see them go up when we as a country need to see zero.

We need to dig deeper and examine the social causes that contribute to those disturbing statistics. Drug and alcohol abuse is a common denominator among domestic violence offenders. Accessibility to drug and alcohol rehab centres is insufficient in regional communities, and appropriate housing for men released on parole is not generally available. Men being released back into the community often causes their victims to pack up and flee for their own safety. The New South Wales Government has a duty to extend its protective services to towns and villages in regional and rural New South Wales. The women of Oxley, and indeed all women, deserve nothing less than a guarantee of safety and support. It is time we translated our commitments into concrete actions that reduce violence in regional communities and protect the women who need it the most.

To this end, the member for Wakehurst is correct. We must enhance specialist services across the State, especially in regional communities. The issue needs to be resourced within the police force, but also within the health and community services teams that are often crucial in providing the first response and support to escape toxic situations for women faced with these situations. We need more frontline workers trained and equipped with the skills and necessary understanding to deal with the complexities of domestic violence. Women's refuges in regional areas are under huge pressure. They cannot cope with the demands of women made homeless by their need to escape from a violent partner.

Financial pressures and high housing costs mean that many women suffer in silence, too scared to leave their homes for fear of having to sleep in their cars. To this end, I call on the Government to invest further in affordable housing solutions in regional and rural New South Wales. The lack of safe and available housing options can force victims to choose between abuse and homelessness or, in the regions, sometimes, having to move towns. We can and must do better than this. By fostering partnerships with the private sector and community housing providers, we can increase the availability of temporary and permanent housing solutions. My community wants this and I, as the member for Oxley, certainly say "Yes, please", in my backyard.

In closing, I reiterate that while we reflect on these statistics, we must always remember that behind each number is a human face and a person whose life has been irrevocably changed. As the member for Oxley, I stand here not just to speak but to call for action. I commend the member for Wakehurst for this important public interest debate, and I urge my colleagues and the Government to join this fight to do better. There is no place for any form of violence against women, full stop.

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (17:45):** By leave: I thank members for granting me leave. I was unprepared to deliver an address today, being on House duty, so I have some handwritten notes. It is such an important issue, and I commend the member for Wakehurst for his motion. I thank all the members who have contributed to the debate today. I particularly want to recognise the Minister for Women, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. We have had very emotional presentations from members on this issue. I gave my inaugural speech approximately 18 months ago, in which I referenced personal experience. My professional career has been in women's health for more than 30 years. A doctor cannot experience women's health care without acknowledging the effects of physical and psychological coercion and trauma on women. It affects their reproductive decisions, their general gynaecological care, their pregnancies and their births.

I want to briefly describe what it is like to grow up living with domestic violence. I grew up in a home with alcohol-induced violence. There was verbal abuse, coercion, broken plates and drawn knives in the kitchen. My mother experienced black eyes and as a child going to bed I had the blankets pulled over my head. The last straw was arriving home in a Morris 1100—if anyone can remember that car, back in the sixties and seventies—to find a shooting target on the garage door. In retrospect, I did not realise how close our family was to murder or to more serious injury. But in those days, where were the police? Where were the domestic violence services? They did not exist. It has had a generational effect. Personally, there is trauma that I deal with, and I know it led my late brother to alcoholism, mental health issues and homelessness. We lost him prematurely.

I cannot speak more strongly about the need for support for women for domestic violence and sexual assault. I know it is a bipartisan issue. It is not a gender issue. We have had two male members who are six foot four or six foot five stand up, and I commend them both for their contributions. It is something that affects us all and can affect us all. It can affect our children, and it affects our women. I know that both sides of politics will be united in trying to contribute to the development of improved resources for women experiencing domestic violence, and to the zero-tolerance approach that we have to have towards this terrible condition.

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (17:48):** By leave: I make a brief contribution to this important debate. I wholeheartedly support the proposition that we need to do much more about family, domestic and sexual violence. This morning I had coffee with an old friend, who described the challenging situation with her former husband. It has not become violent yet, but there is a lot of verbal abuse involving the terms of their separation

and what to do with their family home. She described verbal abuse over the phone and verbal abuse towards their kids. As she was talking, I felt a fear come up in me that the situation could escalate into something unexpected, because we see it so often. It has not yet crossed the threshold into physical violence, but there is verbal abuse over the phone. As members think about this issue, I ask what mechanisms we can put in place to offer advice and to protect people and victims as a situation escalates and before it goes beyond the point of no return.

In my electorate of Strathfield some 30 per cent of the residents are of Chinese background, 20 per cent are of Indian background and 3 per cent to 4 per cent are of Korean background. We know that family, domestic and sexual violence occurs in many migrant communities. However, it is difficult for people to talk about it because there are a lot of cultural barriers. It is considered a cultural taboo and something shameful, so people just do not talk about it. Even though there may be services available, people are not comfortable seeking out support.

I do not have a solution to this. I do not know how we create a safe and comfortable environment that is culturally and linguistically appropriate for women and victims from diverse backgrounds to seek support—and perhaps to even understand that they need support in the first place because the behaviour they are experiencing is not acceptable. Perhaps in the cultures they come from there is a different understanding of this sort of behaviour than we have in Australia. As members think about this issue, I encourage us to consider not only the escalation of the behaviour from its root causes but also how we make sure that people from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds can be included in our thinking around the solutions.

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater) (17:52):** By leave: I thank the member for Wakehurst for bringing this public interest debate forward this afternoon and thank all members for their contributions. Many members have different contexts and approaches to this topic. All of them are equally valuable and add to the melting pot of solutions to this scourge in our society. I pay tribute to those in the gallery today, many from the northern beaches community, who I know have deeply held convictions on this issue and how we go about resolving it.

I come at this from the context of my experience as a family divorce lawyer before I entered this place. Sadly, that is the wrong end of this scourge to be involved in. People come to you at their most broken and at their worst during their most difficult moments in life. However, one of the joys of that role is helping those people get back on their feet, get out the door and on the way to being their best self. I will tell members a story about a client that I had. It is an example that is, despairingly, all too common.

The client was an individual lady who had been in a 30-year marriage and was subjected to the most horrendous and horrific coercive control over many decades. She slept behind a locked door every night, cuddling her diary in her handbag underneath her. She was scared of what her partner might do to her if he read what she had been up to, saw where she had been going or found the receipts for things she might have bought. She was given a cash allowance each week and could not spend beyond that. She came to me and my firm as a recently separated individual after finding her partner in a pool of blood and faeces at the bottom of the stairs one morning. He was okay, but she decided she had had enough. When she came to us she did not know how to use an ATM. She did not know how to use a bank card. She did not know how to use a mobile phone effectively. She did not know how to do many of the things that all of us take for granted.

These stories are all too often hidden beneath the civilised society we find ourselves in, where people put on a facade as they go about their day-to-day lives. But the more we talk about this issue and shed light on a dark situation, the more people will appreciate the problem and the more we can turn our minds to fixing the issue. For me, one of the biggest things we can do comes down to education. The more we tell stories such as those that members in this Chamber have spoken about today—whether from a culturally diverse background or otherwise—and expose our young men and women to these tragedies, the more they will appreciate it is not normal and not okay.

I wholeheartedly support the motion. As government commits resources and we continue to educate young people about this, those young people will make the difference tomorrow. So often we see that change starts with our young people coming through the education system into university. We have seen so many social changes come through them. It will not be the older generations that lead this change. If we can instil within our young people through our school system that this behaviour is not acceptable—that there is a proper and appropriate way to treat people, talk about people and conduct yourself towards people, be they the same sex or another gender—to me that will be the start of the journey towards ensuring that we do not just talk about the number of people who have been killed by an intimate partner but about the other of issues the day.

We must ensure this will be an issue of the past and not one of the future. I commend the motion to the House and thank the House for its indulgence in giving me leave to speak to it. I implore all members to continue to talk about this issue in their communities, with their loved ones and with the schools that they visit as they go about their duties as representatives of their communities. I thank the House.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** I call the member for Wakehurst in reply.

**Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (17:57):** In reply: Thank you, Temporary Speaker. I am glad you are presiding over my first public interest debate; it is an honour. I was not prepared to be choked up and a little bit teary during this debate. However, I should have been, given that my wife said to me today that domestic violence is almost like cancer: It has probably touched everyone in this House in some way. Today members have heard some stories and experiences being shared. I thank all members who contributed to today's public interest debate. We need as many champions as possible in Parliament working to eliminate domestic and family violence. We have only touched the sides of this crisis in today's debate. We could all share so many more statistics and stories.

Personally, I thank the Minister for Women for her contribution, as well as her awesome staff members for their briefing and for working with me and my equally awesome staff on this debate. I thank her for what she introduced today in the Parliament, the announcements that have been made and the appointment of the women's commissioner. I also thank the members representing the electorates of Shellharbour, Balmain and Wollondilly. I thank the member for Oxley—I really appreciated his support. The member for Cootamundra was amazing. I say to the member for Hawkesbury and the member for Bega that they blow me away. "Brave" does not even begin to articulate how I think about both of them. I certainly did not expect that. We have had a response from the Government today. The footprint from the Staying Home Leaving Violence program is not to be revisited until 2025. It is no surprise that I do not accept that and will continue to advocate on that. It appears it has maximum bang for buck, as we have heard, and I will continue to push hard for that.

I thank the Opposition and acknowledge the work of the previous Government, which has set a solid foundation for the current Government. I urge it to continue to engage constructively in a bipartisan way, because politics and ego has zero place on this horrific topic that affects so many people. I particularly thank our regional and rural MPs and appreciate the emphasis on those areas, particularly the remarks by the member for Oxley. Based on its announcements today, the current Government is committed to dealing with this issue. We can do more and we will do more.

So much more needs to be done and we have three and a half years together to do it. We raise money through fundraisers—walks, fun runs and the like. We are in Parliament so we can take action. We can be serious and get it done. Let us work together on this. It is important to appreciate the harrowing, gritty reality of domestic violence and not to get lost in the sanitised language of plans, policies, programs and funding buckets. Lives are being lost and destroyed at an unacceptable rate from a preventable cause. Frankly, it is devastating. We can and must do more. Let us not forget our police. Recently the commissioner said the majority of their work is now domestic violence related. How on earth is that happening? We need to support them.

Finally, I thank everyone who is in attendance in the gallery today who came to show their support. I want to name each of them, but time does not permit it. I will always have their back and I am in complete awe of what they do. I am determined to do all of them out of job. There is no one solution, but it is an abhorrent, invasive crime that we must combat. If I do them out of a job, it will mean that we will have eliminated violence against women and children.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

### *Bills*

## **STRATA LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2023**

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (18:02):** I lead for the Opposition on the Strata Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. The Liberal-Nationals welcome the reforms and support the bill. The Coalition left a strong reforming legacy which has a robust regulatory framework that ensures that strata schemes in New South Wales are sustainable, well managed and broadly working for owners. Members may recall the major reforms to strata law enacted by the Coalition in 2015. In a sense, there is always more to do in strata. The 2021 Statutory Review of the Strata Schemes Development Act 2015 and Strata Schemes Management Act 2015 confirmed the Coalition reform is working well and the framework remains appropriate.

Acknowledging the shifting realities of living, including the increased trend towards strata living since 2015, the review made 139 recommendations to better realise the objectives and intent of those reforms. The reform process that is outlined in the bill before us was initiated under the Coalition in its statutory review for

which its members consulted widely with stakeholders to receive feedback on how strata schemes are operating. These are complex reforms and we were taking the time to get them right. The Labor Government is building on the Coalition's work it carried out on the strata review recommendations when it was in government. Those who own or live in strata properties need laws that keep pace with increasing development, population and the accelerating move towards strata and apartment living. The current expectation is that by 2040 in excess of 50 per cent of people living in Greater Sydney will do so in a strata property. It is a significant statistic and highlights the importance of getting the strata framework right and working for both home owners and occupiers.

I now make some brief remarks on some of the key proposals of the bill. The first is strata renewal schemes. We all know that the solution to the current housing crisis is to boost supply. To do this we must facilitate growth in housing and renew our existing stock. The former Coalition Government's strata renewal process commenced in 2016 and introduced a method to secure urban renewal. It was a sound reform that took a democratic approach to empowering strata owners to collectively sell or redevelop their lot in cases where not every owner agreed with that course. We built in strong protections, and checks and balances for the minority owners in such schemes to secure fairness and transparency for all involved.

That was a well-defined process, requiring at least 75 per cent support and the Land and Environment Court having final consideration and approval over any renewal plan. Unfortunately, since then some instances have come to light where unscrupulous developers and other actors, sometimes in bad faith, have purchased properties within a building and exploited those protections to prevent rival developers from developing the property, despite other owners supporting its redevelopment. The bill increases disclosure requirements to enhance transparency around conflicts of interests. It also enhances the Land and Environment Court's ability to address the behaviour of owners who are acting unreasonably or not in good faith. The Opposition supports the measures in the bill to uphold the original intent of our reforms so that they realise their full potential to deliver urban renewal and ease housing constraints. We note that strong protections for minority interests will continue to remain in place.

I will move to pets in strata schemes. The Coalition Government passed reforms in 2021 that relate to keeping pets in strata properties. In 2020, in a highly publicised case before the New South Wales Civil and Administrative Tribunal, later affirmed by the Court of Appeal, it was found that by-laws purporting to enact a blanket ban on pets in a strata scheme were harsh, unconscionable and oppressive, and therefore inoperable. The Parliament later passed the Strata Schemes Management Amendment (Sustainability Infrastructure) Act 2021 that provided certainty to that position. Those reforms struck the right balance between the interests of individual owners and the majority as expressed through the owners' corporation. A property owner should not be denied a pet in their own property without good reason. Owners' corporations can continue to pass by-laws targeting a pet that is unreasonably interfering with other occupants' use and enjoyment of their lot, or indeed common property. Reasonable conditions can continue to be imposed by the owners' corporation on pets, such as limitations on common areas the pet may utilise, or by imposing certain supervision requirements.

The reform in the bill is about extending the balanced approach that currently exists to community land schemes and closing some of the loopholes that have undermined that balance. Some strata plans have sought to get around the restriction on blanket bans by instead imposing unreasonably high bond requirements or insurance amounts that have in effect amounted to a de facto ban on pets. Pets are an important part of our families and in a lot of ways our communities too. The value of their companionship to millions of Australians cannot be understated. This was particularly highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Australians have one of the highest percentages of pet ownership in the world. Some 61 per cent of households enjoy the company of a pet who is a loved member of the family. That has not yet happened in my household. My wife will not say yes until our kids are a bit older, much to my dismay, but we will get there. With the increasing move to apartment living, pet ownership should not be unreasonably constrained for property owners who choose to have a pet.

I now move to strengthening the operation of the schemes. The further amendments in the bill are mainly technical in nature and arise from the statutory review. They are the product of extensive stakeholder consultation and engagement under the Coalition Government. We welcome those machinery measures, such as increasing annual general meeting notice periods, moving to electronic record keeping, and limits to proxy harvesting. We are confident that they will enhance the governance, operation and management of strata schemes. The Opposition and stakeholders await further reforms from the Government arising from the outstanding recommendations of the strata review. I thank all stakeholders and the hardworking staff at Fair Trading who have contributed to the strata review, and indeed to these reforms. I acknowledge the Minister's work and that of his office. The Liberal-Nationals will support the reasonable proposals that build on our sound work in government. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (18:08):** I contribute to debate on the Strata Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. Strata laws in New South Wales are in dire need of updating. Although the

recommendations that form the substance of the bill that we are considering today came from a statutory review conducted in 2021, it has taken a change of government for the reforms to be enacted and for much-needed movement in this space. The bill is the first step in delivering the review recommendations and providing immediate benefits to strata and community land schemes. Unfortunately the residents of strata and community land schemes have been waiting too long for action because the previous Government sat on its hands for two years.

The Strata Schemes Development Act 2015 and the Strata Schemes Management Act 2015 work together to provide the regulatory framework for the creation, variation, termination and management of strata schemes in New South Wales, whereas the Community Land Development Act 2021 and the Community Land Management Act 2021 do the same but for community land schemes. The bill amends all four Acts and ensures community land scheme laws remain in step with strata laws. The reforms in the bill will improve the lives of residents in strata and community land schemes by strengthening the governance, accountability and effectiveness of such schemes.

As more and more residents of New South Wales move towards communal living, the changes proposed in the bill take on greater significance. There are now more than 85,000 strata schemes in New South Wales, almost 9,000 more schemes than when the development Act and management Act commenced in 2016, and there are now more than 968,000 strata lots, up by more than 162,000 since 2016. That is evidence that living in apartments and townhouses is increasingly becoming a choice of home ownership, especially as we try to meet the demands for more housing. As we grapple with the growth we have seen over the past few years, we should ensure that our legislative and regulatory frameworks also cater to future trends.

I now highlight a few aspects of the bill. The bill addresses issues relating to the accountability of committees. The bill makes amendments to improve the accountability of committee members and the governance of strata and association committees. A committee is a group of people elected by the owners' corporation or association to help make decisions for the scheme, which may include decisions such as approving renovations or certain repairs, arranging insurance or approving applications made under by-laws. Each member of the committee has a duty to carry out their functions for the benefit of those living in the scheme and with due care and diligence.

Many committee members are volunteers who take time out of their day to help with the day-to-day running of the scheme. The bill provides greater clarity about the duty of committee members by removing the ability of members to participate or vote on a matter they have a financial interest in. Currently it is up to the committee to decide whether the member can be present or take part in the decision. Unfortunately this contributes to disputes and potentially unjust outcomes for owners. The bill removes the ability for committee members to participate and vote in a matter where they have a conflict of interest.

I reference the experience of Eloise and Prakash, who bought an apartment in Liverpool as part of their retirement plan. After becoming treasurer of their strata committee, Eloise found herself putting in many hours per week. Often the committee was not well resourced or able to make considered decisions as its members did not have a clear picture of what they were dealing with in terms of the conflicts of interest that members may have. In that vein, the bill makes changes to strengthen the governance and effectiveness of general meetings of the owners' corporation or association.

The owners' corporation must have at least one meeting each year called an annual general meeting [AGM]. They are planned yearly events and are very important because they are when owners collectively discuss how the scheme is running. Important decisions on how the scheme is going to run for the year ahead are also made at these meetings, which is why it is so important for the laws to set out how meetings are run and how matters are voted on. That ensures fair meeting processes and ensures that owners have a voice on the matters that impact them. The bill enhances the current meeting procedures in three ways. Firstly, it extends the minimum notice period of the annual general meeting from seven to 14 days. An extra seven days will not be an imposition to owners' corporations or strata managing agents but will benefit owners by giving them more time to review documents and make arrangements to attend the meeting or access advice and other professional expertise they may need to make the best decision for the committee.

Secondly, the bill will require key documents to be provided at least 14 days before the annual general meeting. The first AGM is the first meeting of the new members of the owners' corporation. Before then, the original owner, typically the developer, has control of the scheme. Currently the key foundational and critical documents of the scheme only need to be provided to owners at least 48 hours before the first AGM. That is extraordinary considering that important and often complex documentation is not able to be given due consideration on such short notice. That is all the more important where owners may be from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds, may live with a disability or may have busy lives and so are unable to process and read through all the complex documentation in a 48-hour time period.

Thirdly, the bill will improve the governance of meetings by stopping proxy farming, using powers of attorney and company nominees. Proxy farming is when a person holds proxies, and hence voting power, on behalf of multiple owners. That practice undermines democratic decision-making at general meetings and disenfranchises other owners who participate at meetings in good faith. All three changes will improve the fairness of meetings and the quality of decisions, and set up the owners' corporation for success for the years ahead. That will ensure that another key impact of the bill on financial and record management is placed at the heart of the reforms. That key impact is crucial if a scheme is to be properly managed and maintained.

The strata and community land scheme laws already provide rules about how finances and records are managed. The current laws enable some flexibility in how schemes manage their funds by allowing the transfer of money between a scheme's capital works fund and administrative fund. The laws also provide that schemes can use money from either fund to cover expenses from the other fund. However, there is some ambiguity about repayment of these amounts back to the relevant fund. The bill makes clear that a decision must be made within three months about whether, and how, these amounts are to be repaid by resolution at a general meeting of the owners' corporation.

Large strata schemes of 100 or more lots must obtain at least two quotes for any proposed expenditure over \$30,000. However, with such a significant amount, all schemes, regardless of their size, should ensure that goods and services are obtained at competitive prices. Therefore the bill extends the requirement to obtain two quotes for such large expenses to all strata and community land schemes. It is extraordinary that such provisions are not already in place given the sometimes large amounts of expenditure that strata committees are responsible for and the financial expertise or knowledge that is sometimes required to understand and make sound decisions in this space.

Finally, the bill will improve record keeping and make it easier to find records by requiring owners' corporations and associations to store records in electronic form. That change will apply to records made six or more months after the Act commences. It does not apply retrospectively and does not prevent the keeping of hard copies. The bill is the beginning of strata and community land scheme reforms and is incredibly important for those who live and work in strata and community land schemes who have waited too long for change. I commend the work of the Minister, the department and all of the public servants. They worked incredibly hard to reach this outcome.

The bill will deliver necessary reforms to modernise, clarify and enhance current laws for the benefit of residents. It will stop the manipulation by developers of the strata renewal process. It will increase strata committee accountability, uplift the governance of schemes and let residents enjoy the benefits of pet ownership. In addition to appointing the New South Wales Strata and Property Services Commissioner, the bill demonstrates the Government's commitment to ensuring living in strata is fair and an attractive option for the growing number of people who must live communally. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (18:18):** On behalf of The Greens, I speak in support of the Strata Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. The bill makes a number of sensible amendments, many of which emerged from the 2021 statutory review of the Strata Schemes Development Act 2015 and the Strata Schemes Management Act 2015. That review consulted with stakeholders, residents and the broader community to understand how strata schemes are currently working in practice and identify areas for improvement. The review made no less than 139 recommendations. It is astounding that two years after the review reported, this is the first piece of legislation acting on any of those recommendations. I acknowledge the work of the Minister and the Government in bringing this legislation forward.

The Greens welcome the long overdue and much-needed reforms proposed by the bill, which we understand are the first in a broader suite of changes the Government plans to make in relation to enacting the statutory review's recommendations. I recall when I was a recently elected member of Parliament in 2015 the very intense and heightened debate that occurred around the review of strata laws and the changes that were put in place then. I recognise and acknowledge the Government's decision to take these reforms in stages so that there is time and space for people to engage with and be consulted on these changes.

As growing numbers of people move into apartments and building higher and denser is posited as the solution to the housing crisis, we need to get strata schemes right. The various measures within the bill are sensible and non-controversial steps toward achieving this goal, and The Greens support them. In particular, we support the bill's amendment of the provisions in the Strata Schemes Development Act pertaining to collective sales and strata scheme renewals. In 2015, The Greens opposed changes to this Act by the then Coalition Government that allowed for the collective sale or redevelopment of a strata lot with the support of only 75 per cent of owners. Previously, collective sales and redevelopment required unanimous owner consent. Back then, many people expressed serious concern that lowering the threshold of support from 100 per cent to 75 per cent would cause

significant uncertainty and insecurity for people living in strata and allow developers to make money to the detriment of people wishing to be secure in their own home.

While we have not seen this borne out on a massive scale, we must recognise that since the introduction of the 75 per cent threshold, dodgy developers and other bad faith actors have used the reduced threshold to achieve their own ends. In one well-publicised case in Macquarie Park, a developer used different company names to purchase units in two neighbouring buildings that were part of the same strata scheme. Although 40 of the 45 owners agreed to sell, the developer, Hyecorp, was in the minority dissenting. Hyecorp made a bid on the buildings and then withdrew it, leaving the owners to go with another bidder that later walked away after Hyecorp mounted an expensive legal challenge to the sale. The owners were left with a huge bill from the challenge and little chance of redeveloping their buildings.

We have heard significant stories of the personal stress that the changes to the 75 per cent laws made to elderly people and people who had done significant renovations to their homes in strata schemes and how they lived in fear that they would be in a situation where their home—the place that they had created to be their home—would be sold from underneath them as a result of the changes. Stories like those are the greatest reason why we need increased transparency in the process of collective sales and why The Greens strongly support the bill's proposal to increase the disclosure requirements of conflicts of interests of members of strata committees.

I turn to the other significant component of the bill, which is the introduction of new protections for assistance and companion animals. Australia has some of the highest rates of pet ownership in the world, and pets are a beloved part of households in freestanding homes and apartments alike. For owners and renters, pets are a key part of people's families. It is critical that the laws we make in this place facilitate people to be able to live with their four-legged friends and other pets in their homes without others trying to intervene and control what is acceptable regarding living with pets. The Greens believe that the right to have a pet should be enjoyed equally by owner-occupiers and renters. In fact, when it comes to all the strata laws reforms, as we move into the next stage of the review and as we look at further reviews to the strata laws, it is absolutely critical that there is always equity regarding information sharing and participation in decisions in the building between strata owners and the people who are renting in stratas. Renters make up a significant proportion of strata schemes and it is absolutely critical that renters are included in the information that is shared that impacts on their lives.

Getting back to pets, it is the view of The Greens that any reasons for refusing pets should be limited to existing laws. I will share a story of when I attempted to make a change to allow renters to have pets in their homes under the previous Government when we were reviewing the Residential Tenancies Act. I remember having a conversation with the Parliamentary Counsel's Office. I said I would like to move an amendment that would allow renters to have pets in their homes like owners can have pets in their home. They said, "But what kind of pets?" They were trying to get me to put a limit on that. I said, "I'm not going to limit that. There are other laws that exist." They said, "Surely you don't think a renter can have a horse in the apartment if they're renting?" I said, "If the owner can have a horse in the apartment then the renter should be able to have a horse in the apartment." There should be other laws in the State to prevent the holding of inappropriate animals inside apartment buildings and the distinction between what is appropriate for a renter, someone who lives in a strata scheme, and someone who owns a freestanding property should not be made. It should be decided based on the welfare of the animal and the appropriateness of having that animal in a domestic setting.

The bill would make it so that any strata by-law prohibiting companion or assistance animals has no force or effect to the extent that it would "unreasonably prohibit" the keeping of an animal on a lot within a strata scheme. This change would also extend to by-laws that restrict or unreasonably burden the keeping of an assistance animal, which The Greens welcome with open arms. We also support the raft of other changes that the bill makes to strata law, including amendments related to governance, requiring new tenants to be provided with all necessary by-laws and allowing the regulator to compulsorily appoint a strata managing agent if an owners' corporation is not satisfied with their existing agent's functions. Each of these measures will have real and practical impacts on the lives of the thousands of people across our community who live in strata schemes. The Greens look forward to seeing the next steps in the new year towards further strengthening strata laws in this State. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (18:26):** I support the Strata Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. This bill amends the Strata Schemes Development Act 2015, the Community Land Development Act 2021, the Community Land Management Act 2021, and related regulations. It will implement the 31 recommendations of the *Report on the statutory review of the Strata Schemes Development Act 2015 and Strata Schemes Management Act 2015*, which was tabled in Parliament on 29 November 2021. The report made 139 recommendations to reform strata and community land scheme laws. The residents of strata and community land schemes have been waiting far too long for action. The previous Government did nothing to progress the recommendations of the review, thus

ignoring the needs of people living in strata. The bill is the first step in delivering the review recommendations and will deliver immediate benefits for residents and owners in strata and community land schemes.

This Government recognises the importance of strata and community land schemes for many people across the State, and we are getting on with the job of making those changes. The Strata Schemes Development Act 2015 and the Strata Schemes Management Act 2015 work together to provide the regulatory framework for the creation, variation, termination and management of strata schemes in New South Wales. The bill amends four Acts and ensures that community land schemes remain in step with strata laws. It is an important next step for communal living in New South Wales, as it will improve the lives of residents in strata and community land schemes by strengthening their governance, accountability and effectiveness.

Living in an apartment or townhouse is increasingly becoming the choice of home ownership, and that will continue to grow into the future, particularly as we try to meet the demands for more housing. Each person who buys a lot within a strata scheme owns the inside of the lot and shares ownership of the exterior common property with all other owners. Common property includes roofs, driveways, external walls and gardens. Lot owners automatically become members of the owners' corporation, which is the legal entity comprising all lot owners and which is collectively responsible for the common property. Community land schemes involve subdivisions, where a lot owner owns and maintains any buildings constructed on their lot but shares the use and maintenance of all other facilities. They are like small community neighbourhoods. There are now more than 85,000 strata schemes in New South Wales and more than 968,000 strata lots, which is up by more than 162,000 since 2016.

The bill amends the Strata Schemes Development Act 2015 to introduce much-needed improvements to the strata renewal regime. The process allows the owners' corporation of a strata scheme to pursue a collective sale or redevelopment of its building without unanimous support but where at least 75 per cent of lot owners agree. The renewal provisions empower strata owners to make a collective decision about the future of their scheme—what to do with the building as it ages, or when maintaining or retrofitting common property becomes too expensive. Strata renewal draws on the collective decision-making process inherent in strata living. As well as owning their own lots, strata owners will share the common property. The statutory review found that the collective sale and redevelopment provisions have been effective in meeting the objective to facilitate the renewal of strata schemes, despite limited uptake. However, consultation feedback identified that the regime could be improved by incorporating flexibility into the staged process and by bolstering existing safeguards. These fundamental safeguards will prevent intimidation, encourage collaboration and ensure that owners receive appropriate compensation.

The current law requires a scheme to develop a strata renewal plan strictly according to the process set out in the development Act. If the Land and Environment Court is not satisfied that the appropriate steps have been followed, then the plan will not be approved and will lapse. The bill gives the court some latitude to approve a strata renewal plan even if there are inconsistencies with the set steps or time frames. This more flexible process will boost confidence in the regime and address concerns identified in the review that a plan might not be approved just because of a minor procedural mistake during development. The amendments in the bill create a more workable process, but not at the expense of the safeguards that are fundamental to the renewal regime. The court can only approve a plan that has not strictly complied with the steps in the legislation if the court is satisfied that the procedural error would not cause substantial injustice.

The bill also boosts existing safeguards relating to conflicts of interest, which will make the process more transparent for all owners. Under current law, only those owners who are appointed to the strata renewal committee tasked with developing a strata renewal plan need to disclose conflicts of interest. The bill extends conflict of interest provisions to all owners, not only those who are on the strata renewal committee. At key decision points in the renewal process, owners will have to disclose whether they have a financial or other interest in the strata renewal proposal. It is important to note that an owner who has disclosed an interest is not prevented from voting in relation to a strata renewal proposal, and their views are still counted. The changes in the bill will improve transparency and will mean that the Land and Environment Court must consider owners' disclosures when deciding whether to approve a strata renewal plan.

The bill also makes several amendments to make it easier to have pets and assistance animals in strata and community land schemes. Currently, strata schemes cannot make by-laws or decisions under those by-laws that prohibit the keeping of a pet on a lot. The exception is where the keeping of the pet unreasonably interferes with another resident's use and enjoyment of their lot or the common property. The bill will prohibit an owners' corporation or association from charging residents a fee or bond relating to the keeping of a pet or requiring residents to obtain insurance for their pet. Imposing fees or bonds puts up barriers for residents who want to keep a pet. The costs of such fees and bonds are also unreasonable. Schemes should not be charging these costs because owners already pay levies to finance the administration of the scheme. Overall, the changes will make it easier to

keep a pet and improve the liveability of strata and community land schemes and will also strengthen the protections for persons with assistance animals.

The bill also serves to maintain the privacy of persons with an assistance animal by clarifying the type of evidence that the owners' corporation or association can request about the assistance animal's status. One type of evidence that can be requested is a statutory declaration verifying the animal has been trained to assist a person with a disability and has standards of hygiene and behaviour appropriate for an animal in a public place. The change responds to some owners' corporations requesting medical information about an owner's disability instead of information about their assistance animal. Those medical records could then be accessible via a search of the scheme's records, which has led to obvious concerns about privacy. The bill will improve record keeping and make it easier to find records by requiring owners' corporations and associations to store records in electronic form. It does not apply retrospectively and does not prevent the keeping of hard copies.

The bill will also give the Commissioner for Fair Trading standing to apply to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal to seek the appointment of a compulsory managing agent. This will ensure the schemes are better prepared to consider either renewing or discontinuing an agent's contract. A compulsory managing agent may be needed where the management of a scheme is not functioning. The bill is the beginning of strata and community land scheme reforms. Those who live and work in strata and community land schemes have waited too long for change. The bill will deliver necessary reforms to modernise, clarify and enhance current laws for the benefit of residents. It will stop the manipulation by developers of the strata renewal process, increase strata committee accountability, uplift the governance of schemes and let residents enjoy the benefits of pet ownership. The reforms will complement many of the Government's other work, including the appointment of a strata commissioner, cracking down on unscrupulous builders, increasing housing supply and making it easier for tenants to have pets in rentals. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (18:36):** I speak on the Strata Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. The bill amends the Strata Schemes Development Act 2015, the Strata Schemes Management Act 2015, the Community Land Development Act 2021 and the Community Land Management Act 2021, and the related regulations. The bill implements 31 recommendations of the *Report on the statutory review of the Strata Schemes Development Act 2015 and Strata Schemes Management Act 2015*, tabled to Parliament on 29 November 2021. The bill is the first step in delivering the review recommendations, providing immediate benefits to strata and community land schemes. The residents of strata and community land schemes have been waiting too long for action because the previous Government sat on its hands for two years, once again neglecting the pressing issues facing the people of New South Wales. The Minns Labor Government recognises the importance of strata and community land schemes for many people across the State. That is why the Government is getting on with the job and introducing this bill.

The Strata Schemes Development Act 2015 and the Strata Schemes Management Act 2015 work together to provide the regulatory framework for the creation, variation, termination and management of strata schemes in New South Wales. The Community Land Development Act 2021 and Community Land Management Act 2021 do the same but for community land schemes. The bill amends all four Acts and ensures community land scheme laws remain in step with strata laws. The reforms in the bill will improve the lives of residents in strata and community land schemes by strengthening the governance, accountability and effectiveness of these schemes.

Strata schemes are a form of community living, typically in an apartment building or a block of townhouses. Each person who buys a lot within the scheme owns the inside of the lot and shares ownership of the common property with all other owners. Common property includes roofs, driveways, external walls, gardens and some amenities. The bill amends the Strata Schemes Development Act 2015 to introduce much-needed improvements to the strata renewal regime. The process allows the owners' corporation of a strata scheme to pursue a collective sale or redevelopment of their building without unanimous support but where at least 75 per cent of lot owners agree. The renewal provisions empower strata owners to make a collective decision about the future of their scheme. Strata renewal draws on the collective decision-making process inherent in strata living.

As well as owning their own lots, strata owners also own a share of the common property. The strata renewal process acknowledges that decisions about commonly owned property need to be made collectively. The statutory review found that the collective sale and redevelopment provisions have been effective in meeting the objective to facilitate the renewal of strata schemes, despite limited uptake. Any proposed collective sale or redevelopment must follow a multi-step process set out in part 10 of the development Act, designed to provide transparency and allow time for consultation. These fundamental safeguards prevent intimidation, encourage collaboration and ensure that owners receive appropriate compensation.

The current law requires a scheme to develop a strata renewal plan strictly according to the process set out in the development Act. If the Land and Environment Court is not satisfied that the appropriate steps have been

followed, then the plan will not be approved and will lapse. The bill gives the court some latitude to approve a strata renewal plan even if there are inconsistencies with the set steps or time frames. This more flexible process will boost confidence in the regime and address concerns identified in the review that a plan might not be approved just because of a minor procedural mistake during development. The amendments in the bill create a more workable process, but this is not at the expense of the safeguards that are fundamental to the renewal regime. The court can only approve a plan that has not strictly complied with the steps in the legislation if the court is satisfied that the procedural error would not cause substantial injustice.

The bill also boosts existing safeguards relating to conflicts of interest, making the process more transparent for all owners. Under current law, only those owners who are appointed to the strata renewal committee tasked with developing a strata renewal plan need to disclose conflicts of interest. The bill extends conflict of interest provisions to all owners, not only those who are on the strata renewal committee. At key decision points in the renewal process, owners will have to disclose whether they have a financial or other interest in the strata renewal proposal. This might occur where the owner is related to the proposed purchaser of the scheme or has made a competing offer to purchase the strata scheme. The changes in the bill will improve transparency and will mean that the Land and Environment Court must consider owners' disclosures when deciding whether to approve a strata renewal plan.

The bill also makes important clarifications about the court's cost orders. Currently, the law prevents the owners' corporation from recovering costs of renewal proceedings from a dissenting owner. This has created some confusion and injustice in situations where dissenting owners have raised frivolous objections to draw out legal proceedings and ramp up legal costs. The changes in the bill now clarify that the court can award costs against a dissenting owner where the court considers it appropriate. This might occur where the owner has not acted in good faith or has a conflict of interest that makes it inappropriate for the owners' corporation to bear all costs. The bill improves meeting governance across community and strata schemes by extending from seven to 14 days the periods for notice of an annual general meeting and delivery of all documents before a first AGM, and addressing proxy harvesting by limiting the number of lots a power of attorney or company nominee may represent.

The bill also boosts overall governance of strata and community schemes by clarifying rules around repayment of money paid from the administrative fund to the capital works funds or vice versa, while strengthening record-keeping requirements by requiring owners' corporations and corporations and associations to store records in electronic form, requiring landlords' agents to give notice of a tenancy to the owners' corporation or association and enabling tenants to give notice of their tenancy to the owners' corporation or association. The bill is the beginning of strata and community land scheme reforms. Those who live and work in strata and community land schemes have waited too long for change. The bill will deliver necessary reforms to modernise, clarify and enhance current laws for the benefit of residents. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (18:44):** I speak in support of the Strata Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. The bill implements 31 recommendations from the 2021 *Report on the statutory review of the Strata Schemes Development Act 2015 and the Strata Schemes Management Act 2015* and is the initial step towards not only delivering the review recommendations but also providing long overdue and immediate benefits to strata and community land schemes. My electorate of Parramatta has the fourth highest percentage of residents living in flats or apartments of any State electorate in New South Wales. As a direct result, issues within strata and community land schemes are hot topics of concern and conversation within my community.

The former Government sat around doing nothing for two long years, failing to implement critical reforms to this sector, making it even more pleasing that I can now inform the residents across my electorate that the Labor Government is taking action and is recognising the importance of strata and community land schemes for many people across the State. The bill amends the Strata Schemes Development Act 2015, the Strata Schemes Management Act 2015, the Community Land Development Act 2021 and Community Land Management Act 2021, ensuring community land scheme laws remain in step with strata laws. These reforms seek to strengthen the governance, accountability and effectiveness of strata and community land schemes, resulting in a positive improvement to many lives.

Our Government is committed to increasing housing supply, ensuring that we are focused on quality as well as quantity. Yesterday in this place I contributed to debate on the Building Legislation Amendment Bill 2023, aimed at improving transparency, accountability and the quality of work in the building and construction industry in New South Wales. Hand in hand with providing quality housing is the need to ensure that we set a strong governance framework around new and existing housing. To oversee this, our Government has appointed John Minns as the NSW Property Services Commissioner. With 70 per cent of residents in the Parramatta electorate living in apartments or flats, this form of housing is fast outpacing any other in and around the electorate of Parramatta as we try to meet the demands for more housing.

With more than 85,000 strata schemes in New South Wales plus more than 968,000 strata lots, the need for reform is critical. Strata renewal was introduced in 2015, allowing the owners' corporation of a strata scheme to pursue a collective sale or redevelopment of its building without unanimous support but where at least 75 per cent of lot owners agree. The statutory review found that the collective sale and redevelopment provisions are meeting the objective to facilitate the renewal of strata schemes. There is a need for improvement by incorporating flexibility into the staged process and by bolstering existing safeguards to prevent intimidation, encourage collaboration and ensure that owners receive appropriate compensation.

The bill gives the Land and Environment Court some latitude to approve a strata renewal plan even if there are inconsistencies with the set steps or time frames. It also boosts existing safeguards relating to conflicts of interest, making the process more transparent for all owners. Conflict of interest provisions are extended to all owners, not only those who are on the strata renewal committee, thus improving transparency and ensuring that the Land and Environment Court must consider owners' disclosures when deciding whether to approve a strata renewal plan. The bill also makes important clarifications about the court's costs orders. The court can award costs against a dissenting owner where the court considers it appropriate. This might occur where the owner has not acted in good faith or has a conflict of interest that makes it inappropriate for the owners' corporation to bear all costs.

Wentworth Point in my electorate is pooch heaven, dispelling the myth that people in apartments do not want or have pets. We want to make it easier for renters to have pets and assistance animals in strata and community land schemes. These changes will make it easier to keep a pet and improve the liveability of strata and community land schemes. More than two-thirds of Australian households own a pet. In response to our election commitment, the bill will strengthen the protections and privacy for persons with assistance animals and will ensure that more people are able to enjoy the benefits of love and companionship from living with a pet.

The bill makes amendments to improve the accountability of committee members, improve the governance of strata and association committees and strengthen the governance and effectiveness of general meetings of the owners' corporation or association as they apply to both the Strata Schemes Management Act 2015 and to general meetings of the association under the Community Land Management Act 2015. The bill will address finance and record keeping and tenancy notice provisions; ensure the strata laws cater for the unique position and challenges faced by schemes with only two lots; and strengthen protections for owners, ensuring that schemes are better prepared to consider either renewing or discontinuing an agent's contract.

The Minns Labor Government understands that those who live and work in strata and community land schemes have waited far too long for these reforms. The time is nigh to bring clarity and to modernise and enhance the current laws for the benefit of residents. It will stop the unwanted and unfair manipulation by developers of the strata renewal process, increase strata committee accountability, uplift the governance of schemes, allow residents to enjoy the benefits of pet ownership and deliver practical reform that improves the lives of people living in strata and community land schemes right across New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (18:50):** I make a contribution to debate in support of the Strata Legislation Amendment Bill 2023, which is really important for assisting the residents of almost one million strata lots across New South Wales. The bill implements 31 recommendations from the 2021 statutory review of the Strata Schemes Development Act and the Strata Schemes Management Act. It is the first step in delivering the review's recommendations, which will provide immediate benefits to strata and community land schemes. The residents of those schemes have been waiting far too long for action because the previous Government sat on its hands for the past two years. My electorate has approximately 20,000 units and townhouses, and those residents live in strata schemes. They often struggle with the complexities around strata, such as getting renovations and repairs done, and many other aspects of strata living that the bill will tackle.

The Strata Schemes Development Act and the Strata Schemes Management Act work together to provide the regulatory framework for the creation, variation, termination and management of strata schemes across New South Wales. Similarly, the Community Land Development Act and the Community Land Management Act do the same for community land schemes. The bill amends all four Acts to ensure that community land scheme laws remain in step with strata laws. The reforms will improve the lives of residents by strengthening the governance, accountability and effectiveness of those schemes. It is a very important step forward. It also implements the Government's election commitment to appoint a strata commissioner. John Minns has been appointed as the NSW Strata and Property Services Commissioner. The bill and the appointment of Mr Minns demonstrate the Government's commitment to ensuring that living in strata is a fair and attractive option.

Strata schemes have been around for a long time as a form of community living, typically in an apartment building or block of townhouses. Each person who buys a lot within the scheme owns the inside of the lot and shares ownership of the common property, such as roofs, driveways, external walls, retaining walls, gardens and footpaths. Lot owners automatically become members of the owners' corporation, which is the legal entity

comprising all lot owners and which has collective responsibility for the common property. Community land schemes involve subdivisions where a lot owner owns and maintains any buildings constructed on their lot but shares the use and maintenance costs of other facilities. New South Wales now has more than 85,000 strata schemes—almost 9,000 more schemes than when the Development Act and Management Act commenced in 2016. As I mentioned, there are also almost one million strata lots, which has increased by more than 160,000 since 2016.

In terms of strata renewal, the bill amends the Strata Schemes Development Act to introduce much-needed improvements to the renewal regime. Strata renewal was a major reform introduced in 2015 to allow owners' corporations to pursue the sale or redevelopment of their building without unanimous support, but where at least 70 per cent of lot owners agree. That was a very contentious reform. Huge promises were made at the time that it would lead to a whole lot of older buildings being redeveloped. That has not happened. Where it has happened, quite often it has resulted in a smaller number of homes. Where there were small blocks of units, units have been amalgamated, dividing walls have had openings put through them, and whole floors have become one unit. There have not been that many occasions where whole blocks of units have been knocked down.

It has been so widely accepted as ineffective that at the moment, while the Department of Planning and Cumberland Council are looking at redeveloping Westmead South, they have excluded the entire area of low-rise residential development right next to Westmead station because they think it is too hard to get that area redeveloped. The way to achieve redevelopment is to offer an incentive. Some of those unit blocks are very old. There could be an incentive through rezoning, but instead they are focusing on areas a long way from the station—much to the irritation of many of those residents.

Under the current law a scheme is required to develop a strata renewal plan in accordance with the process set out in the Development Act. If the Land and Environment Court is not satisfied that the appropriate steps have been followed, then the plan will not be approved and will lapse. The bill gives the court some latitude to approve a strata renewal plan even if there are inconsistencies with the set steps or time frames. That will make the process more flexible, boost confidence in the regime and address concerns identified in the review that a plan might not be approved just because of a minor procedural mistake during development. It will make things far more workable.

It also boosts existing safeguards around conflicts of interest in strata schemes, making the process more transparent for all owners. Under the current law, only those owners who are appointed to the strata renewal committee tasked with developing a strata renewal plan need to disclose conflicts of interest. One of the complaints I have had in the past few years is about somebody who has become a stick-in-the-mud about making any repairs to the building and, at the same time, trying to convince people to redevelop the whole block, and act as the agent to make that all happen.

The statutory review identified circumstances where other owners have had a conflicting financial or other interest—so it is not just the one example that I referred to—and have been able to manipulate the protections in the renewal process to draw out proceedings and incur legal costs that are imposed on others. The bill will extend the conflict of interest provisions to all owners, not only those who are on the strata renewal committee. That will address some, not all, of the issues around conflicts of interest, but certainly those that apply to the renewal process.

The bill also does a lot to improve the situation for people keeping pets. As an animal lover, I am always distressed to hear about how many animals are in shelters because the owners cannot keep pets in units—either the landlord or the strata scheme will not let them. The previous Government tried to address this, but it was not as effective as we had hoped. The bill will prohibit an owners' corporation or association from charging residents a fee or bond relating to the keeping of a pet or requiring residents to obtain insurance for their pet. The costs of such fees and bonds are also unreasonable. I refer to an example about pet ownership from one of my constituents that was sent to me recently. I will read a complaint about the impediments they have faced in keeping a pet under strata. It reads:

Eighteen months ago, when I moved into my apartment and considering our 5 Kg adult dog as being suitable for apartment living, the Committee failed to provide me clarity in relation to a by-law that allowed pets, subject to certain conditions and completely ignored any mediation, requests to clarify the by-law or even engage in dialogue to provide any conditions whatsoever. If the by-law prohibited pets I would never have moved in; however that is not what the by-law states.

After 18 months of occupation, and a week after the Horizon decision from NCAT appeal panel, I was issued with a by-law breach notice. The Committee has taken it upon themselves to now evict all pets without cause. The Committee communicated to all Owners that they were limited to \$3,000 (although the legislation allows \$15,000) so they Proxy Farmed votes and passed a resolution to now increase the legal fees they can allocate to evicting my pet to \$43,000; a bully through and through. With my limited funds, and scare tactics of being hit with a costs order, I was left with no option but to seek alternative arrangements with my fiancée and pet within the 28 day timeframe I was instructed to comply with.

That is obscene. No-one should have to go through that—no humans, no pets. It is important that we try to stop people putting up barriers to having pets. [*Extension of time*]

In relation to assistance animals, under the current provisions a by-law may require a person to provide evidence that an animal is an assistance animal. The bill will clarify that by-laws cannot affect the ability of assistance animals to perform their duty. For example, by-laws that require animals to be carried through common areas would unfairly affect a vision-impaired person who relies on a guide dog. The bill will also serve to maintain the privacy of persons with an assistance animal by clarifying the type of evidence that an owners' corporation or association can request about the animal's status. This change responds to some owners' corporations requesting medical information about an owner's disability instead of information about their assistance animal—again, something that is totally unacceptable.

The bill also makes important amendments about the accountability of committee members and the governance of strata and association committees. Each member has a duty to carry out their functions with due care and diligence for the benefit of all those living in the scheme. Many committee members are volunteers. The bill provides greater clarity about the duties of committee members by removing the ability of members to participate or vote on a matter they have a financial interest in. That should have been self-evident and already happening for years, but it is important that we do it today. These are just some of the steps we are taking to improve the management of strata schemes. They are really important.

One of the other issues that I have received many complaints about—and it is not resolved by the bill, but I understand we will be addressing it shortly—is embedded networks. The use of embedded energy networks and water networks has exploded over the past decade. They are an impost by developers that is not usually disclosed at the point of sale. They cause people to have enormous power and water bills and are hugely problematic. I note that the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal is currently reviewing the future of embedded networks with a view to recommending appropriate price methodologies for setting electricity, gas and water prices for customers in embedded networks, establishing a more appropriate compliance and enforcement framework for any new price predictions, and determining whether the establishment of new hot and chilled water embedded networks should be prohibited. The final report is due in March next year. I certainly hope that report will go some way to addressing the issues faced by the thousands of people who have suddenly found themselves subjected to enormous bills because they are part of an embedded network and have no option to shop around for their electricity, gas or water.

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (19:03):** I make a brief contribution in support of the Strata Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. The bill will make various amendments to the Strata Schemes Development Act 2015, the Strata Schemes Management Act 2015, the Community Land Development Act 2021 and the Community Land Management Act 2021. These amendments are derived from recommendations proposed in the statutory review of the Strata Schemes Development Act and Strata Schemes Management Act, which was tabled in the Parliament in November 2021. By expanding the requirements for the disclosure of conflicts of interest and outlining the court's ability to award costs against opposing owners, the bill aims to restore balance and flexibility to the strata renewal process. The bill will make it easier for an individual to keep service animals and pets at their property by preventing pets from being unreasonably restricted from community land schemes. It will also prevent a residents' corporation or association from issuing fees associated with the banning of animals as well as bonds to keep pets.

The bill also intends to maintain the privacy of an individual with a service animal by clarifying the type of evidence that the owners' corporation or association can request about the service animal's status. A statutory declaration may be requested to confirm that the animal has been adequately trained to assist an individual with a disability and upholds the standards of behaviour and hygiene that are required for an animal in a public space. The bill will improve committee accountability and governance of strata association committees by clearly outlining the duties of committee members and prohibiting them from voting on matters in which they have a financial interest. Currently, it is up to the committee to decide whether a member may vote on a matter. This has contributed to continuous disputes and conflicts of interest, so the bill seeks to clarify the duties of members when voting. Further, the bill lowers the threshold for votes required to remove a member from the committee and will place additional restrictions on when a previous member can re-serve on the committee.

The bill will also expand the maximum limit of association committee members from nine to 15. This is to assist when the association may face more time-consuming and challenging matters, as well as when the usual nine members of the association may be too small for a large community land scheme. The bill makes amendments to enhance the effectiveness and governance of general meetings of the owners' corporation or association. The owners' corporation must have at least one meeting per year, such as the annual general meeting [AGM], where owners discuss how the scheme is performing and how it will continue to run the following year. The bill will extend the minimum notice period for the AGM from seven days to 14 days. The extension of time will benefit

owners by giving them time to review their documents and questions, whilst not impacting the owners' corporation or strata managing agents. Further, the bill will require key documents to be provided to new members of the owners' corporation at least 14 days before the first AGM, rather than the current 48 hours that is needed. This gives new members time to understand what decisions may need to be made at the AGM.

The bill aims to restrict proxy farming and the use of powers of attorney and company nominees to vote on behalf of multiple lot owners. These amendments seek to encourage fairness of meetings and quality of decisions made by the owners' corporation to improve the longevity of the corporation's success. The bill makes amendments to clarify the rules around the repayment of money between the administrative fund and the capital works fund. The current law allows a scheme to manage its funds by transferring money between its capital works fund and administrative fund. The law also enables schemes to use money from either fund to cover expenses from the other fund. This leads to ambiguity regarding the repayment of these amounts back to the correct fund. The bill clarifies that a decision must be made within three months on whether and how these amounts are to be repaid, by resolution at a general meeting of the owners' corporation.

Further, the bill reduces the required amount of notice that a scheme must give to pay for an urgent levy from 30 days to 14 days. This aims to mitigate the risks of serious or imminent threats to health and safety that are associated with urgent repairs. Additionally, the bill clarifies that all community and strata schemes must obtain at least two quotes for expenditures over \$30,000. Owners' corporations and associations will be required to store records in electronic form. This will not prevent the keeping of hard-copy records. The bill will empower an owner in a two-lot scheme to issue a notice to comply with a by-law to the other owner without requiring the agreement of the other owner. This will enable the owner to apply to the tribunal if breaches of by-laws continue. In order to strengthen protection for owners, the bill restricts the managing agent's notice period to between three to six months before expiry. This will ensure that the schemes are better prepared to consider either renewing or discontinuing an agent's contract. This bill will also give the Commissioner for Fair Trading grounds to apply to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal in order to seek the appointment of a compulsory managing agent. A compulsory managing agent may be needed where the management of a scheme is not performing effectively. This bill demonstrates the Government's commitment to the people of New South Wales and provides security to those living and working under a strata management. I commend the bill to the House.

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (19:09):** I join in debate on the Strata Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. I am probably one of the members of this House who has the largest number of flats and apartments in their electorate, with 64 per cent of my electorate having apartments and flats. Not a day goes by without constituents contacting my electorate office staff for assistance with navigating strata issues they are having with their living arrangements. My electorate office staff and I are incredibly well versed in the issues that exist within the strata laws. On a personal level, my constituents and I are very happy to see these changes because this bill is really the first step in delivering review recommendations that will provide immediate benefits to strata and community land schemes. This Government recognises the importance of strata and community land schemes for many people across this State, not just for those who live in my electorate.

The Strata Schemes Development Act 2015 and the Strata Schemes Management Act 2015 work together to provide the regulatory framework for the creation, variation, termination and management of strata schemes in New South Wales. The Community Land Development Act 2021 and the Community Land Management Act 2021 do the same but for community land schemes. The reforms in this bill will improve the lives of residents in strata and community land schemes by strengthening the governance, accountability and effectiveness of those schemes. This bill is an important next step for communal living in New South Wales. This Government also has implemented its election commitment to appoint a strata commissioner. John Minns has been appointed as the New South Wales Property Services Commissioner. This bill and the appointment of Mr Minns very much demonstrates that this Government is deeply committed to ensuring living in strata is fair and an attractive option.

Living in an apartment or townhouse increasingly is becoming a choice of long-term home ownership. This is particularly evident in places like the eastern suburbs. Actually, it is a reality that if people want to live in the eastern suburbs, really their only choice is to live in apartments. It was once the case that apartments were really there for young people, but increasingly that is where families live. In the block of apartments I live in, the vast majority of two-bedroom apartments house four people—two adults and two children. Twenty years ago that was not what we were seeing, but it is what we are seeing today. Indeed, it will continue to grow into the future, particularly as we try to meet the demands for more housing. It is therefore critically important that we have strata laws that are fit for purpose.

This bill amends the Strata Schemes Development Act 2015 to introduce much-needed improvements to the strata renewal regime. Strata renewal was a major reform introduced by the 2015 laws. The process allows the owners' corporation of a strata scheme to pursue a collective sale or redevelopment of their building without unanimous support, but where at least 75 per cent of lot owners agree. The renewal provisions empower strata

owners to make a collective decision about the future of their scheme—what to do with the building as it ages, or when maintaining or retrofitting common property becomes too expensive. Strata renewal draws on the collective decision-making process inherent in strata living. As well as owning their own lots, strata owners also own a share of the common property. The strata renewal process acknowledges that decisions about the commonly owned property need to be made collectively.

The statutory review found that the collective sale and redevelopment provisions have been effective in meeting the objective to facilitate the renewal of strata schemes, despite limited uptake. However, consultation feedback identified that the regime could be improved by incorporating flexibility into the staged process and by bolstering existing safeguards. Any proposed collective sale or redevelopment must follow a multi-step process set out in part 10 of the development Act, which is designed to provide transparency and allow time for consultation. What is important to note here is that these fundamental safeguards will prevent intimidation, encourage collaboration and ensure that owners receive appropriate compensation.

The bill also boosts existing safeguards relating to conflicts of interest by making the process more transparent for all owners. Under the current laws, only those owners who are appointed to the strata renewal committee tasked with developing a strata renewal plan need to disclose conflicts of interest. However, the statutory review identified circumstances where other owners have had conflicting financial or other interests and have been able to manipulate the protections in the renewal process to draw out proceedings, incur legal costs that are imposed on others and prevent the success of a collective sale or redevelopment that otherwise has the support of the significant majority. This bill extends conflict of interest provisions to all owners, not just those who are on the strata renewal committee. At key decision points in the renewal process, owners will have to disclose whether they have a financial or other interest in the strata renewal proposal. This might occur where the owner is related to the proposed purchaser of the scheme, or has made a competing offer to purchase the strata scheme. Another example is where the owner holds neighbouring land that might be impacted by the renewal proposal, such as having views impacted by a potential redevelopment. It is important to note that an owner who has disclosed an interest is not prevented from voting in relation to a strata renewal proposal. Their views are still counted. The changes in this bill will improve transparency, which will mean that the Land and Environment Court must consider owners' disclosures when deciding whether to approve a strata renewal plan.

One of the things I am most proud of is that this bill will make it easier to have pets in flats and strata schemes. The amendments in the bill closely align with our commitment that was made in the last election, which is to make it easier to have pets in rentals and in strata schemes. Overall, the changes will make it easier to keep a pet and improve the liveability of strata and community land schemes. These changes will ensure strata laws keep up with changes in housing and households. More people in Greater Sydney are forecast to live in strata schemes. More than two-thirds of Australian households own a pet. I am one of those people. I have a pet. I live in a strata apartment building, and I am lucky that I live in a strata scheme where pet ownership has been allowed. But it should not be just luck that allows people to have that. This is something that I wish all people should have. I love my little Hermes, my little miniature Samoyed. He makes my life a much richer and better life. We know that having animals makes our lives much richer and nicer. This is something that should not be limited to people who live in households. This is something that I hope everyone who lives in an apartment can have—the opportunity to have a pet.

This bill is also focused on improving the accountability of committees. The bill makes amendments to improve the accountability of committee members and the governance of strata and association committees. Each member of a committee has a duty of care to carry out their functions with due care and diligence for the benefit of those living in the scheme. Many committee members are volunteers, who take time out of their day to participate in running the scheme. This bill provides greater clarity about the duties of committee members by removing the ability of members to participate or vote on a matter where they have a financial interest in the matter. Currently, it is up to the committee to decide whether a member can be present or take part in a decision. However, this contributes to disputes and potentially unjust outcomes for owners. The bill therefore removes the ability for committee members to participate and vote on a matter where they have a conflict of interest.

The bill makes it clear and simple as to what a committee needs to do to fulfil its duties. If a committee member is not performing their duties or the owners have lost confidence in the committee member, the bill lowers the voting threshold for removal of a committee member. It provides that only a majority of votes is needed to remove a committee member, instead of the current requirement of a special resolution. The bill will make the process of removing a committee member easier and will stop a minority from retaining a committee member who no longer has the support of the majority.

The bill will also make changes to strengthen the governance and effectiveness of general meetings of the owners' corporation or associations. The following changes apply to both the Strata Schemes Management Act 2015 and to general meetings of the association under the Community Land Management Act 2015. The bill will

improve the current meeting procedures in three ways. First, the bill extends the minimum notice period of the annual general meeting from seven days to 14 days. The extra seven days will benefit the owners by giving them more time to review documents and make arrangements to attend the meetings. [*Extension of time*]

Secondly, the bill will require key documents to be provided at least 14 days before the first annual general meeting, which is generally for those who live in stratas. It is the first meeting of the new members of owners' corporations. Before then, the original owner—typically, the developer—has control of the scheme. Currently, the key foundational and critical documents of the scheme only need to be provided to owners at least 48 hours before the first annual general meeting. Some of those documents are needed to help owners make critical and important decisions at the meeting. Requiring the documents to be given at least 14 days before the first annual general meeting will give new owners more time to review very complex documents and seek advice before the meeting. Two days is clearly not enough—and I do not think it would pass a pub test if anyone was told two days before a board meeting that they only had two days to read documents.

Thirdly, the bill will improve governance of meetings by stopping proxy farming by using powers of attorney and company nominees. Proxy farming is where a person holds proxies, and hence voting power, on behalf of multiple lot owners. The practice undermines democratic decision-making at general meetings and disenfranchises other owners who participate at meetings in good faith. The management Act already limits the number of proxies a person may hold. However, some owners are using company nominees and powers of attorney as a way of getting around those limits. The bill extends existing proxy restrictions to powers of attorney and company nominees. All of those changes will improve the fairness of meetings, the quality of decisions and set up the owners' corporation for success for years to come.

The bill makes those changes to ensure that the strata laws cater for the unique position and challenges faced by schemes with only two lots. Again, this issue gets raised in my electorate a fair bit. Two-lot strata schemes are unique in that lot owners generally decide on issues unanimously. The bill will allow an owner in a two-lot scheme to issue a notice to comply with a by-law to other owners without requiring the agreement of the other owner. Currently, an owner has to get the other owner's support to issue a notice to comply, which is almost impossible. The bill will enable the owner to issue a notice to comply without agreement from the other owner. That will mean that they can then apply to the tribunal for continued breaches of by-laws, if needed. The bill maintains the original owner's full unit entitlement and voting rights, which is to ensure that no owner in a single two-lot scheme has a controlling interest over the other owner.

The bill is the beginning of strata and community land scheme reforms from this Government. Those who live and work in strata and community land schemes have waited far too long for change. The bill will deliver necessary reforms to modernise, clarify and enhance current laws for the benefit of residents. It will stop the manipulation by developers of strata renewal processes, increase strata committee accountability, and uplift the governance of schemes and provide greater transparency to let residents enjoy the benefits of pet ownership. The Government is committed to delivering reforms that improve the lives of people living in strata and community land schemes. Those reforms will complement many of the Government's other work, including the appointment of a strata commissioner, cracking down on unscrupulous builders, increasing housing supply and making it easier for tenants to have pets in rentals and easier for people to live in Sydney.

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (19:23):** I speak in support of the Strata Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. Until recently Riverstone has not had many people living in strata; most of the housing is on quarter-acre blocks or farms with acreage. However, as the electorate faces rapid growth, the five-acre blocks are being replaced with 500-unit towers. Many of my constituents have already begun living in housing with strata management. It is our responsibility to ensure that those people are protected, and the amendments in the bill ensure that. The amendments are driven by the report on the statutory review of the Strata Schemes Development Act 2015 and the Strata Schemes Management Act 2015. The Minns Government is acting on the recommendations made in that report to crack down on unscrupulous builders, effectively increase housing supply, and make it easier for tenants to have pets in rentals. This amendment bill is part of a broader drive from this Government to ensure that legislation around housing is considered and reflective of our community needs.

We know that the need for more housing is paramount. The Minns Government has undertaken a broad suite of changes to go up rather than out, which necessarily means more people living in strata management dwellings. However, the new supply must come with a robust framework to protect both renters and home owners alike. The Strata Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 marks a crucial stride towards enhancing the governance, transparency and overall living experience within strata and community land schemes in New South Wales. This comprehensive piece of legislation addresses a spectrum of issues, ranging from a strata renewal process to pet ownership rights. There is committee accountability, financial management, record keeping and the unique challenges faced by two-lot strata schemes. Those amendments are not just about legal technicalities but are a

concerted effort to address practical challenges and enhance the quality of life for residents in those communal living spaces.

One of the more significant points of the bill is the refinement of the strata renewal process. The amendments acknowledge the effectiveness of the existing collective sale and the redevelopment provisions but also respond to valuable feedback from consultation. The introduction of flexibility into the stage process and the strengthening of existing safeguards are noteworthy improvements. By providing a more workable process while maintaining fundamental safeguards, the amendments aim to boost confidence in the regime, addressing concerns raised during the statutory review that procedural errors might impede the approval of strata renewal plans.

The bill's provisions also extend to the disclosure of conflicts of interest, a critical aspect in ensuring fair decision-making. By broadening the conflict of interest provisions to include all owners at key decision points in the renewal process, the amendments foster transparency. This addresses instances where conflicting financial interests may have been manipulated to disrupt proceedings, incur unnecessary legal costs and, ultimately, impede the success of collective sales or redevelopments. Those changes underscore the commitment to a fair and transparent decision-making process, ensuring that all owners' voices are considered.

Furthermore, the bill takes a significant step in facilitating pet ownership within strata and community land schemes. Recognising the increasing trend of apartment or townhouse living as a choice for home ownership, the amendments make it easier for residents to keep pets. As the member for Coogee noted, the ownership experience is changing from individuals or couples to families, and pets are well known to be beneficial for people's mental and physical wellbeing. The prohibition of certain fees and bonds related to pet ownership removes unnecessary barriers and ensures that residents are not burdened with additional costs beyond the levies that they already contribute for the administration of the scheme. Those changes align with the broader societal trend of pet ownership and acknowledge the numerous benefits that pets bring to individuals and families, promoting a more inclusive and supportive living environment.

A key aspect of the bill is its commitment to the protection and accommodation of assistance animals. Not all animals are pets. Some are designed to assist people living with disabilities. Strengthening the safeguards for persons with disabilities who rely on assistance animals, the amendments make it clear that by-laws cannot impede the ability of assistance animals to perform their duties. This proactive approach ensures that individuals with disabilities have the confidence and independence provided by their assistance animals, contributing to a more inclusive and accessible living space. It is well considered for both pets and for people who require animals to move on with their lives.

The amendments must also address governance issues within strata and association committees, recognising the crucial role that committees play in the day-to-day functioning of the schemes. By providing greater clarity about the duties of committee members, including the removal of members with financial conflicts of interest, the bill aims to enhance accountability. The lowering of a voting threshold for the removal of committee members streamlines the process, preventing a minority from retaining a committee member who no longer enjoys majority support. The changes contribute to a more efficient and responsive decision-making structure within strata committees.

The amendments introduce changes to strengthen the governance and effectiveness of general meetings. Extending the notice period for annual general meetings, requiring key documents to be provided well in advance and addressing proxy farming practices ensures fair and informed decision-making processes and increases the ability to have democratic changeovers of governance. The changes not only empower owners with more time to review and consider important decisions but also protect the nature of the democratic processes in the general meetings, preventing a concentration of voting power in the hands of just a few.

The financial aspects of strata and community land schemes are also addressed comprehensively in the amendments. Clarity is brought to the transfer of funds between capital works and administrative funds, resolving ambiguity about the repayment of those amounts. The reduction of notice periods for urgent repairs levies acknowledges the need for swift action in critical situations. Extending the requirement for obtaining quotes for significant expenses to all schemes irrespective of size ensures that competitive prices are sought, promoting responsible financial management. It is a balance between addressing critical situations and ensuring the best possible price is achieved when improvements are needed. Record keeping is a vital element of effective governance, and the amendments introduce measures to improve storage and accessibility of records. Requiring electronic storage of records made six or more months after the bill commences enhances efficiency and ease of access without preventing the keeping of hard-copy records.

The bill introduces measures to ensure that landlords' agents provide notice of tenancy to the owners' corporation or association, promoting better awareness of tenants living in the scheme. That aligns with the broader trend of promoting responsible and accountable property management practices. The amendments also

recognise the unique challenges faced by two-lot strata schemes by introducing measures to streamline processes and maintain fair governance. Allowing an owner to issue a notice to comply without requiring agreement from the other owner simplifies the enforcement of by-laws, and maintaining the original owner's full unit entitlement and voting rights ensures a balanced distribution of power.

Strata managing agents play a pivotal role in the management of schemes, and the amendments introduce changes to strengthen protections for owners in their dealings with managing agents. Limiting the notice period for the expiry of managing agent contracts ensures that schemes are better prepared for contract renewal or discontinuation. The provision granting the Fair Trading Commissioner the standing to apply for the appointment of a compulsory managing agent further safeguards the interests of residents in situations where the management of a scheme is not functioning effectively.

The Strata Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 represents a comprehensive and forward-thinking approach to addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by residents in strata and community land schemes. By focusing on transparency, accountability and the wellbeing of residents, the amendments pave the way for a more harmonious and efficient communal living experience. For Riverstone especially, home to many tenants living under strata with many more to come in the future, the amendments are critical to setting up a robust framework that will protect their rights and make living easier to ensure that their needs are catered to. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (19:33):** I make a brief contribution to debate on the Strata Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. Apartment living is becoming more and more popular. As we know, we are in the middle of a housing crisis. The direction of the Government is to contribute to solving that housing crisis by increasing density which, by definition, means there will be more apartments. Currently, 20 per cent of New South Wales dwellings are apartments or townhouses, and there are about three million dwellings in New South Wales, according to the 2021 census. That means there are about 600,000 apartments or townhouses in the State at the moment. If we multiply the average price of an apartment in New South Wales—which is around \$800,000—by 600,000, that is almost half a trillion dollars of value in the apartment stock of the State.

My point is that a tremendous amount of wealth and power resides within strata schemes in New South Wales, and the management of those strata schemes is by strata committees. As part of the Government's direction toward solving the housing crisis and as part of protecting the financial interests of a lot of people—for most people, their home is their greatest financial asset—it is critically important to make sure that they have confidence in the effectiveness, governance and integrity of those strata schemes. So much wealth and power are controlled by them, and they are a critical part of people's investment plans as well as their dwellings.

That is the context for the reforms that the bill seeks to undertake. It implements 31 recommendations from the 2021 statutory review of the Strata Schemes Development Act and the Strata Schemes Management Act. As I said, the objective is to improve the governance, accountability and effectiveness of the schemes. Strata schemes are a pretty innovative governance arrangement. They remind me of the concept of a company. They are a mechanism by which there can be communal or joint management or control or ownership over an asset. They allow a group of people to not only jointly own their apartments but also jointly own common areas like elevators, swimming pools, gardens, barbecue areas and whatever else. Strata is an innovative way of allowing such joint and communal management of a dwelling. It is part and parcel of communal living. That is, again, why it is so important that owners and communities have confidence in strata schemes.

Speakers before me have gone into detail about the provisions of the bill. I will not go into so much detail; I will just cover three main aspects. The first is that the reforms in the bill improve the strata renewal regime. That is where a bunch of owners want to sell or redevelop their building or development and there is a minority that do not. Just as in company law, with strata schemes it is a question of balancing the rights of the majority with the rights of the minority. Right now the rule, which has been working reasonably well, is that 75 per cent of owners wanting to sell or redevelop the property can drag the remaining 25 per cent with them.

The bill allows the Land and Environment Court to forgive minor mistakes in the very strict process of procedure that needs to be followed in order to do that sort of compulsory acquisition and to drag the minority along. The bill also provides that all owners, not just members of the strata committee, have to declare any conflicts of interest. That is obviously important to prevent any funny business from going on when an owner or a member of the strata committee deliberately tries to block a redevelopment proposal or a sale because they have an undisclosed interest. They might have a rival bid that they want to put up, which is why they want to sink the current bid before the committee. They might own adjacent land, so they do not want a redevelopment to block their views. There are a variety of reasons. That is why this bill, in order to improve accountability and transparency, will require that all owners disclose if they have a financial interest.

The second area covered by the bill is improving the accountability and governance of committees. When I was reading the bill, it reminded me of company law. Those on the strata committee have a duty. They manage the affairs of the owners' corporation and decide on things such as maintenance, repairs, important financial decisions and strategic decisions. The fundamental principle is that members of the strata committee have to act in the best interests of people who are living in that complex. They cannot act in their own personal interests. Members of the strata committee cannot vote where they have a conflict of interest. The other reform is that a simple majority is sufficient to remove a member of the strata committee and to increase the maximum number of members of a strata committee from nine to 15.

The third area I will cover is the bill's strengthening of the governance and effectiveness of meetings. There has to be one general meeting held every year of the strata committee. The bill requires a minimum notice period of 14 days, up from 7 days. It requires that key documents are provided at least 14 days in advance of the meeting, rather than 48 hours, and it stops proxy farming. These are all commonsense reforms that improve the effectiveness of governance and its transparency. In conclusion, as I said, there is a tremendous amount of power, wealth and responsibility that is vested in strata committees and strata schemes. We have a housing crisis in New South Wales. At least part of the solution to that housing crisis will involve increasing density, and that means more apartments and more strata schemes. It is, therefore, critical that the residents of New South Wales have confidence in the integrity, effectiveness, governance and accountability of those strata schemes. This bill takes first steps to achieving that.

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (19:41):** I speak in support of the Strata Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. At the outset I acknowledge my colleague the outstanding Minister and member for Macquarie Fields. We share responsibility for part of this legislation, but obviously he has done a great deal of work, and I put the acknowledgement of his work on record. The bill provides vital and much-anticipated improvements to the legislative framework governing strata properties. Strata is significant in New South Wales: More than 1.1 million people in the State now call strata properties home, and around 1,000 new strata schemes are being established each year.

The impact of these reforms should not be underestimated. Strata schemes are an essential element in the fabric of New South Wales housing and play a crucial role in other aspects of the built environment. Not limited to only housing, strata title can apply to retail shops, commercial offices, factories and even retirement villages. For those who are unfamiliar with the terminology, a strata scheme is a building, or a collection of buildings, that has been divided into lots. When a person buys a lot in a strata scheme, they own the inside of that lot or unit, but they also share the common property with other owners. Common property is usually the areas of communal use or structural importance, like gardens, recreational spaces, external walls, stairwells and driveways. At its heart, strata title involves collaborative decision-making, shared property and communal interaction. A residential strata scheme is essentially a self-governing community, where lot owners collectively decide how best to manage the property they share.

Today I speak in support of the bill's reforms, particularly as they relate to the Strata Schemes Development Act 2015, or the development Act. I am responsible for the development Act, along with the Minister for Building. The development Act provides for the creation, variation and termination of strata schemes, and sets out requirements for dealings with lots and common property. It also supports urban revitalisation and boosts housing supply through the strata renewal process, which was one of the most significant reforms introduced by the 2015 laws. Strata renewal permits strata owners to pursue a collective sale or redevelopment of their complex where there is not unanimous support, but at least 75 per cent of lot owners agree.

This regime draws on the principles of collective decision-making inherent in strata living. It was introduced to address the shortcomings in the previous law, where owners who wished to renew their building could be blocked by just one individual who did not want to participate. The process balances the need for owners to make collaborative decisions about the future of their strata complex, while ensuring the minority in any such decision are treated fairly and considerately. It is a particularly important mechanism for strata owners as buildings age and the cost of repairing, maintaining or retrofitting structural components increases, sometimes prohibitively. The 2021 statutory review found that the development Act was meeting its objectives, but it identified a compelling need to restore balance and enhance safeguards in strata renewal to address unintended consequences. The bill returns that balance and delivers a more workable, transparent and fair renewal process.

Central to the regime is a rigorous, multi-step process that schemes must follow to develop a renewal plan, designed to be transparent and to allow time for consultation. Built-in safeguards are aimed at preventing intimidation, encouraging collaboration and ensuring that owners receive appropriate compensation. One of these safeguards is the need for members of the strata renewal committee charged with developing a renewal plan to

disclose conflicts of interest. The owners' corporation can then consider that conflict, and whether the committee member should be permitted to continue work to develop a renewal plan.

Another safeguard is the oversight of the Land and Environment Court. In considering whether to approve a renewal plan, the court must be satisfied that it was developed in good faith, that owners are being properly compensated, and that approving the plan is just and equitable in the circumstances. The current law also protects dissenting owners through a presumption that the owners' corporation will pay the dissenting owners reasonable costs in renewal proceedings. The provision is designed to encourage dissenting owners to voice their concerns without fear of financial ramifications, but it has resulted in some unintended consequences. Feedback to the statutory review has highlighted instances of the safeguards being manipulated in a way that was not intended and that is contrary to the objectives of the regime.

In these cases, the collective will of owners to renew their scheme is being thwarted by the mercenary tactics of rival developers, manipulating the safeguards for their own commercial gain. One example is a scheme at Macquarie Park in north-west Sydney, where a proposal supported by more than 75 per cent of owners is now at a standstill, and the scheme's future is uncertain. There, a dissenter was able to adopt a blocking position and use the current safeguards to draw out proceedings and incur significant costs for the owners' corporation, such that the proposal had to be abandoned. In that case the dissenting owner was a rival developer who had been the underbidder in an earlier tender process, and had at no stage in the proceedings been required to disclose their conflict of interest. The owners are now left with the financial impacts of protracted litigation and no clear path to renew the scheme.

To address this problem, the bill extends existing requirements for renewal committee members to disclose conflicts of interest so that these now apply to all owners, including those in dissent. The bill provides guidance as to the kinds of direct and indirect pecuniary or other interests that must be disclosed, which might be a connection with a proposed purchaser of the scheme or with a competing purchaser. The bill is not exhaustive in providing this guidance. However, this change does not stifle an owner's right to be heard. Just because a person has disclosed a relevant interest does not mean they do not get to have a say in the scheme's future. This reform is all about transparency, collaboration and balance. Disclosures need to be made at key decision points in the renewal process so that they are documented in meeting minutes, and this information is available to the Land and Environment Court.

The changes in the bill mean that the court will now have to consider potential conflicts of interest for both strata renewal applications and objections to a strata renewal proposal before making an order to approve a plan or endorse an objection. Costs are another important issue addressed by the bill. In cases where safeguards have been reportedly misused, dissenters have been able to protract litigation to ramp up legal costs, which, under current law, are not recoverable from the dissenting owner. That loophole has promoted frivolous and vexatious legal action.

Amendments to section 188 of the development Act make it clear that the court can award costs against a dissenting owner where the court considers it appropriate. This might occur where the owner has not acted in good faith or has a conflict of interest that makes it inappropriate for the owners' corporation to bear all costs of proceedings. These important changes will provide immediate benefits to those schemes wanting to pursue a strata renewal and will reset the balance that was intended when the regime was first introduced. The Strata Legislation Amendment Bill makes other improvements to the development Act to provide flexibility and simplify certain processes in terminating and varying schemes.

Still in the strata renewal process, the bill permits the Land and Environment Court to approve a renewal plan even if there is a procedural irregularity in its development. The court can only do so if the irregularity would not cause a substantial injustice. Currently the court must not approve a plan if the process set out in the legislation has not been properly followed, and as a result the plan lapses and cannot be resubmitted for 12 months. For schemes that may have spent a year or two developing a renewal plan, this potential barrier would have significant ramifications. The flexibility this amendment provides will ensure a more practical, workable process and will encourage schemes to pursue renewal plans without the fear of inadvertent lapsing.

Moving away from strata renewal, the bill also provides flexibility in certain plan requirements. To this end, the bill amends schedule 2 to the development Act to clarify valuation requirements for schedules of unit entitlements in strata plans of subdivision. The schedule of unit entitlements sets the basis for apportionment of contributions—or levies—and voting rights within the scheme. In 2015 the development Act introduced a requirement that unit entitlements be determined by a qualified valuer on a market value basis. This change was intended to provide an impartial allocation of unit entitlements and a fairer basis for assessing levies to overcome the previous system, where unit entitlements were based on developers' estimates.

However, this change has been problematic in particular circumstances. Where strata lots are subdivided after a scheme has been established, a strata plan of subdivision must be accompanied by a new schedule of unit entitlement determined by a qualified valuer. If this subdivision will create or subdivide common property, all of the lots in the scheme will need to be valued because the relationship between all lots may have been altered. *[Extension of time]*

This valuation process can be expensive, particularly in large schemes with many lots. The statutory review identified that this valuation may not be appropriate in all cases. The bill addresses this issue by amending schedule 2 to the development Act and dispensing with the valuation, if the qualified valuer is of the opinion that the subdivision involves only minor changes to common property that will not impact the proportionate unit entitlement of each lot in the scheme. While this change may seem very technical, the amendment will overcome a significant administrative and financial hurdle for strata owners who are altering their lots in this way.

The Strata Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 introduces much-needed changes that have been developed in consultation with industry stakeholders and the community. The swift action of this Government in implementing recommendations from the strata statutory review demonstrates the Government's firm focus on improving the lives of the increasing number of New South Wales citizens who live and work in strata schemes. I thank everybody who worked in preparing this legislation and consulted with stakeholders to help us to get to this point. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (19:53):** On behalf of Mr Anoulack Chanthivong: In reply: Tonight I am pleased to represent the Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading. I thank members for their contributions to debate on the Strata Legislation Amendment Bill 2023, particularly the members for the electorates of Willoughby, Liverpool, Newtown, South Coast, Camden, Parramatta, Granville, Fairfield, Coogee, Riverstone, Strathfield and Bankstown. The bill implements 31 recommendations from the 2021 Statutory Review of the Strata Schemes Development Act 2015 and Strata Schemes Management Act 2015. It is the first step in delivering the review's recommendations and demonstrates the Government is getting on with the job.

The reforms in this bill will improve the lives of residents in strata and community land schemes. They will do so by, for example, making the strata renewal process more workable and transparent to address the issues highlighted in the well-publicised example at Macquarie Park; stopping community land schemes from making decisions or by-laws that prohibit the keeping of a pet on a lot, unless the pet would unreasonably interfere with other residents' use and enjoyment of their home; stopping schemes from charging bonds or fees or requiring insurance for a resident to keep a pet; supporting people with an assistance animal to maintain their privacy and ensuring that by-laws cannot affect assistance animals' performance of their role to help their owners; and increasing the effectiveness of schemes' governance, processes and accountability mechanisms, such as requiring schemes to keep electronic records going forward.

The Government is committed to strengthening the foundations of strata and community land scheme laws so that everyone has the confidence to live and invest in these types of living arrangements. This is especially important as we move to increase housing supply across New South Wales. Strata and community land schemes are a growing share of the housing mix in New South Wales. They play an increasingly important part in meeting people's housing needs.

I note that most amendments in the bill commence on assent, providing immediate benefits to strata and community land schemes. However, two amendments commence on proclamation. The first is the amendment to extend the existing strata pet reforms to community land schemes. This amendment will commence once supporting regulations have been developed. The regulations need to be developed in consultation with stakeholders and will set out some of the circumstances where it is unreasonable to keep an animal because it interferes with another resident's use and enjoyment of their lot or association property. The second is the amendment giving standing to the NSW Fair Trading Commissioner to seek the appointment of a compulsory managing agent at the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. This is to ensure there is sufficient time for the tribunal's case management system, forms and websites to be updated before the provision starts.

I also note that the amendment requiring schemes to keep records in electronic form starts on the Act's assent. However, the provision only applies to records made six months after it commences. This gives schemes time to prepare for this new requirement. For the bill provisions that commence on assent, the Department of Customer Service will take an educative approach to enforcement for the first few months. However, the strata renewal changes will not be subject to this transition period, as it is important that they apply immediately for the benefit of schemes that are currently in a stalemate. I will now respond briefly to points made by members. I welcome the support of the Opposition and the member for Willoughby's remarks on the provisions in the bill. On a side note, I wish the shadow Minister the best of luck in his endeavour for a pet in his own household.

**Mr Tim James:** Thank you, I'll need it. Just ask my wife.

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA:** Just show your family the *Hansard*. As the Minister indicated in his second reading speech, the Government is well aware of the importance of pets to the people of New South Wales. We are proud of the provisions in the bill to make it easier to keep pets and assistance animals in strata and community land schemes. I also note the shadow Minister's comments that the bill builds on the work of the former Government. It is a shame that the former Government did not bring the required legislative changes to the House despite the statutory review report being tabled in 2021.

I also welcome The Greens' support for the bill, as outlined by the member for Newtown. With more than 85,000 strata schemes in New South Wales, the bill will improve the lives of the great numbers of people who live in strata and community land schemes. The bill continues to modernise strata and community land laws. It addresses pain points that stakeholders have identified over the past few years. The bill complements the Government's other commitments relating to strata living. This includes our appointment of a strata commissioner, our work to crack down on unscrupulous builders, our work to increase housing supply and our work to make it easier for tenants to have pets in rentals. The Government's ambitious reform agenda will provide buyers and renters with confidence about the quality of their homes and their living arrangements.

I thank the wide range of stakeholders who have engaged constructively with us on the bill, from key strata stakeholders, such as the Strata Community Association (NSW) and the Owners Corporation Network, to industry stakeholders, such as the Real Estate Institute of NSW and the Australian Property Institute, to tenant and animal justice advocates, such as the Tenants' Union of NSW and Animal Care Australia. Their input is invaluable. I also thank the dedicated staff at NSW Fair Trading and the office of the Registrar General for their work to bring the bill to fruition. Thank you to Melissa Pinto, Cassie Jacobs, Timothy Lohman, Leslie Barraclough, Sabah Fahad, Diana Holy, Katerina Pavlidis, Leanne Hughes, Amy Stiles and Alana Hoyek. I look forward to building on this first stage of work with future legislative reforms and the continual advancement of modern and fit-for-purpose strata and community land scheme laws. I commend the bill to the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

### Third Reading

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA:** On behalf of Mr Anoulack Chanthivong: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

## EMERGENCY SERVICES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2023

### Consideration in Detail

#### Consideration of the Legislative Council amendment.

*Schedule of amendment referred to in message of 19 October 2023*

No. 1      **GOVT No. 1 [c2023-100B]**

Page 4, Schedule 2. Insert after line 8—

#### [2]      **Section 26 Membership of Advisory Board**

Insert after section 26(2)—

(2A)      Also, at least one of the members of the Advisory Board must be a person who, in the Minister's opinion, has considerable experience in a senior role with a local council.

**Example—** experience as a senior manager of a local council

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (20:02):** I move:

That the Legislative Council amendment be agreed to.

I acknowledge the presence of the shadow Minister in the Chamber and thank members in the other place for the amendment. It is a good, sensible amendment. This is a good process in terms of the Parliament. Where we can make legislation better, we will. I acknowledge the shadow Minister and the collaborative way in which we have worked to get the amendment passed.

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (20:03):** On behalf of the Opposition, I thank the Minister and his staff for the collaborative way in which they have dealt with not only the bill but also the subsequent amendment. The Opposition does not oppose the amendment.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

#### *Community Recognition Statements*

#### **IAN BURNS**

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (20:04):** I commend Hawkesbury's Ian Burns, who runs the Hawkesbury Paddlewheeler. Ian has faced great adversity to ensure the boat continues to operate. The construction of the new Windsor Bridge prevented him from docking at the Windsor wharf for years. Add to that the pandemic and six catastrophic floods over 18 months, which would have most businesses walking away. But Ian remained focused on resurrecting this piece of maritime history for locals and tourists to enjoy. I was honoured to join Ian at the paddlewheeler on Saturday 18 November, where local bands, businesses and residents were present to show their support. Congratulations to Ian on maintaining this iconic tourist attraction. I encourage everyone to visit Windsor and experience the Hawkesbury River on this amazing paddlewheeler.

#### **GREG WELLS**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (20:05):** I congratulate Flinders Public School Principal Greg Wells on being awarded a Distinguished Service Award at the Primary Principals' Association State Conference held in Sydney from 24 to 27 October 2023. The Distinguished Service Award started in 2010 to recognise those who have undertaken high-level activities and achieved excellence in that area. Mr Wells received the award for his service not only to the students, staff and community of Flinders Public School, but also to the other schools in the wider network of schools in southern New South Wales. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour community, I express our congratulations to Greg Wells on his steadfast commitment and dedication to students, their families and the community.

#### **NORTHERN TABLELANDS ELECTORATE STUDENTS**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (20:06):** I recognise the achievements of students from the Northern Tablelands electorate for their outstanding performances in the recent Newcastle Permanent Primary Mathematics Competition. I congratulate Subha Naomi Hoque of Armidale City Public School and Riley Woodward of Inverell's Holy Trinity School for their wins in the Year 5 District Awards–New England North West and Kevin Mongar of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Armidale, for his win in the Year 6 District Awards–New England North West. I commend each of the students for their hard work in their preparation and practice leading up to the competition and their commitment to the event. Each is a great representative for the power of public education and independent school education to provide useful skills that can be applied in day-to-day life. I also acknowledge the principals and teachers for the support they provide to their students. Congratulations to all of them.

#### **16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (20:07):** Violence against women and girls continues to be a senseless scourge on societies around the world, including our own. The annual international campaign 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Related Violence will run from 25 November until 10 December. The 2023 theme is Make it Your Business, as we seek to normalise responding to and addressing domestic violence by educating the community. Parramatta is home to Cumberland Women's Health Centre, Immigrant Women's SpeakOut, Thelma Brown Cottage and Parramatta Women's Shelter, along with other dedicated domestic and family violence [DFV] support services. In 2022 the City of Parramatta adopted a three-year Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence Action Plan outlining council's commitment to preventing DFV and strengthening community groups, services and businesses' capacity to respond to violence. I encourage members to visit PHIVE in Parramatta Square during the 16 Days of Activism to see how violence is displayed in those images.

#### **RAINBOW LODGE**

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (20:08):** I bring to the attention of the House the Rainbow Lodge Program, the first intensive, residential-based program in Australia to help people recently released from prison to reintegrate into the community. Based on Gadigal land in Glebe, the program has run for over 50 years and helped hundreds of men to rebuild their lives and lower the risk of reoffending, with a focus on healing from trauma and the impacts of the criminal justice system through capacity building and cultural programs. The

recently launched Walama List program has seen Rainbow Lodge assist more First Nations men through a range of social and cultural activities to support their wellbeing post release. I thank manager Claude Robinson, board members Bill O'Brien, Pete Townsend, Annabel Mayo and Troy Rugless, Judge Sophie Beckett, Magistrate Jenny Atkinson, Trinkia Kent, Gareth Hamill and Ilan Finberg, as well as Elders, staff and volunteers for the important work they do.

#### **REBEL HANLON**

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (20:09):** I congratulate Rebel Hanlon on becoming a director of the Greater Blacktown Business Chamber. The chamber's request for Rebel Hanlon to join their board is based on his reputation as a can-do person with strategic foresight. Rebel has served in leadership roles in his previous capacities as president of the Blacktown City Lions Club; assistant secretary of the Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union, New South Wales Construction Division; director of West Tradies Club; and various leadership and policy roles within the Labor Party. All those roles are diverse, and many would see them as insurmountable challenges in reconciling strong union principles with the management of a club. But Rebel is no ordinary person, and due to his strong ethical stance on what is right and his belief in enhancing the community good, he can easily deliver. I congratulate Rebel Hanlon. He is truly a Rebel for a great cause with a lion's heart.

#### **COROWA RUTHERGLEN FOOTBALL NETBALL CLUB**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (20:10):** I extend my congratulations to Corowa Rutherglen Football Netball Club on its return to the Ovens and Murray. Devastating flood damage and other changes forced the club into a recess. The board's recent decision to re-enter in 2024 signifies a remarkable turnaround. Club leaders like Graham Hosier, Craig Spencer, Rowena Black on the board; Steve Owen and the coaching team across both football and netball; Ovens and Murray officials; and the entire Roos team have shown unwavering determination. Playing numbers have increased in both the football and netball teams. The outpouring of support and the relentless efforts behind the scenes have not only rekindled the spirit of Corowa Rutherglen but also demonstrated the enduring strength of community ties. The club's return to competition dispels the idea that clubs in recess cannot make a comeback. This commitment will create opportunities for young athletes and help ensure the future of competitive football and netball in the Ovens and Murray region. Welcome back, Corowa Rutherglen. Welcome back, the Roos.

#### **REPUBLIC OF TÜRKIYE 100TH ANNIVERSARY**

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (20:11):** My electorate recently celebrated the 100th anniversary of the Republic of Türkiye. One of the biggest community celebrations was the successful event run in Wyatt Park, Lidcombe, by Cumberland City Council with funding from the New South Wales Government through Multicultural NSW. Cumberland City Council takes immense pride in the diversity and unity of the community, and that shone through throughout the celebration. It was widely enjoyed, and it was great to see diverse groups unite and showcase their rich tapestry of identities. I thank the Cumberland City Council steering committee for its tremendous work, including staff Nicole Byrn, Stephanie Hodgson, Davin Nam, Chloe Babbage, Ilan Bermeister and Michael Brown. Many local organisations were an essential part of the committee, including Australia Alevi Cultural Centre, Australia Turkish Maarif Foundation, Australian-Azerbaijan Association, Australian Turkish Music Ensemble, Australian Turkish Mutual Alliance, Ataturk Scholarship, Gallipoli Mosque, Gallipoli Turkish Cultural Foundation, Muge Hassip and the Republic of Türkiye Centenary Committee. I thank them for their hard work.

#### **BLACK HEAD LONGBOARDERS**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes) (20:12):** I recognise the Black Head Longboarders for their outstanding efforts in organising the Surfside Hoedown Charity Fundraiser, held at Hallidays Sports Club. This incredible event successfully brought together our community to support a noble cause: Dolly's Dream. The Black Head Longboarders and club president, Halle Ford, coordinated an evening filled with live music, raffles, an auction, face painting and a mechanical bull. The event not only surpassed expectations but also raised an impressive total of \$25,300 for the youth suicide prevention charity Dolly's Dream. This achievement was made possible through the hard work of the Black Head Longboarders and the generous contributions and donations from local businesses. I thank Black Head Longboarders for having a positive impact on our community and supporting a very meaningful cause.

#### **KEIRA BUCKPITT**

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (20:13):** I recognise Keira Buckpitt of Culburra Beach. Keira has been a member of the Culburra Beach Boatriders Club and Ulladulla Boardriders Club since she was five years of age. Since that time, I have watched Keira grow into the amazing young surfer and athlete that she is today.

She is currently preparing to represent Australia at the International Surfing Games to be held in Rio de Janeiro later this week. Not only is Keira representing Australia but she has also been voted captain by her teammates due to her willingness to help mentor younger surfers and her past experiences at local and international surf titles. As captain, Keira gets to take part in the opening ceremony, which includes the sand pour where representatives from each country take sand over to the event from where they live. During the ceremony, all sand is poured into one bowl as a symbolic gesture of unity. Keira is taking sand from her beloved Lake Wollumboola. I congratulate Keira and wish her good luck.

#### **EASTERN SUBURBS POLICE AREA COMMAND AWARDS**

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (20:14):** I acknowledge the dedicated Police Force in the eastern suburbs, who keep our community safe. Under the leadership of Detective Superintendent Jodi Radmore, they have been exceptional during these difficult times. Recently I attended the Eastern Suburbs Police Area Command Awards. The police officers were recognised for their dedicated long service and ethical and diligent police service. In particular, I call out Sergeant Anthony Crematy, the recipient of the National Emergency Medal; Inspector Amy Scott, the recipient of the National Medal and the National Police Service Medal; and Sergeant Kerri Ann Bennett, the recipient of the National Medal Clasp Set. We are all beneficiaries of their service and our community is deeply grateful. I thank them all.

#### **ANGUS OLSEN**

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (20:15):** Angus Olsen's daughter Jane was diagnosed with cancer at just two years old and bravely endured months of chemotherapy, procedures and hospitalisation. In order to help Jane understand her diagnosis and treatment, Angus began drawing pictures and cartoons. Over the course of Jane's treatment, Angus created over 20 books filled with illustrations that would go on to help young children understand aspects of their treatment like their scans or medical equipment. Angus was recently awarded the Local Hero at the 2024 NSW Australian of the Year awards, an achievement that acknowledges the selfless and important work he has done to help his daughter and thousands of families around the world. I offer him my hearty congratulations. Stories like Angus' are so important because they raise awareness and reassure people going through this that they are not alone. These books support children and their families and help others understand the challenges of a cancer diagnosis. I pay tribute to Angus; his wife, Rachel; Jane; and her sister Holly. I am honoured to recognise their journey as a family and the amazing work Angus has done. Check out his Facebook page I Draw Childhood Cancer.

#### **KORORO PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (20:16):** Kororo Public School is the toast of the Coffs Coast with its remarkable journey to the NSW Primary Schools Sports Association football knockout finals. The Kororo-Tillies had an inspirational run of success in their round clashes and quarterfinal to be crowned regional champions. That cemented their finals spot in Sydney, where they finished third out of 460 teams in the State. The squad comprises captains Charlotte Dixon and Ginger Harrison, Freya Wendt, Saffi Wendt, Valla Parsons, Aaliyah Parsons, Julia Pietrini, Amber Fletcher, Mia Rademaker, Mya Whealey, Koa Miller, Kya Murphy, Emily Hunter, Daisy Morrison, Tera Haynes, Claire Cuthbertson, Ruby Deacon and Maddison Wallace. The Kororo Public School team is coached and managed by Gurleen Sandhu. We are all extremely proud of their achievements, and their proud parents and teachers can certainly share in their success.

#### **RUTH DIEMAR**

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion) (20:17):** Not many people can end their careers categorically knowing they have made a difference to the lives of many people. I pay tribute to someone who most definitely can. Ruth Diemar has spent the past 36 years at Birubi Point Community Preschool, giving children the best possible start in life. Ruth, who is soon to retire, has spent her entire 36 years as the director of the preschool, a service that started off as a four-day service operating out of the community hall. After a few years of Ruth's passionate advocacy, the preschool became a purpose-built building next door, operating every weekday for the families of Anna Bay. As a true testament to Ruth's leadership, many of her staff have also been there for a very long time and they speak of Ruth's love for the children, love for their families and her love of literacy, and about what a wonderful storyteller she is. On behalf of generations of families in Anna Bay, this Parliament and the New South Wales Government, I recognise and thank Ruth Diemar for her 36 years of commitment and dedication to changing children's lives through the power of early education.

#### **SILVERDALE SHOPPING CENTRE**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (20:18):** The building progress for Silverdale Shopping Centre is under schedule even with continual roadblocks from the council. It is one of the largest private investments in

Wollondilly we have ever seen. The locally managed project will feature a shopping centre and 468 car spaces, the majority of which are situated under the 8,000 square metre retail space. The project has taken years, with approval delays, altered plans and communication delays. I acknowledge the resilience of Bruno Lopriato, who moved into the area in 1986 and saw the construction of the first small shopping precinct at that time. Over 400 jobs will be generated by the investment of the Lopriato family. The shopping centre will be just 30 minutes away from the new airport. I am excited to see the project progress to its first stage opening in March 2024. At the end of the project, residents will be pleased to hear there will be takeaways, personal trainers, discount stores, a delicatessen, a post office, a cafe, a barber, a nail salon, a medical centre, a dentist, a food court and a Woolworths. With the biggest project since Warragamba Dam in the local area, Bruno Lopriato deserves all the praise for his vision.

#### **ASSOCIATION OF MARIA SS DELLE GRAZIE AND SAN VITTORIO MARTIRE**

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (20:19):** Celebrating 63 years of service, the Association of Maria SS Delle Grazie and San Vittorio Martire is a longstanding Italian Australian organisation that goes above and beyond to make a difference. Its dedication to hosting diverse events, from festas to food night picnics to annual fundraising events, showcases a cultural community that embodies Fairfield's vibrant essence. Its support goes a long way to helping charities like the children's hospitals at Randwick and Westmead, the Leukaemia Foundation and many more. In acknowledging this association, it is important to also recognise the broader impact of the Italian Australian community. From great food and achievements in sport to notable political figures, including former Premier Morris Iemma, the Italian community has played a pivotal role in shaping our State's identity. Grazie amici for shaping Western Sydney with pride, warmth and a strong sense of community.

#### **THE HAIR SHACK**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek) (20:20):** I am delighted to acknowledge and celebrate a remarkable achievement by the team at the Hair Shack in Erskine Park, a shining example of excellence in our local business community. Earlier this year, the Hair Shack was rightly recognised, taking out the prestigious award for outstanding hairdresser in our local business awards. The Hair Shack's success is a testament to their professional skill, commitment to quality service and the positive impact they have on their clients. Winning this award is no small feat. It represents the hard work, talent and customer-focused approach that the team at the Hair Shack has consistently demonstrated. I extend my congratulations to the Hair Shack on receiving the outstanding hairdresser award. The recognition is well deserved and highlights the exceptional standards they have set in their field. Their achievement is a source of pride for Erskine Park and serves as an inspiration to all local businesses striving for excellence.

#### **MAZU PARADE AND LUNA DOUBLE NINTH FESTIVAL**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (20:21):** On 21 October I had the pleasure of attending the Mazu Parade and Luna Double Ninth Festival, a vibrant event that started at 8.00 a.m. and lasted until 4.00 p.m. I actively took part in the religious ceremony for Mazu, immersing myself in the rich cultural and spiritual experience. After the ceremony, the day commenced with a firecracker display and a captivating lion dance performance, setting the tone for the procession from Canley Vale to Freedom Plaza, Cabramatta. The procession was filled with people wearing cultural costumes and playing drums and music. There was a wonderful atmosphere. Once there, I was captivated by the diverse and mesmerising performances on display. I am grateful to the NSW Indo-China Chinese Association and the executive committee of the Tien Hau Temple for extending their invitation and allowing me to be a part of this wonderful celebration.

#### **CURRABUBULA PARENTS AND CITIZENS ASSOCIATION**

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (20:22):** I pay tribute to the members of the Currabubula Parents and Citizens Association for holding their fantastic boutique markets. From artisanal food to homemade jewellery and preserves of any kind, there is something for everyone at the Curra markets. This year, 180 stallholders spread out over the Currabubula Recreation Ground to sell their wares to the more than 5,000 marketgoers from all around the region. It is a remarkable effort to bring together the necessary people and resources to put on an event like this, and the best thing about it is that it is all for the kids. An incredible \$12,000 was raised for the local primary and preschools, funding that will go towards subsidising excursions, buying library books and sporting equipment, and infrastructure. The kids at Curra are grateful, and it is all thanks to the Currabubula P&C and its president, Veronica Filby.

#### **RAY JAMES, OAM**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (20:23):** I recognise the achievements of outgoing RSL NSW President and my constituent Ray James, OAM. Ray was elected to the presidency in December 2020 in the RSL's first one-member one-vote election in its history. During his term, Ray steered RSL NSW through challenging

and rewarding times. A Vietnam War veteran, Ray delivered an apology to those who served in Vietnam for their rejection by the league upon their return to Australia. He also presided over the first increase in membership in 40 years. I thank Ray for his service during and before his presidency, and I know his commitment to veterans will continue well into the future. I thank both Ray and his wife, Pauline, for their ongoing support of the RSL, veterans and their families in New South Wales. I count myself lucky to represent two such outstanding individuals in this place. I wish Ray and Pauline all the best in the future and congratulate new president Mick Bainbridge on his election.

#### **ASPECT VERN BARNETT SCHOOL**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (20:24):** On Thursday 16 November 2023 I attended the Aspect Vern Barnett School to mark the renovation of its campus in Forestville. The school, with 121 students, is an amazing place in our community. First built in 1971, the autism-specific school has historical significance in the northern beaches region. The school offers a range of services to support children on the autism spectrum and their families, and is important in offering choice in our education system. The renovation included additional classrooms; new calm, sensory and active playground spaces; and a multipurpose room incorporating autism-specific design improvements to support sensory requirements. I thank principal Anna Brady, Aspect CEO Jacqui Borland, Parents and Friends Association president Deb Monroe and former student Max Epper, who officially opened the renovation. I am proud that the services of Aspect Vern Barnett School are available to the Davidson electorate community.

#### **DANIEL GOBENA**

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (20:25):** I recognise Mr Daniel Gobena, who is a resident of my electorate, for his dedicated assistance to the community. Daniel is the manager of the Mount Druitt Ethnic Communities Agency, known as MECA, which is an independent not-for-profit community-based organisation dedicated to informing, linking and empowering people from culturally diverse backgrounds. Under Daniel's management, MECA has been able to establish pathways and information to assist the community and empower individuals to settle in to their new homes and become productive members of society. Daniel has been instrumental in assisting our diverse community, and his empathy and compassion should not go unnoticed.

#### **HEAD HIGH**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (20:26):** During the recent Festival of Mosman, I had the pleasure of attending an afternoon tea hosted by the team at Head High. For those who do not know, Head High is an organisation that allows young adults with disabilities to increase their capacity and confidence via education and professional skillsharing. The afternoon tea was served to us by the wonderful "Head Highers", as they are affectionately known, with delicious scones and tarts, as well as a spot of tea. The "Head Highers", as well as being on service duty, read out poems describing themselves. There were some truly fantastic and funny poems read out to all the friends, families and locals at the afternoon tea. I acknowledge the incredible work of the founder and owner of Head High, Julie Ross-Edwards, as well as the team from Cafe Montmartre for hosting at the last minute. I also thank some of our incredible "Head Highers" for their service work. Jess, Lucy, Adam, Dan, Shida and Liam all did such an amazing job. I look forward to joining them all and experiencing the wonderful work they do in my community to give young people the confidence and opportunity to achieve their goals.

#### **METRO ASSIST**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (20:27):** Earlier this week I had the pleasure of joining the Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs, the Hon. Andrew Giles, MP, at Metro Assist in Bankstown. In a bustling metropolis, it is easy to feel lost in the crowd, but Metro Assist, through its compassion and community spirit, serves as a guide for refugees and immigrants navigating the challenges of moving to Australia. Metro Assist, with its firm commitment to social welfare, offers support for individuals facing adversity, from providing housing assistance to offering counselling services. During my visit, students from Kingsgrove High School participated in Metro Assist's Dress for Work program. The program provides quality clothing and job-readiness training for boys and men who have experienced hardships in their lives. Coordinator Saleh Jaidi even tried to dress me in a better outfit, but I said, "Slim-fit shirts just don't do it for me anymore." Metro Assist provides business attire, casual wear, trade wear and accessories, as well as a one-on-one job-readiness training program. When asked about the program, the students agreed that they appreciated the advice they received, even small changes like cutting or maintaining their mullet. I wish them all the very best. I thank CEO Nina Shahi and the team.

### FUSION SYDNEY NORTH

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (20:28):** I recognise Fusion Sydney North in Hornsby, a wonderful not-for-profit community organisation with a commitment to developing resilience in individuals through various community initiatives. Fusion started in Hornsby over 60 years ago and today cares for communities via its centres across the world. Fusion provides 65 nutritious meals each night and 80 food hampers per week. This fills the needs of those who are homeless or struggling financially. Fusion centres also provide a safe place where people can visit, and they are always welcomed but never judged. Support is crucial for Fusion to function, and it is grateful for its relationships with many local supermarkets and SecondBite. Fusion Hornsby is almost entirely run by volunteers, with over 100 involved across its programs, ranging from youth volunteers through to retirees. I thank Phyl Ladd and Lyndal Eagleton, who recently retired after volunteering at Fusion for over 30 years. I also note Jan Smith, Judy Smith and Bev Dunlop for their incredible voluntary work over two decades. I also thank Daniel Neil, who recently moved on to a new challenge, as well as the incredible Myf Webster, who managed Fusion Hornsby passionately for many years.

### ALL SAINTS CHURCH BODALLA

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (20:29):** I congratulate the congregation of All Saints Church Bodalla and the Bodalla community on the recognition of the church as having State heritage significance. Designed in the early English Gothic revival style by the acclaimed colonial architect Edmund Thomas Blacket, the church was constructed between 1880 and 1901. It stands as a lasting memorial to Thomas Sutcliffe Mort and his wife Theresa. Thomas Mort established the Bodalla Estate, which was pivotal in the development of wool, dairying, engineering, shipping and refrigeration throughout New South Wales and Australia. It has been a centre of worship and culture for the Bodalla township and Eurobodalla shire for over 120 years. All Saints Church has seen countless baptisms, marriages and funerals over that time. I was honoured to attend the All Saints' Day service on Sunday 5 November and celebrate the registration of heritage listing with the community.

### MATT BRADY

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (20:30):** I acknowledge the incredible service of outgoing Sutherland Shire Football Association president, Matt Brady. A Sutherland Shire Football Association life member from Bonnet Bay, Matt has served on the association's executive committee for 12 years, serving as vice-president from 2015-16 and president since 2017. Throughout his time with the association, Matt has been known to help wherever he can, from engaging with players to gauge their views on grassroots development of the association to mowing the grass to ensure the field is ready for action on game day. In 2012 Matt took a brief hiatus from the Sutherland Shire Football Association executive committee to serve as president of the Sutherland Titans Football Club and is credited with revitalising and reinventing the Titans. The Sutherland Titans Football Club aims to include children with a disability in mainstream sport in a supportive and enjoyable environment. During his time at the Titans, Matt left a long-lasting and indelible legacy. I thank Matt for his years of service to the Sutherland Shire Football Association and for his ongoing commitment to growing football in our community.

### KLAVA DJACHENKO

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (20:31):** I express my congratulations to Klava Djachenko, who recently celebrated her 101st birthday. Klava attended this year's Jean Arnot Recognition Awards for remarkable women 90 years old and over and was acknowledged for her lifelong commitment to her faith, family and community in Australia, aiding and supporting the Ukrainian diaspora. Klava lives with her daughter Helene and family in Quakers Hill. Klava often attends mass and continues to help those displaced by war, in conjunction with the Australian Ukrainian community. Klava is very appreciative of the support provided by her adopted country of Australia and the opportunities New South Wales has afforded her family over the years since she arrived in 1949 as a refugee seeking safe haven for herself and her family. Klava has now celebrated a century of wisdom and grace. A remarkable journey through time, her resilience and joy inspire us all. I congratulate a remarkable woman who continues to light up our lives with her enduring spirit.

### LIVERPOOL YOUNG ACHIEVERS AWARDS

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (20:32):** I acknowledge the accomplishments of Liverpool's young achievers, who were celebrated at an annual awards ceremony earlier this month. The Liverpool Young Achievers Awards recognise local primary and high school students who demonstrate academic excellence, sporting prowess, exemplar citizenship or artistic brilliance. Students can receive up to \$1,000 in cash prizes to further enable their pursuits. I acknowledge the achievements of local high school winners Vladyslav Verlovyskyi, Malia Fifita and Audrey Brodie, as well as primary school winners Moeakiola Falepapalangi and Oluwadamilola Abiola Ishola. I also congratulate Liverpool's highly commended students Whetu Marama Aperahama-Takiari, Jasmin Chouchair, Blake Marson and Fgar Khayoon, who made

significant strides in their disciplines. These accomplishments are a testament to the tenacity of our young people and to the dedication of their teachers, school communities and families. I thank Liverpool City Council for sponsoring this initiative, and I look forward to seeing the young achievers of today blossom into the heroes and problem solvers of tomorrow.

#### GRACE-LEE WEEKES

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (20:33):** Today I recognise Grace-Lee Weekes, a young lady and Hornsby local, who is achieving great things in the sport of rugby league. Originally a keen netballer, Grace took up rugby league a few years ago. This year she represented the New South Wales under-19s State of Origin team, having worked her way through the system via her local club and the North Sydney Bears. Grace first played rugby league for the Asquith Magpies under-16s team in 2019 and immediately displayed an incredible talent as a powerful running winger. In 2022 Grace-Lee Weekes was selected for the inaugural under-19s Bears Tarsha Gale team, and this year she captained the team. This year Grace was selected in the Bears open age premiers team and scored a great try on debut. She recently picked up a contract with the Cronulla Sharks as a NRLW development player. The Weekes family are local to Hornsby and are a talented rugby league family. Grace-Lee's grandfather played first grade with St George, and her elder brother, Kaeo, has recently got a contract with the Cronulla Sharks. Younger sister Krystal also plays with the Asquith Magpies and the Bears in their Tarsha Gale team. We wish Grace-Lee every success with her ongoing career.

#### GEORGE ZARBALIS

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (20:34):** I acknowledge George Zarbalis. George is one of the owners of Mazzaro Restaurant on Elizabeth Street in the city. I acknowledge him tonight because I stay at the hotel above the Mazzaro Restaurant when I am in town serving the people of New South Wales. I put on record my thanks for the welcome I receive from George, who works every night in the restaurant as well as being an owner. I acknowledge the way I am made to feel welcomed into the city whenever I am staying down here. George is of Greek extraction. He came to our country to avoid conscription during the period of the right-wing regime of the colonels from 1967 to 1974. Greece's loss has been our gain. George has made a fantastic contribution to the social and economic life of this State and this country, and I acknowledge him tonight.

#### *Private Members' Statements*

#### LONG BEACH ROADKILL VIRTUAL FENCE

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (20:35):** I congratulate the initiative of Eurobodalla Shire Council and associated local animal welfare and environmental groups for the successful trial of a virtual fence to reduce roadkill. Collaborating with the wildlife rescue organisation WIRES and the environmental group the Coastwatchers Association, the council installed electronic posts every 25 metres along approximately 1,500 metres of road along Blairs Road and Cullendulla Drive in Long Beach, north of Batemans Bay. At the top of each post is a small device which, when struck by car headlights at night, emits an audible alarm and blue-and-yellow flashing strobe LED lights. These signals are projected into the roadside forest.

As the car passes, each of the receivers on the posts is triggered in sequence, creating a virtual fence that deters animals like kangaroos, wallabies and wombats from crossing the road. The results so far have been a resounding success. There has been an overall 90 per cent reduction in kangaroo roadkill. Prior to the trial, there was an average of five deaths per week on that stretch of road. Over an eight-month trial, there was a total of five kangaroo deaths. Interestingly, when there was a temporary technical failure of the virtual fence, the numbers rebounded to their previous levels.

The virtual fence trial at Long Beach cost \$10,000 to install and was spearheaded by the Coastwatchers Association, in partnership with Eurobodalla Shire Council and WIRES, with funding support from the Great Eastern Ranges organisation and the World Wild Fund for Nature Australia. It was the first road in New South Wales where the virtual fencing was trialled. This small section of virtual fencing has made a huge difference to the number of wildlife being killed or injured. It has improved road safety. It is also less traumatic for the rescuers and carers, and it reduces the workload for council staff having to clear roadkill. Rescuers, carers and council staff will be much safer as a result of fewer wildlife deaths and injuries. It saves the insurance companies considerable money from reduced claims. It will improve the experience for the thousands of tourists who visit the beautiful Eurobodalla region each year.

Unfortunately, one limitation of the virtual fence is that it does not work in areas where the speed limit is faster than 80 kilometres per hour because cars pass too quickly for the virtual fence to be effective. The next virtual fence will be installed at another roadkill hotspot at Dunns Creek Road between Mogo and Tomakin. Along Dunns Creek Road—where I have personally hit a kangaroo—three wombats and three wallabies were killed there in just one week in June. Once again, the Great Eastern Ranges and the World Wide Fund for Nature have

contributed \$10,000 and Eurobodalla Shire Council has provided another \$10,000. This well-designed project has given empirical data on the results of an innovative road safety and animal welfare program.

I acknowledge the advocacy of Councillor Anthony Mayne of the Eurobodalla Shire Council on this issue. He has been engaged on this important road safety issue for a number of years. Councillor Mayne moved a motion at the South East Australian Transport Strategy supporting more trials in New South Wales, and it received 100 per cent support. As the Eurobodalla looks to its second trial, Shoalhaven City Council is looking to trial a virtual fence near Bawley Point just north of my electorate in the electorate of South Coast, which is represented by my hardworking colleague Liza Butler.

The success of these pilot studies indicates the need for further trials on highway hotspots, including the Kings Highway between Batemans Bay and Braidwood. Further investigation should be made into the current speed-related limitation to see if the technology could be expanded to 100-kilometre-per-hour roads. Alternatively, consideration should be made as to whether more roadkill blackspots should be reduced to 80-kilometre-per-hour speed limits to allow for the use of virtual fence technology. I thank the individuals and organisations involved in this practical and innovative initiative. I support the continued trials and will continue to advocate for further funding from the New South Wales Minns Labor Government.

### **CRONULLA SUTHERLAND JUNIOR RUGBY LEAGUE**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (20:40):** I recognise Cronulla Sutherland Junior Rugby League in its sixtieth anniversary year. I was pleased to join Cronulla Junior Rugby League to mark this milestone at its celebratory dinner on 20 October, which brought together representatives from all 13 clubs, life members and the current executive committee in a nostalgic tribute to six decades of junior rugby league in the Sutherland shire. The night also served as an opportunity to recognise the incredible efforts of Nathan Waugh, who stepped down as president of Cronulla Junior Rugby League after five successful years at the helm of the district.

Rugby league holds a special place in the hearts of many of us in the Sutherland shire. Today the district has over 5,000 players across its 13 clubs, including the Aquinas Colts, Como Crocs, Joeys, Gynea Gorillas, Taren Point Titans and Menai Roosters based in the Miranda electorate. Rugby league was first played in the Sutherland shire in 1912. In those early days, informal matches were played at Sutherland Oval and Dunningham Park, with clubs being established at Sutherland in 1912 and Cronulla in the 1920s, playing in the St George district, as interest in rugby league grew.

In these early years, before the establishment of Cronulla Junior Rugby League, the Sutherland shire produced many New South Wales and Australian players, including the likes of Norm Provan and his brother, Peter Provan, Bobby Bugden, Brian Messiter and Henry Holloway. In their first season, the district played a particularly strong C grade competition, with eight teams participating, and a total of 12 clubs fielded 84 teams in 11 grades, drawing 1,527 players. In the 1964 season, the district entered its very first representative team in the Presidents Cup competition, with the team making it to the final at the Sydney Cricket Ground, where they played Parramatta. A win, however, was not meant to be. Leading 4-2 at full-time, the siren failed to sound, with Parramatta scoring to give them a 5-4 win.

It would not be until 1973 that Cronulla Sutherland Junior Rugby League was to win its first title, the Matthews Cup. In 1982 the district absorbed Cronulla Sutherland Minor Rugby League up to under-12s, which saw 93 under-12s teams join the competition, meaning Cronulla Sutherland Junior Rugby League would be responsible for all junior rugby league in the Sutherland shire. It was around this time that the district began working with Peter Corcoran and the Rothmans Sports Foundation on what would go on to be known as mini football, which included modified games and equipment targeted at younger players. In 1982 the Tommy Bishop Shield—the under-8s competition—was played under the new mini league rules. Over the years the game developed and was accepted across the State, with modified rules added and age groups expanded. While not acknowledged, the district should be proud of its development of this aspect of the game and the role it has played in the play safe delivery of the sport for its players.

Since then Cronulla Sutherland District Rugby League has continued to expand its offering, with league tackle and tag added for the junior league as well as the over-age and female categories. The over-age category has been particularly popular since its inception in 2018, with two men's divisions and one women's division. Furthermore, the district has taken great strides to promote rugby league to women and encourage participation on the field, as well as in positions of administration, coaching and refereeing, with the district's own Heather Eshman being the first female referee in rugby league back in 1984. The district is also setting up pathways for girls to participate in NRLW competitions with the introduction of a women's tackle competition, with Como-Jannali in my electorate doing an incredible job in encouraging participation amongst women.

Throughout the district's incredible history, the Cronulla Junior Rugby League has developed a reputation for producing some exceptional first grade players, with nearly 150 first grade players having played for local clubs. Amongst the players are some household names, including Aaron and Stuart Raper, Andrew Ettingshausen, Ben Sammut, Cameron Ciraldo and Tyrone Peachey, as well as current NRL stars Kyle Flanagan, Jayden Brailey and Scott Sorensen. Of course, none of this would have been possible without the hard work and dedication of Cronulla Junior Rugby League's executive team.

I recognise the operations team, consisting of the general manager, Chris Bannerman, and the competition administrator, Jenny McNamara. I also recognise the executive committee chairman, Jon Mannah, the deputy chair, Simone Osfield, the executive director, Amanda Kayes, the director of members services, David Sheargold, and the director of finance, Adam Wrightson. I thank the general committee, including patrons Graeme Morrison, Barry Pierce, Graeme Oates and Marie Withers; vice-presidents Belinda Green, Michael Toro, Faith Perryman, Simone Gilroy and Elliot Waugh; registration and grading chairperson, Tony Robinson; promotions committee chairperson, Kathy Ismay; coaching director, Alan Kayes; and constitution and rules chairperson, Shaun Osfield. I thank Cronulla Sutherland Junior Rugby League for its incredible work in promoting participation and a love of rugby league in the Sutherland shire. I congratulate the district on 60 incredibly successful years, and I look forward to the next 60.

### TEACHER WORKFORCE

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (20:45):** Present in the gallery tonight are two amazing year 9 students from Westfields Sports High School, Annie Youkhanna and Zachary Mitrevski. These students, along with Aliya Jafari, came together to put forward their perspectives on the teacher shortage crisis in New South Wales and its implications for students and the broader education environment. It is on that note that I relay their message to the Parliament. They said:

As students in New South Wales, we are deeply affected by the ongoing teacher shortage crisis. Tonight, we want to share with you how this issue is directly impacting us and our friends, as well as our education system as a whole.

Firstly, let's talk about the impact on class sizes. With a shortage of teachers, our classrooms are becoming increasingly crowded. This means that there are more students than the teacher can effectively manage, resulting in a lack of individual attention and personalised instruction. It becomes challenging to ask questions, seek clarification, or engage in meaningful discussions. The quality of our education suffers as a result.

Furthermore, the teacher shortage has a direct effect on us as students. In some subjects, we find ourselves excelling and progressing at a faster pace. However, in other subjects, we lack the necessary support and guidance. This imbalance creates frustration and hampers our overall academic growth. We deserve equal opportunities and support across all subjects, regardless of the availability of teachers.

The consequences of the teacher shortage extend beyond the classroom. It affects our future prospects and opportunities. Without enough teachers, we are limited in our choices and paths. We may not have access to the specialised knowledge and guidance required to pursue our passions and interests. This shortage is hindering our personal and academic development, and it is unfair to us as students.

But we are not here to dwell solely on the problem; we are here to propose solutions for the future. It is crucial for the government and educational institutions to take immediate action to address the teacher shortage crisis. We need increased investment in recruiting and retaining qualified teachers. This can be achieved by offering competitive salaries, providing professional development opportunities, and creating a supportive work environment that values and appreciates the contributions of educators.

Additionally, we must prioritise the training and development of new teachers. By investing in teacher education programs, we can ensure a steady supply of qualified educators who are equipped to meet the demands of our growing student population. This will help alleviate the teacher shortage and provide us with the support we need to excel in all subjects.

In conclusion, the teacher shortage crisis in New South Wales is having a profound impact on us, our friends, and our education system as a whole. The overcrowded classrooms, lack of support in certain subjects, and limited opportunities are hindering our growth and potential. We deserve better. We urge the government and educational institutions to take immediate action and invest in our education system. Let us work together to ensure that every student has access to a quality education, regardless of the availability of teachers.

I wholeheartedly agree with those words from Annie, Zachary and Aliya. It also makes me so proud to see the students take this issue all the way to this Parliament. It is incumbent upon us to do what we can to ensure that everyone has a quality education. The very fabric of our society depends on it. I will do everything I can in that regard. Annie, Zachary and Aliya are a credit to their school, to Fairfield and to the State. I thank them so much for being here, and I thank them so much for speaking out.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (20:50):** I thank Annie, Zachary and Aliya for bringing this issue to the Parliament's attention. I thank them for being willing to contact their local member not only to raise their concerns and express a problem so eloquently but also to identify some really practical solutions. I appreciate that members of Parliament get problems presented to us all too often but very few times are we offered sensible solutions. It is important that students' potential is not limited by the education system and teachers—or lack of teachers. As a government, we are trying to address that issue. Our

potential should only ever be limited by our ambition and our willingness to work hard. However, I do not think the potential of those three students will ever be limited. Our future is in safe hands if there are more students like them coming through our high school system. Congratulations.

### OXLEY ELECTORATE BUSHFIRES

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley) (20:51):** It is one month since unrelenting flames tore through the Macleay Valley, and the charring is still visible—on our land and on our people. I assure the House that nothing quells the looming fear when our spring blue skies suddenly disintegrate into a hellfire red, or when evacuation warnings urge people to choose their life over the life they spent years creating, or when there is uncertainty that what they have will still be standing today or tomorrow. On 16 October those fears reignited. Willawarrin, Toorooka, Temagog, Mungay Flat, Boonanghi, Wittittrin, Yessabah, Hat Head and Crescent Head were set for seven days of rapidly changing conditions when the Willi Willi and McGuires Crossing Road bushfires nudged at their doorstep, claiming more than 28,000 hectares of land, 30 outbuildings, seven houses and, tragically, one life.

I implore members to think about the word "resilience". It is almost synonymous with bushfires, floods and any natural disaster. We hear stories of small communities rising from the ashes, staying true to their Aussie battler heritage and lending a hand to their neighbour even if they need one themselves. And I do not disagree. It is true that through tragedy we often see humanity at its best. But when I visited the Willawarrin pub, where a dozen locals sat, nursing a coldie and discussing the evolving situation, "resilience" was not the word that was tossed around the timber table; it was "anxiety". Beyond the reaches of the pub, the firestorm was still burning. They told me how closely this bushfire resembled those of 2019-20, and some who had lost everything just three years prior feared it was going to happen again.

In particular, there were the totally unfortunate—those who were left picking up the pieces of their life and hard work for a second time, their properties razed to the ground twice in just three years. The memories and trauma are still fresh. A mother shared how quickly she had to act to get her children prepared to leave their house. In our conversations there was worry, there was concern and, yes, in true Willawarrin spirit, there was laughter. But anxiety stirred in an otherwise fearless community. This is going to be one of our worst bushfire seasons since Black Summer. The La Niña weather patterns expedited vegetation growth, including the middle storey, which our bushfires burned straight through.

On top of the looming drought, the increase in fuel load and the coming dry conditions are concerning landholders from afar. We saw firsthand the power behind the latest infernos. The difference this time is our town's bushfire preparedness and the intricate planning devised by a multitude of agencies working together diligently and swiftly. Over that terrifying week, there was a call to arms from members of our emergency services, far and wide. No thank you can express our gratitude for their sleepless nights in action, their preparations, their quick thinking and decisions made on the fireground, and the countless hours spent behind computer screens monitoring, coordinating and planning. This was one of the best multi-agency responses between RFS brigades, the National Parks and Wildlife Service, and Forestry. Through that response they managed to save 189 homes, 104 outbuildings and four facilities.

We also thank the 70,000 volunteers who don their uniforms every year. It is not always an easy decision, choosing between your day job and your duty. I know that struggle firsthand. I decided to leave Parliament and return home on the first flight out of Sydney. I knew that there was more to do on the ground in the Macleay, my home. I knew it was right to trade in my city suit for my RFS Dondingalong yellows. I worked alongside men and women for countless days and nights, mapping out appropriate containment lines while the threat of unerring weather changes chased on our tails. It is in those moments when the sweat, pressure and heat weigh heavy on your shoulders that you witness the camaraderie, the courage and the sheer will in their eyes.

We also thank the more than 30 out-of-town strike force teams that descended upon Kempsey, arriving from the furthest reaches of New South Wales, including Griffith and Tibooburra. We also thank those involved in the recovery aftermath, taking the time to work in the recovery centre, providing legal aid, grant options and even just a simple conversation. As I mentioned earlier, the Kempsey bushfires were not without grief. I take this moment to honour the life of 56-year-old Richard Mainey, a brave father, son, brother and uncle, who tragically died while trying to save his family farm at Temagog from the blaze. The news of his death struck deep through our upriver community, and I share my deepest condolences for this devastating loss. One life lost is one too many.

Sadly, this is a battle that is far from over. The summer months are encroaching. We are already seeing a rapid increase in grassfires and, with our drought-like conditions, I fear that we can only anticipate what is to come. Look out for one another and stay safe. Bushfire season is lethal. Our community is scorched; the charring is still visible on our land and on our people. Please get bushfire ready.

## HOLODOMOR REMEMBRANCE DAY

**Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn) (20:56):** As members will be aware, the electorate of Auburn has the largest Ukrainian population in New South Wales and 25 November 2023 marks a memorable tragic day for our Ukrainian community: the Holodomor Remembrance Day. This is the ninetieth annual commemoration of Holodomor by the Ukrainian community. Holodomor—which means "death by hunger"—was an artificial famine in Ukraine brought about by the deliberate actions of the Stalin Government that is believed to have caused the death by starvation of millions of Ukrainians. In 1932 the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics [USSR] set impossibly high quotas for the amount of grain that Ukrainian villages were required to contribute to the Soviet State. When the villages were not able to meet the quotas, authorities intensified the requisition campaign, confiscating even the seed set aside for planting and levying fines in meat and potatoes for failure to fulfill quotas.

Special teams were sent to search homes and even seized other foodstuffs. Starving farmers attempted to leave their villages in search of food, but Soviet authorities issued a decree forbidding Ukraine's peasants from leaving the country. As a result, many thousands of farmers who had managed to leave their villages were apprehended and sent back—virtually a death sentence. A law was introduced that made the theft of even a few stalks of grain an act of sabotage punishable by execution. In some cases, soldiers were posted in watchtowers to prevent people from taking any of the harvest. Although the dire conditions in Ukraine were well understood, central authorities ordered local officials to extract even more from the villages. Millions starved as the USSR sold crops from Ukraine abroad.

The famine followed a campaign of intimidation and arrests of Ukrainian intellectuals, writers, artists, religious leaders and political leaders after Ukraine had briefly become an independent country between 1917 and 1921. I join with the global community in remembering the lives of the millions of men, women and children who were killed by this atrocity in depriving Ukrainians of food, leading to their starvation. It is imperative that we prevent such tragedies happening in the future. Unfortunately, Ukraine continues to suffer at the hands of Russia. The recent invasion of Ukraine by Russia is aimed once again at destroying the national, cultural, religious and democratic aspirations of Ukrainian people since Russia's full-scale invasion on 24 February 2022. Once again Russia has continued the use of food as a weapon of war during its invasion through its attacks on Ukraine's agricultural production and the seizure of Ukraine's grain exports. It has also failed to recommit to the Initiative on the Safe Transportation of Grain and Foodstuffs from Ukrainian Ports.

It is important that we do not lose sight of our support for Ukraine in that conflict. It has now been underway for many months, but Ukraine has led a counteroffensive. Western Kherson has now been liberated and the Ukrainian forces recently crossed the Dnipro River, which could be a significant foothold to transfer armoured vehicles and defence systems closer to the Crimean Peninsula. Holodomor Remembrance Day and the loss of lives both from the 1932 famine and the current Russian invasion of the Ukraine are important reminders of the bravery of the Ukrainian people in their battle for an independent democratic country with a government that represents the will and aspirations of the Ukrainian people.

## EUGOWRA FLOODS

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (21:00):** Last week in Eugowra the community—along with Cabonne councillors led by Mayor Kevin Beatty and Federal member for Calare, Andrew Gee—gathered for a reflection ceremony remembering two of their own who tragically perished in the floodwaters that devastated their township without warning on the morning of 14 November 2022. The solemn occasion was moving. They gathered to remember Ljubisa "Les" Vugec, aged 85, and Dianne Smith, aged 60. They also heard recollections from survivors of the event, both young and old. Many locals trapped in the flood zone clung to rooftops awaiting rescue. The Eugowra flood event sparked the largest ever helicopter rescue operation in Australia's history. There were countless acts of selflessness and heroism by those who placed themselves in harm's way to rescue their fellow citizens from peril. They are absolutely awe-inspiring.

I take my hat off to our first responders too. Their courage and determination in the rescue operation certainly helped prevent further loss of life. The impact of the floods will continue to be felt by many, and it will never be forgotten. I have witnessed the aftermath and the effect it has had on residents—the loss, despair and grief. I have also witnessed the kindness, charity and strength of community members through unity as they rallied to rebuild their lives and their towns. The unprecedented flooding that struck communities across the electorate of Orange last November caused significant loss of and damage to property. People lost homes and irreplaceable personal belongings. Some lost all of their worldly possessions. Farmers across the district lost stock and farm infrastructure. Community utilities and infrastructure sustained damage beyond council's capabilities to fund repair.

Adding insult to injury, many of the flood victims' insurance claims were met with visits from insurance assessors and hydrologists for hire, and some unscrupulous insurers responded by either an outright rejection of

insurance claims or accepting only partial liability. It beggars belief that an insurer would place a tape measure against a wall, establish the depth at which they would accept water damage as attributable to flooding and then attribute water damage above that depth to something else. That is unconscionable and un-Australian. Some insurers even sent contractors to remove flood-damaged building materials, including walls and kitchens, only to later deny a claim, leaving home owners with a skeleton of their family home. Marooned by insurers, many were left with nowhere to turn, relying on charitable aid and the hope of some form of financial rescue from government.

From day one of the disaster I vigorously and relentlessly lobbied the former Government for both financial and service assistance. I thank former Premier Perrottet for visiting my flood-affected communities and for the aid he and his Government provided them. I also acknowledge the former Premier's adviser, Alicia McCumstie, who worked tirelessly behind the scenes and at all hours to assist my constituents in accessing services and support. I have not stopped knocking on doors in Parliament. My flood-impacted communities have needed more and ongoing assistance. Premier Minns and his Ministers' doors have been open to me, and they have welcomed me as I have visited their offices with a mission to secure further financial assistance. In particular, I thank Premier Minns, along with Minister Dib and Minister Scully, who responded with the recent announcement of vital funding for my flood-affected communities.

My communities and I have welcomed the 31 October announcement of \$50 million of flood recovery funding for the flood-affected communities of my electorate. The vital funding will, among other flood recovery needs, provide house raising and retrofits of homes and also property buybacks, allowing the incorporation of designs and materials that can withstand future flooding events. The NSW Reconstruction Authority will work alongside local government and community leaders to prioritise where the funding is required. The funding will also be directed to the repair and replacement of critical community assets and improving the resilience of public infrastructure, including bridges and roads.

The New South Wales Government's initiative in announcing that funding prompted a response from the Australian Government. On 9 November the Australian Government announced an additional \$50 million in funding to match the State's commitment dollar for dollar to flood recovery in the communities across the Central West. The combined funding pool of \$100 million will have a noticeable impact on the ongoing recovery efforts. The additional financial injection is a welcome start on the wide range of recovery and reconstruction work that still needs to be done across the region. Those who experienced the 2022 floods in the Central West are still dealing with the after-effects day in and day out. Communities still have a long road of recovery ahead and additional funding and support is essential.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (21:05):** I thank the member for Orange for his advocacy. There is no doubt in my mind—because he has been in my ear—that the \$50 million that was allocated to the Central West in the budget and that was matched by the \$50 million from the Federal Government was because of his tenacity and the tenacity of the Federal member, Andrew Gee. When I was first appointed to my role the member for Orange was in my ear and in my office almost immediately to make sure that I got out to the Central West. Minister Dib and I did that. We saw a community that was still traumatised and still recovering but incredibly resilient. The community is proud of where it lives and wants to get back on its feet, and it wants to deal with the aftermath of a flood that no-one should have to experience. We also saw a wonderful woman called Grace and shared her eighty-third birthday as she moved out of her pod. There is more work to do, but I am committed to helping the member for Orange with that recovery for as long as it takes.

## GAZA CONFLICT

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (21:06):** Over the past six weeks many in the community I represent have been devastated by the loss of life in the current conflict between Israel and Gaza. For them, it is not just an abstract conflict on the other side of the world but one that is killing and injuring members of their families, their friends or the friends and families of people they know. I know such distress is widely felt across Sydney, with people touched by the conflict on both sides—a conflict that has seen 1,200 Israelis killed and 14,000 Palestinians killed, including almost 6,000 children, and 240 Israelis still held hostage after six weeks.

In my last private member's statement in this place I spoke about Mona Sakr, who runs an Arabic community language school at Granville Public School, who was stuck in Gaza. Thanks to the efforts of the Australian Government, she is now home and safe. She spent weeks being forced to move from place to place, eventually staying in a garage with 80 others after the windows and doors of her hotel were blown out and she fled for her life. I recently visited Mona, who is deeply concerned about the relatives whom she went to visit in Gaza. She feels incredible survivor's guilt. She showed me a video of the wedding she went to on 6 October, with men and women dancing, and everyone in that video has been killed. That family has lost 25 people.

I also visited Musher Saleh and his wife, Renad, who live in Merrylands, to offer my condolences to them. Renad's family lives in Gaza. On 25 October an Israeli air strike killed 10 members of her family and wounded others. The extended family were all living in one house as another had previously been destroyed. Renad lost her brother Mohamed, his wife and their two daughters; her sister Rawand, Rawand's husband and their three children; and Renad's youngest sister, Rand. Her father and two surviving brothers are still in hospital with severe injuries. Renad, Musher and their kids are devastated and deeply traumatised.

Sydney's Palestinian Christians came together on 25 October for the feast day of Our Lady of Palestine and also to mourn the loss of members of four families killed while sheltering at St Porphyrius Church in Gaza, the third oldest church in the world. Over 400 people whose homes have been destroyed by the Israel Defense Forces were sheltering in the church in its outbuildings when 21 members of the Amash, Sourì, Tarazi and Elham families were killed. All those families have relatives in Sydney. The member for Liverpool and I attended the mass and were struck by how raw and traumatic it was and how well known those who were killed in St Porphyrius Church were to the community in Sydney. To this day there are still internally displaced people sheltering in the church along with the priests. The Israel Defense Forces have told them to leave or stay at their own risk. They have nowhere to go.

I have spoken to many Palestinian Australians who are trying to sponsor their relatives from Gaza to come here for temporary safety on tourist visas, but many more do not have relatives outside who can sponsor them. For those thousands who followed orders and evacuated from the north to the south, the journey has not been easy. I was told of a 75-year-old elderly diabetic relative of a friend here in Sydney who walked for six hours with his 68-year-old wife. He was a baby in 1948 during the Nakba when his parents were forced to move to Gaza. He, his wife and others were instructed to walk with their hands up and to not look to the right or left. After three hours he collapsed and was helped to his feet. A young man walking ahead of them was shot right in front of them.

Adding to the trauma of relatives of these people in Sydney are despicable instances of Islamophobia and anti-Palestinian bigotry, which, along with repugnant incidents of antisemitism, are corrosive to community cohesion. I have heard about primary school students being called terrorists, worshippers at a mosque being followed and abused as they leave after prayers, people being abused for wearing the keffiyeh or displaying Palestinian flags, and posters being ripped down aggressively. These incidents are small in number but are really distressing for communities that are already traumatised.

The temporary ceasefire and return of hostages announced today is welcome, but it does not go nearly far enough. The destruction of Gaza civilian infrastructure and killing of civilians must end, and all Israeli hostages must be released as soon as possible. We need an immediate and complete ceasefire—not just one that is the cessation of the current bloodshed. We need one that represents the resumption of the peace process, with genuine peace building and attempts towards a sustainable two-State solution.

### HORNSBY MUSICAL SOCIETY

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (21:10):** The Hornsby Musical Society is one of Sydney's premier amateur societies. It is a much-respected community organisation that pulls together performances of a highly professional standard. It takes pride in staging quality shows, which involve talented performers and production team members covering every step of the process. Operating on a not-for-profit basis, the society has a constant membership of around 50. Over the years it has staged over 100 productions at numerous local venues.

The society was formed in 1958 by a group of enthusiasts who initially staged concerts in St Peter's Church at Hornsby and then St John's Church at Gordon. The performances back then had a very different appearance, and Gilbert and Sullivan operettas were the flavour of the day. From those humble beginnings, the Hornsby Musical Society has grown to become one of Sydney's premier amateur musical societies. The society later moved to the hall at Asquith Boys High School, where its members performed no less than 40 times between 1972 and 1991. The cast and crew performed timeless classics such as *Showboat* and *The Student Prince*, alongside modern legends such as *Man of La Mancha* and *West Side Story*.

In the early 1990s the Hornsby Musical Society once again shifted its home base, this time to Abbotsleigh Girls High School. The move brought great success in 1995 with the society's stellar production of *Les Misérables*. This production was so successful that Jeremy Secomb, who played Javert in *Les Misérables*, moved to the United Kingdom soon after to play the same role in the London concert version. Despite the many successes of the Hornsby Musical Society, the group was again left homeless the following year when the Abbotsleigh venue was no longer available. In the following years the society had to endure life bouncing between different homes and halls while facing ever-increasing competition from other musical groups, bodies and associations.

The lack of a permanent home became an ongoing problem, but that did not stop the musical society's talented men and women bringing joy to the local community. In 1998 the society introduced the midyear play. This enabled the society to maintain its special place within the community's calendar, enabled those actors who did not sing to have their voice heard, and allowed more directors to share their visions. In 2005 the society found a new home at the Hornsby RSL Club, which served them up until this year. I attended their most recent show, *Jersey Boys*, which they performed in the Pioneer Theatre at Castle Hill.

The Hornsby Musical Society is an invaluable resource as a creative outlet for all people, young or old. It involves not only actors and singers but also those behind the scenes such as directors, producers, set designers, costume managers, accountants, marketers and even the audience. Over the years many have come to realise that their passions and dreams can be their reality. Some of the Hornsby Musical Society's graduates include Brian Stacey, the musical director for Australia's long-running *Phantom of the Opera*, who was a founding member of the Hornsby Musical Society. Jeremy Secomb went on to be best known for his work in *Phantom of the Opera* at Albert Hall and *Jerry Springer: The Opera*, and this year has been performing in *Stonehouse*. Andrew Bevis went to London and played Marius in *Les Misérables* in the West End, before going on to land the lead role in London's *Romeo and Juliet*. Adam Willits went on to become one of the original cast members in the Australian soap opera *Home and Away*, while Wendy Purdy became an international theatre actress. There is also Michael J. Hurney, who is one of the most respected and sought-after professionals on the world stage, and Natalie Davis-Pratt, stage actress and musician. I make special mention of Phyllis Horne, a life member of the society, who has directed more than 35 productions and coordinated the costume department for more than 40 years up until 2006.

Over the past decade I have enjoyed many performances by the Hornsby Musical Society including *Guys and Dolls*, last year's *The SpongeBob Musical* and the magnificent production of *Jersey Boys*, in which Sebastian Sabir and Lachlan Ceravolo both starred as Frankie Valli and led an impressive cast, including Nick Heibl, Jordan Gallegos, Samuel Dobb, Myles Burgin, Paul Mephram, Sofia Macri, Rachel Bendeich, Courtney Larkham, Maegan Chin, Sarah Whitehead, Sofia Guastini, Claudia Martinis, Aiden Smith, Karl Elbourne and many more. The show was directed by Jacob Macri, who is an outstanding young director. The production manager was Jessica Funk and the musical director was James McLanders. The show was simply spectacular. I can honestly say that the acting and singing is amongst the best in Sydney. It is fantastic that in Hornsby we can boast about having one of Sydney's premier amateur musical societies.

Although the world has moved on and life has changed, the society's dedication to excellence and hard work remains strong. I especially acknowledge amazing president Lauren Oxenham, who was also the choreographer for *Jersey Boys*. Lauren is an incredible member of our community. I also acknowledge her dedicated committee for their wonderful work. Staging two musicals each year, the Hornsby Musical Society continually encourages new members to audition and warmly welcomes individuals to get involved in any capacity. If only I had the time or the talent! Groups like the Hornsby Musical Society offer a sense of belonging. They provide a forum for community talent to come together for the enjoyment of all. I think it is fair to say that amateur musical societies like the Hornsby Musical Society are the engine room of the performing arts across the country.

### PORT BOTANY PROTESTS

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (21:16):** I express my deep concern about the disruption to supply of goods to regional and rural New South Wales as a result of industrial action at Port Botany in Sydney. Rural and regional New South Wales rely on the smooth flow of goods to and from Port Botany. Port Botany is the largest container port in New South Wales and plays a critical role in the supply of goods to our communities. For the State of New South Wales, the port currently handles 99.6 per cent of containers, 100 per cent of bitumen, 98 per cent of LPG, 90 per cent of bulk chemicals, 30 per cent of refined petroleum and 15 per cent of aviation fuel. If something goes wrong at the port, we all feel it.

A big part of the port's operations is DP World, which handles containerised freight. At present, the Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union is in dispute with DP World, with various go-slow operations and stop work orders. That is causing significant concern for the consistency of supply of goods in New South Wales. It would normally take two days to move a container. The industrial action has blown that out to eight days. Businesses rely on the consistent flow of goods in and out of New South Wales. It is a serious concern if that is disrupted. Consumers will see that the goods they have ordered and paid for have not arrived. Retailers will see that they will not be able to replenish stock. Even building materials, which are already in short supply, will become critically scarce and that will create huge problems for the construction industry looking to finish jobs before Christmas.

**Ms Liza Butler:** Point of order: The member for Tamworth should be talking directly about his electorate.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** The member for Tamworth did refer to regional and rural New South Wales, but he should refer to his electorate.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** In addition to that, the cost will be forced on consumers not only in Tamworth but also in the Hunter, Wagga, Albury and other parts of the State. It is difficult enough with cost-of-living pressures pushing family budgets. Businesses are struggling to make ends meet and are facing a myriad of problems like securing a stable workforce. Parts of regional New South Wales are already in drought and farmers are wondering what the next few months will bring. If members opposite are already starting to complain, then they have a role to play. This is not what we need for regional New South Wales right now. The flow-on effect for agricultural businesses will be felt far and wide, particularly if they are waiting for essential equipment, whether it be farm machinery, irrigation pumps or tractors.

**Ms Liza Butler:** Point of order—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for South Coast rises on a point of order. The member for Tamworth will resume his seat.

**Ms Liza Butler:** I ask that, in the spirit of a private member's statement, the member for Tamworth remain directly relevant to his electorate and tell a good news story.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** I do not uphold the point of order. I am satisfied that the member for Tamworth is referring to his electorate. The member for Tamworth has the call.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** The ports play a big part in our lives, for both import and export. The problem needs to be sorted. My hope is that this dispute between the Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union and DP World is resolved quickly. It is in the best interests of the communities I represent—and, indeed, the wider regional New South Wales—that both parties engage in constructive negotiations to ensure a strong and reliable supply chain for New South Wales.

#### **BLUE MOUNTAINS ELECTORATE MEN'S SHEDS**

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (21:20):** As we approach the end of another year, I will speak about a group that plays an integral role in the lives of many. The Australian Men's Shed Association was established in 2007. The driving force behind the group was to provide men and women with a space to hang out, chat and enjoy getting their hands dirty. Whether it was gardening or woodworking, the idea was to connect and learn as a group as well as have the space to stand shoulder to shoulder and talk.

In the Blue Mountains there are three men's sheds: Katoomba, Central Mountains and Lower Mountains. I am lucky enough to be the patron of the Central Mountains Men's Shed and was recently invited to attend its annual Christmas party. In the lead-up to Christmas, it was a timely reminder of how important it is to establish and nurture valuable connections with those around you, and how those connections can lead to a community. We live in a world that puts immense pressure on individuals to conform to certain expectations. In a refreshing counter narrative, the men's shed recognises that everyone has something unique to offer, regardless of age, skill or gender.

One of the core principles of the men's shed is the promotion of mental wellbeing. Sometimes men can find themselves grappling with isolation, depression and a lack of purpose as they navigate life's challenges. The importance of intergenerational connections cannot be overstated. Men's sheds provide a platform for older men to pass on their skills, wisdom and life experiences to a younger generation. In turn, younger members bring fresh perspectives, energy and a willingness to learn skills that are increasingly being forgotten. This interplay of knowledge creates a dynamic environment where everyone benefits and contributes to the collective growth of the community.

Recently the story of the Central Mountains Men Shed's was shared with me. I thought it encapsulated the heart and soul of this association and wish to share it in this place. The shed began as a small group of men meeting for coffee once a month. Slowly, as the group grew and its members found themselves moving tables together to all fit into a cafe, they thought there might be an opportunity to do something bigger. Thus the Central Mountain's Men Shed was formed.

Like many other men's sheds, the group was originally made up of retired men looking to fill some time and make connections. However, this gradually changed as younger members joined to see what was on offer. In a wonderful interview for the *Mid Mountains Local News*, one of the younger members, Graham Menzies, said, "This is a goldmine. There is a lot of skill in here that I can learn." Another young member, Heri Lim, is training to work in community services. One day he mentioned that he wanted to learn to drive a manual car in case of an emergency. One of the older members offered to give him driving lessons, an offer he took up eagerly. We know

that mentor relationships can have a wonderful impact on one's wellbeing, and these kinds of relationships are fostered within the men's shed.

I also mention that the shed is not exclusively for men, either. On Wednesdays women come along to the shed to build and work on the tools, whether to complete house maintenance or work on a building project. The tools are there for everyone to use. That is a real help for people who do not own or have access to the kinds of tools and machinery stored in the sheds. It was an absolute pleasure to attend the Central Mountains Men's Shed Christmas lunch. I thank John Crichton, Laurie Gilman and their partners for extending an invitation to me. As I walked into the room, it had a great energy and lots of banter. The raffle brought lots of laughs, and my offer to provide a fancy-pants lunch here in Parliament was a smash hit.

As we applaud the Australian Men's Shed Association for its invaluable work, let us also reflect on the broader implications of its efforts. The impact of this movement goes beyond the shed walls, influencing societal perceptions of masculinity and mental health. It encourages a shift towards a more compassionate, understanding and supportive society. The men's sheds are a testament to the transformative power of community and shared purpose. By providing a space for people to connect, create and contribute, the association builds bridges and inspires positive change in the lives of countless individuals. I thank those good men involved in our Blue Mountains men's shed. You are more valued than you realise.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (21:24):** I thank the member for Blue Mountains for drawing the House's attention to the men's sheds in her electorate. She raises a valid point about the role of the men's sheds throughout New South Wales. In saying I value their role, I particularly acknowledge men's sheds in the Illawarra. A lot can be done from a simple conversation, and a conversation over a shared experience—whether it be a repair, making toys for kids for Christmas or whatever—is going on at a particular men's shed at any given time. They are a great help to a number of people, particularly men who are increasingly suffering social isolation as the result of a loss of a partner or a loved one. It is important that we as members of Parliament support them, because each of those men in those men's sheds is supporting men in their communities. That is an important thing to do. Well done, Blue Mountains.

#### HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (21:26):** Everybody needs a safe and secure place to call home. This is a simple statement that nobody in this place would dispute, yet sadly right now it is not something being borne out in our communities. From the inner city—where the good people of the electorate of Newtown live—to the regions, people across the State are struggling to keep a roof over their head as the housing crisis continues to deepen. Interest rates are still edging upwards, short-term rentals are choking secure rental supply and the construction of new public housing has ground to a halt as existing estates are threatened with demolition. Meanwhile, State and Federal Labor's unwillingness to freeze and control rents has allowed rents to soar completely unchecked.

The latest Rental Affordability Index from National Shelter and SGS Economics & Planning shows that over the past year affordability has nosedived in every Australian city but Hobart and Canberra. Over 60 per cent of people in the electorate of Newtown are renters. In Sydney, affordability plummeted by 13 per cent. People on JobSeeker living in our city must now spend 137 per cent of their weekly income just to rent a one-bedroom apartment. To be clear, that is not possible, which means housing insecurity and homelessness are a reality for so many people. This would be a disgrace anywhere, but in the richest State in one of the richest countries in the world it simply beggars belief. We must do so much more.

This Government is touting new supply as the silver bullet to solving this wicked problem. Make no mistake, The Greens know that new housing supply must be part of the solution. But to meaningfully address the housing unaffordability crisis that is crushing our communities, this new supply needs to actually be affordable. Those struggling to meet their housing costs right now will not be helped by more luxury apartments that most people cannot afford and families cannot fit in.

But what is affordable housing? The term itself has become ubiquitous in discussions of boosting housing supply but its definition is slippery and seems to vary, depending on who you ask. It would be reasonable to assume, as many do, that affordable housing means housing people can rent without going into rental stress or spending more than 30 per cent of their income on weekly rent. But according to New South Wales planning law, affordable housing is rental housing for low to moderate incomes that is managed by a community housing provider and "let at a discount of at least 20 per cent of market rent".

Here I note that there is currently no requirement for community housing providers to be non-profit, leaving the door open for private providers to profit in this space. In an uncapped rental market, this "discount to market" model means the term "affordable housing" is deeply misleading. In practice, a 20 per cent discount on market

rent means that people can be paying huge proportions of their income in a rental property that is technically affordable housing but in reality is anything but. In one so-called affordable housing complex in the city, two-bedroom units rent at \$1,150 per week, and a one-bedroom rents for \$775. This is outrageous and so far beyond what the community can afford.

What is more, affordable housing does not have to be affordable forever. Currently, rents for affordable housing properties delivered through the housing system only need to be discounted for a minimum of 15 years, at which time they return to the private market. The idea of time-limiting a solution to the housing crisis, which we know is deeply entrenched and cannot and will not be solved in 15 years, is absurd. Because there is no central oversight or register of affordable housing, we do not even know how many affordable housing dwellings there are in New South Wales, or how many have returned to the private market. All of these loopholes are ones we desperately need to close if affordable housing is to be part of our housing solution. In the new year I look forward to bringing legislation on behalf of The Greens to do just that.

I end on this point: While The Greens support the inclusion of affordable housing with all of those loopholes closed in new housing developments, it is absolutely crucial that it is not seen as a get out of jail free card for the Government. Affordable housing cannot replace public housing built, maintained and managed by the Government—public housing that our communities so desperately and immediately need right now. Tackling the housing crisis will take a range of solutions: public housing, genuinely affordable housing, caps and controls on rents, tighter regulations on short-term rentals, high-quality and supported specialist crisis and temporary housing with all the necessary wraparound and supports, as well as housing that meets sustainability and accessibility standards. The Greens are committed to working with the New South Wales Labor Government to deliver these things so that everybody has a safe and secure place to call home.

#### INTERNATIONAL CENTRE OF TRAINING EXCELLENCE

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (21:31):** It was with immense pride and joy on the weekend that I witnessed the opening of what was initially named the International Centre of Training Excellence [ICTE] in Rooty Hill, located in the area previously known as Blacktown Olympic Park, which hosted the softball and baseball preliminary rounds and warm-up athletics training field for the 2000 Sydney Olympics. The complex has grown to include Blacktown and District Soccer Football Association and a shared stadium between NSW Cricket and NSW AFL. It was the inaugural home for The Giants and is the spiritual home for the Western Sydney Wanderers.

In 2015 Kevin Jones, the then manager of council's key venues, which included the Blacktown International Sports Park, presented to me—as mayor at the time—and the council's general manager the idea of an indoor sports centre with a pool and a gym that would generate income from learn to swim lessons, based on the possibility of the State Government looking to fund high-performance centres to the tune of \$10 million. I replied to Kevin's proposal that a high-performance centre requires the opportunity to provide initiative training methods, not only for sportspeople but also for coaches and to improve wellness in the community.

I told him, "We need to partner with a university to deliver sports performance and testing. We need to consider health recovery for injured athletes, which can translate to improved community health outcomes. Ideally, it should be supported by academy-style accommodation." I was keen on transferring the skills and health support for injured elite sportspeople, who recovered quickly, to injured workers who were often left suffering with insufficient treatment. Kevin's concern was that this would cost a lot more than \$10 million. I said, "Yes, it would be about \$100 million," at which the general manager gasped. He considered it to be a courageous move by a minority mayor, or just a mayoral thought bubble.

At the 2016 council elections my Labor team endorsed the project and we went from a minority position of seven councillors to a landslide win of 10 Labor councillors out of 15. From 2016 to 2018 detailed planning was undertaken with extensive community consultations, meetings with health professionals and sporting academies such as the NSW Institute of Sport, the Australian Institute of Sport and the Queensland Institute of Sport. The Australian Catholic University announced it was moving into Blacktown with a multi-faculty campus, including sports science and other allied fields. The consultant team visited facilities across Australia and international facilities in the USA, UK, Germany and France. I still argued with them about the elements needed for a successful multipurpose sports and health recovery centre.

To improve my knowledge, I financed my own multi-location tour, including Gloria Sports Arena in Turkey, meeting with CEO Gorkem Donmez and Dr Ali Erdogan, FC Barcelona chief architect Marti Padrisa, Manchester Institute of Health and Performance's Dr Stephen McGregor, Arsenal Football Club executive director Peter Silverstone, and David Slade from the Western Sydney Wanderers. I thank each one for their valuable time and considerable ongoing support. After peer reviews were completed, the proposal was finalised with a

\$100 million budget and a time line to be completed by mid-2021. I retired as mayor in October 2019, having been elected to Parliament two years earlier.

Whilst the completed project is wonderful to anyone who sees it, I am saddened by the two-year delay, which resulted in substantial cuts to the facility features to remain within budget. The council executive and councillors appeared more interested in renaming the facility—said to cost more than \$500,000—rather than allowing building naming rights to generate up to \$100,000 per annum. It is sad to note that some attendees at the opening who basked in the glory of the new facility were the ones who slowed down the project or even tried to have it stopped. The line-up on the weekend reinforces the saying that "failure is an orphan, but success has many parents". There were many adopted parents on the day.

It was fabulous to see legendary athlete Cathy Freeman officially open the facility. I thought it was fitting, and the successful 2000 Olympics was an interesting metaphor for the new Blacktown facility. All involved, whether at the 2000 Olympics or the ICTE, were there with the best of intentions to deliver something special for sportspeople. But, in the same way as at the 2000 Olympics—with Rod McGeoch, Ric Birch and Sandy Hollway, who put their hearts and souls into the success of the Olympics—many were overlooked for their contributions. Many people who truly supported the project's vision were overlooked by the current administration. As in sport, success is fleeting but long-term significance is meaningful. Only time will tell whether the current administration will achieve in any significant way the true goals of this facility.

### WATER BUYBACKS

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (21:36):** I begin by acknowledging the communities across the southern Murray-Darling Basin that gathered yesterday to voice their concerns over water buybacks. On 10 November the Senate Environment and Communications Legislation Committee published its report *Delivering Healthy, Working Rivers in the Murray-Darling Basin*. The report makes 15 recommendations with a dissenting report calling for more accountability to be placed on State governments to ensure projects proposed can be delivered and will achieve the outcomes sought, and an agreed implementation schedule would be welcomed.

The New South Wales Government cannot absolve itself of its responsibilities to represent and advocate for the wellbeing of those communities which will be severely impacted by proposed changes. I have recently been in India—the second largest food producing nation—where I participated in the World Food conference 2023. Food production and processing present enormous challenges for the planet and its population. While other nations think and plan in terms of hundreds of millions of people, Australia continues to struggle with the fairness of its settings to support the Murray-Darling Basin and our capacity to feed our population, and indeed the world.

There is significant referencing within the Coalition senators' dissenting report about what they call "the poverty of community consultation and engagement". These senators expressed their disappointment in the consultation process undertaken by the Murray-Darling Basin Authority and the department in preparing the bill. Webinars, online surveys and invite-only sessions are woefully inadequate. This shows up, up and down the line, where open-tender buyback is being recommended as a method for recovery of the 450 gigalitres of additional environmental water to take place in absence of an adequate social and economic impact assessment. The report's recommendation 6 states:

The committee recommends that the Australian Government implement appropriate eligibility parameters for community assistance packages by requiring communities to demonstrate how they were impacted by water acquisition ...

Surely this is a job for a government agency. The onus must be on government—not on communities—to deliver balance and to ensure funding support makes it home. As others have commented, irrigated agriculture and the capacity to capture water for future release are key mitigation tools in dealing with the extremes of climate change to enable us to cope with increasing droughts punctuated by flooding. It is surprising, therefore, that a regulation impact statement has not been completed to underpin the consideration of Labor's proposal.

The 2020 Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences report entitled *Future scenarios for the southern Murray-Darling Basin: Report to the Independent Assessment of Social and Economic Conditions in the Basin* forecasts that the recovery of a further 450 gigalitres of water, amongst other factors, would lead to an increase in average water allocation market prices by between 28 per cent and 50 per cent across the basin compared to the current market scenario. The report estimates that with this level of recovery, average prices might remain above \$200 per megalitre in eight out of 10 years, and that is unsustainable by farmers and producers and therefore by consumers.

For 2020-21 the total gross value in the Murray-Darling Basin of irrigated agricultural production before value-adding was \$8.4 billion. Industry research notes there are approximately 20,000 manufacturing jobs directly relying upon irrigation in the southern Murray-Darling Basin. Towns, communities, indirectly impacted jobs, tourism, manufacturing and retail are at risk. Irrigators, primary producers and food processors are deeply

concerned that the financial, emotional and community impacts of the legislative changes are not fully understood and that the impact on consumers, staff and the community has not been correctly considered nor acknowledged in framing the legislation.

I ask the Premier and the Government to be an advocate to the Federal Government for fair treatment in the revised Murray-Darling Basin program and the provision of truly accessible and generous funding to support farming communities and regional businesses that will be severely impacted. It would be fruitless to allow our food security sovereignty to stumble into disarray and risk by poorly prepared and panic-driven Federal legislation that has left out so many.

#### **NORTHERN RIVERS ITALIAN COMMUNITY FLOOD RECOVERY EFFORTS**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (21:41):** Amid the Lismore flood crises of 2022 there were countless stories of heroism and selfless acts of kindness, both in the moment and after. I focus on just one of them, an incredible community-led effort to supply our flood-ravaged communities with donated household goods supported by an association for former Italian servicemen. Many would know that the Northern Rivers is home to a vibrant and long-established Italian community that traces its origins back to the nineteenth century. Following the second flood at the end of March 2022, members of this community, led by local retired builder Giovanni John Foltran, reached out through their networks to seek household goods for those impacted, and among those who responded was Sydney's Alpini Association.

Alpini Australia is an offshoot of Italy's Associazione Nazionale Alpini, which was established in 1919 by a group of Italy's famed Alpine veterans at the end of World War I. Today the association and its overseas branches have some 350,000 members, including about 200 members living in Australia. The current president of Alpini Australia is Sydney-based Giuseppe Querin, and he was among the first people who responded to John Foltran's calls. With Giuseppe's assistance, contact was made with the Italian Catholic Federation in Wollongong and, under the leadership of Luca Ferrari, the Assistant Italian Consul in Wollongong, enormous quantities of furniture and other goods were soon collected from addresses around the city.

I acknowledge the hard work of Morris and Mario—they know who they are—who physically organised the collections in Wollongong and the drop-offs in Sydney. All these donations were taken to a central dispatch point in Sydney organised by Giuseppe. By the end of May 2022, the first truckload of goods was delivered to Lismore by friendly truck driver Gino, soon followed by another three truckloads including one financed by Alpini. Alpini also organised fundraisers to buy fuel for the deliveries to Lismore, with each round trip from Sydney in a huge Pantech truck costing around \$3,000. Then there was the problem of where to store the goods and how to distribute them. John Foltran worked his local contacts and before too long local building supplies and second-hand dealer Alan "AJ" Magnay and his wife, Ann, offered up their shed for free. The first problem was solved.

With plenty of storage space available, John once again worked his contacts and soon yet more donations of household goods were coming into the shed from local families and businesses. As for the distribution, that was done through the local bush telegraph, often the most dependable network in regional areas such as ours. John told me that people would contact him from all over the region one at a time and then rock up and collect what they needed. Charities were also contacted, but in the aftermath of the disaster they had no spare capacity, so as John said, "We just did our own thing." Among those who helped with distribution was Ernie Rubbo, who offered his utility to help with goods deliveries for those who could not organise their own transport, and Dan Jones, a volunteer charity worker, used his own networks to assist.

By the end of August 2022 everything had been distributed, all without any government assistance and all for free. None of this would have been possible without the superhuman efforts of many volunteers, most of them locals such as Alan Magnay and his wife, Ann Jackson, but also others who travelled from far and wide. I offer my especial thanks to the local Italian community who have made our region their home. They have continued to help in all aspects of the recovery journey, including people like prominent locals Tony and Julie de Nardi who opened their home to flood refugees and provided vouchers from Bunnings and Woolworths to give away to flood-affected people.

There was strong support from the wider Italian community as well, including Wollongong's Italian Catholic Federation, Italy's Honorary Consul for the New South Wales North Coast Cristina Avallone, and Franco Baldi's Sydney-based Italian newspaper *Allora!*, which also provided Bunnings gift cards for distribution in Lismore and surrounds. Last but not least, I once again thank John Foltran for his magnificent efforts, Giuseppe Querin and Australia's Alpini Association without whom none of this would have happened. As Giuseppe says, "No matter where the Alpini are in the world, when disaster strikes the Alpini jump in." On behalf of everyone in our Northern Rivers communities, thank you very much. If I could pronounce it in Italian, I would have said it but it would not have sounded as good.

### ST GEORGE COMMUNITY AWARDS

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (21:46):** Each and every year it is my great privilege to recognise some of the most dedicated and hardworking individuals, business leaders and community organisations within my local area. As many members know, I do that by hosting my annual St George Community Awards. This year was the thirteenth St George Community Awards, and it was a roaring success. Over 300 people attended on the night. My office received countless submissions from local residents, community groups and small businesses. Over 80 winners were chosen for their dedication and service to their community. The award categories included the Individual Volunteer Achievement Award, the Senior Volunteer Achievement Award, the Sharyn Andersen Cullis Environmental Achievement Award, Business Achievement, Community Group Achievement, Multicultural Communities Achievement, Sporting Achievement and Youth Achievement.

The community came out in droves to support their family, friends and colleagues who were receiving awards. I offer a big thankyou to the entire team at Mortdale RSL who were incredibly hospitable. I have always said that our local heroes are our greatest asset. They work tirelessly, often with little to no recognition, to make a difference in the lives of people in our community. From the volunteers who spend countless hours fundraising for community events to the business owners who provide valuable services for locals, every single award recipient plays an important role in making our community great. I truly believe that my local area is the best place to live, work and raise a family, and that is thanks to the work of selfless individuals like our award winners.

The Individual Volunteer Achievement Award recognises outstanding individuals for their efforts. This year 26 individuals were presented with this award, representing organisations like IRT Group, local churches and schools, and local Lions club organisations and Rotary, among others. Sometimes it only takes one person to make change, and individual volunteers are proof of that. Despite often limited resources, they do incredible things for our community. I commend them highly. It was also wonderful to recognise some of our fantastic senior volunteers on the night. They are blessed with a wealth of experience, enabling them to serve the community in ways that many of us would never imagine possible. Take Linda Pritchard, for example. Linda started a sewing group called Knit2gether over 15 years ago. Whilst it started as just six ladies meeting up each week to knit, it has since transformed into an organisation of over 60 locals who meet to knit items for those in need. Knit2gether supports people in my community, like the homeless and disadvantaged, by knitting items like beanies, blankets, scarves and gloves. Senior volunteers like Linda are an inspiration to all of us, showing that we have the power to inspire others to get involved.

The Sharyn Andersen (Cullis) award is also evidence of this fact. Sharyn was a great community environmental hero and a true steward for the environment, volunteering for the Oatley Flora and Fauna Conservation Society for several years. Sadly, she passed away last year. However, I was proud to present an incredibly devoted local environmentalist, Hridaya Shrestha, with an award in remembrance of Sharyn. I thank Hridaya for all the work she does to protect our local environment. It was also a privilege to recognise eight local community organisations and eight local small businesses. The volunteers and members of staff who are involved with those organisations are second to none. They are truly the heartbeat of the St George community. I offer a special congratulations to everyone who received a multicultural communities achievement award. Perhaps I am a bit biased, but I truly believe that our community is incredibly diverse. It is a testament to the multicultural success story of our great State. I cannot forget about our local sporting champions. Our wonderful winners are all committed to community outreach and development programs through sport, which has a long-lasting impact on the lives of many.

Finally, I am pleased that the youth achievement award was also a smashing success this year, with 16 winners, 11 of whom came from the Australian Air League Riverwood squadron. Under the command of Chris Bailey, our wonderful Air League volunteers are dedicated to both community service and personal development. I once again extend my congratulations and best wishes to all the award recipients. The St George Community Awards are truly a highlight of my year and I thank everyone who was involved. I look forward to hosting the awards next year and for many more years to come.

### GENOCIDE

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (21:51):** I bring to the attention of the House an important anniversary. Saturday 9 December 2023 will mark the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in 1948. It was the first human rights treaty adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations and was ratified by Australia in 1949. The United Nations Genocide Convention codified the crime of genocide for the first time in international law and was part of a commitment by the international community to never again repeat the atrocities of the Holocaust and the Second World War. Sadly, since then genocide has remained a feature of modern conflict, including the atrocities committed by the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia in the 1970s and the Rwandan genocide of 1994, to name just two. In order to combat this, 9 December has also served as the United Nations International Day of Commemoration

and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime since 2015. This day serves as a reminder of the genocides of the past and a renewed commitment to stopping genocide in the present and in our future.

Each year, the commemoration of this event highlights a specific aspect of preserving the memory of victims of genocide and strengthening collective global efforts for its prevention. Last year, the day of commemoration focused on the ways that sport can promote social inclusion, bring together communities, and break down cultural and ethnic barriers. The theme for 2023 is a "A Living Force in World Society: The Legacy of the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide". The United Nations has said that this presents an opportunity to reflect on the living legacy of the Genocide Convention and renew the global commitment to prevent genocide amidst concerning rising risk factors for this crime across the world.

The prevention of genocide, in addition to a prohibition on committing it, is a central feature of the Genocide Convention. Further, it is considered by rulings of the International Court of Justice that all States have a responsibility to prevent and punish genocide under international law. Those requirements are tied intimately to the Responsibility to Protect, a global political commitment to end the worst forms of violence and persecution, such as genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. The Responsibility to Protect has three key pillars: first, the responsibility of the State to protect its own population from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity; secondly, that States must support each other in those efforts; and thirdly, if any State is manifestly failing to prevent genocide or war crimes, other States have a responsibility to take collective action to protect civilian populations. It is clear that Australia has a legal obligation in international law, as well as a moral one, to take steps to condemn and prevent genocide and war crimes when they occur.

Gregory Stanton, one of the world's leading experts on genocide and the founder of the human rights group Genocide Watch, has pioneered research on, and academic analysis of, this atrocity. Through his research, Stanton produced the Ten Stages of Genocide, a model that identifies the risk factors for, and the predictable path of, a genocide. Among the 10 steps are dehumanisation, discrimination, polarisation and classification, which is central to the model. One of most important classifications in modern society is citizenship, and often the first step towards genocide is the removal or denial of citizenship. The model also identifies interventions that may be taken, particularly by other States, to prevent or divert the path of genocide. For example, at the persecution stage, at which point victims of genocide are subject to forced displacement, Stanton recommends direct assistance to victim groups, protection of refugees and mobilisation of humanitarian forces. At the extermination stage, at which point the mass killing of civilian populations begins to occur, Stanton advises that only rapid armed intervention and the establishment of protected refugee escape corridors will stop genocide.

In advance of 9 December, I commemorate all victims of genocide, past and present, and pay tribute to their lives lost. Genocide is an exceptionally grave and important matter. In Australia, and internationally, we must be ever vigilant. I stand in support of the efforts of the United Nations to continue to bring awareness to and prevent the atrocities of war crimes and genocide.

### WATER BUYBACKS

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (21:56):** I speak about the Federal water Minister's disastrous plan to buy another 450 gegalitres of water from distressed farmers in the Murray-Darling Basin. Specifically, I want to provide a suggestion to end the threat of buybacks once and for all. The buybacks can be stopped in Canberra before they even begin. Who can stop Tanya's mad buyback plan right now? The National Party and the Liberal Party can. At the moment, people living in rural communities are terrified. They know that water is the lifeblood of their communities. It is no exaggeration to say that ripping this water out of the basin will be like ripping the heart out of our rural communities. The southern basin has already contributed 83 per cent of the water that has been bought back under the Basin Plan. We simply cannot give up any more water.

In Canberra, people like Nationals Senator Perin Davey and the Federal deputy leader of the Liberals, Sussan Ley, continue to sit on the fence. The buybacks cannot happen if Tanya Plibersek's Water Amendment (Restoring Our Rivers) Bill 2023 is defeated in the Senate. Why has the Federal Coalition not put us all out of our misery and announced that it will simply vote down the bill? Why does Federal Nationals leader David Littleproud not hold a press conference tomorrow and say, "The Nationals are going to stop the buybacks by not supporting the bill"? If that happened, the 450-gegalitre buyback threat would be gone. Why are The Nationals and the Liberals trying to have an each-way bet? Currently, The Greens do not support the bill, so a deal between Federal Labor and the Federal Greens seems incredibly unlikely. That means that The Nationals and the Liberals have the power to kick this bill out.

Water buybacks hurt the lives of real people, and by hurting real people they hurt every aspect of our community. They end up hurting schools, sporting clubs, hospitals and local businesses. I have met with the New South Wales water Minister a number of times about the buyback plan, and I have been publicly critical of

her because she has not done enough to oppose the buybacks. I have also made public comments calling on the Premier to stand up to the Feds and publicly oppose the buybacks.

This is not just a problem for the State Government, because the Federal Coalition can also protect the people of rural New South Wales simply by killing that bill off. My message to Sussan Ley, Perin Davey and David Littleproud is simple: It is time to come out and say that there will be no 450 gigalitre Federal buybacks because the Coalition is killing the bill off in the Federal Parliament. If The Nationals and the Liberals do not take this stand, we need to ask why.

I note that State Nationals MP Steph Cooke has publicly denounced the buybacks, and that is a good thing. So why do the Federal Nationals not support Steph by not supporting the bill? If The Nationals and the Liberals really care about rural communities, they know what they need to do. Victoria has already publicly opposed the Federal buybacks, and that has given Victorian regional communities a lot of comfort. These buybacks simply cannot happen. They must be stopped, and it is time for the Federal Nationals and Liberals to step up and help protect the people of New South Wales from this disastrous buyback plan.

### ISRAEL-PALESTINE PROTESTS

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (22:01):** I make some remarks about current world events and their effect on the community I represent. Both Israelis and Palestinians have a right to exist in peace and security. Tragically, those rights are under assault by the actions of terrorists. I despair at what Hamas has done and is doing. It is a terrorist organisation. Innocent people from Israel and Palestine alike have suffered and continue to suffer. I express my condolences to all those affected people of goodwill. On the Sunday morning of 8 October 2023, we all awoke to horrific scenes of Israel being ruthlessly bombarded by rockets and of innocent civilians being maimed and injured. These casualties included one Australian citizen, Galit Carbone of Sydney, who was tragically killed in the Hamas attacks. I join members in sending our deepest condolences to her grieving family. I also join with members in calling upon Hamas to release all hostages.

In response to these Hamas attacks, the State of Israel has every right to defend itself. Modern Israel was founded in 1948 as a home and sanctuary for the Jewish people. Australia and the world must afford Israel every support it needs to defend itself from terrorist attacks and violations of its territorial sovereignty and integrity. Its welfare, prosperity and very survival matters to us all, and we must be prepared to stand strong with Israel. I know how much the barbaric attacks on Israel have impacted the worldwide Jewish community. I have been deeply heartened by the show of empathy and solidarity from around the world, including in Australia, which saw the Sydney Opera House and other landmarks around the country illuminated in the Israeli colours of white and blue.

While public support for Israel and the Jewish people here in Sydney has been overwhelmingly positive, I have been disturbed and indeed appalled by the behaviour of a small minority in our community who have shamefully seized upon the recent Hamas attacks to indulge their own prejudices and hatreds. I refer especially to recent protests at the Sydney Opera House where protesters chanted disgusting antisemitic slogans, supported the vile actions of Hamas and burned Israeli flags. I condemn these despicable protests in the strongest possible terms. Such behaviour has no place in our society, and our local Jewish community must be able to feel safe at all times in their own city.

It is inexcusable that members of our Jewish community were told to stay at home in a city where they should feel most safe. I welcomed the apology from the Premier but maintain that this Government should have handled this situation much better by taking every security precaution necessary to keep our Jewish community safe in the first place. As well as the behaviour of some protesters, I have been disappointed with the moral equivalence displayed by some elected members of Parliament. I refer to comments made by my Federal counterpart, the member for North Sydney, Kylea Tink, who for so many days said nothing in condemnation of the terrorist attacks. She said nothing about the horrible actions at the Opera House. Her first written words were to condemn Israel's actions in Gaza as "abhorrent" and then she voted with The Greens in their extreme position in the Federal Parliament. I would have expected much better from our elected local representative.

Our broader New South Wales community must rally to support and affirm our Jewish fellow citizens at a time when they are feeling most vulnerable and distressed by the recent attacks on Israel. We must rid our society of all forms of antisemitism and make every effort to ensure that our Jewish community are respected, valued, and made to feel safe in all places, at all times. My own electorate of Willoughby is home to a sizeable Jewish community, with an estimated 750 people of Jewish background residing in the Willoughby local government area. Many of these Jews have family links to Europe where they fled Nazi persecution. Beginning new lives in Australia, they have contributed so richly to our community in education, business, the professions, art, culture, and, of course, religion. The Jewish community in my area is served by three main synagogues: the North Shore Temple Emanuel, led by Rabbi Nicole Roberts; the North Shore Synagogue of Lindfield, led by Rabbi Paul Lewin; and the Cremorne Synagogue, led by Rabbi Chaim Konceptolski.

Shortly after the Hamas attacks on Israel, I joined the Cremorne Synagogue in a moving service and offered my condolences and support. I thank each of these synagogues for their service to the Jewish community and for the great contribution they made and continue to make to the spiritual, cultural and community life of Willoughby, Sydney, New South Wales and Australia. I cherish the Jewish community in Willoughby and will strive to be the best advocate I can for their interests and wellbeing, now and always. I once again express my support for our local Jewish community in the face of terrorist attacks. I stand with the nation of Israel as it faces some of its darkest days. Again, both Israelis and Palestinians have a right to exist in peace and security. I hope and pray that no more innocent lives will be taken by the events brought about by the terrible actions of Hamas terrorists.

### REMEMBRANCE DAY

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (22:05):** At 11.00 a.m. on 11 November 1918 the guns on the Western Front fell silent after more than four years of brutal war. Each year we come together in our local communities to pay tribute to the men and women who have selflessly served and sacrificed for our freedom. As we stand in solemn reflection, we remember the countless individuals who throughout history have answered the call of duty, leaving behind the comforts of home to defend the values that we hold dear. Each poppy that adorns the chest of veterans, friends and family is a symbol of remembrance. It is a symbol that transcends borders and reminds us of the shared responsibility we have to uphold the legacies of those who came before us. The red petals are not just a symbol of bloodshed; they are a reminder of the resilience and determination that define the human spirit. The First World War was a time of hardship and devastation that ultimately ended with millions dead and millions more displaced. In the carnage and horror of war the Anzac spirit was forged—on the beaches of Gallipoli, the muddy hell of the Somme, and in the deserts of the Holy Land.

It is important that on Remembrance Day we pause to honour that Anzac spirit that endures to this day, the spirit of mateship, courage and determination in the face of overwhelming odds. This year I joined with my local community in Kirribilli to mark Remembrance Day. As always, it was a solemn occasion. I acknowledge the Kirribilli RSL Sub-Branch for all its efforts in organising this service, and for its continued support of our local veterans and their families. In particular, I thank Kirribilli RSL Sub-Branch president John Kirton, as well as the rest of the committee, including Tom Richardson, OAM, and Lisa Meehan. I also recognise the cadets from St Aloysius' College who attended and formed part of the honour guard and led the formal procession.

I thank Councillor Roy Bendall, who laid a tribute on my behalf at the Mosman RSL Sub-Branch service at the Mosman War Memorial. I also acknowledge the Mosman RSL Sub-Branch and particularly president Alan Toner for his work in pulling together the service again this year. At the North Sydney RSL Sub-Branch service, I acknowledge and thank Trent Zimmerman, who laid a tribute on my behalf. He and I are fellow patrons of the North Sydney RSL Sub-Branch. I also acknowledge president Alex Wilson for all his continued efforts. I was honoured to be appointed as a patron of the North Sydney RSL Sub-Branch. It is a role that I gladly accepted, along with Commander Fiona Eggins of the Royal Australian Navy, who is the Commander of HMAS Waterhen, one of the two naval bases in my electorate of North Shore.

I also recently joined with all three of those RSL sub-branches for a family-friendly day of barefoot bowls at the Greens in North Sydney. While this was a much-anticipated showdown between North Sydney, Mosman, Kirribilli and some out-of-towners—our friends from Lane Cove—there was no clear winner except the bowls and camaraderie on the day. It was particularly lovely to see members bringing their families along to join in, from all ages young and old. It is these types of events that keep that mateship spirit and camaraderie alive and well. I recognise that RSL NSW is putting a lot of effort and energy into ensuring we have these types of events and sporting activities that will also encourage the participation of younger veterans. I note that Mosman RSL Sub-Branch now has a fishing day planned for our local RSL sub-branches. I am not much of a fisherman, but I may join them for the fellowship if not for the fish.

As we pay homage to those who served, it is crucial to cast our eyes upon the indomitable spirit of Australians who, despite the vast difference from the epicentre of conflict, played a pivotal role in the First World War. The struggles and horrors that they faced forged a resilience that belied our relatively small population at the time, and their bravery in the face of adversary became a defining characteristic of our Anzac spirit. In finishing, I will read a quote from former Prime Minister Billy Hughes, who said at the end of the First World War of the soldiers of the Australian Imperial Force:

Our heritage, our free institutions of government—all that we hold dear—are handed back into our keeping stained with the blood of sacrifice. Surely not only we, their fellow citizens, but Australians throughout the ages, will treasure for ever the memories of these glorious men to whom the Commonwealth owes so much, and will guard with resolute determination the privileges for which they fought and suffered.

Lest we forget.

## PITTWATER ELECTORATE DEVELOPMENT

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater) (22:10):** I speak tonight about the Labor Government's plan for a development onslaught in Pittwater. During the recent State election, I cautioned that a vote for any candidate in Pittwater other than a Liberal was a vote for overdevelopment in Pittwater. This concern was based upon repeated commitments by the Labor Party over many years. Before the 2019 State election, the then Labor leader said, "It's not fair that the North Shore and the northern beaches are protected from overdevelopment." In March this year, the now Premier said, "We believe that the population needs to be balanced. We don't think it's right that communities in Western Sydney take their share of population growth as well as everybody else's share."

The establishment and setting of housing targets is a political minefield. Too often the government of the day can be tempted to unfairly dump overdevelopment in areas where there is neither the infrastructure to accommodate it nor political consequences connected with it—that is, putting the development in seats that the Government could not win at an election. In 2015 the then Liberal Government did its best to take the politics out of housing targets by establishing the Greater Cities Commission. This would ensure that long-term planning, strategy and the capacity of infrastructure was tied in with any future development. Under the Greater Sydney Commission's housing target for the northern beaches, by 2036 we need to accommodate 22,963 more people than lived in the city in 2016. This equates to about 11,975 more dwellings by 2036. The northern beaches has developed capacity for 11,700 extra dwellings, meaning the area from Palm Beach to Manly to Davidson requires an additional 275 dwellings. This is a pittance that will be resolved as council progresses the updating of its local environment plans over the coming period.

An ongoing challenge with meeting housing targets is that they depend upon private property owners availing themselves of the potential development on their land. Under set zonings, a property could be home to multiple dwellings but remain undeveloped due to the inherent rights of individual citizens. Over time, however, we know that land is developed to its full potential and the northern beaches housing targets will be met with built dwellings. Today, the Government has announced its intention to disband the Greater Cities Commission and rip up its mandate. Sadly, this will bring politics back to the planning system. It is not entirely clear how the Government's new housing target and planning system will work. However, we know that the last time the Labor Party was in charge of our planning system, we saw the likes of Eddie Obeid, Joe Tripodi and Ian Macdonald run rampant. The challenge with politicians is that they can be susceptible to relying upon political or financial support of vested interests, and this can be a breeding ground for corruption or political decision-making.

Planning is a hotbed of risk. I do not by any means seek to impugn any member of the Government. I believe that almost every member comes to this place with the best of intentions. The purpose of independent housing targets and checks and balances within a planning system is to reduce the risk of corruption and the politicisation of planning decisions and to ensure that we get the best possible outcomes. I fear that, under this Government, Pittwater and the wider northern beaches is set for a relative development onslaught. Pittwater is paradise. Our homes are nestled amongst trees; it is not a matter of trees being nestled amongst homes. We are more at one with the natural environment than many other parts of Sydney. In a world of increasing human impact, we need to save the wonder of our environment for future generations. Make no mistake, significant development outside of Pittwater but on the northern beaches will harm our way of life. We will spend more time in traffic and our natural environment will be destroyed to make way for an increase in development.

Not only does this Government's onslaught of high rise and overdevelopment jeopardise Pittwater's environment, the Government has axed the widening of Mona Vale Road West; axed the Beaches Link tunnel; failed to provide additional funding needed for the finalisation of the Narrabeen Sports High School upgrade; cut our bus timetable frequency; proposed to rip away intensive care paramedical services from Narrabeen, putting our residents at risk; refused to reopen Kedesh Rehabilitation Services; and refused to reopen the community dental clinic at Mona Vale Hospital—the list goes on. The Government is slashing and burning services and infrastructure while threatening more housing. When I recently asked Government members if they planned to increase the current housing target for the northern beaches, they responded with, "Housing targets are still under development."

Based on all that we have seen to date, I hope that those targets are not being overdeveloped. Rest assured, if the Government seeks to destroy our community with high rise and density, which simply cannot be accommodated, my community and I will fight them every step of the way.

## RURAL FIRE SERVICE

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (22:15):** The NSW Rural Fire Service personnel who serve with such distinction across the Coffs Coast are used to facing danger as they fight to save lives and property. We are indebted to every member of our local RFS brigades for putting themselves in harm's way to keep members of our community safe, whether they are farmers, families or people on remote properties. With summer nearly

upon us and with the State grappling with many fire emergencies so far this season, we think of the men and women—whether they be volunteer or paid—who are prepared every day to be on the front line. I am extremely proud of the entire RFS Coffs Coast team, led by Coffs Coast district manager Inspector Sandra Huer. I commend this extraordinary Coffs Coast team for their hard work and perseverance, their preparedness and their vigilance. Recently they were able to reflect on their sterling service, taking centre stage at a medal presentation, and vehicle handover to the Bonville brigade in Coffs Harbour.

It was a proud day at Coffs Harbour Racing Club and Function Centre for our RFS firefighting family, showcasing the exemplary efforts of all our volunteers, staff, crews and brigade supporters. In the Coffs Harbour electorate, those Rural Fire Service members who were awarded medals for their years of service, with their brigades, are as follows. From the Bonville brigade is Kevin Romero, 30 years; Narelle Swanson, 30 years; Neville Crampton, 30 years; Wendy Crampton, 30 years; Daryl Ravenscroft, 30 years; Wayne Hartridge, 20 years; Robert Gill, 20 years; David Hansen, 20 years; Scott Beard, 10 years; Craig Melrose, 10 years; Wilma Romero, 10 years; and Tim Jeffery, 10 years.

From the Coffs Coast Team is Michael Brougham, 25 years; Maree Coonan, 20 years; and Darryal Luxford, 25 years. From the Coramba brigade is Linda Cook, 20 years. From the Corindi brigade Robert Cox served 25 years; Neville Anderson was awarded the Humanitarian Overseas Service Medal, Canada; Group Officer Walter Gately served an amazing 55 years; and Group Officer Keith Driver served 30 years. From the Karangi brigade, Gary Hildebrand served 30 years. From the Moonee brigade, William O'Brien served 10 years and Rebecca Lieschke served 10 years. From the Mullaway brigade, Celia Wells served 30 years.

A posthumous medal was awarded to Neville Woodward from Red Hill/Fire Control Centre for 33 years of service, while Samuel Turner served 10 years. From the Sandy Beach brigade is Ernest Brownlee, 30 years; Jeffrey Taylor, 20 years; Maxwell Clayton, 20 years; Alan Biggen, 10 years; Michael Collins, 10 years; Reece Biggen, 10 years; and Rowan Lehr, 10 years. From the Solitary brigade, one of the longest serving members of the RFS in the State, Leonard Leete, served an amazing 70 years of service; as well as Graeme Leete, 30 years; Lyle Gately, 20 years; Joshua Keating, 20 years; James Smith, 20 years; Paul Golding, 10 years; Aaron Drayton, 10 years; and Alexander Swadling, 10 years.

From the Coffs Coast support brigade is Linda Sticker, 20 years; Jeffery Maher, 20 years; and Rita Davis, 10 years. From the Ulong brigade is Tracey Timms, 30 years; Nicholas Timms, 20 years; Wayne Wardell, 10 years; Steve Cleary, 10 years; Natalie Hardy, 10 years; and Felicity Cochrane, 10 years. From the Woolgoolga brigade is Colin Noble, 50 years, and Jade Vidler, 10 years. I thank every member of the Rural Fire Service in the Coffs Harbour electorate for their dedication to their important duties. They truly are the heroes that the Coffs community needs.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 22:19 until  
Thursday 23 November 2023 at 10:00.**

*Written Community Recognition Statements*

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

**COUNCIL OF INDIANS AUSTRALIAN, DIWALI FESTIVAL, CASTLE HILL SHOWGROUND**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—I recognise and acknowledge The Council of Indians Australia for service to our community for over ten years. It was more than ten years ago that a decided and community minded group came together and formed the Council of Indians Australia [CIA]. The Council's objectives include the promotion of social and cultural welfare of the people of Indian origin; providing support and/or assistance for the Indian Australian community and to facilitate and conduct celebrations and functions relevant to the Indian Australian community. The Council conducts many celebrations within the North Western Region of Sydney including India independence Day; Holi Festival of Colours and Diwali Festival of Lights. Within the Hills Shire Council we have forty-two per cent of residents born overseas. We have over six per cent of residents born in India. CIA held its annual Diwali Festival at the Castle Hill Showground on 29 October 2023. It was a great day with wonderful colourful and festive stalls, Artists; Bollywood Cultural Performances; and great cultural food for everyone. I wish to recognise and acknowledge CIA President Shail Wadhwa and the entire CIA Executive Committee for organising another great Diwali Festival.

**HILLS SOROPTIMISTS, HIDDEN HOMELESSNESS FORUM**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—I wish to express my congratulations and appreciation to Hills Soroptimists on holding a successful Hidden Homelessness Forum on 25 October 2023. More than 80 locals gathered at the Castle Hill RSL to discuss the issue of homelessness experienced by older women over 55 in the

Hills District and how we as a community can assist through supporting local charities and initiatives such as the Kenthurst Transitional Housing Project. Presentations were made by Dr Michelle Byrne, former Mayor and founder of the Hills Winter Sleep Out, Bev Baker from the National Older Women's Network, Annabelle Daniels CEO of Women's Community Shelters and Dennis Van Someren and James Visione who established the first transitional house for older women in Kenthurst. All funds raised from the forum will be donated to the Kenthurst transitional housing to provide further accommodation for homeless women over the age of 55 in our community. Congratulations to all involved on holding an important and informative forum.

### **CASTLE HILL CHRISTMAS CARD COMPETITION 2023**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—It was such pleasure to organise my first Christmas Card Competition for the primary schools of the Castle Hill electorate. The theme for the competition was 'the three wise men and the Christmas star' and so we naturally had many artistic interpretations of camels, stars, and deserts. I had many wonderful submissions from talented young artists from schools including Our Lady of Lourdes Baulkham Hills Primary School, Kenthurst Public School, Glenhaven Public School, and Baulkham Hills North Public School. Unfortunately, only one person could win the competition, and it was very difficult to choose the winning artwork. I would like to congratulate Sophie Kim from Baulkham Hills North Public School on winning this year's competition. Her wonderful artwork is displayed on my 2023 Parliamentary Christmas Cards. On Wednesday the 15th of November, I went to the school's award ceremony and presented Sophie with a certificate. This is a fantastic way to engage the community as we all prepare ourselves for the Christmas season. Sophie's artwork along with the top 20 I've selected will be displayed in the reception of my Electorate Office over December. A final well done to Sophie and the other participants.

### **SAM PARISH**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—Mr Speaker, young Forbes stock and station agent Sam Parish is carving out a career based on excellent judgement, and he now has an Australian title to prove it. Sam, aged 22, demonstrated the future of the Australian cattle breeding industry is in good hands by winning the National Beef Cattle Young Judges Championship, finalised at Launceston's Royal Show in October. A young man with a passion for the beef cattle industry, Sam attended sales and shows from a young age, winning a reserve peewee national title at five and he's been honing his skills ever since. To be named best Young Beef Cattle Judge (aged 15 to 25), Sam proved himself at regional and state level, starting his journey at Bedgerabong's annual show-proving the importance of local shows to rural communities. He was also a finalist in this year's Beef Paraders competition, held at Perth Royal Show. Sam's family is heavily involved in the stud cattle industry, and he's happily taken the advice and opinions of others on the way to completing a steep learning curve, with his national title the result. I congratulate Sam Parish on winning a National title and wish him well.

### **MICK DONELLY**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—Mr Speaker, volunteers like Mick Donelly are few and far between and I would like to congratulate him on receiving a life membership from the Cargo Blue Heelers Rugby League Club. Mick has been involved with the Blue Heelers as a player, strapper, club secretary and president for two decades. His dedication has been unwavering to the point of lacing up the boots when the playing numbers are thin, despite being in his mid-fifties. Cargo Blue Heelers have more than one hundred years of history and Mick sees his role as carrying on a legacy that has become a staple for the small Cargo community, population of about 550. After moving to Cargo with a young family, Mick was able to meet people through the club and his philosophy is, if you get something out of a club, you should put something back in. It is no secret that volunteers are the lifeblood of small rural communities and Cargo is no different. The footy club is more than a sports club, it's a hub that enables rural people to connect. I congratulate Mick Donelly and the Cargo Blue Heelers on recognising his contribution with life membership.

### **FOODCARE ORANGE**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—Mr Speaker, as the cost of living starts to bite I would like to bring attention to the work of Orange's social enterprise group FoodCare. Manned by a group of volunteers, FoodCare is the provider of low-cost or free food and has now added free cooking classes to its agenda. These classes have the theme of cutting costs and minimising waste and with the demand of the products FoodCare can supply increasing, are very timely. FoodCare volunteers say they have seen a monthly increase from around 360 people to more than 800 using the service, from all walks of life. Showing people how to stretch their weekly shop further with tips in the kitchen just makes sense. Partnering with FoodCare and Mission Australian, Orange chefs Alison Karbowski and Ruben Lopez Mesa are sharing their ideas on easy, affordable cooking at home, encouraging people to ditch the takeaway for a healthier alternative. Orange is recognised as a food destination but for some in our community that is far removed from their reality. Enabling them to share in the produce of the area and make the best of it is a great initiative and commend FoodCare on its work.

### ADAM BEATTIE

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)**—I would like to acknowledge the incredible accomplishments of world sailing champion Adam Beattie. Adam made the move to Lake Macquarie three years ago from Cairns, following his belief that if he wanted to become the best sailor, he had to compete against the best, and we do have some amazingly skilled sailors in Lake Macquarie. While Adam is not a professional sailor per-se; this year alone he has won the New South Wales, Queensland and Victorian State Titles as well as the Australian Championships, beating Olympic silver medallist and World Champion Darren Bundock and World Champion and reigning European Champion Steve Brewin. Adam won his first national title when he was just eight years old competing in a sabot. Since then he has gone on to win a total of nine nation titles in three different classes and a world championship in a Nacra F18 catamaran. Adam is now sharing his love of sailing with his nine year old daughter Jade, and I'm happy to report that just last month they came second in the Maricate NSW State Titles held at Mannering Park. Well done Adam, you are an inspiration to us all.

### RUBY FLEMMING

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)**—Christmas is a time of giving, and I would like to acknowledge the efforts of one young lady who is going above and beyond to make sure everybody in Lake Macquarie can have a joyous Christmas day. Year 7 student Ruby Flemming from Morisset High School has organised a food and toy drive to support Southlake's Incorporated Christmas Drive, which provides hundreds of Lake Macquarie families who are facing hardships with toys and food hampers to ensure that nobody misses out on being able to celebrate the festive season. Ruby's initiative is based on her genuine desire to make a real difference to people who are doing it tough. Well done Ruby, it is a wonderful thing you are doing to help those who are most in need in our community.

### YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FORUM

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)**—October is Mental Health Month when Rose Jackson MLC, Minister for Youth and Mental Health and I took the opportunity to attend the Y NSW's Mental Health Forum in Parramatta. Throughout the forum, members of the mental health committee raised concerns about the core mental health issues impacting youth across Western Sydney. Highlighted was the need to empower the minds of young people to better recognise their self-worth, inner-strength, and agency. Developing these qualities are essential in growing our future leaders. The Mental Health Committee also presented the Minister and I with their Mental Health Youth Bill - Revolution, Prevention and Destigmatisation of Mental Health Bill 2023. The Youth Bill, developed by the Youth Parliamentarians, aims to destigmatise mental health and mental illness plus revolutionise the provision of mental health services. The importance of the Bill was highlighted by Louisa McKay, the Executive Leader for Purpose and Impact, stating "it is paramount that young people not only have a say about issues that impact them but have opportunities to inform policy to create change." Thank you to all the youth members who participated and for being great advocates of mental health awareness.

### ARTS AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE-WSABE

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)**—On the 13th of October, I had the incredible opportunity of joining the Premier at the Western Sydney Awards for Business Excellence. 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 vast 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, Arts and Cultural Exchange [ACE] who won the award for Outstanding Community Organisation. Established in 1984, ACE places arts and cultural activities at the centre of its interdisciplinary, multigenerational collaborations with communities. ACE delivers transformational projects that increase social and community participation of those living on the margins, particularly within the communities of Parramatta and Western Sydney. A big congratulations to Executive Director, Anne Loxley and the team at Arts and Cultural Exchange

### THE ROYAL AERO CLUB 103RD BIRTHDAY

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden)**—The Royal Aero Club of New South Wales held their 103rd birthday celebrations on Friday the 10th of November, holding a Cocktail Gala at the Royal Automobile Club of Australia. The Royal Aero Club was founded over 100 years ago in November 1920, by the aviators on their return from the battlefields of World War I. In 1926 The Royal Aero Club became involved in flight training, with early flight instructors include legends of aviation Charles Kingsford Smith, George Littlejohn, and Charles Ulm, demonstrating the quality of the Royal Aero Club from its foundation. The Royal Aero Club then purchased a site at Mascot which is now occupied by Sydney Airport. During World War II the Royal Aero Club supported

the war effort, providing skilled instructors, aircraft, and maintenance facilities to train cadets for the Royal Australian Air Force. Today the Royal Aero Club is still going strong and holds the title as the largest volunteer-run and not-for-profit Part 141 Flight Training Organisation in the Southern Hemisphere. Once again, congratulations to the Royal Aero Club of New South Wales for their 103rd birthday celebrations and a continuation of their rich and storied history.

#### **BEERSHEBA DAY BREAKFAST**

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden)**—I was pleased to commemorate the history-changing Australian Light Horse charge that occurred on 31 October 1917 during World War 1. The ceremony took place at the Beersheba Centenary Wall in front of the main building at Club Menangle. We were very lucky to have Kate Munari as the distinguished guest speaker. Kate spoke elegantly about her experiences as Australia's only female Navy helicopter pilot to fly in Afghanistan. Club Menangle's venues hold a significant connection to the battle of Beersheba, with light horse regiments using the sites for training purposes. On the 31st of October, the whole community was able to commemorate the last successful mounted infantry charge in history and honour those who made the ultimate sacrifice that day. The ceremony was lovely and truly served as a reminder to all of us that the sacrifices of the past should never be forgotten. Thank you to Club Menangle for inviting me and hosting such a wonderful ceremony.

#### **GO FURTHER AWARD RECIPIENTS**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to congratulate the recipients of Taree Universities Campus, Go Further award. Each year, TUC recognises the achievements of one Year 12 Graduate from each MidCoast High School. Each Go Further award recipient has been recognised for extending themselves in their studies and/or supported their peers, especially in the face of adversity, set-backs and personal challenges. Congratulations Ruby Roberts from Bulahdelah Central School, Sarah Annesley from Chatham High School, and Amara Wright from Taree High School. You have shown that through hard work, compassion, and resilience, great heights can be reached. Once again, congratulations to Ruby, Sarah, and Amara for your well-deserved recognition and achievements. As you embark on your future journeys, may your paths be filled with continued success and personal growth.

#### **LYNDA MEGAW**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to recognise and celebrate Lynda Megaw on her 40th year anniversary at Beaver Novello Moss. Lynda, a school leaver with a dream, joined Rod Beaver's accounting practice as a receptionist and secretary in 1983. Through commitment, diligence, loyalty, and client service, she played a key role in the evolution of the firm into Beaver Novello Moss [BNM], one of Tuncurry Forster's prominent public accounting firms. The accounting industry witnessed technological advancements, which Lynda embraced. From typewriters to computers, she adapted, mastering tasks from typing documents to data entry with precision. Her dedication extended to creating a close-knit community among colleagues, becoming the cornerstone of BNM's social culture. Lynda's willingness to undertake challenging tasks, including liaising with government institutions, earned her admiration from everyone at BNM. Her commitment to the business is evident through the clients who praise her dedication. Congratulations, Lynda, thank you for your contributions to BNM's growth and success.

#### **FORSTER NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to recognise and celebrate the Forster Neighbourhood Centre on the official opening of their new premises, marking a significant milestone in its ongoing journey to service the Great Lakes region. For over 40 years, the Forster Neighbourhood Centre has stood as an example of what can be achieved when dedicated individuals come together to create positive change. The scope of services provided by the centre is truly extraordinary. From emergency assistance, including food, clothing, and shelter, to vital community connections that bring our society together, the Forster Neighbourhood Centre offers a lifeline to those in need. It also nurtures creativity and community spirit through activities for kids, singing groups, men's, and women's gatherings, and more. The Centre's transition to its new premises ensures a central community hub that welcomes all, offering meeting spaces, counselling, no-interest loans, and referrals to other valuable organisations. Thank you to the staff and volunteers at Forster Neighbourhood Centre, your hard work is truly changing lives.

#### **BENSON HOLT SHOWCASES HIS AFL SKILLS**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—Temora's own Benson Holt is a keen Aussie rules footballer, with a passion and drive to get in and never give up. Benson's determination and passion for the sport has been displayed recently at the 2023 Inclusion Carnival where he was selected to represent the NSW/ACT Rams. This was not Benson's first time to be selected at representative level, after making his debut last year. Benson is one

of 20,000 people who lives with Williams syndrome, a rare genetic disorder, however this does not stop him from being part of a team and enjoying sport. At the young age of five Benson picked up a football and has been kicking goals ever since. Now a valued team member of the Temora Kangaroos, Benson is a great role model for others with disabilities. Congratulations Benson on showing others when you have a passion and a dream you can be provided with opportunities to showcase your skills and talent.

#### **GRENFELL REGIONAL YOUTH RECOGNISED**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—It is always exciting to hear about the achievements of our youth, and to know two of our Grenfell young ladies have been awarded for their passion and dedication to their educational and career goals is fantastic. A total of 56 nominations were received, meaning that our future is looking bright with so many of our regional youth recognised for their commitment to achieving their goals. Congratulations to Chloe Wilson and Heather Walker who were two of the winners of the recent Country Education Foundation [CEF] Alumni Awards. Chloe is a talented fashion designer, undertaking her Bachelor of Fashion Design, with her garments recently on display at the CEF Grenfell fashion parade, took out the Young Achiever award. Heather was recognised for her tenacity, her resilience, her ever positive attitude, undertaking her Bachelor of Education Technology and Applied Studies was awarded the CEF Launching Star award. This is in addition to her previous award in 2020 as the CEF Rising Star. Congratulations ladies on your achievements, I wish you both a very successful future.

#### **EVIE HENLEY**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—I wish to congratulate a West Wyalong local sporting talent, Evie Henley who recently represented NSW in the Girls 15 years and under Australian Football School Sport Australia Championships in Ballarat. This year's carnival saw over 300 students from across Australia come together and play a week of AFL. Day 1 and 2 saw the NSW girls play ACT and South Australia with wins on both days. Day 3 was a chance to enjoy the Championship Team Educators Experience at Sovereign Hill Museum. Day 4 saw NSW play Vic White and again NSW came away victorious, Evie was also named "Players Player" of this game. Day 5 saw NSW play in the crossover match against Vic Navy but unfortunately, they were beaten. Players then enjoyed a rest day on Day 6, so they were ready to play in the Finals the next day. NSW played South Australia in the finals claiming the win and the Bronze Medal. I congratulate Evie once again on this incredible achievement.

#### **CRONULLA SEAGULLS - FOOTBALL NSW CHAMPION OF CHAMPIONS**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I congratulate the Cronulla Seagulls FC 18s Men's team on winning their age group in the 53rd Football NSW Champions of Champions finals held on 22 October at Valentine Sports Park Glenwood. The knockout tournament is an opportunity for the winners of each association to battle against each other; over 300 teams participated. The Seagulls defeated Wakehurst Football Club 1-0, with the winning goal came from Aiden Fielder who made an extraordinary shot in the last 10 minutes. I congratulate team members Oliver Gravenor, Jackson Greck, Jack Rich, Clay Smith, Mitchell Blackhouse, Luca Algeria Ferreira, Matthew Nunn, Luka Oliveri, Harry Hindle, Jack Moreria, Aiden Fielder, Jackson Fox, Patrick Schwartz, Luke Cutcliffe, Logan Coffey, Will Collins and Hayden Roberts. I also congratulate coach Mal Smith, assistant coach Scott Greck and manager Steven Blackhouse. The victory is a great achievement for all involved.

#### **GRAYS POINT PUBLIC SCHOOL SENIOR SOCCER GIRLS TEAM**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I congratulate the Grays Point Public School senior soccer girls team which won the NSW Primary School Sports Association Championships state knockout on 30 October. In the school newsletter, Principal Narelle Betts Smith tells the story of a tense finals day: "Grays Point senior soccer girls team will go down in our school's history books. This day will be forever etched in the team's memory and for those of us at the semi-final and final. After a Matildas like semi, leaving us spectators until 5 minutes to go to score a brilliant goal to defeat Shell Cove PS 1-0. In intense heat the team played the final against Eleebana Public School and the game ended in a 0-0 draw making our amazing girls Equal State Champions." The winning team members Sage Boothroyd, Amelia Cocks, Amelia Connor, Sage Corran, Cleo Elsdon, Amelie Foley, Erin Mirigliani, Kate Park, Amelia Quinlan, Eliana Rensen, Grace Stegbauer, Tabatha Talbot, Maya Williams and Isabelle Yewdall. Mrs Brittany Wymer was the coach. Well done players and coach!

#### **GRACE MAHER**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I thank Kirrawee's Grace Maher for her volunteer contributions to the Red Cross' emergency services for 25 years. Ms Maher, aged 87, was recognised with a certificate of appreciation for her dedicated community support in helping during disasters that have occurred in Sydney and further afield in NSW for the past 25 years. She was deployed in 1997 to assist after the Thredbo landslide. Part of her job included answering the phone from potential victims, relatives and friends. She has volunteered for the Red Cross emergency services ever since. A significant task for her was helping with the phone lines following

the Lindt Café siege in 2014. She also assisted in the aftermath of the cyclone in Kurnell. Ms Maher recently supported the residents at Woronora after their homes were flooded. Besides phone calls, her tasks have been as varied as making sandwiches for people who are wanting to settle into temporary accommodation, simply chatting to displaced people and reassuring people where necessary. I thank Ms Maher for all her support and being an important part of recovery support.

#### WARRAWONG RESIDENTS FORUM

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces)**—Since 2003 The Warrawong Residents Forum has been running a free community lunch program providing meals for vulnerable people every week from food donated by organisations like OzHarvest. Volunteers help run the lunch and its estimated 1000 kilograms of otherwise wasted food is provided to struggling families and vulnerable people in the area. Warrawong is one of the most vulnerable communities in New South Wales. Increasing cost of living pressures and rising rents have put pressure on family budgets. There are many families doing it tough right now, struggling to make ends meet. Low-income households, many with children, make the difficult choice every day on what bills they can afford to pay and what meals to skip to make ends meet. I have always admired the work of the Residents Forum and was pleased to have secured a \$70,000 funding boost so that they can continue delivering good, healthy meals to those people doing it tough in the Warrawong community. My thanks goes out to Ash Castro and the volunteer team at the Warrawong Community Centre for the invaluable work that they continue to do to support people in Warrawong and its surrounding suburbs.

#### BOMADERY RSL SUB-BRANCH EVENT

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises the Bomaderry RSL Sub Branch. On Saturday 11th November 2023, I was honoured to lay a commemorative wreath at a solemn and respectful Remembrance Day ceremony hosted by the Bomaderry RSL Sub Branch at Walsh Memorial Park in Meroo Street, Bomaderry. I acknowledge and thank the Bomaderry RSL Sub Branch Committee Members including the President Mr Robert (Bob) Madden, the Secretary Mr Allen Scott and the Treasurer Mr William Harrison for inviting me and for doing such a terrific job organising this Remembrance Day ceremony event in Bomaderry. 11th November marks the annual anniversary of the Armistice that ended fighting with Germany in World War One. Every year at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, millions around the world pause in silence to remember the sacrifices many have made so that we all as Australians can enjoy our lives and many freedoms today. It was also encouraging to see so many people in the local Bomaderry community honouring and remembering our current service personnel and our returned war veterans who are all heroes. Lest We Forget.

#### NATIONAL YOUTH SCIENCE FORUM

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises the seven local Kiama High School students who have been selected for the National Youth Science Forum in January 2024. The students include Emily Farrah, Keziah Whitford, Charlie Meredith, Charlie Philpott, Maisie Whitbourn, Kai King and Ruby Sylvester. Some are heading to the University of Queensland in Brisbane and others to the Australian National University in Canberra. Students were required to submit comprehensive applications, seek endorsements from local Rotary Clubs, deliver speeches and undergo panel interviews. Given the total cost of \$3,000 per student to attend, the generous contribution of \$1,000 from local Rotary Clubs has gone a long way to help the students make their trip possible and student-led fundraising efforts including a sausage sizzle at Kiama High School's Open Night. Kiama High School teacher Mrs Ruth Power has also played a vital role in guiding these talented students. Ruby Sylvester anticipates expanding her knowledge across diverse scientific fields. Charlie Philpott looks forward to igniting his passion for scientific topics. Emily Farrah anticipates a deeper exploration of STEM. Thank you also to Khan IGA and Saltwater Café in Kiama for supporting these students.

#### KANGAROO VALLEY

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises the Kangaroo Valley community. On Saturday 11th November 2023, a special community day was held to celebrate the Kangaroo Valley Historical Society 70 plus years of community service and the Kangaroo Valley Museum of 50 years in the Village Hall. It was an enjoyable day of celebrations for the whole Kangaroo Valley community with some excellent displays of historical documents, photographs, objects, talks by long-term residents of the Valley, a history desk for enquiries, book sales, refreshments and free entry. I acknowledge the organiser and Secretary Christine Murphy for her time, commitment and dedication to the Kangaroo Valley community. In September 2022, Kangaroo Valley Public School celebrated its 150th anniversary. I know that the Pioneer Village Museum at Kangaroo Valley is an enjoyable location for family and friends to have a picnic, take a bush walk and wander through the museum to take a look at the historical displays. I also acknowledge my friend Tony Barnett who is involved with the Kangaroo Valley Voice Committee as the Secretary & Copy Editor, the Pioneer Village Museum and has also delivered Meals on Wheels to local Kangaroo Valley residents.

**PAT AND NEV VIGORS 70TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY**

**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)**—Local couple Pat and Nev Vigors of Kanwal celebrate their 70th wedding anniversary and still enjoy every moment they have together. The couple first met at the Lottery Office in Sydney more than 70 years ago and soon after they were married at St. Fiacre's church at Leichhardt on November 7, 1953. The couple lived at Leichhardt for some time, raising their five children Jan, Greg, Chris, Karen, and Michelle. Nev retired from the Lottery Office and Pat worked at a jewellery wholesaler until she also retired until moving to Maroubra, then Port Macquarie, Belmont and now live at Arcare, Kanwal. Nev had been a keen cricketer and surf club member and Pat a loving mother, homemaker, and avid gardener. The family grew to 10 loving grandchildren and 14 great grandchildren. The special occasion had been celebrated at a family lunch including Pat's older brother and his wife who travelled from Queensland to join the couple in Morisset at 8 at Trinity, on November 4. Congratulations to Pat and Nev on their platinum wedding anniversary. May your love continue to bring you joy as you celebrate your anniversary of love and togetherness.

**TOUKLEY RSL SUB-BRANCH 75TH ANNIVERSARY**

**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)**—Toukley RSL Sub-branch celebrate a special milestone of 75 years at Club Ary, Toukley on November 5, 2023. The anniversary is an event to remember the veterans and committee members that were responsible for the establishment of the branch when the club received its formal affiliation in 1937. The RSL evolved as a direct result of the camaraderie, concern and mateship shown by the "Diggers" for the welfare of their mates during and after the 1914 to 1918 War. President Frank Vincent Holmes bought 80 acres from Canton Beach Rd to the Primary School and Main Rd down to Crossingham St. 1944 Mr Holmes lived in the area, re-naming Holmes Avenue to Holmesville and several roads were named after family members. Many activities took place in Holmesville including meetings of the RSL, Progress Association, Women's Auxiliary, Bowling Club, Garden Club, Cricket Club and Bush Fire Brigade. In the early 1960's an old bakehouse in Wyong was bought and transported to Toukley to be re-assembled where the RSL stands today by voluntary labour and was known as the Upper Tuggerah Lakes Branch. Today the Sub-branch membership consist of 177 service veterans and 16 auxiliary members.

**NORAH HEAD LIGHTHOUSE 120TH ANNIVERSARY**

**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)**—One of Central Coast's historic tourist attractions Norah Head Lighthouse celebrate 120 years with volunteers, former Board Members, supporters, and friends who gathered to celebrate this special occasion. The celebration acknowledged the work of the longest-serving local volunteers with a lighthouse tour and cutting of the anniversary cake. It was a special day to be a part of history and celebrating with many locals who share their stories and memories on the iconic lighthouse. Late 1800s Noraville resident Edward Hargraves witnessed several shipwrecks off the coast including the coal-carrier Esperanza in 1868 and urged for a lighthouse to be built. In 1901 construction began on the 27m high lighthouse including 96 stairs to the top and was officially opened and illuminated on November 15, 1903. Today, the lighthouse and reserve are managed by Reflections Holiday Parks who are working with Crown Lands, Volunteers and Community Members to ensure the ongoing care and management of the Norah Head Lighthouse and Reserve, is an important community asset. The lighthouse is a popular wedding venue winning 6 Brides Choice Awards in a row and a prime spot for whale watching from May to November each year.

**RILEY MCCANN**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to congratulate Riley McCann, from Dapto High School, who received a bronze medal in World Skills VETiS Construction competition. VETiS competitions operate on the same two-year cycle as WorldSkills Australia's Regional Competitions. The VETiS Regional Competitions are open for students who are enrolled in the first year of a VET course in secondary schools. To be eligible to compete at a National Championships in a VETiS category, you must be enrolled in a VET course within secondary school the year of the competition. Riley was also named VET Student of the Year for the Southern Region of all VET subjects earlier in the year. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour community, I would like to express our congratulations to Riley and wish him well in all his future endeavours.

**CALEY TALLON-HENNIKER**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to congratulate Caley Tallon-Henniker, from Horsley, for being called up to play for Sydney FC at the AFC Women's Club Championship in Uzbekistan. The tournament, which is a pre-cursor to next year's AFC Women's Champions League, features some of the top female clubs from across the Asian region. Caley began training with Sydney FC's A-League Women's squad recently in the lead up to the 2023/24 season. Caley's opportunity came after completing the 2023 NPL NSW Season with the NSW Football Institute. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour community, I would like to express our congratulations to Caley and wish her well in all her sporting endeavours.

**ST JOHN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL – CATHOLIC MISSION MONTH**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to congratulate St John's Catholic Primary School for their involvement in Catholic Mission Month. The school participated in a Colour Run on Friday 27 October 2023. Students were encouraged to seek sponsorship from their families and friends for their participation in the Colour Run. St John's are supporting children in need in Timor-Leste by raising funds for a medical clinic and a children's home. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour community, I would like to express our congratulations to St John's Catholic Primary School and thank them for fundraising for this worthy cause.

**CENTRAL COAST BASKETBALL**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—I am honoured to congratulate Central Coast Basketball for their 30 years of success. Central Coast Basketball is a not-for-profit sporting organisation which has offered sport and leisure activities to people of all ages and abilities across our region. Started in 1993 and led by 500 founding members, this organisation was under the name Gosford City Basketball and Sports Stadium. Today, as the name indicates, its core business is basketball, however, Central Coast Basketball has a massive list of 3,000 active members who participates in different kinds of sports held weekly at the Breakers Indoor Sport Stadium. Fruited from this marvellous sport organisation are two promising basketball teams: Central Coast Rebels and Central Coast Crusaders. These talented young people represent the Central Coast to compete in Basketball NSW competitions and programs. It's an electrifying feeling when I talk about sport because I know the value of sport in our community. That sense of belonging and the ideology of all is one keep us fighting for another day. I want to deeply thank everyone who has supported Central Coast Basketball over the years. Here's to 30 more fantastic years!

**NOEL RICHARDS**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—It's only a few weeks until the most exciting time of the year. Christmas time is inevitably magical to many of us. From the gifts, and the decorations, to the nice warm hugs of our friends and family, all those special moments make Christmas dear to our hearts. I love Christmas for all the reasons above, however, what makes it truly magical is when selfless individuals showcase the Christmas spirit, working tirelessly to put together a light show or to decorate their houses so spectacularly for other people's enjoyment. I had the pleasure to meet with the wonderful Noel Richards, a community member, who has been creating glamorous Christmas light shows for over 15 years. This year, he has prepared at least 17,000 LED lights, a snow machine and a Thomas the Tank Engine train set for his Christmas display. Besides that, he also organises donation drop-offs for the Ronald McDonald Room at Gosford Hospital. Isn't he the gift that keeps giving! I applaud Noel Richards for your kindness, and I thank you for making Christmas even more special to people of all ages in our community.

**THE AUSTRALIAN REPTILE PARK**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—I am overjoyed to congratulate the Australian Reptile Park for winning gold at the 2023 Tourism Awards as a Major Tourist Attraction. This fabulous tourist attraction is home to more than 1000 animals, starting in the 50s, from the naturalist Eric Worrel's innovative idea of combining snake venom production and tourism. Fortunately, his dream was carried on by two passionate members of the team, John and Robyn Weigel, who invested and took over the Park's ownership. With the support of fellow Directors, Tim Faulkner and Liz Gabriel, they turned the Australian Reptile Park into one of the most unforgettable tourist destinations in the world. Besides being a wonderful tourist attraction, the Australian Reptile Park has saved more than 20,000 lives from venomous snake and funnel web spider bites through their venom program. Moreover, this Park has continuously donated tickets to our local schools and not-for-profit organisations to support their fundraising events. It is joyous to witness your success and thank you so much for being the pioneers in many different programs that bring joy to our community, while also saving Australian lives. This Christmas, I encourage everyone to get out and visit the Australian Reptile Park!

**SARA BURNS FROM BURRUMBUTTOCK - NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to extend my congratulations to Sara Burns, aged 17, from Burrumbuttock NSW, who has been selected for the under-19 Female Victoria Country Cricket Squad to compete at the National Championships in Brisbane this December. Sara's connection to cricketing excellence runs deep in her family with her father Lyle Burns who had previously represented Riverina in cricket, making her achievements all the more special to the family. Earlier this year Sara won a school competition that opened the door for her to play cricket in England. This experience provided her with an opportunity to engage with other young players from all corners of Australia. Sara's dedication to her sport is truly commendable. She not only commits herself to the rigorous training sessions and games, but also contributes her time and efforts on the family farm in Burrumbuttock – where she has worked on her sport by setting up a bowling machine in the shearing shed and involving her dogs as fielders! Sara, I wish you all the best in the upcoming National Championships, and I look forward to your continued success on the cricket field.

**AUSTRALIAN HOTELS AWARDS NSW 2023**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to extend my congratulations to the following businesses which have received recognition at the Australian Hotels Association NSW Awards for Excellence 2023: Public House Albury, which was awarded the Australian Hotel Association NSW Award for Excellence for the Best Marketing Activity; Holbrook Hotel as a Finalist in the category of Best Regional Redevelopment. The AHA NSW awards for Excellence are widely acknowledged as the most prestigious awards program in the hospitality industry. These recipients have delivered the dedication and hard work required for hospitality businesses to reach high levels of excellence. The awards are also testimony to the efforts of staff and the respect held by customers. Congratulations, as you continue to serve the community with a standard of excellence.

**OSCAR KREUTZBERGER NTH ALBURY WINS 400M IM GOLD**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to extend my congratulations to Oscar Kreutzberger, a student at Trinity Anglican College, who has been awarded a gold medal in the 400m Individual Medley at the Australian Short Course Championships in Sydney. Oscar, at 16 years of age, represented the North Albury Swimming Club with remarkable skill and determination. He not only took the lead during the breaststroke event, but also delivered in the freestyle event, solidifying a well-deserved victory, and leaving his competitors in his wake. Coach Mitch Brown has been a great mentor to the young athlete with a promising journey. Oscar, I wish you all the best in your future endeavours in the sport you enjoy.

**JACKSON BIALOBRZESKI-BALRANALD**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Madam/Mister Speaker, Today I would like to recognise Jackson Bialobrzewski of Balranald for his services to the community as Youth Mayor. Balranald Councils established the Youth Council in 2018 and Jackson was the Youth Mayor until 2022 when he left Balranald to continue his education at university. Jackson organised and with engagement of youth and Council, all youth activities, discos, pool parties, recycling project, movie nights and movie trips. He kept youth informed, and the community, by writing a Youth Mayor column in the Council community newsletter, social media and often wrote to Ministers on behalf of Youth Council. He also contributed to youth engagement at Australia Day Awards presentations. Jackson is passionate about the Youth of Balranald and often travels more than 1,200kms round trip to assist with the coordination of the Youth Festival being held in Balranald in December. I congratulate Jackson for his endeavours within his Balranald community and wish him well in his university studies.

**TONI PARR-GRIFFITH**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Today, I would like to acknowledge the longstanding contribution made by Mrs Toni Parr to the Hillston Show Society. Toni has a long history of entries in the show pavilion, exhibiting cooking, sewing, and flowers. She has won the overall pavilion prize of the Most Successful Exhibitor an astounding 16 times. She has been a member of the Show committee, showed horses with her children and with her husband Geoff, she was part of the sheep, wool and shearing competitions, either as a competitor or helping out. Most people certainly know her for her passion for the show girl competitions, which are aimed to broaden experience and strengthen skills of young rural women, better equipping them for leadership roles in their own communities. No one could escape being targeted as a potential entrant! Her own daughter was NSW Showgirl in 1991. Toni's children and grandchildren are immensely proud of her achievements, and the energy and passion she still has for the show. Her great community spirit has seen her presented with life membership of the Hillston Show Society in 2023.

### JESSICA CONLAN-GRIFFITH

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Today, I am proud to shine a well-deserved spotlight on Miss Jessica Conlan, a shining star in the realm of netball. Miss Conlan's journey in netball is nothing short of inspiring. She embarked on her netball journey from humble beginnings, with the local Barellan Rep netball team. In 2019, her talent and dedication propelled her to the Under 17s State team, marking the beginning of her remarkable career. Since 2020, Jessica has been a formidable force in the Netball NSW Premier League, even competing in the Grand Final. Her excellence extended beyond state boundaries, as she scored a spot in the Australian Netball Championships Grand Final. Jessica has enjoyed seeing her hard work pay off and is hoping to secure a Super Netball contract. The year 2023 brought further accolades, as Jessica earned a well-deserved place in the prestigious Australian under 21 squad. Her commitment was evident through her selection in the NSW Swifts Academy in both 2022 and 2023. Miss Conlan is a testament to what relentless dedication and unwavering passion can achieve in the world of netball.

### REMEMBRANCE DAY AT ST MARYS RSL

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney)**—On 11 November, I had the absolute pleasure of attending the St Marys RSL Sub-Branch Remembrance Day ceremony. It was fulfilling to witness our community unite and pay our respects to past and current service-personnel. The sacrifice made by those who have served and who are currently serving our country is heroic. It was my honour to join my community while we paid homage to all service-personnel. Moreover, it was great to see so many local schools and organisations attend the ceremony. Understanding the importance of honouring past and current service-personnel is vital, and only strengthens our connection to the ANZACs. More specifically, I would like to recognise Training Ship Nepean and the 21 Army Cadet Unit Penrith who assisted with the organisation and administration of the event. Thank you to the St Marys RSL Sub-Branch, attendees and all who were involved during the ceremony, what a great community we have!

### LLANDILO JUNIOR CADETS

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney)**—The Llandilo 'Little Devils' Cadets were awarded second place at the 2023 Australian Fire Cadet Championships. This event saw over 120 cadets from across the nation use their skills to compete in life-like scenarios. This enabled teams to showcase their individual and group skills, while working together to solve fire-related scenarios. Out of the twenty-one teams who competed, the Llandilo Junior Cadets won second place for their outstanding cooperation, leadership, and effort during the event. Alongside the team's achievements, the 'Little Devils' also secured several first-place individual winnings. The community and I are so proud of your achievements and are lucky to have such talented and skilful individuals that will progress to assist our community in the future. Congratulations!

### LAKE MACQUARIE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT AWARDS

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—Congratulations to Dudley Public School and St Mary's Primary at Warners Bay for sharing in the top honours at the Lake Macquarie School Environment Awards. The two Charlestown Electorate schools were jointly chosen as winners in the annual competition, emerging from a crowded field of twenty schools that entered the annual competition across the city. Dudley Public's innovative renewable energy co-contribution program, which will soon see a 14kW solar energy system installed at the school, and the student-led Garbage Guardians initiative clinched its spot at the top, while St Mary's was recognised for water efficiency innovations and achievements reducing waste and energy use. Congratulations to the school principals, Chad Tsakissiris of Dudley and Liz Starling of St Mary's, their staff and the students for working so hard to improve the environmental outcomes for their schools, reducing waste and electricity usage. Great work! Two more Charlestown Electorate schools were included on the winners' list, with Garden Suburb Public School securing the Ongoing Commitment Award and Charlestown South Public School winning the Encouragement Award. It's fantastic to see such commitment to the environment from the next generation of Lake Mac locals.

### KOORI NETBALL TOURNAMENT

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—This has been a huge year for Australian sport, but one of the absolute highlights for me happened right here in the Charlestown electorate over Saturday 28 and Sunday 29 October. I was so proud to join the Charlestown Netball Association, representatives from Netball NSW and more than a thousand players from across NSW to help launch the Koori Netball Tournament. For more than twenty years, the Koori Netball Tournament has brought netballers, Aboriginal and non-Indigenous alike,

here to Charlestown for what has become the largest celebration of First Nations netball in the state. The 2022 tournament was named a finalist in the Inclusive Achievement of the Year category at the 2023 Sports Foyer NSW Community Sports Awards, and this year I once again saw First Nations women and their supporters sharing their love of the sport and celebrating their talent in a fun, inclusive environment. I had such a great time, and I want to thank all those involved in organising the event, all the players who attended and the wonderful Charlestown Netball Association.

#### **ART AND DESIGN AT WARNERS BAY HIGH SCHOOL**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—There are so many talented art and design students at schools across NSW, and it's great that HSC students in our state have the opportunity to have their hard work and talent showcased at events like ARTEXPRESS and Shape. Every year, ARTEXPRESS showcases the most extraordinary artworks produced by NSW visual art students for the HSC, and I am very happy to report that four Warners Bay High School students had their HSC Bodies of Work nominated for the 2023 edition. Congratulations Warners Bay Year 12 students Lachlan Berridge, Archie Brennan, Emilia Corrado, and Jayden Peter on their nominations who have had their artworks nominated to be showcased in a variety of galleries across NSW. Warners Bay High also had three students nominated for Shape, the annual exhibition of exemplary Major Projects developed by HSC Design and Technology, Industrial Technology and Textiles and Design students. Congratulations to Michael Nesporek, Luca Street and Luke Bradley on their nominations—and I'm thrilled to see that Luke has since been shortlisted! I wish all these talented students the very best as they head on to their next adventure.

#### **KIRLI SAUNDERS**

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote)**—Many people aspire to write a book. However, not everyone has the time, patience or determination to do so. Kirli Saunders is one of those people who can talk the talk and walk the walk. The Thirroul resident recently released her second poetry collection titled, *Returning*. A proud Gunai woman who lives on Dharawal land, Kirli's poems explore topics such as decolonisation, culture, country, human rights and feminism. Kirli's works are also a celebration of her culture, elders and family. Kirli's second release is also the first collection that is illustrated. The creations are more pieces of art rather than illustrations and were created through various techniques such as painting and weaving. Speaking to the Illawarra Mercury, Kirli said there were more than 20 First Nations artists, custodians and academics who helped in the creation of works. Congratulations Kirli on another wonderful achievement in the release of your second book. I can't wait to see what you create next.

#### **JAMES DOWNIE**

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote)**—I want to recognise a very special young man in the Heathcote electorate, teenager James Downie. James' mother Monica, a Scarborough resident, recently contacted my office to relay a heroic story involving her son. The year 12 student, who is finishing his secondary schooling in North Carolina after earning a basketball scholarship, was lifting weights on October 15 this year, when an incident unfolded. One of James' friends ran into the gym and said another student had just died. The student known as 'DJ' had actually suffered a heart attack. James quickly sprung into action, rolling DJ on his side and clearing his airways so he wouldn't choke. James then began to perform CPR – which he learned from his schooling days in the Illawarra – and did so until DJ let out a loud gasp. A short time later DJ stopped breathing for a second time so James performed CPR until paramedics arrived. His heroic actions saved the life of DJ. James' parents, Monica and Kane, as well as the entire Heathcote community, are extremely proud of the teenager's actions. Thank you for your selflessness.

#### **COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION-CROOKWELL DAY BRANCH**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise today to recognise the Country Women's Association, Crookwell Day Branch. The history of the Country Women's Association [CWA] dates back to 1922, with a group of women living in rural and remote areas recognising they were isolated and had little or no access to health care. With fortitude, purpose, and courage this group of women went on to grow and develop the CWA. The CWA today remains the largest women's organisation in Australia and continues with their aim to improve conditions for country women and children. The Southern Tablelands Group of the CWA of NSW held the 98th Annual Conference in the Taralga Memorial Hall, which included branches from Braidwood, Bungendore, Collector, Crookwell, Majors Creek, Marulan, Queanbeyan, Tarago, Taralga, and Vass. The Crookwell Day Branch was presented with the prestigious Alison O'Brien Community Service Award at the conference for the second consecutive year. The Branch has donated funds to local schools, assisting students to attend excursions, Careflight, Soldier On, and many other community groups over the past twelve months. I congratulate all members of the Crookwell Day Branch on being the recipients of the award and celebrate their inspiring work.

**SYLVIA CARLESS**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise today to recognise Sylvia Carless. The Berrima District Historical Society and Family History Society was established in 1960 with an aim to encourage the study of Australian, local, and family history and establish a museum, which would serve as a place to permanently archive and preserve documents and material heritage of the Southern Highlands. Ms Carless joined the Society in 2006, enthusiastic to research a branch of her family tree. Ms Carless's interest soon grew to envelope an interest in the Society's museum in Berrima, where she took on a volunteer role enabling her to share her knowledge of the area. Ms Carless became a volunteer, undertaking tasks such as preparing the volunteer rosters, training volunteers, enhancing the grounds and gardens of the museums, also contributing to the museum income, through the donation of home-made marmalade. Ms Carless is a member of the museum sub-committee and undertakes other functions such as counter duty, cleaning and the assistance with group bookings and functions. Ms Carless has been recognised for her significant contribution to the Society receiving a Certificate of Achievement Award from the Royal Australian Historical Society. I congratulate Ms Carless on her award and significant contribution.

**JOHN SCHWEERS**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise today to recognise John Schweers. The Berrima District Historical Society and Family History Society was established in 1960 with an aim to encourage the study of Australian, local, and family history and establish a museum, which would serve as a place to permanently archive and preserve documents and material heritage of the Southern Highlands. Mr Schweers joined the Society in 2010, initially keen to research a branch of his family tree. Mr Schweers quickly developed his interest in Berrima's history and heritage, in particular, the story of the German Internees in Berrima during World War I. Mr Schweers is dedicated to ensuring that Berrima's history is continued to be passed on. Undertaking various roles, including museum management, arranging group bookings and functions, promotions and welcoming visitors remains fundamental to the continuum of sharing the rich history of the area. Mr Schweers is also known for his endearing personal qualities and reliability to respond and rectify issues. Mr Schweers has been recognised for his significant contribution to the Society receiving a Certificate of Achievement Award from the Royal Australian Historical Society. I congratulate Mr Schweers on his award and dedication to preserving the history of the area.

**NAJEX REMEMBRANCE DAY 2023**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—On Sunday 12 November 2023 I attended the NSW Association of Jewish Service & Ex-Service Men and Women [NAJEX] Communal Wreath Laying and Remembrance Day Service at the Sydney Jewish War Memorial in Darlinghurst. NAJEX was founded in 1920 to remember and commemorate the Australian Jewish population who served in Australia's armed forces, from the time of the Sudan campaign in the 1880s to the Afghanistan conflict in the 2010s. The occasion also marked the 100th anniversary of Sir John Monash opening of the NSW Jewish War Memorial, where he said, "nowhere in the world do we have so free and unfettered a life. Let us do loyal service to the country." I recognise Roger Selby, President of the NSW Association of Jewish Service & Ex-Service Men and Women, together with Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, the Governor of NSW, David Ossip, President of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, and Alex Silver from Masada College, who gave an inspiring Remembrance Day Tribute. In our Davidson electorate community, we have a vibrant Australian Jewish community. I am proud to represent this community in the Parliament of NSW.

**LAUNCH OF THE GORDON MULTICULTURAL HUB AND DIWALI CELEBRATION**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—On Monday 13 November 2023, I attended the launch of the Gordon Multicultural Hub at Ku-ring-gai Central Library. I was joined by Ku-ring-gai Council Mayor, Cr Sam Ngai. The opening of the Hub is a collaboration of the AASHA Non-Profit Aged Care Foundation, Ku-ring-gai Neighbourhood Centre [KNC], and Ku-ring-gai Council. In particular, I recognise Bijinder Dugal for all her ongoing and inspiring work. It was good timing to have the launch of the Hub at the same time as Diwali. Diwali is the festival of lights – celebrating light over darkness, good over evil and knowledge over ignorance. In the complex world of today, Mahatma Ghandi reminds us "an eye for an eye leaves the whole world blind". The joy of the Festival of Light reminds us of the qualities of light, good and knowledge. Our electorate of Davidson has a vibrant and growing Hindu, Jain, Buddhist and Sikh community, who I am proud to represent in the Parliament of NSW.

**DEEPAVALI CELEBRATIONS – HINDU COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—On Wednesday 8 November 2023, I attended the Hindu Council of Australia's Deepavali celebrations at the NSW Parliament. The Hindu Council of Australia was founded in 1998 with the aim to help create and promote a strong Hindu community in Australia. The Council represents the Hindu

community in working closely with government, religious and cultural communities to create harmony. Deepavali reminds of light over darkness, good over evil, and knowledge over ignorance. In the complex world in which we live today, we can all learn from the words of Mahatma Ghandi, who reminds us that "an eye for an eye leaves the whole world blind". Deepavai reminds us of light, good and knowledge. I would also like to acknowledge my colleague, the Member for Liverpool Charishma Kaliyanda who is the first women of Hindu faith elected to the NSW Parliament. I trust and hope she will be the first of many. Our Davidson electorate community has a vibrant and growing Hindu, Jain, Buddhist and Sikh diaspora. I am proud to represent this vibrant community in the NSW Parliament.

### **BALLINA WAVE**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—I wish to acknowledge the team at Northern Rivers Media on the second birthday of their free community publication the Ballina Wave, which along with its sister publications the Lennox Wave and Byron Wave, keeps the community updated on news, local stories, and entertainment. I would especially like to acknowledge editor Kate Parry, and CEO Milt Barlow, for their tireless work over the last two years. I always look forward to picking up a copy of the Ballina Wave each month, and I am hopeful that the Ballina Wave will celebrate many more birthdays over the coming years.

### **BIALA SUPPORT SERVICES**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—Today I congratulate Biala Support Services on the opening of their new office in central Ballina. Biala Support Services have been providing much-needed disability support to the people of Ballina and surrounds for more than 50 years. Many local residents are aware of Biala for their work with young people through their Biala School, but the opening of this new office in the Ballina CBD will assist with their expanded work as providers and advocates for implementing the National Disability Insurance Scheme. I am heartened to see Biala continue to grow and I welcome their incredible ongoing contribution to the community.

### **SPRUNG INTEGRATED DANCE THEATRE**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—Today I congratulate Sprung Integrated Dance Theatre on the success of their new annual disability community ball, Dis-Co Ball. The community event recently lit up the Lennox Head Cultural Centre, bringing people together for an evening of unashamed joyous dancing, inspired by and featuring Sprung's Community Artists. Based on and reimagining New York's prestigious Met Gala in a way that centred on and celebrated access and inclusion, Dis-Co Ball was a glamorous opportunity for everyone to live large on the red carpet. Pop-up performances fuelled a collective celebration of difference on the dance floor, with artists and audience alike dressed to impress. Sprung Integrated Dance Theatre is a not-for-profit community organisation based in the Northern Rivers and delivers a range of contemporary dance and community arts programs specifically for emerging deaf and disabled artists. Congratulations to everyone at Sprung for their fabulous 2023 season of events.

### **NEWTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOL LEADERS**

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)**—On behalf of the Newtown electorate, I wish to recognise Newtown Public School's 2023 Student Parliament and their contribution to the school community. 2023 Student Parliamentarians include Jordan Tinker and Ayla Carroll (Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders), Ariana Lurie and Mike Mishchenko (Department of Management), Maggie Pratt and Lara Hebblewhite (Department of Arts and Community), Leo Brasse Warhaft and Siena Cranford (Department of Student Representative Council), Maya Valiente-Riedl and Tess O'Donoghue (Department of Library), Ayden Crawford and Billy Hunter (Department of Media and Communication), Jo Scott Kicuroski and Tommy Cuddihy (Department of Technology), Isabelle Clarke, Eza Dyer, Oliver Rojan-Clarke, Mara Dwyer and Adrian Racolta (Department of Health and Wellbeing), and Tino Garelja and Lily Gibb (Department of Sustainability). The Newtown Public School Student Parliament also had a wonderful Strategic Direction goal for the year: "By the end of 2023, the students at NPS will feel safe, appreciated and supported, building their sense of belonging, inclusion and their ability to share their individuality, creative ideas and beliefs with their peers." Thank you for the impact you've had and the contribution you'll continue to make to your school, our community and beyond.

### **ERSKINEVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENT LEADERS**

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)**—On behalf of the Newtown electorate, I would like to recognise Erskineville Public School's 2023 Student Leaders, and their contribution to the school community. The 2023 Student Leaders are Olive Corben, Hamish Saunders, Dali Connelly, Maya Mitchell, Charles Stewart, Emily Dingle, Claire Troy and Irmunee Tuvshinjargal. Becoming a representative for your school is a highly rewarding way of contributing to the strength and connection of our community - whether at school, in our neighbourhoods, or around the world. It has been wonderful to have the Erskineville Public School community become part of the

Newtown electorate this year, and we look forward to seeing what the Student Leaders will do in the coming years. I thank them for the great work they have done, for the work they will continue to do, and for the difference they will make to their school's community and beyond.

#### **MUDGEES ROTARY CLUB AWARDS**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker, I would like to recognise the winners of the Mudgee Rotary Club's Pride of Workmanship Awards. These awards offer the opportunity for employers to nominate their employees for outstanding contributions to their workplace, whether it be their approach, attitude, dedication, or commitment. The sense of community that emerges because of programs like these awards are incredible and have been a resounding success for many decades. Since the establishment of the Mudgee Rotary Club in 1937, it has since maintained the values, needs and aspirations of the Mudgee district. I would like to extend my congratulations to all the recipients: Jack Forgione, Jeremy Bremer, Jason Brown, Tristan Stark, Mark Kirkland, Nicole Hale, Paul Winfield, Makayla Roe, Sonya Conroy, Tim Deacon, Jayden Roberts, Blake Gardner, Rosie Gibbs, and the Mudgee Playgroup 2023 Volunteer Committee. Well done, this award is a testament to all of your hard work.

#### **NARROMINE SCHOOL SPECTACULAR**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker, I would like to recognise the efforts of eight Narromine Public School students who have been selected to participate in the 2023 School Spectacular in Sydney. Dance Coordinator Belinda Edmunds is extremely proud of her students, saying that this opportunity is incredibly special to the girls and that the experience will stay with them forever. Dancers Alexis Press, Ally Gill, Ava White, Aniyah Clarke, Annabelle Gibbs, Joyce Riley, Lydia Gordon, and Tilly Mulloy will participate in a flash-mob at the street festival, SpecFest outside of Qudos Bank Arena before enjoying the featured artists at the School Spec Performance. This year's theme, 'Fabulous' will be a celebration of 40 years of the School Spec, with performances running on the 24th and 25th of November. Congratulations again and best of luck for your performances!

#### **NSW TOURISM AWARDS**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker, I would like to recognise the winners at the NSW Tourism Awards from the Dubbo electorate. Peppertree Collection Mudgee provides beautiful boutique country accommodation curated to reflect the character and charm of the surrounding countryside. The team at Peppertree went home with Gold in the Self-Contained Accommodation Category. Also doing the Mudgee Region proud is Evamor Valley, who won the silver in the unique accommodation category. Evamor is located on a 34-hectare property and offers guests luxury eco-glamping. Dubbo was very successful on the night, taking home a total of four awards. Taronga Western Plains Zoo snagged the silver in Major Tourist attraction, Dubbo Regional Council won Silver in the Local Government Award for Tourism and Old Dubbo Gaol won Bronze in the tourist attraction category and silver in cultural tourism. After the uncertainty of the pandemic and natural disasters over the last few years left within our communities, it's great to celebrate the resilience and innovation of the tourism industry. I am very proud of the Dubbo electorate and of the magnificent tourism providers Regional NSW has on offer. Congratulations to all our winners.

#### **JUSTICE OF THE PEACE CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION-GERARD DOUMIT**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—Congratulations to Gerard Doumit on receiving a Justice of the Peace Certificate of Appreciation by the Cumberland Branch of the NSW Justices Association on Monday 16th October 2023. The NSW Justices Association was established in 1911 to offer support, information and advocacy to Justices of the Peace across NSW. Justices of the Peace perform an integral role in our community, providing accurate and trusted verification services. Justices of the Peace are entrusted to be independent and impartial witnesses. Certifying legal documents, such as powers of attorney, statutory declarations and affidavits, they are an important component in our legal system. Justices of the Peace assist courts and governing bodies to provide timely outcomes. The Certificate of Appreciation is awarded to outstanding members of the Association, who have demonstrated great loyalty and longevity. Gerard has generously given his time to our community as a volunteer JP in the NSW JA – Cumberland Branch for 25 years. Congratulations Gerard on your receipt of this significant award. Thank you for your dedicated service. I also thank NSW Justices Association State President Dr John Brodie for your considered advocacy for JPs in our community.

#### **JUSTICE OF THE PEACE CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION-MICHAEL ALIBERTI**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—Congratulations to Michael Aliberti on receiving a Justice of the Peace Certificate of Appreciation from the Cumberland Branch of the NSW Justices Association on Monday 16th October, 2023. Established in 1911, the NSW Justices Association offers support, information and advocacy to Justices of the Peace across NSW. Justices of the Peace perform an integral role in our community, offering accurate and trusted verification services. Justices of the Peace are entrusted to be independent and impartial

witnesses. Certifying legal documents, such as powers of attorney, statutory declarations and affidavits, they are an important component in our legal system. Justices of the Peace assist our courts and governing bodies to provide timely outcomes. The Certificate of Appreciation is awarded to outstanding members of the Association, who have demonstrated great loyalty and longevity. Michael has generously volunteered his time to our community as a JP in the NSW JA – Cumberland Branch for 40 years. Congratulations Michael on receiving this significant award. Thank you for your dedicated service to our community. Thank you also to NSW Justices Association State President Dr John Brodie for your ongoing advocacy to support JPs in our community.

#### **JUSTICE OF THE PEACE CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION-ROBERT HARRISON**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—Congratulations to Robert Harrison on receiving a Justice of the Peace Certificate of Appreciation by the Cumberland Branch of the NSW Justices Association on Monday 16th October, 2023. Established in 1911, the NSW Justices Association offers support, information and advocacy to Justices of the Peace across NSW. Justices of the Peace perform an integral role in our community, offering accurate and trusted verification services. Justices of the Peace are entrusted to be independent and impartial witnesses. Certifying legal documents, such as powers of attorney, statutory declarations and affidavits, they are an important component in our legal system. Justices of the Peace assist our courts and governing bodies to provide timely outcomes. The Certificate of Appreciation is awarded to outstanding members of the Association, who have demonstrated great loyalty and longevity. Robert has served our community as a volunteer JP in the NSWJA – Cumberland Branch for 20 years. Congratulations Robert on your receipt of this significant award. Thank you for your dedicated service to our community. Thank you also to NSW Justices Association State President Dr John Brodie for your ongoing advocacy and support for JPs in our community.

#### **AVALON BOWLING CLUB – COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AWARD**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—I congratulate Avalon Bowlo on being awarded the Community Engagement Award at Bowls NSW Awards evening. The Club was the joint recipient of the award alongside Northern Beaches Vision Impaired Group for their Vision Impaired Lawn Bowling Group. Since 2005, this collaboration has provided vision impaired individuals with an opportunity to stay connected, social and active in our local area. Eighteen years later and the group is still going strong. Open to people of all ages and abilities, participants meet at Avalon Bowlo every Tuesday morning for morning tea and some friendly lawn bowls. The regular meeting provides participants a chance to share with an understanding group about their experiences living with vision impairment. Although, I understand the most popular topic of conversation is lawn bowls, with everyone buzzing to get out on the greens and throw down some bowls. The success of the Vision Impaired Lawn Bowling Group would not be possible without the support of Avalon Bowlo and several dedicated volunteers. Thank you to all involved and particularly Group founder, Maureen Eves, who travels from the Central Coast every Tuesday to help run the sessions.

#### **AVALON BEACH SLSC – SURF LIFESAVING MERITORIOUS AWARD**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—I congratulate Mike Stanley-Jones, Andrew Clark, Stuart Cooper, Karl Atkins, Blaze Roberts, and Lucas Molloy on receiving the prestigious surf lifesaving Meritorious Award at the Surf Lifesaving Australia Awards of Excellence. The group of members at the Avalon Beach Surf Lifesaving Club were honoured with this acknowledgement for their bravery whilst rescuing fellow member and friend, Mark Head, in September 2022. While Andrew, Mike and Mark were practicing their skills on surf rescue boards at Avalon Beach, a freak accident resulted in the drowning of Mark. Lucas and Stuart noticed from the headline and, along with Karl, Blaze and Joel, raced to assist. The team braved the dangerous waves to retrieve Mark and brought him to shore where the group administered CPR, oxygen and a defibrillator whilst attempting to resuscitate Mark for over 30 minutes, waiting for an ambulance and paramedics to arrive. The group's resilience and skill in the face of crisis was remarkable and saved Mark's life. Pittwater is so thankful for the service of our surf lifesavers. Mike, Andrew, Stuart, Karl, Blaze and Lucas are heroes, and I am pleased to acknowledge and thank them.

#### **ROBERT DURBIN – RSL MERITORIOUS SERVICE MEDAL**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—I congratulate Robert ('Bob') Durbin on receiving a Meritorious Service Medal for his service to the War Veterans Village (Narrabeen) RSL sub-Branch. The Meritorious Service Medal is the highest honour which can be bestowed upon a Service Member of the RSL. Bob served in the Royal Australian Navy for 20 years after enlisting in 1970. After discharge from the Navy, he joined the City of Blacktown RSL sub-Branch in 1990, where he was a member for 27 years, holding various. Robert also served the City of Parramatta RSL sub-Branch and as a State Councillor at RSL NSW. Now a member of the War Veterans Village (Narrabeen) RSL sub-Branch, Bob has been the President since 2017 and is also one of two chaplains at this sub-Branch. It is estimated Bob has delivered over 800 tributes at funerals during his time as a member of the League. Robert has always had a passion for the motto of "Mates Helping Mates" and would ensure

not only were his tributes delivered within the RSL protocol but also by honouring the wishes of the family. Bob is a remarkable individual, and I am pleased to congratulate and acknowledge him.

#### **JASMINE RUMBEL – NORTHERN NSW SCHOOLS TRAP SHOOT**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Congratulations to Year 10 student Jasmine Rumbel from St Columba Anglican School for taking out the Northern NSW Schools Trap Shoot on Friday, 3rd November in Tamworth. Competing against 45 students from all over NSW, Jasmine rose to the occasion and blitzed the Trap Shoot event claiming a well-deserved first and the Overall High Gun title. The awards did not stop there with Jasmine also securing the accolade for the highest shooter of the day, the Cherie Hunter Memorial Ladies High Gun, a first placing in the A Grade Single Barrel, first in the A Grade Point Score and a commendable second in the A Grade Double Barrel. A two round shoot off in the final for the Overall High Gun saw Jasmine defeat an in form Archie Smith to secure the title. Coordinated by the Tamworth Clay Target Club at Loomberah, the event attracted students as far away as Cobar and Goondiwindi, all competing for the prestigious first placing and the Overall High Gun. A wonderful achievement by a talented, young woman who I have no doubt will have many successes to come. Congratulations Jasmine!

#### **ANDY PANDY HAIR CANDY**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I recognise today Andy Liebeck, owner of Andy Pandly Hair Candy who was one of just four finalists in the Digital Influencer of the Year section at the Australian Hair Fashion Awards [AHFA]. A gala night showcasing Australia's most successful hairstylists held on Monday 13th November at The Star in Sydney attracted hundreds of talented professionals from the Hair Fashion industry, all hoping to take home a highly esteemed AHFA. Andy Pandly Hair Candy shot to fame in 2020 through the social media platform TikTok. Andy's ingenious idea to showcase step-by-step hair transformations has literally supported hundreds of hairstylists develop their technique and profession. Andy now has 128,000 followers from across the world viewing his interactive videos. Inspired by the overwhelming support, Andy entered his business for an AHFA and the rest is history. Described as Australia's largest, longest running and most successful independent hairdressing awards program, the gala night acknowledges the best of the best industry professionals in a grand Trans Tasmanian affair. Congratulations Andy on this impressive accomplishment!

#### **IRENE MIFSUD – HASTINGS LITTLE WISHES**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Today I recognise the efforts of a very special local, Irene Mifsud, who is the driver behind the compassionate and generous charity "Hastings Little Wishes." This local charity grants special wishes for children and teens who are living with a serious and rare illness. Irene and her team work tirelessly to add a little magic to the lives of families whose funds are often exhausted attending medical appointments, adapting their homes for their children's needs. Many wishes have been granted over the years and every wish is unique to the child and family. For some it's a trip or holiday which make special memories and for others events, gifts, home adjustments or gardens are just a few of the dreams that "Hastings Little Wishes" have made come true. Irene hopes by staying locally focussed the access for families will be easier and more tailored to the child often with the support of local businesses. "Hastings Little Wishes" has raised and invested tens of thousand dollars with local business, companies and individuals generously fundraising and donating. Irene and commend her for this heart-warming initiative and hope Hastings Little Wishes can continue its life changing work.

#### **REDLANDS TEAMS UP WITH UNICEF**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—Over nine months, UNICEF Australia partnered with Redlands students in year 6 to create solutions to challenges faced by children during natural disasters. This highly successful program culminated in a presentation by these students in a 'science fair' at UNICEF headquarters in September. Throughout the unit, students demonstrated critical thinking and problem solving to respond to natural disaster scenarios. Not only did they develop innovative solutions to protect children's rights, but they also carefully considered ethical and environmental factors that had an impact on individual situations. The solutions prepared by the students were discussed with insights from experts within UNICEF, making valuable contribution to how these ideas could be put into practice. Redlands Principal Sean Corcoran has expressed his delight in this collaboration and how these real-world scenarios are a brilliant method of encouraging the next generation to become innovative and compassionate global citizens. I acknowledge UNICEF Australia for developing such a successful program, which is anticipated to become widespread across the nation and even the globe. I congratulate the Redlands year 6 cohort on completing such a challenging program. This really is the first step in changing the world for the better.

### ROTARY CLUB ON THE POLIO TRAIN

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I would like to congratulate Toni Field, Samantha Lee and Jiji Lee, who are members of the Rotary Club of North Sydney, for meeting the Ride for Polio Train at North Sydney. The Rotary club is well known for its community based efforts in issues like polio, and donated \$1000 to the cause as October is Polio awareness month. This disease has no cure, and when contracted, can cause detrimental physical changes such as paralysis. Each year, representatives from the various Rotary Clubs travel the entire Sydney train network in a single day, with the aim of raising \$1 million to fund the eradication of polio. Toni, Sam, and Jiji had a wonderful time as they hopped on and off the train as part of their campaign to end polio, taking many pictures along the way. Since launching their Global Polio Eradication Initiative in 1988, they have collaborated with the World Health Organization, UNICEF and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, working tirelessly to bring funding and awareness towards polio. I congratulate the Rotary Club of North Sydney for their persistence in the fight to end polio and helping to save countless lives.

### CAMMERAYGAL HIGH SCHOOL DEBATING VICTORIES

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I would like to acknowledge the exceptional achievements of the Cammeraygal High School's debating team, comprising of Noah Rancan, Jared Atherton, Josh Herridge, and Alexia Rigoni. This team was the only one to remain undefeated throughout the NSW Premier's debating challenge, which took them to the Hume Barbour Trophy final. I would like to congratulate their victories over nine other schools, coming runners up to Sydney Girls High in the final. School captain Josh Herridge has been offered a 2024 Tuckwell Scholarship at the Australian National University. Fellow school captain Alexia Rigoni was a reserve on the State Debating Team, as well as being selected as part of the Combined High Schools Debating team this year. Vice-captain Jared Atherton is not only an avid debater but an incredibly talented violin player, completing his AMEB certificate and being awarded with an A+. Prefect Noah Rancan retained his title as one of five national champions in the Australia Economics Olympiad, displaying tremendous expertise. I congratulate this team of talented and brilliant debaters.

### 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE WILLOUGHBY DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—I congratulate the Willoughby District Historical Society on the 30th anniversary of establishing its Willoughby Museum. For three decades, the Willoughby Museum has served as an historical focal point of my community, educating locals about the origins and story of the municipality they love. My friend and distinguished predecessor as the Member for Willoughby, the Hon Peter Collins, had the honour of opening the Willoughby Museum on 30 October 1993. Housed in the beautiful Federation cottage, Boronia, at 58 Johnson Street, Chatswood, the Willoughby Museum features several permanent collections of historic photographs and artefacts. These showcase multiple facets of life in Willoughby including local industries and working lives, domestic life, towns, suburbs, and villages, as well as immigration and ethnic influences. In so doing, it gives visitors an authentic glimpse of what life was like for their parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents. The Museum is one of Willoughby's great cultural treasures and I give thanks to the dedicated volunteers of the Willoughby District Historical Society for faithfully maintaining this local institution over the past three decades.

### FAITH LEADERS FORUM

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—On Tuesday 7 November 2023, I was honoured to host the second annual faith leaders forum in Willoughby at the Artarmon Community Hall. It was a wonderful opportunity to meet with eighteen leaders from a range of local churches, faiths and communities to affirm the universal human values we all share and our dedication to serving the welfare of Willoughby. Bringing faith leaders together and working cohesively on the challenges and opportunities of our local community, state and nation is always encouraging. Our churches and faith communities are a great source of strength, love, compassion, care and goodwill across Willoughby. This forum, like last year's, was a moving reminder of how tolerant, diverse and respectful our community is. I would like to sincerely thank everyone who attended and contributed to make our community forum such a success. I look forward to continuing to partner with all our local faith leaders in Willoughby.

### REMEMBRANCE DAY SERVICES

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—On Remembrance Day, I was honoured to attend the annual Commemorative Service at Chatswood's beautiful Garden of Remembrance. Organised by the local ANZAC Dawn Service & Commemoration Committee of the Chatswood RSL Club, the service was a deeply moving and memorable occasion to pay tribute to our fallen. Together with the Mayor of Willoughby and other local leaders of Willoughby, I was honoured to lay a wreath in memory of our servicemen and women. As we do every ANZAC Day earlier in the year, it is important that our veterans and local community come together each Remembrance

Day to honour the sacrifices of our men and women in uniform. We must ensure that the comradeship, mateship and ANZAC spirit forged by our brave diggers is never forgotten. I would like to thank all members of the public who attended the Remembrance Day service and I warmly commend our local service clubs, leaders and council for their all their hard work and dedication. We will continue to honour the service of our those who paid the ultimate sacrifice. Lest we forget.

#### ALLEN BLYTHE

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I would like to congratulate and extend my best wishes to Mr Allen Blythe who celebrated his 100th birthday on Wednesday the 20th of September. Allen grew up in Bexley and has lived in the area for his whole life. In 1931, Mr Blythe joined the army and signed up to fight overseas as a diesel mechanic. However, his expert mechanical skills and extensive knowledge of diesel engines kept him in Australia. While stationed in East Maitland, Allen met the love of his life, Madge. In October 1947, they married and welcomed their two children, Darryl and Kerrie. In his working life Allen drove buses for the family business. Remarkably, if a regular passenger was not at their normal bus stop, he would stop outside their home to check if they were okay. Beyond his working life, Allen loved all things automotive and was recently awarded a Sixty Year Badge for his membership of the Veteran Car Club. Allen is a wonderful and loving person, with five much loved grandchildren and seven great grandchildren. The story of Mr Blythe is truly inspiring and I wish him good health, happiness and peace of mind for the future.

#### HURSTVILLE PRIVATE HOSPITAL

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I would like to congratulate Hurstville Private Hospital on becoming the first ever hospital in New South Wales to offer a new type of revolutionary technology to treat heart trouble. Heart conditions such as atrial fibrillation can lead to irregular heart beating and can cause breathlessness, palpitations, chest discomfort and tiredness. With more than 500,000 Australians suffering from a heart condition, this treatment provides new surgical options. The new technology is set to revolutionise the treatment of abnormal heart function and provide a sense of hope to patients and their families. Hurstville Private Hospital Cardiologist Dr Calvin Hsieh said, "it is an exciting milestone to be the first in NSW to offer this cutting-edge technology, which will provide our patients with less complications, reduce surgery time and ensure a faster recovery". Congratulations and thank you to Hurstville Private Hospital for its dedication and commitment to delivering better health outcomes for our community.

#### JOHN QUINNELL

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I would like to commend and celebrate Kogarah High School teacher, John Quinnell for 60 years in the teaching profession. John began his career as an educator in 1963 in the town of Wirrinia. Since then, he has continued his steadfast dedication to public education touching the lives of countless students. Through sheer determination and passion, he has become the longest serving teacher in the state at 80 years of age experiencing the trials and tribulations of the teaching profession across many decades. For the last 27 years, John has had the joy of teaching English at Kogarah High School sharing his expertise and wisdom to educate and inspire his students. I would like to give Mr Quinnell a special congratulations for his outstanding commitment and contribution to education for which we are extremely grateful.

#### DALMAR HOUSE

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—In 2023, Wesley Mission celebrated the 100th anniversary of Dalmar House, an event highlighted by CEO Rev Stu Cameron's address which was attended by former residents, some still living locally in Ryde today! Founded in 1923 in Croydon, Dalmar House soon required a larger facility, moving to a purpose-built site in Carlingford. This expansion was crucial to offering more children essential care and support. By 1938, it sheltered 150 infants and children. The 1960s marked a significant evolution in Wesley Mission's approach, introducing foster care and adoption programs. This shift towards family-oriented solutions emphasized the value of a nurturing family environment for children's development. The establishment of group homes further diversified care options, catering to various needs. By 1982, Wesley Dalmar was a comprehensive child care provider, caring for 90 children in residential homes and 35 in foster care. Rev Cameron's speech at the centenary event underscored the journey of Dalmar House, reflecting on a century of adaptive, transformative care. The celebration was a tribute to Dalmar House's legacy of dedication and its continuous commitment to creating a safe haven for vulnerable children, honoring a century of improving young lives. Congratulations Dalmar House on your 100th anniversary!

#### NSW POLICE AWARDS

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I wish to bring to the attention of the House members of the Ryde Police Area Command who were recognised at the 2023 Police Awards Ceremony. I acknowledge the following officers

and staff who were awarded, and thank them for their dedication to keeping our community safe: Superintendent Peter Glynn; Chief Inspector Karen Clogher; Inspector Matthew Mezgec. Former Inspector Jennifer Thompson; Sergeants - Alison Acock, Adam Bainbridge, Kerry Bardnard, David Cunningham, David Ford, Mark Giles, Robert Grigor, Brad Howell, Jason Kan, Matthew Litwin; Former Sergeant Mark Pennock; Detective Sergeant Tara Phillips; Leading Senior Constables-Simon Browne, Melissa Hall, Scott Westwood; Former Senior Constable Andrew De Cressac; Detective Senior Constable John Jeffrey; Senior Constables-Max Lawther, Belinda Simpson; Former Senior Constable Steven Pas; Detective Senior Constables - Adrian Ram, Tania Shackleton, Robert Van Woerkom; Constables-Fadi Almakdisi, Marco Bellina, Olivia Butt, Holly Chandler, Tannon Clements, William Conolly, James Feng, Cameron Dack, Zackary Hearn, Renee Hemmens, Blake McGinty, Mitchell Ogilvie, Benn Snare; Staff-John Adams, Roslyn Haiser, Mary Louise Porter. Whether serving or retired, each has played a critical role in making our community the safe, harmonious place it is today. I thank them and congratulate them on their recognition.

### **RAISE MENTORING PROGRAM**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I wish to bring to the attention of the House graduates of the Marsden High School Raise mentoring program. Attending their ceremony, I was struck by the transformative journey of the students, highlighting the immense impact of the Raise mentoring program. The event recognised the dedication and growth of individuals who participated in the 20-week evidence-based curriculum, enhancing their well-being through 15 hours of personalised mentoring each week. The remarkable students—Jess Friar, Aleia Ongolea, Dallas Reid, Noah Drennan, Chiara Ruiu, Shakira Cooke, Annie Tran, Zaid Marzouq, Marcus Jannadas, Benjamin Bested, Maddison Harvey and Zia Arun Antony—embarked on a journey of personal development under the guidance of committed mentors. The Raise Program prioritises safety, ensuring a secure environment with fully supervised sessions led by qualified Program Counsellors. The one-on-one, in-person or online mentoring model for Years 7-9 students focuses on holistic development, fostering a supportive relationship between mentors and mentees. Raise not only transforms individual lives but also cultivates a sense of community, leaving an indelible mark on the participants. The graduation ceremony encapsulated the culmination of a transformative journey, marking the beginning of a new chapter for these empowered students. Congratulations to each graduate!

### **TOP BLOKES FOUNDATION**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—On Thursday 2 November, I had the pleasure of meeting Melissa Abu-Gazaleh, Founder and Managing Director, and Daniel Allars, NSW State Manager. The Top Bloke Foundation aims to challenge and nurture young males to be their best selves. In our community of Bankstown, the Top Bloke Foundation is proudly educating 58 boys on how to grow to become healthy, happy, and respectful men. Working with groups of boys and young men over 3 to 6 months, the Top Bloke Foundation utilises preventative and evidence-based group mentoring programs to increase resilience, empathy, and respect for self and others as well as develop critical thinking and decision-making skills. The programs and services the Top Bloke Foundation offers not only promotes mental health and well-being for young boys and men but work to reduce the stigma associated with mental health issues, encouraging young men to seek help when they need it. The Top Bloke Foundation's dedication to promoting positive masculinity and improving men's mental health in our community is truly commendable. Their work not only helps young men lead healthier and happier lives but also contributes to a more inclusive and supportive society for our Bankstown community.

### **ARIA CHALLITA**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—I would like to congratulate a young Holy Saviour College student, Aria Challita, who has been selected to represent Australia at two Championships in Thailand for her boxing skills. Aria is a dedicated and disciplined athlete in training who is focused on achieving her dreams. She has shown other young people in the community how important it is to keep a strong mindset and to continue to do the things you enjoy doing. Aria will be competing in the Sixth International Thai Martial Arts Games in Phuket, Thailand, in February and then the World Boxing Council in Bangkok, in March. With the help of her dedicated coach, Wahib Baki, at Nitrixx Fitness gym in Chullora, Aria has already won several gold medals for her incredible skills. I am delighted to see young talented people in my electorate actively pursuing their passions and at the same time fostering a positive influence within our community. The positive impact of motivated youth, such as Aria, serves as a source of inspiration and encouragement for our younger generation. I would like to thank Aria for her hard work and dedication and wish her the best in her upcoming competitions.

### **DADS BACK AT SCHOOL FOR A FUN NIGHT TO BOOST FAMILY BONDS**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—I would like to commend Punchbowl Public School for their great initiative in family and community building by hosting their popular Handball and Pizza Night for students and their fathers. This event serves as a positive reminder to dads about their school experiences. The Handball and Pizza Night, aimed to introduce more dads to The Fathering Project, a non-profit organisation dedicated to helping fathers and father figures become more engaged and effective in their children's lives. The event brought together parents, community members, students, and teachers for an evening of fun and competition. Everyone enjoyed friendly handball matches on the painted courts facilitated by Handball Australia, while also indulging in pizza. Deputy Principal Eleni Mavridis-Kontakos said the night was an excellent opportunity for families to connect, socialise and support the school's aim to include fathers and father figures in education. She said it highlighted the importance of quality time spent with children, reinforcing The Fathering Project's mission. I am pleased to see the positive outcomes that this event has on the community, and I hope more local schools in Bankstown will incorporate this wonderful event.

### **DIANNE YOUNG**

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)**—I would like to congratulate Dianne Young for being bestowed with the Order of Liverpool 2023. Dianne's journey with Liverpool Meals on Wheels began in 2012 as a dedicated driver, evolving into roles as a kitchen hand and cook when the need arose. Since 2014, she has been an integral part of the management committee, assuming the position of Vice President in 2018. Dianne's commitment extends beyond organizational roles, as she actively engages in preparing meals for 162 clients and delivers to distant locations such as Nepean. In her role as a volunteer, Dianne has not only fulfilled her duties but has also inspired others to take on additional responsibilities. Her unwavering dedication, faithful service, and cheerful demeanour make her a valuable asset to our community. Congratulations to Dianne Young for her outstanding contributions and well-deserved recognition.

### **LADIES LIKE TO LUNCH PINK RIBBON LUNCHEON 2023**

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)**—On 29 October 2023 I had the delight of attending the inaugural Ladies Like to Lunch Pink Ribbon Luncheon. The not-for-profit organisation supports women affected by cancer in South-West Sydney communities, who seek to assist by building support networks and their care packages designed to make cancer treatment a little easier. At the lunch, the group raised over fifty-three thousand dollars, and were able to send thirty-three care packages to the Liverpool Wellness Centre – Liverpool Cancer Therapy Centre. The lunch was hosted by Sabrina Treffeletti, with entertainment by Chris Sebastian. A big shout-out to the events sponsors – including Liverpool and Fairfield Council, Black Elk Espresso, NPM Events, Ray White Carnes Hill, Novella on the Park, Gloria Jeans Hoxton Park, Sulfaro Accountants, Studio Design and Print, Grima Bros Wholesale Produce, The Athletic Hub, Benson Smash Repair Centre, and Ocara Sports. In particular, I would like to commend the great volunteers at Ladies Like to Lunch – Antoinette and Lorenzo Sulfaro, and Grace Newcombe for their work. I look forward to next year's Pink Ribbon Luncheon and look forward to helping their great cause into the future!

### **LIVERPOOL GARDEN CHAMPIONS 2023**

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)**—I would like to congratulate all of those who participated in Liverpool City Council's 2023 Garden Competition, who were celebrated at Lieutenant Cantello Reserve in Hammondville on 4 November 2023. I would like to extend my warmest regards to Kathy Duong for the Best Front Garden, Mitchell Stone for the Best Back Garden, Caroline and Damata for the Best Entire Garden, Annie Dimech for the Best Courtyard, Enclosed Area or Entrance Way, Thomas Adrian for the Best Balcony Garden, Bringelly Public School for the Best School Garden, and Milka Horvat for the Best Themed Garden. I would also like to give a special shoutout to the highly commended list – Natasha Ribeiro, Dante Salvador, Lynne and Lance Gardner, Carmel Carbott, Sara Cibralic, Austral Public School, and Donabella McNamara for their corresponding categories. Their efforts and contributions have added immense value and beauty to the Liverpool community, making it a more vibrant and beautiful place for everyone. Well done to all, and may your green thumbs continue to flourish!

### **MANLY MARLINS PRESIDENT MATT CURLL**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)**—I rise to acknowledge Matt Curll who was recently appointed as President of the Manly Rugby Union Football Club. Matt was a member of the Marlins' 1997 Shute Shield-winning side and is widely respected in the Club and wider community. Matt is a passionate ambassador for Rugby and supporter of the countless incredible volunteers who help make Club Rugby the great physical and social activity it is in boosting community wellbeing. Club Rugby is at an exciting moment in its history, building

on gains in recent years including the increasing interest in the sport by female players which has seen the Mermaids join the Marlins family. Thank you to outgoing President Cameron Douglas for your leadership over recent years – which included the challenging COVID-19 period – and I wish Matt Curll all the best as he takes the baton.

#### **SEAFORTH FC AAW**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)**—Mr Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Seaforth Football Clubs All Age Women's team for their recent 3-1 win against Jamisontown FC at the 53rd Football NSW Champion of Champions finals. This a huge win and adds to this squad's broader success who this year won the MWFA Challenge Cup, the FNSW State Cup, the MWFA Women's Premier League and now the FNSW All Age Women Champion of Champions. This success is on top of their very impressive 2022 results. I would like to thank the wonderful volunteers who contributed to the success of Seaforth FC.

#### **QUEENSCLIFF 100 YEARS**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)**—Mr Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Queenscliff Surf club on 100 years of service to the community. Queenscliff surf club is a vital component to the fabric of Manly whether it is keeping swimmers safe every weekend in summer or teaching hundreds of Nippers on Sunday mornings. The great work the club does wouldn't be possible without the fantastic volunteer board including President Garry Fox, Treasurer Jamie Grant and Secretary Paul Sholl. I look forward to all the upcoming 100th anniversary celebrations and wish the club and all its volunteers a safe summer season.

#### **IAN BEGG**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—I would like to congratulate Ian Begg from Wagga Wagga who has recently been nominated for this year's New South Wales and ACT Community Achievement Awards. He is being recognised for his volunteering efforts in more than a dozen events in Wagga, and also his major achievement in donating blood more than 100 times. Ian has helped saved more than 3000 lives since he began donating 40 years ago and even though he was recently told he is no longer able to donate, he is now encouraging others to do so. Ian spoke to the Wagga Wagga Daily Advertiser saying it is important for everyone to think about how they can give back to the community. He hopes to see the next generation get involved in the community and this can be done through volunteering for community events or with a blood donation. Congratulations, Ian, on your accomplishments. You can be proud of what you have achieved and all the best at the Community Achievement Awards.

#### **HOCKEY AUSTRALIA – WOMEN'S MASTERS CHAMPIONSHIPS**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—I would like to acknowledge Correne Ellis and Helen Lansdown from Wagga Wagga who played for the NSW team in the Hockey Australia Women's Masters Championships which took place in Perth in September. The Women's Masters were held across nine days of competition, with 48 teams competing across seven age divisions. Correne and Helen travelled to Newcastle for NSW trials earlier in the year and were successful in joining the team. Helen and Correne were selected to play with the NSW over 70s women's team. Helen scored two goals in five matches at the 10-day event and both women were great assets to the team. Congratulations to the over 70s NSW team who won all five of their matches throughout the tournament, including the grand final 2-0 against Victoria. This was the first year there was an over-70s division in the women's masters, so it was a real achievement for NSW to be the first team to win this division. Well done to the team and congratulations to Helen and Correne on this success and also their achievement of playing in the Women's Masters almost every year for the past twenty years.

#### **AUSTRALIAN ARMY BAND-KAPOOKA**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—I would like to acknowledge the Australian Army Band Kapooka who were granted the honour of freedom of entry to the city with a special ceremony on Sunday the 15th of October. The Army Band paraded along Baylis Street, the main street in the Wagga Wagga CBD, and finished the parade with a community concert at the Victory Memorial Gardens. This event was only the sixth time a military unit has been granted the Freedom of Entry into Wagga Wagga. The event began with a presentation led by the Mayor of Wagga Wagga, Cr Dallas Tout, to recognise the service and sacrifice of the former and current soldier-musicians. The Australian Army Band Kapooka has been in the community of Wagga Wagga since 1952 where the musicians have shown their dedication to the community many times over. The band has always shown a strong commitment to the community by entertaining and supporting charitable organisations in the region. They regularly perform at events throughout the year and the community always appreciates hearing them play. Thank you to all those who have participated in the Australian Army Band Kapooka throughout its 70 years of service.

### **LARRY BARDEN-MAITLAND CITY BRASS BAND**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—I would like to congratulate Larry Barden on his dedication to the Maitland City Brass Band, having been a member for 50 of the band's 60 year existence. Larry began his journey with the Maitland City Brass band playing the cornet and tenor horn however now Larry plays the euphonium. Larry is the person who always "gets things done" and never expects any accolades. Any time the band performs he's the first on-site to help bump in and the last on hand to bump out. When the Band performs at multiple events on the one day such as ANZAC Day ceremonies, Larry pulls off the miracle of a smooth setup. Even when COVID-19 reduced numbers and participation to just eight members, Larry was there. Larry has been awarded Life Membership of the Maitland City Brass Band and on the 12th of November he was recognised by the NSW Bands Association with his 50-Year Badge for continuous membership. Larry's contribution is highly valued and it's my pleasure to recognise his commitment and loyalty.

### **LIONS CLUB OF MAITLAND**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Congratulations to The Lions Club of Maitland who have been engaging and supporting the Maitland Community for the past 70 years. Following the 1955 Maitland floods the Lions Club of Maitland not only gifted 55 blocks of land but also relocated several homes for victims of the flood. Over the years the club has donated equipment to the Maitland Hospital, a special school bus for disabled children, and provided an ambulance and a car for the district nurse. The club have also provided and enhanced recreational facilities and parks, provided Maitland's first Tourism Information Centre; and even designed and provided Maitland's Coat of Arms and Mayoral Chains. I would like to recognise the efforts of Life Members former Mayor of Maitland Bob Gee OAM and his wife Melva, Col Cairns, also my former NSW Parliamentary colleagues Andrew Gee MP, Federal Member for Calare and Maitland City Councillor Sally Halliday. The Lions Club of Maitland continues to offer community activities that promote fun, friendship and family and have demonstrated an ability to harness the goodwill and diversity of skills and resources in our community to improve the lives of others. What an incredible legacy!

### **STEVE SCHUMACHER**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—I would like to recognise Steve Schumacher for his tireless contribution to the well-being of the Maitland Community over the past 40 years. Steve grew up, raised his children and lived his life in the East Maitland area, working as a truck driver until his retirement. Having chaired the Maitland Region Suicide Prevention Network for 30 years, Steve has been dedicated in his aim to keep the Maitland community safe by increasing connections to services such as Lifeline and organising training and ancillary supports. Steve has also volunteered at the Maitland Hospital, he has run local coin clubs, led mental health support groups and been an active member of his church. Steve has been a role model to many and continues to lead local connections and support his community. Thank you Steve, for your huge contribution towards the well-being of Maitland

### **BIG RIVER SAILING CLUB 50TH BIRTHDAY**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—Congratulations to the Big River Sailing Club who recently celebrated their 50th birthday. A large crowd of spectators and former club members gathered on the shores of the Lower Clarence to witness the 'sail past', a fleet of bannered and decorated sailing boats. For former and returning members, it was an emotional reunion that revived memories of the old sailing club building that was destroyed in 2017, and for some it was their first time seeing the club since the rebuild. Many stories were shared from the fifty-year history of the sailing club. In between the displays and races, a delicious morning tea and hearty BBQ lunch was served up by the wonderful team in the canteen. Some challenging breezes made for a fun afternoon of racing to entertain the spectators. I would like to commend the club for their significant contribution to local sport over the last fifty years and I hope that it experiences many more in the future.

### **JAMIE PLUNKETT AND FREYA MEADE - 2023 COUNTRY SWIMMING CHAMPIONSHIPS**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I would like to recognise the outstanding achievements in the pool at the 2023 Country Swimming Championships by Clarence Valley stars, Jamie Plunkett and Freya Meade. The Championships were held in Darwin between September 30 and October 3, 2023. 13 year old Freya advanced to the final in every event entered, with personal bests set in the 50m backstroke and gaining personal bests in the 200m freestyle and 100m backstroke. As member of the talented Maclean Manta Rays Swim Team, Freya trains with Richard Beresford and Jessie Clare in Yamba during the winter season and during the summer season, in Maclean with Ruth Everuss. 18 year old Jamie was also outstanding winning four gold and six silver medals during the Championships. Jamie won the 100m backstroke, 50m breaststroke, 50m backstroke and the 100m breaststroke finals and placed second in the 50m freestyle, 200m freestyle, 100m butterfly and 200m

individual medley finals. I congratulate both Freya and Jamie on their individual performances and commend them on their hard work in preparation for such an event and commitment to their sport of swimming.

#### **HELEN COLLINS-GOLF**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I would like to congratulate Helen Collins on being named the winner of the 2023 Mabel Mackenzie Champion golfing event in the NSW Senior Veterans over 70s division. Representing Yamba Ladies' Golf, Helen played an 18-hole Stroke event in competition for the sought-after Mabel Mackenzie Brooch prize in NSW. Local results from 140 country NSW clubs were submitted to Sydney and the best scores in three divisions, plus Senior Veterans, were selected to win at state level, a huge win for Yamba Golf and Country Club and Ms Collins. Helen's membership to Yamba Ladies' Golf spans a decade. She is well-known amongst her fellow competitors for her neat scores and winning streaks, having won several Veterans' prizes in previous years, she also has a collection of hat clips from Veterans Women's Golf NSW for club events. Helen was presented her award at the Yamba Ladies' Presentation last month. Well done, Helen and congratulations.

#### **BLACK GOLD MOTEL**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—A local family run motel in Wallerawang has beaten the best of the best across NSW to win Excellence in Large Business Award at the prestigious Business NSW Awards. Owners Robert and Linda Cluff purchased the former public school in 1996 and have since spent countless hours dedicated to reshaping and rebuilding the site into a motel, conference centre and restaurant servicing locals and travellers alike. It's a special place for the Cluff family having attended the school that once sat where their award-winning business now thrives. The site has grown from some abandoned classrooms to a 71-room motel, a bustling restaurant and a brand-new conference room. But as the saying goes 'it takes a village' and the Cluff family are humble in their accolades putting their success down to the dedication and teamwork of their staff. It is the staff who greet you at the front door or deliver your meal that create the friendly atmosphere and memorable experience. Congratulations to the entire Black Gold Motel family on this incredible accomplishment. This award is no mean feat and is a testament to the pride and dedication all have displayed for the business and Wallerawang.

#### **ROBIN PRICE**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—Robin Price has made a significant contribution to the lives of retirees in the Bathurst area. Mr Price was the ideas man behind Bathurst's first Probus Club. He gathered the idea from the UK in 1984 where a new club for retired professionals and businessmen had been created. Mr Price thought this idea would be a positive addition to the Bathurst social scene and boy was he right! Fast forward some years and Bathurst is now proudly home to not one but five thriving Probus clubs. Although president of Bathurst East Rotary Club Mr Price was actually too young at the time to join Probus when it was first formed in Bathurst but since retiring has become an active member. Mr Price is responsible for the many friendships that have been made, the social connections that have been forged and the positive impact Probus has had on all of its members over the years. It is only with great minds like Mr Prices that progressive, positive change is instilled in the communities that we live in. Mr Price has certainly left a lasting impact on the Bathurst community, and we thank him for his contributions.

#### **STEVE SEMMENS**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—Bathurst businessman, Steve Semmens better known as The Persuader, has just celebrated 20 years of his business. Beginning in Brisbane and continuing in Bathurst, Mr Semmens runs a highly successful recruitment and business coaching service for employers and entrepreneurs of the Central West and beyond. Mr Semmens is known for being able to find the right people for the right jobs, particularly in tight skills markets and seasons of low availability. Slotting comfortably into the community Mr Semmens and his wife Sharyn have raised their children in Bathurst and have loved every minute of their tree change. Running your own business can be a tricky endeavour in which many struggle to reach milestones such as 20 years in business. It is only with guidance and mentorship from experts like Mr Semmens that local small businesses have flourished and thrived into bigger enterprises and major employers for locals. Congratulations to Mr Semmens for his success in his own business endeavours and for his contribution to make the local economy and business industry as strong as it is today. Steve, you have had a shaping hand in the prosperous business landscape of Bathurst and the Central West.

#### **ANTONIO CARUANA**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I rise to recognise and congratulate an incredibly talented local student and artist, Antonio Caruana, who is in year 12 at Marist College Penshurst. For his efforts in the performing arts sector, Antonio has received a highly sought-after nomination for ENCORE, a program which recognises HSC music students for their major works. Performing a piece by Buddy Rich on the drums, Antonio has been given the opportunity to present his work at the Sydney Opera House on the 4th of March next year.

Antonio has been learning how to play the drums for the past eight years – what a fantastic effort! His success is thanks in part to his teacher, Peter Markovski. Peter owns one of the biggest drumming schools in Australia, with hundreds of students from all parts of Sydney and come from all age groups attending weekly lessons. Antonio is the first student from Peter's drumming school to be nominated for ENCORE, with the last student being Peter himself in 1996. I would like to congratulate Antonio on this wonderful achievement and wish him well in his endeavours in the future.

#### **CAMIL SHALALA**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I rise to recognise Camil Shalala for his service to the Australian-Lebanese community in Sydney. He has contributed so much to the multicultural fabric of New South Wales. Camil founded the Australian Lebanese Christian Council in 1983 and through this role, he has played an important part in delivering aid and public information to the Lebanese and Arabic community in Sydney through his magazine, the Middle East Times. He has also assisted new arrivals from Lebanon with settling in New South Wales by helping with housing, education, employment, health and learning English. For his outstanding service, Camil has been recognised by a multitude of institutions, embassies and officials with many awards for the role that he has played and continues to play in highlighting Arab issues across multicultural communities in New South Wales. Camil has built a beautiful and active family in the Arab-Australian community, alongside his wife Laura Qarqaf Shalala. I would like to thank Camil for his service to the Lebanese and Arabic communities in Australia and wish him well in his future endeavours.

#### **DANIEL POTTER**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I rise to recognise Daniel Potter, the chief executive of the youth arts organisation 'Shopfront Arts Co-Op' in Carlton. In his role over the last eight years, he has made enormous contributions to our community. Shopfront Arts Co-Op is the largest youth-led arts organisation in southern Sydney and the second largest in NSW. They have a rich history of delivering innovative, inclusive programs across theatre, visual arts, dance and singing, whilst participating in youth-led engagement. These programs have provided young people with opportunities to connect with and explore the arts, fostering creativity and breaking down barriers related to ability, perceived skill or social circumstance. During Daniel's time as chief executive, Shopfront has experienced an era of significant change. Their premise at Carlton has seen significant upgrades, transforming it into a multi-purpose arts facility that boasts additional performance and rehearsal spaces, as well as outdoor entertainment areas. Shopfront's facility also acts as a business hub hosting arts and community organisations. I would like to thank Daniel for the wonderful things he has done for our community and wish him well for his endeavours in the future.

#### **EAST HILLS VIEW CLUB'S STATIONERY DRIVE**

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills)**—I would like to recognise the East Hills VIEW Club for their outstanding and compassionate efforts in hosting a record-breaking stationery drive. This initiative, undertaken by VIEW, exemplifies the spirit of community service and generosity of the club and its members. VIEW stands for Voice, Interests and Education of Women and supports the work done by the Smith Family with disadvantaged Australians through their fundraising efforts. In their endeavour to make a meaningful difference in the lives of local youth, East Hills VIEW Club successfully collected and filled four boxes, each weighing 10kg, with essential stationery items. These supplies are destined to support The Smith Family's Learning for Life program which aims to ensure educational resources reach those students who need them the most. Their proactive response to the educational challenges faced by students, particularly in the wake of the pandemic, is a testament to VIEW's commitment to eliminating educational inequalities. I thank East Hills VIEW Club, for its unwavering support and dedication to enhancing the educational opportunities of our youth. Your actions inspire us all to work towards a more inclusive and brighter future for the next generation.

#### **RYAN WEBBER AND THE 'STRIDE4STROKE' INITIATIVE**

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills)**—I would like to recognise the remarkable resilience and determination of Ryan Webber, a Padstow local, who, despite facing a life-altering stroke just six months ago, is now an advocate for stroke awareness and recovery. His journey serves as an inspiring example of strength and hope in the face of adversity. Ryan is taking a proactive step by organising 'Stride4Stroke,' an event that invites stroke survivors and the broader community to come together in a cycle, walk, or gentle run to be held on 25 November. Ryan is well on his way to reaching his goal of donating \$20,000 as he has already raised \$5,000 and gathered the support of 70 participants. His efforts are a testament to individual perseverance and the power of community. With the backing of numerous local businesses and the support of participants, this event promises to be a great community event, all in the name of a worthy cause. I commend Ryan Webber for his dedication to raising awareness about strokes and promoting a healthier lifestyle. His 'Stride4Stroke' initiative will encourage others facing similar hardships and is a shining example of the power of community.

**JUSTIN LAI**

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills)**—Congratulations to Year 8 student Justin Lai of Picnic Point High School who was recently awarded the "Braille Accuracy" Award at the NSW Braille Writing Competition. The competition, run by the Sydney Braille Forum, aims to promote Braille as an important literary tool and encourage students to improve their Braille knowledge and skills. Students, families and educators came together on 15 November to attend the award ceremony to celebrate the achievements of competition entrants. Justin's story was about the London Underground and I am told that he is quite the train enthusiast; he can name all London stops and the different station lines with ease. Another award presented at the competition, and which holds special significance is the Pat Dawson Braille Literacy Award. Pat worked for the NSW Department of Education as an audio-typist and assisted with Braille proofreading. She was an active member of the Sydney Braille Forum and was a strong advocate for Braille and Braille literacy. Pat was also a longstanding member of the Labor Party in my electorate. I congratulate Justin who is achieving great things and is proof that people living with disability can make valuable contributions to their community.

**AUSTRALIAN HOTELIER AWARDS**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise Armidale's Tattersalls Hotel on winning the Best Regional Hotel and Best Restaurant Award in the Australian Hoteliers Association NSW Excellence of the Year Awards 2023. The prestigious AHA NSW Awards for Excellence is an opportunity to recognise excellence and innovation in the NSW Hotel industry. Across the categories there were 529 finalists and 18 entrants in the Regional Hotel of the year. I congratulate John and Annette Cassidy and their son John Cassidy (Jnr) owner operators of the Tattersalls Hotel, for taking out not only the Regional Hotel of the Year category, but also: Individual Hotel Operator of the Year; Best Restaurant; Best Stake Sandwich; and were highly commended for: Best Deluxe Pub Accommodation (\$130 and over); Best Burger; and Best Wine List. I commend the Cassidy family and the whole Tattersalls team behind them for their hard work and commitment in providing a quality customer experience and striving for excellence in a highly competitive industry.

**RECOGNITION OF LOUISE CALL**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise Lou Gall on being the recipient of the prestigious Industry Award, for her significant contribution to the Gwydir Valley Cotton Industry. I congratulate Lou for her award and her long career in all facets of cotton production and development, which commenced on Pelchelba north of Moree in the 1980s and has spanned over many different aspects of the cotton industry. Louise has been instrumental in market development, sales and marketing in the Agro Chemical and cotton seed industries and manages her own marketing business. Louise is passionate about presenting balanced and accurate information about agriculture and irrigation and the critical role they play in the viability and sustainability of regional communities. I commend Lou for actively supporting and mentoring staff, Agronomists and new growers across the region. Also for lending her expertise and time to many industry and community organisations, which has included being a member of the Gwydir Valley Irrigators Association, Gwydir Valley Cotton Growers Association and the Regional Development Australian Northern Inland Committee. I thank Lou for her contribution and positive impact to the Australian Cotton Industry, to agriculture and to her community.

**PASTURE WONDERLAND CELEBRATES 50 YEARS**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise the Pasture Wonderland Group of Walcha on reaching their 50-year milestone. The group was founded to highlight the many attractions in the district, along with the enjoyment and the fellowship of Lawn Bowls. I congratulate those volunteers staging this year's event and the many contributors to the success of this group over the years, including: Frank Lynch, Owen Sweeney, Noel Cross, Ron Cotterill, Alan Flanagan, Roy Olrich, Denis Makeham, the late Betty Buckland, Ned Fisher, Derek Star, Bob Burnett, Joyce Henry, along with lady bowlers and social committee. Special thanks to the Nivison family for the A.S. Nivison Memorial Shield Perpetual Trophy and the Bird family for the Ray Bird Memorial Trophy, for the most successful Walcha team. I commend all involved in running the competition, including President Adam Hall, Tony Asmus, Nel Goodwin, Gordon Michie, Gordon Bird and Andrew McGuffog. Many thanks also to Alan Carter, Manager and staff of Walcha Bowling Club for the venue, nominations and assisting in running the event. Each year is a tremendous team effort and it is greatly appreciated by all.

**HOUSING FOR THE AGED ACTION GROUP**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)**—On behalf of the Sydney electorate I congratulate Housing for the Aged Action Group on their 40th anniversary. Housing for the Aged Action Group [HAAG] is Australia's only organisation dedicated to the housing needs and challenges faced by older people. Since their grass-roots beginnings in 1983 HAAG has worked with older people through community activism, service provision and

advocacy for social change and housing justice. HAAG's community education and specialist programs like Home at Last have helped many Australians over 55 facing housing insecurity or homelessness into safe, secure homes. HAAG understand the complexity of homelessness among older people and the need for early intervention. HAAG provides me with information and insight into older persons' homelessness and I value this leadership and advocacy. They contribute to improving policy and supporting effective service delivery initiatives that improve and save lives. The number of people over 55 experiencing homelessness is increasing and the HAAG and this work is more important than ever. I applaud Housing for the Aged Action Group for 40 years of advocacy and thank them for their commitment to supporting older people into safe, secure housing.

#### **DR HARRY HARINATH OAM**

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Kellyville)**—It is with sadness that I inform the House of the passing of my close friend Dr Harry Harinath OAM, a leading figure of Australia's Indian community, former Chairman of Multiculturalism New South Wales, and an all-round cricket tragic. Dr Harry and I had much to do with each other during my tenure as Minister for Multiculturalism, and I always appreciated his wisdom, demeanour and great dedication to the growing ties between Australia and India. He arrived in Australia in 1971 and was a successful medical doctor, a career he continued in spite of all his other responsibilities until well into his 70s. As Chairman of Cricket New South Wales and as a Board member at Cricket Australia, Dr Harry found an administrative outlet with which he could express his love of the game, and he was particularly instrumental in ensuring cricketers from all backgrounds had the chance to play the game at the highest level. Dr Harry will be missed by his wife Gayathri, his children and grandchildren, and all who had the pleasure of knowing him

#### **DIWALI**

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Kellyville)**—I recently had the great pleasure of celebrating, alongside my growing Indian Community, 'Diwali', the Festival of Lights. Hosted by Badminton North Kellyville and 'Amhi Ek Kutumbh', the Diwali Celebrations at North Kellyville were an ecstasy of colour, vibrance and celebration, as the community praised the victory of good over evil and light over darkness. The 'Diyas' were lit as I was joined by Alex Hawke, the local Federal Member, for the evening's proceedings. Diwali is a great opportunity to recognise the Indian community, acknowledge their contributions to modern Australia, and appreciate their simultaneous love for their new home, and reverence for their ancient traditions. I would like to particularly thank Kamakshi Shenoy for her work in organising the event, and I am already looking forward to next year!

#### **FIELD OF FLAGS**

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone)**—Today it is with immense pride and gratitude I commend Bruce Shaw, Craig Laffin and the Riverstone-Schofields RSL Sub Branch for their organisation of the 'Field of Flags' on this year's Remembrance Day. This poignant tribute stands as a testament to the selfless sacrifice made by our armed forces- honouring those who bravely lost their lives, those who served and passed into history and those who tragically took their own lives. The 'Field of Flags' serves as a powerful symbol of remembrance, paying homage to the valiant men and women, in our community and beyond, who have worn the uniform to defend our nation and its values. We extend our solemn gratitude, not only to veterans who have left an indelible mark on history, but also to the current Australian Defence Force personnel who continue to serve with dedication and courage. In the face of the challenges our nation confronts, the 'Field of Flags' reminds us that the lives we enjoy now came at a cost paid by the brave souls who have fought, and continue to fight, for the values we hold dear. To Bruce, Craig and the Riverstone-Schofields RSL Sub Branch- thank you

#### **RAY JAMES OAM**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and congratulate Mr Ray James OAM, outgoing President of RSL NSW. Ray James was named in the 2020 Queen's Birthday Honours list for his services to veterans and their families. Mr James was appointed President of RSL NSW in 2020. He was the first Royal Australian Navy veteran to be appointed. He is the son of a Second World War veteran, and he joined the Navy as a 15-year-old recruit and completed 20 years full-time and war-like active service, including Vietnam. With a further 26 years in the Royal Australian Navy Reserve before retiring at the rank of Chief Petty Officer. Since, Ray has been committed to serving veterans in his community. I have gotten to know Ray through his work as a Board Member of the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway in Concord West. I have been able to appreciate his passion for ensuring Veteran's service and sacrifice is not forgotten. I want to acknowledge his leadership tenure of RSL NSW and wish him all the very best.

#### **NAVARRA VENUES-GOLDEN JUBILEE**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge Navarra Venues for celebrating its Golden Jubilee this year. Established in 1973, Navarra has focused its efforts on producing first-class quality hospitality in all its forms. From food, service, styling, coordination, venues and

experiences, founder Filippo Navarra has made his mark on the landscape of the hospitality industry. Navarra is an Italian-Australian immigrant success story. With big dreams and hard work, Filippo and his family have grown the business and Navarra is now highly revered across New South Wales. The Navarra group has grown with several venues in Sydney, including the original venue, Conca D'oro, Riverwood, Oatlands Estate, Oatlands, Montage, Lilyfield, Curzon Hall, Marsfield, and The Vermont, Bowral. These venues and the Navarra team help families and communities create lasting and exciting memories. I also wish to acknowledge the dedicated staff of the Navarra group. Once again, I would like to sincerely congratulate the Navarra family on this proud achievement. I wish them all the very best in the future.

#### **BIAGGIO SIGNORELLI FOUNDATION 15 YEAR TRIBUTE GALA DINNER**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I recently attended the Biaggio Signorelli Foundation 15 Year Tribute Gala Dinner on the 1st of November held at the White Bay Cruise in Rozelle. It was a wonderful event attended by over 2000 people and raising money for an important cause. In October 2007, Biaggio Signorelli was diagnosed with Mesothelioma, an asbestos related cancer. Six months later, on 30 May 2008, Biaggio passed away surrounded by his family. Over 4,000 people attended his funeral at St. Mary's Cathedral Sydney, an honourable tribute for a true gentleman and family man. Shortly after his passing, the Signorelli family were determined to fulfil their father's dying wish to help save others. They established the Biaggio Signorelli Asbestos Cancer Foundation to raise funds to create awareness, early detection, treatment and ultimately a cure for mesothelioma. I would like to recognise the important work that the foundation does to support research, community awareness and treatment of mesothelioma. I wish to acknowledge the Signorelli Family, and hardworking Board and wish the Foundation all the very best.

#### **ROTARY NSW POLICE OFFICER OF THE YEAR**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)**—Congratulations to Detective Inspector Hassan El Khansa on being awarded the prestigious Rotary NSW Police Officer of the Year award. Hassan has a remarkable depth of experience having joined the NSW Police in 1998 and spent a number of years at Parramatta Area Command and NSW State Crime Command. Hassan's expertise in emergency and natural disaster management are extensive and he has a passion for ensuring the Police provide the best response to communities in times of crisis. He seeks to bring an empathetic approach to police operations. He is one of only a handful of NSW officers who has an Urban Search and Rescue accreditation. Earlier this year when Turkiye was devastated by a severe earthquake Hassan was asked to fly over to assist. He packed his bags immediately and was away for 3 weeks. During his time there he focussed on helping the local community; demonstrating his absolute commitment and compassion to the community. NSW Police Commissioner Karen Webb remarked that on numerous occasions Hassan has demonstrated that he goes above and beyond his normal duties. It is pleasing to see our essential workers receiving the recognition they deserve.

#### **WAUCHOPE-BONNY HILLS SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB DUBBED THE BEST**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—It's a fitting team name for a group sailing to the top. Today, I rise to congratulate the Wauchope-Bonny Hills Surf Life Saving Club team 'B.O.T.A' also known as 'Best of Them All' for taking home first place at the North Coast Surf Boat Series. Grace Field, Brooke Instrell, Charlee Maher and Lilly Maher along with their Boat Captain and Sweep Dylan Sainsbury came first in the under 19 division at Round Three and Four of the series held at South West Rocks. It's a testament to the local club in producing athletes that are dedicated to the sport. The team have been training two to three times a week in preparation, navigating the challenges of the Hastings River to the choppy waters of the sea. B.O.T.A is now rising to the occasion a second time, preparing for the next two rounds of the series and the Coffs Craft Carnival. Well done, Wauchope Bonny Hills SLSC for mustering a competitive drive and passion in our athletes. The representation of the club was in abundance with Team A placing third in the Reserve Men's Competition.

#### **JORJA BARNETT EXCELS AT UPPER HUNTER BEEF BONANZA**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—There is no doubt the agricultural industry is important in our community, and I am immensely proud that our youth is stepping up to the challenge. Today, I rise, congratulating Jorja Barnett for her exceptional achievement as the recipient of the prestigious Waverley Station Scholarship at the Upper Hunter Beef Bonanza. With over 50 applications and 13 shortlisted interviews, Jorja emerged as one of the two fortunate recipients of this esteemed scholarship, becoming a testament to her hard work, dedication, and passion within the industry. It is through unwavering commitment through pursuit of knowledge and honing skills that Jorja takes out the highest accolade. This scholarship presents a remarkable opportunity for Jorja to engage in a week of work experience at Waverley Iconic Kind Island Station. This is an invaluable experience for any young person with a keen eye in the industry and will contribute to Jorja's personal and professional growth. Jorja's achievement is an excellent example of our emerging generation and reinforces our beliefs in the bright future of the agricultural industry. I wish Jorja continued success in all her future endeavours.

### FASHION, THRILLS AND TALENT SHINE AT KEMPSEY CUP

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—Another unforgettable year of top fashion, thrilling riding and talent. Today, I rise to congratulate the Kempsey Race Club on the remarkable 2023 event. The Kempsey Cup holds a special place in the hearts of the community, it brings together talented jockeys, magnificent horses, and passionate spectators for a day filled with unforgettable moments. This esteemed event takes place at the beautiful Kempsey racecourse, where the atmosphere is electric with anticipation and excitement. The track is meticulously prepared, the horses are primed, and the jockeys are ready to compete for glory. The Kempsey Cup also celebrates the long-standing heritage and traditions of our area and is considered the major social event of the year. It highlights Kempsey's relationship with the iconic Akubra, and it won't take too long before one is spotted. Members of the Kempsey Race Club have worked tirelessly to bring this day to life and provide an experience like no other. From a day of socialisation to the iconic Fashions on the Field. I praise the Kempsey Race Club for a successful day. We eagerly await the next.

### TAREN POINT TITANS JUNIOR RUGBY LEAGUE FOOTBALL CLUB

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I recognise the twenty wonderful years of the beloved Taren Point Titans Junior Rugby League Football Club ("Titans"). Starting with one senior team in 2004, the Titans quickly established themselves as a formidable force on the footy field with the team making it through to the A Grade Grand Final in their inaugural year. Within four years, the Club grew to include juniors who went on to win the Grand Final the following year. Today, the Titans have 360 players and have developed a reputation as an inclusive and family friendly club catering to both male and female players. Since the introduction of girls touch football in 2016, the Titans have made great efforts to encourage female participation and today impressively have the third largest female tackle participation in the district. Of course, none of this is possible without the hard work and dedication of the Taren Point Titans Club Executive Committee. I acknowledge Brett Robinson, Adam McPherson, Jay Te Wao, Andrew Ross, Julie Robinson and Joe Pirrello for their efforts. I congratulate the Taren Point Titans for reaching this important milestone and wish them well for the future.

### PORT HACKING HIGH SCHOOL DEBATING TEAM

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I congratulate the incredible team of students from Port Hacking High School who won the 56th annual Sutherland Shire Debating Competition. This year's Sutherland Shire Debating Competition brought together 45 teams from school's across the Sutherland Shire to compete for the prestigious title with the finals held at the Sutherland Shire Council Chambers on 23 October. In the final, the students faced off against Kirrawee High School on the "Australia should only give foreign aid to countries that are democracies". Arguing the negative, the team from Port Hacking High School was able to effectively use real world examples and ethical arguments surrounding humanitarian aid to make their case and be named winners. Such success would not have been possible without the tireless dedication of this exceptional group of young people. I recognise Port Hacking High School's champion debating team consisting of Arjun Pashine, Lila Jotevski, Jessop Hartley, Charlotte Stirling-Smith and Winter-Berry Awabdi, as well as their coach Kate Berger. I commend Port Hacking High School's Debating Team on their success at the Sutherland Shire Debating Competition and extend my best wishes for the future.

### JACKSON SARCIA

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I recognise the fundraising efforts of Jackson Sarcia of Oyster Bay ahead of his upcoming charity swim to raise funds for the National Breast Cancer Foundation. Taking inspiration from relatives including his mother who have gone through the difficult journey that comes with a breast cancer diagnosis, Jackson will use his passion for endurance swimming to raise funds for this important cause. Calling it "Jacko's swim for breast cancer", Jackson will complete laps of the Cronulla rock pool for twelve hours from 6am to 6pm on 9 December, complete with only a kickboard and pool buoy for rest. With a goal of raising \$10,000, Jackson has already raised \$6,885 as of 20 November to support the National Breast Cancer Foundation. The National Breast Cancer Foundation is Australia's leading not-for-profit organisation funding world-class breast cancer research towards their vision of Zero Deaths from breast cancer. Since its inception in 1994, the National Breast Cancer Foundation has invested nearly \$200 million into more than 600 research projects across Australia. I wish Jackson all the very best as he endeavours to swim further than he ever has before and trust that he will enjoy his well-earned parmi for his fundraising efforts.

### GLEBE DISTRICT HOCKEY CLUB

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)**—Today I bring to the attention of the House the Glebe District Hockey Club which has been an important part of community sport since 1931. The club has a long history of participation and on-field success across all its grades in men's women's and junior teams throughout the Club's long history. The sense of community and loyalty built around the Club has been the cornerstone of its success, creating a

lifelong foundation of friendship and experience of family for members. Thank you to Sue Heath, Tara Taylor, Mark Paterson, Veronica Collins, Joshua La Spina, Katrina Cochrane, Phoebe Kershaw, Adrian McKeown, Carolyn Pitt and all the volunteers, coaches and players that make this Club so special.

#### **RPA NEWBORN CARE UNIT**

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)**—Today I bring to the attention of the House the work of the RPA Newborn Care Unit, which does incredible work caring for over 1,000 newborns each year. I recently had the pleasure of attending a fundraising dinner for this crucial work and want to particularly acknowledge the work of Community Engagement Manager Danielle Achikian, Julian Morrow, Canterbury-Hurlstone Park RSL, Justina Simmes and Hip Fidelity music for helping put together this special night and helping raise over \$65,000 for the ongoing work of the NCU.

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