

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 21 November 2023

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

The Speaker read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

Members

MEMBER FOR CAMPBELLTOWN

MEMBER FOR CANTERBURY

MEMBER FOR BLACKTOWN

MEMBER FOR DRUMMOYNE

The SPEAKER: I welcome members back to the Legislative Assembly for our final two sitting weeks this year. I am sure everybody has had a relaxing budget estimates period. I acknowledge members representing the electorates of Campbelltown, Canterbury, Blacktown and Drummoyne, who celebrated their birthdays during the break. I wish them all a happy birthday.

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I extend a warm welcome to my guests in the Chamber, members of Lake Macquarie Landcare. Many of them are good friends of mine from over the years working in that space. I acknowledge them and thank all Landcarers, who have played such an important role in New South Wales. Landcare has been a major culture change in caring for the lands in all electorates. I also acknowledge my nephew Tom, who is visiting from Tasmania. It is wonderful to have him here today. I also welcome Mark Powell, guest of the member for Charlestown. I welcome him to the New South Wales Legislative Assembly.

Announcements

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY PHOTOGRAPHS

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

RESPECTFUL AND INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE PROGRAM

The SPEAKER: I encourage members to attend an awareness program on respectful, inclusive, safe and effective workplaces. The program will be facilitated by leading diversity and inclusion consultant Felicity Menzies. Members can attend the session on either Friday 24 November, Friday 1 December or Tuesday 5 December. The Department of Parliamentary Services will circulate a reminder email shortly. I ask members to register their attendance. We look forward to seeing them.

Bills

EMERGENCY SERVICES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2023

Returned

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

MOTOR DEALERS AND REPAIRERS AMENDMENT BILL 2023
MINING AMENDMENT (MINERAL CLAIMS—OPAL) BILL 2023
RADIATION CONTROL AMENDMENT BILL 2023
PAINTBALL AMENDMENT BILL 2023
CRIMINAL PROCEDURE AMENDMENT (CHILD SEXUAL OFFENCE EVIDENCE) BILL 2023
STATE INSURANCE AND CARE GOVERNANCE AMENDMENT (ICNSW GOVERNANCE) BILL 2023
WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY AMENDMENT BILL 2023
STATUTE LAW (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL (NO 2) 2023
DEFAMATION AMENDMENT BILL 2023
HEALTH LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (MISCELLANEOUS) BILL 2023
WASTE RECYCLING AND PROCESSING CORPORATION (AUTHORISED TRANSACTION) AMENDMENT BILL 2023
JUSTICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (MISCELLANEOUS) BILL 2023
REVENUE, MINING AND ENERGY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2023

Assent

The SPEAKER: I report receipt of messages from the Governor notifying Her Excellency's assent to the bills.

Governor

ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT

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

Question Time

MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT OFFICE STAFFING

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (12:08): My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. Leaving aside whatever Kieren Ash did or did not do—

The SPEAKER: Order! Government members will allow the Leader of the Opposition to ask his question. The Minister for Health will come to order.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: Leaving aside whatever Kieren Ash did or did not do, has any other departmental liaison officer undertaken work in the Minister's office which is banned according to the departmental liaison officer [DLO] handbook?

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (12:09): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. Firstly, I have dealt with these issues in budget estimates hearings and in questions to the media ad nauseam. The last thing on the minds of people catching the train home tonight to Leppington or trying to get the bus home is departmental liaison officers, because that does not matter to the passengers of New South Wales. What matters to them is whether or not they can rely on the public transport services that we were elected to fix that those opposite left to us in a complete and utter mess.

The Opposition has consistently tried to narrow the role of a DLO. The Leader of the Opposition asks me what that role is. The DLO handbook makes very clear that the role of a DLO includes supporting policy advisers by reviewing correspondence, briefing notes, meeting briefs and speeches for accuracy and consistency with Government policy and legislation. While those opposite would like to assert that DLOs are nothing more than people who might move paper around, the fact is that their role is critical for government and they played a critical role when those opposite were in government as well. I know it has been only eight months and members opposite are trying to forget it—it was a difficult night for them in March—but the fact is that DLOs—

Mr Mark Speakman: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, direct relevance. I did not ask the Minister about what a DLO was permitted to do or what a DLO was doing that was permitted. It is a simple question of whether or not anything that is banned—

The SPEAKER: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for explaining that it was a simple question. My simple answer is that I do not uphold the point of order. The Minister will continue.

Ms JO HAYLEN: As I was explaining, the role of the DLO is well outlined in the handbook. It is the same role that was undertaken when those opposite were in government. In fact, some of the very same DLOs, the very same public servants that served in their offices, are currently serving in our offices. I think it would be wise of those opposite to be very cautious about continuing to name public servants, both in the Parliament and in the public, because they are the same public servants that served the former Government and continue to serve ours to fix the mess that we were left by those opposite.

EMERGENCY SERVICES LEVY

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (12:12): My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on the importance of the plans of the Minns Labor Government to reform the emergency services levy?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:12): The Government is embarking on tax reform in New South Wales. The Government will replace the emergency services levy which is currently levied against insurance in the State with a levy against property in New South Wales. We need to do that because New South Wales remains the only State in the country that collects that levy on insurance, which is proving to be a disincentive for households and businesses to take out insurance in Australia's largest State. Unfortunately we can expect more, not less, natural disasters in the years ahead. I report to the House that as a result of this levy the underinsured or uninsured rate in New South Wales is approaching 18 per cent. In Victoria it is 10 per cent.

When we are facing bushfire risks or flood risks, we need as many businesses and households as possible in the State to take out insurance. The most recent business survey from Business NSW indicates that the emergency services levy or insurance remains the largest input fear or cost for businesses in New South Wales. For those businesses commercial premiums have increased 30 per cent on average. This is not an insignificant input cost for businesses in the State. For households, the numbers are even worse. As bad as the uninsured rate is in New South Wales, 9 per cent of households are considering reducing their coverage or dropping it altogether in the next 12 months because of rising premiums.

In many communities, particularly on the New South Wales North Coast, the Central West and the north-west of Sydney, households cannot get insurance or are having to deal with rapidly increasing costs of insurance. This reform will go some way to reducing that burden on households and businesses. It is a much-needed policy reform for the State. It has been greeted by many people in New South Wales who support the Government's initiatives, some of whom are in unlikely quarters. Business NSW CEO Daniel Hunter said on Thursday, "There are thousands of mum-and-dad businesses that are one disaster away from shutting their doors permanently." He went on to say, "This is the best news we've had for insurance premiums for a very long time in New South Wales." Insurance Council of NSW CEO Andrew Hall—members would probably expect him to say this—said, "It clearly demonstrates that the Government understands the impact of this tax on the State's capacity to recover from extreme weather events," like bushfires and floods. [*Extension of time*]

There are a few supporters of the initiative from perhaps unlikely quarters. For the benefit of the House I read onto *Hansard*:

I welcome this decision; it is long overdue.

...

I commend the Government for biting the bullet and making the hard decision to ditch the levy in its current form.

That is from the member for Northern Tablelands, Adam Marshall. He stepped up and decided to back in the Government, which we appreciate, speaking truth to power. Of course we keenly awaited the comments from the Leader of the Opposition. One would assume, having embarked on a similar reform in the not too distant past, that the Liberal Party would be in support of this reform. It went on to say, "The Premier's big announcement is a \$1.5 billion new property tax," completely misunderstanding the purpose of the levy and the Government's intention to reform. We see this time and again from, let us be honest, a pretty demoralised Opposition. Good news is met with indifference.

[*Opposition members interjected.*]

They have perked up. I was on Facebook and TikTok the other day. I was looking at the member for Willoughby's TikTok.

Mr Mark Coure: Point of order—

Mr CHRIS MINNS: This is what always happens when you come across good news. He comes across someone presumably hoping—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. I will instruct the member for Oatley how to take a point of order. The member rises to get the attention of the Speaker, who then calls the member to approach the dispatch box and take the point of order.

Mr Mark Coure: We will do that next time. How's that? My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, relevance. The question about the emergency services levy has nothing to do with the member for Willoughby's TikTok.

The SPEAKER: The member for Oatley will resume his seat. I understand the point of order. The Premier has been directly relevant. He has reached the required threshold. The Premier will continue his answer.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: The member for Willoughby is interviewing James Watkin from Jakin Luxury Living, always running down the economy and businesses. He says, "How is business going for you, James?" James replies, "The sector's good. Really starting to see a lot of excitement and interest back here. It's been a particularly hard slog over the last few years and now we are really starting to see the inquiries roll on in." Then Tim James says, "Thanks for your time."

Mr Dugald Saunders: Point of order—

[Interruption]

The SPEAKER: The Premier has concluded his answer. The member for Willoughby does not have to fall into the trap.

SYDNEY TO NEWCASTLE RAIL LINE

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (12:19): My question is directed to the Minister for the Central Coast. Last week Federal Labor announced \$3.6 billion in cuts to New South Wales infrastructure projects, including \$1 million for the Sydney to Newcastle faster rail upgrade. What has the Minister done to ensure that the \$500 million of State funding remains committed and to restore or to replace the \$1 billion of Federal funding for the faster rail upgrade?

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) (12:19): I thank the member for Terrigal for his question, but he should have done his research. When we came into government we found out that the \$500 million committed by the previous State Government did not exist. It was not there at all. The Opposition needs to face a few facts. The previous Government announced a whole lot of transport projects but did not fund them, or it took the money away from the projects and spent it somewhere else. Before Opposition members criticise the Government, they should remember that the project was already at risk. The member for Terrigal should acknowledge that, together with the Federal member for Dobell and the Federal member for Robertson, we strongly defended the two major road projects that are going ahead. Avoca Drive in the member for Terrigal's electorate—

The SPEAKER: Government members will come to order.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: The road through Wyong, for which I have been fighting for a long time, is safe. Not only that—

Mr Dugald Saunders: Point of order: My point of order is on relevance under Standing Order 129. The question was specific about what the Minister has done to ensure the \$500 million of State funding around the project.

Ms Yasmin Catley: It was never there!

Mr Dugald Saunders: That's your interpretation; it is incorrect.

The SPEAKER: I thank the member for Dubbo. I uphold the point of order. The Minister has not been directly relevant, but he has come close. He can probably sign off on that test fairly quickly.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: As I said, the money was never there. I cannot defend what is not there. The previous Government made an announcement at the last moment. The Feds came, made the announcement and stood side by side with the former State Government, but they committed no money to the project. Our Government found that out afterwards. We have committed to the projects that will go ahead because there is money, and they include the Tuggerah commuter car park, the road through Wyong, and Avoca Drive. We will fight to make sure that those projects are delivered. Opposition members have to be honest about what they did when it comes to public transport. They overpromised, they underfunded and now we are trying to clean up their mess.

TEACHER WAGES

Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn) (12:22): My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Education and Early Learning. Can the Deputy Premier please update the House on how this Government's historic decision to lift the salaries of our hardworking teachers will support them and their families with the rising cost of living?

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (12:22): I certainly can, with delight, answer that question from the member for Auburn. As an aside, it was great to join her and her local community in Birrong last week to turn the sod on a much-needed upgrade for the boys and girls high schools. The date of 26 October was a real turning point for our hardworking teachers in New South Wales. It was the day that the historic pay rise they deserved after more than a decade of wage suppression finally landed in their bank accounts. Their pay rise became a reality on that day. Thousands of teachers finally saw a government that respected them enough to give them a higher wage to value the critical work that they do. Higher pay will also get more teachers into our classrooms, which is the key challenge we are attempting to address.

As the member for Auburn intimated in her question, the pay rise comes at a time when the community is facing rising cost-of-living pressures—and so are the teachers in our schools. The pay rise will support 95,000 teachers and their families. That is not a small number, and there will be flow-on effects to their family budgets and all the things that come with cost-of-living pressures. In rural, regional and remote New South Wales, the pay rise will go to 40,000 teachers. The pay rise has already started to flow on to teachers in the non-government sector, so the number of teachers supported is even higher. We take great delight in that, and we encourage it. A rising tide lifts all boats.

Teachers have mortgages and bills to pay. Many of them have just become permanent thanks to our temporary to permanent policy. They now have greater abilities to get loans, buy cars and enter a very difficult housing market. This salary uplift will also significantly contribute to achieving some gender parity in New South Wales when it comes to pay, because the teaching workforce is overwhelmingly female. In fact, 78 per cent of schoolteachers are women.

Ms Lynda Voltz: I ask that the Minister be granted an extension of time to elucidate her answer.

The SPEAKER: An additional two minutes is granted.

Ms PRUE CAR: I will elucidate. There are plenty of teachers in the Chamber who could educate us on that word. Straight out of the blocks, this Government made priorities of addressing cost-of-living pressures for teachers and getting more teachers into our classrooms as we face a chronic teacher shortage. The teacher pay rise continues to be opposed by members opposite. It was not enough to suppress the wages of our teachers for more than a decade; now they will not even support the historic pay rise that teachers so deserved for all that time. Last week the Leader of the Opposition was at Kurnell posing for photos. That is all very well and good, but I wonder if he told any of the teachers that he is opposed to them getting more pay. I bet that did not come up.

Mr Paul Scully: It was part of their presentation night speeches.

Ms PRUE CAR: There will be many opportunities for members opposite to go to presentations over the next couple of weeks.

Mr Mark Coure: Point of order: My point of order is yet again on relevance under Standing Order 129. The Minister is not answering the question that was asked.

The SPEAKER: I thank the member for Oatley. The Minister has answered the question in a manner that satisfies the standing order. She is making further remarks and elucidating her answer.

Ms PRUE CAR: Thank you for your ruling, Mr Speaker. I agree. I would have thought that the Minister for Education and Early Learning talking about public schools was pretty relevant. This Government is committed to raising the status of the teaching profession. By doing that, we are killing two birds with one stone and also addressing cost-of-living pressures for one of the biggest workforces in New South Wales. Hardworking teachers pay mortgages and need houses to raise their families. Many of them are young working mums and dads. We have contributed to them being able to make a better go of it with our historic pay rise for teachers.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL TREATMENT SERVICES

Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (12:28): I do not know about you, Mr Speaker, but I am a bit disappointed in the Government and the Opposition. We are up to question five and we still have not heard from the Minister for Sport, the member for Wahroonga or the member for Clarence about their epic performance last Friday at the Sydney Cricket Ground. Maybe we might hear about it later; I am just putting that out there.

The SPEAKER: I thank the member for Wakehurst for his comments. What is the member's question?

Mr MICHAEL REGAN: My question is directed to the Minister for Health. In December 2022 the Kedesh residential drug and alcohol rehab facility closed in Mona Vale. I am sure the Minister does not think it is acceptable that we have no public sector rehab in northern Sydney, forcing patients to travel out of area for treatment while the Kedesh facility sits very, very empty—in fact, some patients even have to drive to Wagga. What is the Government doing to restore residential drug and alcohol rehab services on the northern beaches and in northern Sydney?

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (12:29): I thank the member for his question. More importantly, I thank him for his advocacy. I also thank the many people from across the political divide who have advocated for improved drug and alcohol services across New South Wales. The closure is a significant challenge, but I thank the member personally for his advocacy about this service. He is right. From memory, Kedesh came in place in about 2010 after it was allocated a grant from the then Government. From memory, it set up a unit called the Phoenix Unit, which was a facility designed to support people with drug and alcohol addiction and gambling addiction issues. In October last year unfortunately Kedesh advised the then Government that it could no longer run its service and in December the service ceased to operate. Since then the Government has been working with individuals needing that service to make sure that they can access drug and alcohol treatment services as close as possible to where they need them.

I emphasise that where a drug and alcohol service is located in New South Wales should not restrict the community it serves. That is very important for drug and alcohol treatment services, because not everyone wants to be treated in the community in which they live. That is something we should all be very aware of. At the moment there is a bit of a challenge in the northern beaches area. As part of the Special Commission of Inquiry into the Drug 'Ice', leading on from the reforms taken on by the previous Government—and I acknowledge the former Premier, who is in the Chamber today—the Government has allocated about \$500 million to boost drug and alcohol treatment services across New South Wales.

Around \$146.7 million of that will be going into expanding drug and alcohol treatment services that are already in place, around \$60 million will be put into treatment hubs and services designed to provide psychosocial support for those dealing with these issues, and around \$50 million will be enhanced capital. The Government is looking at what specific services are needed on the northern beaches and developing existing services that are in place. I know that the member for Wakehurst has a strong interest in this issue—as he should, because these are very important services. [*Extension of time*]

As part of this funding, the Government will get the member, my office and the drug and alcohol team at NSW Health, which administers services in this space, to work through the gaps that we have identified. They can see whether they deal with what the member thinks the gaps are, and look at the services that we embed in his community, which we need to make sure has access to drug and alcohol treatment services. Drug and alcohol treatment services in the city are challenging, but they are exacerbated in the bush. I acknowledge that many members from regional, rural and remote New South Wales understand that the treatment spaces and services we need are in acute demand.

I thank the member for Wakehurst for his interest in this topic. We have to confront that issue, which many families and communities are already confronting. The Government will engage with the member. We are working on the ground to identify gaps and roll out an implementation plan. It is important that members across the political divide understand the services they have in their community, and make sure that, where possible, they are in touch with them so they can refer families on. The geographical location of those services is not defined by the clientele they can see. That is a very important point. I acknowledge the member's advocacy. The Government will continue to work with him as we improve drug and alcohol treatment services across the northern beaches.

BUSHFIRE READINESS

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (12:34): My question is addressed to the Minister for Emergency Services. Will the Minister update the House on the state of bushfire preparedness throughout New South Wales?

The SPEAKER: I give a quick shout-out to the Minister's staff, including Taghred. I know they are watching question time.

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (12:34): I had better wave to them.

The SPEAKER: Wave to the Bankstown staff.

Mr JIHAD DIB: They are probably going to tell me I am wearing the wrong tie for today, but that is alright. They are incredible, as are all of our electorate office staff. I thank the member for Blue Mountains, who knows very well the impact of bushfires and represents the most bushfire-prone area not only in Australia but arguably in the world. Sadly, this bushfire season has exacted a further tragic toll. On behalf of the New South Wales Government, I express my condolences to the family of Mr Leo Fransen, an RFS volunteer who died last week after he was hit by a tree while working on the Hudson fire outside of Walgett. I especially extend my condolences to his wife, Margaret, and his family. I also thank the commissioner for visiting on the same day. This follows the loss of a volunteer in October in the Northern Rivers who was a resident near Kempsey. Captain Fransen, who was a life member of the Diamond Beach rural fire brigade, had travelled all the way from the mid North Coast to the far north-west of the State with his brigade and others to support local volunteers. After the tree struck him, his colleagues did everything they could, but unfortunately there was nothing they could do to save him. I especially acknowledge the ambos for the work they did in very difficult circumstances.

On Saturday I joined RFS Commissioner Rob Rodgers and the hardworking member for Barwon to visit the community. We went out to Glengarry to speak specifically to this gentleman's brigade. We also visited the Coonamble station operation centre. It was dusty, swirly and incredibly dry. I acknowledge a couple of people. A gentleman called Bruce, who is the brigade leader, took Mr Fransen's death to heart. He was carrying the weight himself. I say to him, as I say to everybody: It is not your fault; you did everything you could. Bruce is so gutted because he went out with a person who he did not come back with. The way the brigade and the local community wrapped their arms around these people was absolutely phenomenal.

I also acknowledge a gentleman called Dave, who literally came off the Kempsey fires, which have been burning, as the member for Oxley knows, for so long. Dave jumped in his car and drove another 500 or 600 kilometres. Everyone will agree that this speaks to the absolute truth of the heroic nature of the Rural Fire Service volunteers, and the fact that they give up their time and everything from their families so that they can be there to help others in times of need. People drive 500 or 600 kilometres to support a community that they have no connection with. *[Extension of time]*

They show heroism by going all that way because they believe in a sense of service. We will always remember them and the Government will continue working with them. Dangers such as falling trees, unstable grounds and weather changes are an ongoing challenge for volunteers at this time. Even though RFS members are trained to have a look around—up, down, sideways—we know that these tragedies can occur, even with the best of planning, because of freaks of nature. It reminds us how real the dangers are. I am pleased to advise the House that the Government's \$10 million RFS Benevolent Fund has been established and is now welcoming applications to support families of the injured and deceased. A lot of that money is from fundraising after the 2019-20 bushfires.

We are only in November and already there has been incredible bushfire activity. We have seen tragedy and we have seen grassfires take place. While today we look around and see small pockets of rain, it is not enough to stop them. Even with the cooler weather across the State, today over 144 personnel, 45 appliances and nine aerial aircraft remain deployed in New South Wales. They are active right now in this weather. We know the dangers, but I ask members to again remind their communities to download the Hazards Near Me app, get on the Get Ready website and do everything that they can to be prepared. The way that we communicate this to our communities helps us a great deal.

In terms of my ministerial office, people who have been recently impacted know that we will continue to reach out and support them and their communities in any way we can. I again acknowledge those incredible people who volunteer for the Rural Fire Service. They know that we are facing a difficult and challenging time, but they will not give up. The support that we can all give them as a community will make an enormous difference.

GREAT WESTERN HIGHWAY UPGRADE

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst) (12:40): I acknowledge the Minister for Emergency Services and his acknowledgement of the Rural Fire Service officer. On behalf of the Opposition, we send our condolences to the family and to his brigade, who are also suffering at this time. My question is directed to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads. Last week the Federal Labor Government announced \$3.6 billion in cuts to New South Wales infrastructure projects, including cuts of over \$2 billion from the Great Western Highway that would have seen upgrades being completed on the eastern and western sections of the road through Hartley and Medlow Bath. What is the Minister doing to ensure that those upgrades to the Great Western Highway will be delivered?

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

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (12:41): I acknowledge the comments made by the member for Bathurst as he asked his question. He is very classy. I thank him for his nice leadership. We as a government in New South Wales are focused on making promises that we

can deliver. The member for Bathurst has been a strong advocate for the Great Western Highway upgrades over a long time. He knows as well as I do that we are doing that work. We have projects in construction right now. We have \$316 million flowing from New South Wales Government coffers to upgrade Cocks River Road through Little Hartley. That will unlock housing in that region; it is an important project.

There is also \$129 million going to Medlow Bath in the Blue Mountains electorate. I thank the member for Blue Mountains for the work that she has done with her community to ensure that they are aware of the benefits those funds will unlock in terms of liveability through the Blue Mountains and ensuring that safety is maintained, particularly across the Great Western Highway from the station to the Hydro Majestic. We are completing the work at Kelso to Raglan. It was commenced under the former Government. We will also fix Victoria Pass. One of the lanes has been out of action since June 2022. I find it quite strange that I have the former Minister in the other place, who failed to deliver on this and who failed to get the agreement that he required from—

Mr Dugald Saunders: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The question was what has she done, as the Minister, to ensure that the Great Western Highway upgrade, including a phenomenal commitment of \$2 billion, is being delivered? Is the Minister doing anything?

The SPEAKER: I thank the member for Dubbo. I will hear further from the Minister.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: This is a really important issue. I am giving it the full depth of coverage that it needs and that those communities want. We have a situation where a lot of promises were made under the previous Government—and I have been trying to keep the tone and temperature down for the past two weeks. Please help me by staying with me. But a lot of promises were made that were not funded. I have had to go to a community for which an announcement was for a \$200 million investment when there was only \$80 million in the bank. Things were done by the former Government without agreement from the Federal Government. They were going it alone. We are picking that up.

Mr Dugald Saunders: Did you fight for the Great Western Highway?

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: Yes, we have been fighting. We have been fighting for those communities. We have a whole-of-corridor assessment that will be done on those works to get a project that actually gets delivered.

SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (12:44): My question is addressed to the Minister for Health, representing the Minister for Housing. Will the Minister update the House on how the Minns Labor Government is bringing back integrity to social housing maintenance?

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (12:44): I thank the member for East Hills for her question and acknowledge the work that she is doing in her community. She is a fantastic local member. I also acknowledge the work that the Hon. Rose Jackson in the other place is doing to address the housing crisis that we are facing in New South Wales. I also call out the work of the Premier and the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces for making sure that this was a key priority of the Government. They are making sure that Ministers, departments and agencies, both centrally and in the regions, are working together to address what is becoming an entrenched housing crisis in New South Wales. This will not be easy to fix, but I can assure members that the work they are doing at the highest level of government is starting to make a difference.

As local members I think all of us would agree—maybe one or two may not fit this category—that public housing is one of the most frequently raised issues that members hear about in their interactions with their communities. Certainly that is the case in the Keira electorate. I think that is the case in many electorates across New South Wales. What is interesting is that one of the big concerns is maintenance. I was here in 2011 when this debacle started. What we have had for a long time now is essentially tenants being bumped between agencies when trying to get simple maintenance done.

I live about 300 metres from one of our largest public housing estates in the Illawarra, in Bellambi. The amount of time I have spent there dealing with individual concerns about basic maintenance issues over the past 12 years is unbelievable. I think that has been the case for many members across the divide. The Minister for Housing is creating a maintenance hub, which will be a central point for maintenance issues to go through so there is a one-stop shop. We are reducing red tape and making it easier for people to get that maintenance work done. It is also cheaper because at the moment we have a "scope and quote" type of situation. It is ridiculous how that is not working in all of our communities. [*Extension of time*]

We are centralising that. We are backing it in with an investment of over \$30 million. It will be in place from mid-next year. Importantly, we are bringing the levers of government together to ensure that we are

addressing what is a basic need and a basic right for people who are living in public housing. All of us here and across New South Wales agree that people have a right to adequate and safe shelter. To achieve that right, we need to change the way we are doing things. The maintenance hub is part of that investment. It will be an investment designed to make sure that we are supporting local tradies and getting the repairs done quickly while not having housing estates and their tenants bumped between and across agencies. That is a particular benefit of this reform.

I acknowledge the work that the Minister for Housing is doing in this space. This is important reform. We know that public housing often services the most vulnerable people in our communities. As a member of this place for 12 years, I am confident that our approach will make sure that the legacy we leave is very different to the legacy left by the other mob, which was focused on privatisation, trying to penny pinch and trying to deliver a service that did not take into consideration the basic right of people to have adequate and safe shelter. That is what we believe in, and this reform will help to deliver that.

MULGOA ROAD UPGRADE

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek) (12:50): My question is directed to the Minister for Western Sydney. Last week Federal Labor announced \$3.6 billion in cuts to New South Wales infrastructure projects, including \$232 million for Mulgoa Road stage 2, 5A and 5B. What has the Minister done to ensure \$232 million of State funding remains committed and to restore or replace the lost \$232 million of Federal funding for Mulgoa Road?

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (12:50): It is a good question. In response to the question, to say that the New South Wales Government is disappointed in the Commonwealth's decision to cut funding from vital projects in Western Sydney is a gross understatement. Let me explain what we have been doing.

The SPEAKER: The member for Oatley will come to order. The Minister will answer the question without interruption.

Ms PRUE CAR: I will not get up and defend that decision because, as with the member for Badgerys Creek's constituents, my constituents and the people of Western Sydney need that upgrade to Mulgoa Road. I believe last night at the Penrith City Council meeting a motion condemning these cuts was moved by a Liberal councillor—the Liberal deputy mayor—and seconded by the Labor member for Penrith. That is how serious we are about standing up for the people we represent, even if it is to Canberra. Not only is this inequitable when it comes to the driving force of the New South Wales economy in Western Sydney, but what has happened—

Mr Mark Coure: What have you done?

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

Ms PRUE CAR: What I have done is stand here now to say—and I have said it many times publicly—that we are pressuring the Federal Government to come good on its commitment.

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

Ms PRUE CAR: Like the M7, the M12 and Mulgoa Road stage 2, 5A and 5B, these projects need national funding because they are all related to projects of national significance. There is the Western Sydney airport—which is also related to Mulgoa Road, as the member knows—as well as the fact that New South Wales, and Western Sydney in particular, is taking more than its fair share of housing growth, and has done for decades. It is not good enough that the Commonwealth Government thinks that we can cop a cut to Federal funding. We committed to these projects on the basis that they would get Federal funding. We will lobby and we will not back down because we need this funding in order to go through with these projects.

The inequitable decision by the Commonwealth has resulted in other States getting enormous amounts more than New South Wales. In this deal, \$2.5 billion has gone to Queensland and \$2.8 billion has gone to South Australia, while just \$113 million has gone to New South Wales. We will not back down. We will stand up for the people of Western Sydney and New South Wales. We deserve this funding and these roads. We do not have enough public transport, so we need to drive on these roads. Do not get me started on that. We need this Federal funding to progress with these projects of national significance.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFORMATION SERVICE

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (12:53): My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport. Will the Minister update the House on the actions that the Minns Labor Government has taken to improve information for passengers travelling on our public transport?

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (12:53): I thank the member for Blacktown for his question. I know that he is a regular user of public transport and that he is also looking forward to the opening of the lifts at Doonside very soon. He has been campaigning for that for a long time. He knows that access to public transport services is essential. One of the first things we did in this Government, and one of the first things I did as the Minister for Transport, was to announce the Sydney rail review. Our review, led by the chair of the National Transport Commission, Carolyn Walsh, has identified many of the problems facing passengers on our network and is proposing ways to fix them.

Since we received the initial report in May, we have been working every day through our rail repair plan to get on top of the massive maintenance backlog that we were left by those opposite. We are improving the way that Sydney Trains operates and we are working to deliver the best possible service for passengers. That includes putting people back in control of their journeys, especially when there is disruption on the network. We know that, no matter how well maintained our railway network is, there will be disruptions from time to time—whether that is because of extreme weather, medical emergencies or things out of our control. When things go wrong, the most frustrating thing for passengers is not having any information and standing there not knowing how long they might have to wait or the alternative ways to get home.

We are now giving passengers easy access to the up-to-date information that they need, which is one of the key recommendations of the review. We are putting in place more tools in our communications arsenal for passengers. For the first time ever in New South Wales, geotargeted broadcast SMS alerts will be used during major disruptions to our transport network. They will be sent to people travelling in that area. Thousands of texts will be able to be sent at once by Transport for NSW, putting direct and relevant information into the palms of passengers' hands when they need it. For example, if somebody is working near Martin Place and there is a massive network incident, they will get a text message before they leave their desk. That is the kind of information that passengers want because it will spare them the added disruption.

I want to be clear: This does not mean that we will be spamming people with text messages. This is for major incidents only. Passengers will be familiar with this type of text messaging because it is the same type of text messaging that the NSW Police Force uses. Members of the community might have received texts when the police are looking for a missing person in their area. We will use that kind of valuable information in these circumstances. It will be a game changer to deliver crucial information to passengers. Another element of our plan is our new smart screens. [*Extension of time*]

These new smart screens will help connect passengers to other transport services so that they can plan their journeys across rail, bus, ferry and light rail. Last week when I was at Circular Quay I went to look at the great new screens. They will make moving between different modes much easier for passengers. When there is disruption on one mode of transport, the screens will provide real up-to-date information about what other modes are available and allow passengers to move to them as seamlessly as possible. The screens will change according to different circumstances and will provide people with the timely information that they need. We are also launching a new campaign utilising the advertising billboards and screens that are already across our network to remind people of one of the most powerful tools that they already have on their phones—that is, the Opal Travel app, which provides real-time, up-to-date information. I encourage everyone to download it. That is the best way to know what is going on across our network.

We are not just relying on technology. We know that one of the most important things that passengers value is frontline staff available to help them on our networks, particularly when things go wrong. We are investing in our people and we are hiring more service staff to provide people with that up-to-date information, particularly to update passengers when things go wrong. We are doing work through the rail repair plan to maintain our rail network. We are building a more resilient and reliable network and we are making sure that passengers have the information that they need, particularly when things go wrong. We are getting on with the job of making our public transport services reliable and resilient again.

BLAXLAND ROAD-BALACLAVA ROAD INTERSECTION UPGRADE

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (12:58): My question is directed to the Minister for Transport, representing the Minister for Roads. Last week Federal Labor announced \$3.6 billion in cuts to New South Wales infrastructure projects, including \$6.7 million for the Blaxland Road and Balaclava Road intersection improvements. What has the Government done to ensure that State funding remains committed and to restore or replace the lost Federal funding for the Blaxland Road and Balaclava Road intersection?

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (12:59): I have to say it is encouraging to see that the Opposition has a theme this week. It is impressive. Those opposite have obviously taken a little bit more time in their tactics committee room. It is good. I am pleased to receive the member's question about investment in our transport network and in roads. I think all members understand that to deliver that transport

network efficiently and to make sure that all modes are working together it does require cooperation with the Federal Government. We are talking about major infrastructure investments. As the Minister for education and the Minister for racing said earlier today, we are—let us put it this way—pretty disappointed with the Federal Government's decision.

Mr Ryan Park: Very, very.

Ms JO HAYLEN: Very, very disappointed. I think the Minister said—

Mr Chris Minns: Extremely.

Ms JO HAYLEN: Extremely disappointed with the Commonwealth's decision.

The SPEAKER: The Premier will stop coaching the Minister or elucidating her answer.

Ms JO HAYLEN: We are very, very disappointed with the Commonwealth's decision to cut the Federal funding that we need to deliver these essential transport services. What are we doing about it? We are agitating, lobbying and making very clear that we need this funding to deliver these essential transport services. I make it clear that we are having continuous discussions with the Commonwealth, and we want to see that funding reinstated. The State supports the need to carefully consider the funding of infrastructure projects. Our own budget made a range of difficult decisions in response to the budgetary situation that we inherited and to review the infrastructure pipeline.

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

Ms JO HAYLEN: We are delivering an average of \$29 billion each and every year in infrastructure funding over the forward estimates. The Commonwealth only contributes 10 per cent of that—just 10 per cent. Our share of the Commonwealth funding has been declining over the past few years; in fact, it is now down to just 23 per cent of the national total. In fact, it has declined dramatically over the past five years when those opposite were in charge.

Mr Mark Coure: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The member for Oatley is trying out his technique for taking points of order. I congratulate him. I call the member for Oatley.

Mr Mark Coure: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The point of order goes to Standing Order 129, relevance. The question is clear: What has the Government done to ensure that State funding remains committed and to restore or replace the lost Federal funding for the Blaxland Road and Balaclava Road intersection?

The SPEAKER: I have heard enough. There is no point of order.

Ms JO HAYLEN: We will not be rolled like those opposite were by Scott Morrison when it comes to Federal investment and funding.

The SPEAKER: I thank the Minister. Opposition members could learn a lot from the behaviour of the member for North Shore, who has been an exemplar of good behaviour today. Congratulations.

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LAW

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (13:02): My question is addressed to the Attorney General. Will the Attorney General update the House on how the Minns Labor Government is protecting community groups from hate speech and ensuring that we promote community cohesion across New South Wales?

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (13:03): I thank the member for Campbelltown for his question. I know that the safety of his community and all the people of New South Wales is of great interest to him. Every person in New South Wales has the right to live a life free of discrimination, free of vilification and free of hate speech. Labor governments have a long history of supporting and fostering safe communities in this State. In fact, the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 is an example of this. It is a proud Labor achievement of the Wran Government, groundbreaking in its day. It set the stage for similar reforms nationally and in other jurisdictions.

That was then. Now the Minns Labor Government is taking further steps to protect our community and promote community cohesion by amending that Act to prohibit religious vilification, and it has also referred the Act for a comprehensive review by the Law Reform Commission. The review by the Law Reform Commission will cover the Act in its entirety to ensure the Act will be modernised and simplified to better promote the equal enjoyment of rights in this State, particularly in these challenging times. We are taking action in that regard where the former Government failed. When in opposition, we made various attempts to reform the Anti-Discrimination Act to prohibit religious vilification, which were opposed by the Liberal-Nationals Government. As recently as

November 2021 in this place, the now Leader of the Opposition led the opposition to a private member's bill on this issue introduced by the former shadow Attorney General and former member for Liverpool. But we are getting on with that job, and we do not intend to stop there.

This week I will introduce a bill to amend section 93Z of the Crimes Act to remove a fetter on the ability of police to lay charges under that section. It is an important section. Under section 93Z, it is an offence for a person, by a public act, to intentionally or recklessly threaten or incite violence towards another person or group of persons because of their race, religious belief or affiliation, sexual orientation, gender identity, intersex status or because a person is living with HIV or AIDS. When the offence is committed by an individual it carries a maximum penalty of a fine of \$11,000 or imprisonment for three years, or both. It is not a trifling offence. Currently, section 93Z (4) says that a prosecution for an offence against this section cannot be commenced without the approval of the Director of Public Prosecutions. [*Extension of time*]

Recently, concerns have been raised with the Government about the requirement for that approval in section 93Z (4), including that the time taken to refer matters to the DPP and thereafter obtain approval to charge may act as a disincentive for laying charges under this section. It is of vital importance that we strike the right balance in this State between protecting freedom of expression and preventing public acts that threaten and incite violence. After careful consideration, and in acknowledgement of the crucial importance of having effective laws that protect our community, the New South Wales Government has decided that making this change to section 93Z of the Crimes Act 1900 will continue to strike the right balance. International events have created local challenges for us in New South Wales. This is our response to one of those local challenges.

I also acknowledge the work being done by the Minister for Multiculturalism and his agency, Multicultural NSW. I know the Minister has been engaging with community leaders since October, when Multicultural NSW also activated the NSW Community Resilience and Response Plan—COMPLAN. The COMPLAN committee has met twice already, and through COMPLAN the New South Wales Government is coordinating its response and the resources of multiple agencies in support of our communities. The Police Force continues to lead Operation Shelter.

The Premier has also announced that the first full meeting of the Faith Affairs Council will be convened shortly to promote interfaith dialogue. This council was established to improve the relationship between the Government and our faith communities, and to enhance community harmony, security and wellbeing. I inform the House, as the Premier has already done publicly, that the Premier himself will attend the Faith Affairs Council meeting and will ask faith and community leaders to work towards an interfaith resolution. We keep a watching brief on all of these, and we are working very hard to make sure that the State remains peaceful and respectful.

WOLLONDILLY ELECTORATE CRIME

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (13:08): My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. Amongst many other crimes in the past month, we have had multiple churches in Tahmoor broken into—one using the tools of a neighbouring men's shed and another with walls torn apart. I wrote to the Minister in September and again now, following these recent break-ins. My community is rightly concerned. With 30,000-plus extra homes approved, in addition to the current population, when in the Minister's opinion will my call be answered and will Wollondilly be given its own police area command?

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (13:09): I sincerely thank the member for Wollondilly for bringing this question to the House. I know how important policing is in her community. I also thank her for her correspondence and the other correspondence that she forwarded to me from stakeholders in her community on this particular matter. The last thing any of us want is for people in our communities to feel unsafe. The last place we want them to feel unsafe is in their homes. The police play a vital role in keeping our communities safe. I recognise that there are a number of areas earmarked for high growth across the Sydney metropolitan area like Wollondilly, Riverstone, Leppington and more. They will all require new services as more people move into those areas.

That is a significant challenge that we face as a government. As homes are built and as families move into those growing areas, we must determine how best to place our services in those new communities. Vital government services need to be planned and delivered in new communities—something that has failed us in recent years past. When it comes to operational policing, police are the experts. We know that and acknowledge that. I will always be guided by them on where they believe operational services are best deployed. Currently, station staffing and operating hours are decisions for the local police commands, and there is a process within each of those commands to request resources where circumstances and other factors demonstrate the need.

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

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: Police officers are highly mobile, flexible and adaptable—thank goodness they are—and can be quickly redeployed to meet community needs and respond to changing crime patterns.

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

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: We have seen that across our city, with various taskforce and strike force operations being launched to tackle specific crimes in our community. To give the member for Wollondilly an example of that, Operation Sweetenham was established to combat offenders involved in ongoing occurrences of aggravated break and enters. I am happy to report to the member that, under Strike Force Sweetenham, 975 break and enters and 786 stolen vehicles have been investigated, and 288 individuals have been charged with a total of 2,410 offences. [*Extension of time*]

In addition to that, 102 individuals have been charged with 297 breach of bail offences. The police are doing a good job in our community. I extend an invitation to the member for a full briefing on the local police. I know that she will come along. Sadly, though, police are not only dealing with theft or break and enters in our community. I acknowledge that the member has also written to me in relation to serious family and domestic violence in her community. That is a very serious issue for the NSW Police Force. I have spoken in this place about it many times. We need to get those statistics down. There is no doubt about that. But the police are, again, doing the work that we need them to do. They have established the domestic violence registry unit, which is located in Parramatta. The unit is made up of 70 highly skilled police officers looking at high-risk domestic violence offenders. Again, we will be looking at using those particular skills across New South Wales to attack the scourge of domestic violence on our society.

Mr Ray Williams: Maybe you should undertake another review, Minister.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: The member should not interject when we are talking about such serious matters. It is not a review, and it is a disgrace that he would interrupt. If he had listened instead of speaking, he would have heard that I said there are 70 police officers at that particular—

Mrs Tina Ayyad: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order!

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: He should do a bit more listening instead of talking.

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

Mrs Tina Ayyad: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 49. The Speaker maintains order in this House, not the Minister.

The SPEAKER: I do not uphold the point of order, but all members should take note of the standing order. The Minister has the call.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: The member for Wollondilly has my word that I will continue to support the NSW Police Force to undertake its special taskforce and strike force efforts and that, more broadly, I will continue to ensure the police have the resources and facilities they need to protect members of their local communities.

PARALYMPIC GAMES

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (13:14): My question is addressed to the mighty Minister for Sport. Will the Minister please update the House on the efforts of the Minns Government to support Paralympic athletes competing at the 2024 Paralympic Games?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport) (13:14): I thank the member for her question. What a fantastic question from an outstanding athlete and champion. It is about time our Paralympians got the recognition and support they deserve. Some of Australia's greatest sporting heroes are our Paralympians: Madison de Rozario, Matthew Cowdrey, Priya Cooper, Dylan Alcott, Kurt Fearnley and Louise Sauvage. And what about the member for Gosford, two-time gold medallist Liesl Tesch! It is a fantastic announcement. Some members may have seen it in the news this morning, but if they did not, let me fill them in. The Minns Government will be the first New South Wales Government to fund Paralympians and Olympians equally. Some \$750,000 will go towards supporting athletes, coaches and staff in their pursuit of sporting excellence at the Paris 2024 Paralympics. The financial support will contribute to covering the costs of flights, accommodation, meals, uniforms and medical services.

The SPEAKER: Opposition members will cease their chatter.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: For goodness sake, they should be celebrating this. All athletes that represent Australia and New South Wales deserve the best possible support. That is why the Government is so focused on this. We want to make sure that, no matter who they are, people have access to equal opportunity and equal funding. We want everyone to have an equal opportunity at success. Earlier this year we saw how equal opportunity brought the community together and captured a nation. The Matildas were trailblazers. They were given an opportunity and they put women's sport on the front page day after day. We want to foster that next generation of talent. That is why we put \$30 million into the Level the Playing Field Program for young women and girls across the State.

I am proud to say that, as part of that program, we have incorporated the Equitable Access and Usage Policy which, amongst many objectives, aims to eliminate discrimination and ensure equal access to new community sporting facilities. In light of those announcements, I issue a challenge to the other States, especially Victoria: Now is the time to put your money where your mouth is. Match this commitment. Give our Paralympians an equal shot at success. Give them equal funding.

Business of the House

SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (13:18): I move:

That on Wednesday 22 November 2023 standing and sessional orders be suspended to permit:

- (1) At 2.30 p.m., the moving of a condolence motion for Mr Stephen Bromhead, former member for Myall Lakes.
- (2) At 5.00 p.m., public interest debate to proceed, after which contributions to the condolence motion to continue, if required.
- (3) Government business.
- (4) Community recognition statements.
- (5) Private members' statements, after which the House shall adjourn without motion until Thursday 23 November at 10.00 a.m.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (13:18): The Opposition supports the suspension of standing orders to include what the Leader of the House has mentioned, including a condolence motion for the former member for Myall Lakes.

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

Motion agreed to.

Ministerial Statements

WORLD DAY OF REMEMBRANCE FOR ROAD TRAFFIC VICTIMS

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (13:19): I speak on behalf of the New South Wales Government to mark World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims. I make a special acknowledgement of the members of the Road Trauma Support Group. I was honoured and humbled to represent the Premier of New South Wales at the group's inaugural event to mark the remembrance day on the weekend, which I attended with the member for Blacktown. This day is a time for reflection on those we have lost on our roads—318 people this year as at today—those who have tried to help them and to save their lives and, most importantly, those they have left behind. Held at Grace's Place in Doonside, the event saw family, friends and supporters gather to remember loved ones whose lives were tragically cut short in road crashes.

During an extremely moving service, we heard from Duncan Wakes-Miller and Nigel Smith, whose sons, Barney and Lachlan respectively, were taken in the prime of their lives. The loss these two men have suffered is truly incomprehensible to many of us. There were so many others that I spoke to on that day as well, whose grace and forgiveness in the face of such a tragic loss is truly humbling and inspiring. Despite their grief, enormous pain, trauma, and often anger and betrayal, they dedicate their lives to helping other families and other loved ones through the Road Trauma Support Group. They provide peer support, advocacy, research and the sharing of their deeply personal stories, and provide a voice for those whose voices too often get forgotten in the months and years after crashes.

The sadness, regret, anger and overwhelming sense of loss and injustice that flow from crashes is never-ending for the families, friends and communities directly impacted. I acknowledge the member for Upper Hunter in the Chamber, and the member for Cessnock. We have seen the impact close-up. Every ordinary day, as well as every day of significance and celebration, becomes for these people a day of wondering what could have been and who their loved one would have gone on to become. That is why having a collective voice in the form of the Road Trauma Support Group is so vital. As a society, and as a government and as parliamentarians, we

need to be constantly focused on improving road safety and preventing loss of life, and, importantly, on supporting those left behind.

What makes the men and women of the support group so remarkable is their generous commitment to helping others impacted by crashes, in particular first and what they call second responders. Emergency services who attend crash sites are never far from the thoughts of support group members. First responders and support group members share both an unfortunate and unbreakable bond, united in their grief and trauma. This unity was on display at the service on Sunday. We heard from senior police chaplain Reverend Suzanne Avery, who spoke of the incredible connection between the support group and police—a connection that was instrumental in the formation of the group. Indeed, it was Detective Superintendent Katie Orr who was the driving force behind the establishment of the support group within the police, after she realised there was a lack of help for those who had lost loved ones through a criminal act on the roads.

I was pleased to meet Katie on Sunday alongside the assistant New South Wales police commissioner, Brett McFadden. We thank them and all police for their ongoing support for road traffic victims and the leadership they have shown. I also pay a special tribute to Road Trauma Support Group member Tom Dahr, and the indefatigable and incredible Martha Jabour, OAM, from the Homicide Victims Support Group, who auspiced the formation of the Road Trauma Support Group. I was not able to meet Tom on Sunday because he is overseas, but it was Tom, Martha and Detective Superintendent Orr who worked together to help create the group. What a legacy they have created and continue to nurture for the benefit of others who suffer that unfathomable loss.

The New South Wales Government and, I know, everyone in this place stands shoulder to shoulder with Road Trauma Support Group members, and all family members of victims. They are the second responders. They are the ones who are there, not just in the minutes and days after a crash, but for the long haul, over the months, years and decades. I am pleased there is funding for the group to recognise the important role it plays in our community. I urge all members to promote it in their communities. There is regional outreach, which is so important when we know that so many road fatalities happen in the bush.

I thank the former Government for the funding it provided as well, and the bipartisan support the Opposition has offered. More importantly, I thank the members, families, friends and loved ones. We stand with them, ready to comfort them in their loss. The lives that have been cut short will never be forgotten. The New South Wales Government is committed to always listening to members and families, and working with them to improve safety on our roads to reduce the deaths and trauma to zero.

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (13:25): I thank the Minister for her words today. I make a short contribution on behalf of the Opposition in support of the Road Trauma Support Group. The safety of roads in New South Wales is an extremely important topic. As we mark the World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims, we are reminded of our duty to ensure that the safety of every individual who travels on our roads is maintained. In New South Wales, roads are the absolute lifeline of our communities. They connect our cities, towns and regional communities, facilitating business, trade, tourism and daily life—the things we all take for granted. Because we have such a heavy reliance on our road network, each year, unfortunately, our State grapples with the devastating impact of accidents. As we have heard, lives are lost, families are broken, and communities are left to mourn.

The statistics are more than just numbers, though. They represent real people—family members, sons, daughters, mothers, brothers and sisters—whose lives and safety are in all of our hands. It is therefore our duty to act, and to implement measures that not only reduce the risk of accidents but also ensure a safer travel experience for everyone. Our approach needs to be multifaceted. First of all, we need to invest in our road infrastructure, which means not only maintaining our existing roads but also upgrading them to meet higher safety standards. That needs to happen in both urban and rural areas, and we need to recognise that each has unique challenges and different requirements. Secondly, awareness is key. We need to continue to educate drivers, and initiatives like school programs, community workshops and public awareness campaigns are essential.

Lastly, the enforcement of traffic laws is also critical. Stricter penalties for traffic violations like speeding, driving under the influence and reckless driving must be looked at, and our Police Force needs the adequate resources to uphold and enforce those laws effectively. Moreover, we need to support innovation and technology that enhances road safety. That includes investing in things like smart traffic management systems, improving vehicle safety standards and exploring new technologies that have the potential to revolutionise things in this space.

As we discuss these strategies, we need to not forget the human aspect of the issue. Today, we remember the victims of road accidents and their families. We together acknowledge their pain and loss, and we reaffirm our commitment to preventing such tragedies in the future. The safety of roads in New South Wales is not just a matter of policy but a matter of heart, and we are all involved in that. It is about protecting our people, our families

and our future. Let us all pledge today to take tangible steps towards making roads in New South Wales safer for everyone who uses them, and to continue to support those impacted by accidents.

Documents

OFFICIAL COMMUNITY VISITORS

Reports

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 25 of the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Act 2019, I announce receipt of the report of New South Wales Official Community Visitors for the year ended 30 June 2023, received 23 October 2023. I order that the report be printed.

LAW ENFORCEMENT CONDUCT COMMISSION

Reports

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 138 of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Act 2016, I announce receipt of the report entitled *NSW Police Force Aboriginal Strategic Direction 2018-2023 monitoring report*, received 23 October 2023.

In accordance with section 139 of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Act 2016, I announce receipt of the report of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission for the year ended 30 June 2023, received 23 October 2023.

In accordance with section 132 of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Act 2016, I announce receipt of the report of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission entitled *Operation Tepito*, dated October 2023, received 30 October 2023.

I order that the reports be printed.

AGEING AND DISABILITY COMMISSION

Reports

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 25 of the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Act 2019, I announce receipt of the report of the NSW Ageing and Disability Commission for the year ended 30 June 2023, received 23 October 2023. I order that the report be printed.

OFFICE OF THE CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN

Reports

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 138 of the Children's Guardian Act 2019, I announce receipt of the report of the Office of the Children's Guardian for the year ended 30 June 2023, received 24 October 2023. I order that the report be printed.

CHILD DEATH REVIEW TEAM

Reports

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 34F of the Community Services (Complaints, Reviews and Monitoring) Act 1993, I announce receipt of the report of the NSW Child Death Review Team for the year ended 30 June 2023, received 30 October 2023. I order that the report be printed.

OMBUDSMAN

Reports

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 31AA of the Ombudsman Act 1974, I announce receipt of the following reports:

- (1) Report of the NSW Ombudsman entitled *Pursuing Fairness for the People of NSW, Annual Report 2022-23*, dated 30 October 2023, received 30 October 2023.
- (2) Report of the NSW Ombudsman entitled *Formal Investigations — Summary Report 2022-2023: A summary of completed investigations under section 13 of the Ombudsman Act 1974 (1 October 2022 to 30 September 2023)*.

I order that the reports be printed.

INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION**Reports**

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 78 (2) of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988, I announce receipt of the report of the Independent Commission Against Corruption for the year ended 30 June 2023, received 30 October 2023.

In accordance with section 74 of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988, I announce receipt of the report of the Independent Commission Against Corruption entitled *Operation Tolosa*, dated November 2023, received 9 November 2023.

I order that the reports be printed.

INSPECTOR OF THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION**Reports**

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 77B of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988, I announce receipt of the report of the Office of the Inspector of the Independent Commission Against Corruption for the year ended 30 June 2023, received 30 October 2023. I order that the report be printed.

ADVOCATE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**Reports**

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 32 of the Advocate for Children and Young People Act 2014, I announce receipt of the report of the Advocate for Children and Young People for the year ended 30 June 2023, received 30 October 2023. I order that the report be printed.

INSPECTOR OF THE LAW ENFORCEMENT CONDUCT COMMISSION**Reports**

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 141 of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Act 2016, I announce receipt of the report of the Office of the Inspector of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission for the year ended 30 June 2023, received 30 October 2023. I order that the report be printed.

NSW ELECTORAL COMMISSION**Reports**

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 154 of the Electoral Funding Act 2018, I announce receipt of the report of the NSW Electoral Commission for the year ended 30 June 2023, received 31 October 2023. I order that the report be printed.

ANTI-SLAVERY COMMISSIONER**Reports**

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 19 of the Modern Slavery Act 2018, I announce receipt of the report of the Anti-slavery Commissioner for the year ended 30 June 2023, received 30 October 2023. I order that the report be printed.

LIQUOR ACT**Reports**

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 163 (5) of the Liquor Act 2007, I announce receipt of the following reports:

- (1) *Implementation of Night-time Economy Reforms*, received 30 October 2023.
- (2) *Progress report on Parliamentary priorities required under Section 163 of the Liquor Act 2007*, dated October 2023.

I order that the reports be printed.

PARLIAMENTARY ETHICS ADVISER

The SPEAKER: I announce receipt of the following advice provided by the Parliamentary Ethics Adviser:

- (1) Copy of correspondence from the Parliamentary Ethics Adviser enclosing advice provided to the Hon. Brad Hazzard, former Minister, dated 19 September 2023.

- (2) Copy of correspondence from the Parliamentary Ethics Adviser enclosing advice provided to the Hon. Anthony Roberts, former Minister, dated 24 October 2023.

I order that the reports be printed.

AUDIT OFFICE OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Reports

The CLERK: In accordance with section 12A of the Annual Reports (Statutory Bodies) Act 1984, I announce receipt of the report of the Audit Office of New South Wales for the year ended 30 June 2023, received out of session on 23 October 2023 and authorised to be printed.

PARLIAMENTARY BUDGET OFFICE

Reports

The CLERK: In accordance with section 57 (4) of the Government Sector Audit Act 1983, I announce receipt of the report of the Parliamentary Budget Office entitled *2023 Post-election Report*, dated November 2023, received out of session on 3 November 2023 and authorised to be printed.

AUDITOR-GENERAL

Reports

The CLERK: In accordance with section 52B of the Government Sector Audit Act 1983, I announce receipt of the Financial Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *Customer Service 2023*, dated 21 November 2023 and received this day.

Committees

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

Reports

The CLERK: I announce receipt of report No. 1/58 of the Public Accounts Committee entitled *Report on the Parliamentary Budget Office 2023 Post-Election Report*, dated November, received out of session on 3 November 2023 and authorised to be printed.

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Reports

Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ: As Chair: I table the report of the Legislation Review Committee entitled *Legislation Review Digest No. 7/58*, dated 21 November 2023. I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING

Reports

Mr CLAYTON BARR: As Chair: I table report No. 1/58 of the Legislative Assembly Committee on Environment and Planning entitled *Minerals Legislation Amendment (Offshore Drilling and Associated Infrastructure Prohibition) Bill 2023*, dated November 2023. I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

Documents

INDEPENDENT COMPLAINTS OFFICER

Reports

Mr ALEX GREENWICH: In accordance with the resolution of continuing effect regarding the Independent Complaints Officer, I table the report of the Independent Complaints Officer of the NSW Parliament to the Legislative Council Privileges Committee and Legislative Assembly Parliamentary Privileges and Ethics Committee for the period 1 June 2023 to 31 August 2023. I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

*Petitions***PETITIONS RECEIVED**

The SPEAKER: I announce that the following paper petition signed by more than 10,000 persons has been lodged for presentation:

Regional Seniors Travel Card

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to continue the regional seniors travel card program after the expiry of its four-year trial period in 2023, received from **Mr Adam Marshall**.

The SPEAKER: I set down debate on the petition as an order of the day for a future day.

The CLERK: I announce that the following ePetitions signed by more than 500 persons have been lodged for presentation:

Companion Animals and Public Transport

ePetition requesting the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to work with Transport for NSW to allow companion animals on Sydney metropolitan trains and regional rail services, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Upper Hunter Shire Council

ePetition requesting the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to commence an inquiry into the affairs of the Upper Hunter Shire Council, including consideration of any necessary remedies, received from **Ms Kobi Shetty**.

Shark Meshing

ePetition requesting the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to immediately end the use of shark meshing at New South Wales beaches and keep beach users safe in ways that do not harm marine animals or damage the marine environment, received from **Mr Adam Crouch**.

RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

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

The Hon. Ryan Park—NSW Ambulance and Paramedics—lodged 11 October 2023 (Mr Alex Greenwich)

The Hon. Ryan Park—Barraba Health Care Services—lodged 12 October 2023 (Mr Kevin Anderson)

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

The Hon. Michael Daley—Conversion Therapy Legislation—lodged 10 October 2023 (Ms Tanya Davies)

*Committees***LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON INVESTMENT, INDUSTRY AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT****Chair**

The SPEAKER: In accordance with Standing Order 282 (2), I advise the House that on 6 November 2023 Mr Stephen Bali was elected chair of the Legislative Assembly Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development.

*Notices***PRESENTATION**

[During the giving of notices of motions]

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr): The member for North Shore will not interject during the giving of notices of motions.

Later,

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

*Bills***THOROUGHBRED RACING AMENDMENT BILL 2023****First Reading**

Bill introduced on motion by Mr David Harris, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

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) (14:31): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Government is pleased to introduce the Thoroughbred Racing Amendment Bill 2023. The Government supports a strong and vibrant horseracing industry across metropolitan, provincial and country racing. Thoroughbred racing in New South Wales generates significant economic activity, supporting jobs, tourism and the economy statewide. More than half of this economic activity is in regional New South Wales. The racing industry is a \$3.3 billion industry employing more than 50,000 people directly or indirectly, with more than 90,000 people engaged in the industry across the State as employees, participants and volunteers. The State's thoroughbred racing industry is going from strength to strength following the successful revitalisation of the Sydney Spring Racing Carnival and introduction of world-class events like the Everest. The Everest is a blockbuster event attracting more than 46,000 racegoers to the Royal Randwick Racecourse in October and offering \$20 million in prize money.

The thoroughbred racing industry is overseen and administered by Racing NSW under the Thoroughbred Racing Act 1996, covering all commercial, welfare and integrity issues relating to horseracing. While Racing NSW is an independent body that is not under the direction or control of the New South Wales Government, its board members, including the chair and deputy chair, are appointed by the Minister for Gaming and Racing. The Act sets out the related requirements for board appointments. It provides that Racing NSW board members are appointed to hold office for a period of up to four years and are eligible for subsequent reappointment, with a maximum tenure of 12 years for members. The term of office for the current Racing NSW chair, Mr Russell Balding, AO, expires on 18 December 2023.

The bill seeks to amend the Thoroughbred Racing Act 1996 in relation to the term of office of the chair, who will reach the maximum tenure of 12 years at the expiration of his current term in December this year. The proposed amendment will extend the term of appointment of Mr Balding as the chair and a member of Racing NSW for a further two years, from 19 December 2023 to 18 December 2025. The New South Wales Government has carefully considered this extension and the options available. This amendment recognises the need for continuity of corporate knowledge of the Racing NSW board. The Government considers that this knowledge will be crucial for navigating changing regulatory and economic reforms confronting the racing industry over the next two years.

Upcoming challenges for the industry over this period include addressing funding challenges in response to changing wagering environments; the Federal Government inquiry into online gambling and implications for New South Wales; ongoing legal action with Racing Victoria; building on the important work Racing NSW has done to make New South Wales a global leader on equine welfare through its Team Thoroughbred welfare initiatives; implementing new training and skills programs across the industry following Racing NSW's purchase of Scone TAFE in 2021 and its establishment of the Scone Training Academy; and delivering a significant capital works program, mostly focused on country racetracks, to futureproof the industry.

The Government supports Racing NSW's efforts to ensure our State is the number one thoroughbred racing jurisdiction in Australia. The board, led by the current chair, demonstrated great skill in guiding the industry through the very challenging COVID period. The Government wants that knowledge to help negotiate a pathway to continued financial sustainability. This is about ensuring that more than 50,000 people employed by this industry keep their jobs in a cost-of-living crisis. The bill will help the Racing NSW board effectively respond to these challenges. Mr Balding, as chair of Racing NSW, has the runs on the board in terms of successfully navigating previous challenges and putting the industry in good stead.

I have been advised that since Mr Balding became chair of Racing NSW, annual returns to owners and participants have more than doubled, increasing from \$196 million before Mr Balding took over as chair to \$410 million this year. A further \$214 million has been distributed each year to owners, trainers, jockeys and stablehands right across New South Wales. Annual returns to owners and participants from the provincial sector were \$30 million before Mr Balding took over as chair and are now \$77 million, a 156 per cent increase. That

benefit has flowed to the country too, with annual returns for owners and participants up by 108 per cent to \$129 million this year. When Racing NSW generates a profit, it is distributed to participants which in turn drives reinvestment into the racing economy, creating more jobs and economic growth.

There has also been significant investment in racing infrastructure across New South Wales. During Mr Balding's tenure, over \$88 million has been spent improving the safety and reliability of racing and training facilities. There is more spending to come over the next three years, with a substantial part of the funding to be spent on rural and regional infrastructure such as new stabling, track upgrades and public and educational facilities. This is about futureproofing the industry.

I was impressed when I visited the Scone Training Academy in August as part of a Parliamentary Friends of Racing visit. The Scone Training Academy delivers specialised equine courses that create a pipeline of local jobs needed in this industry such as stablehands, trainers, trackwork riders and jockeys. That day I learnt that there is a huge uptake by women in the courses. That is reflected in the general uptake of women in the industry. I have been advised that 70 per cent of apprentice jockeys coming through the system are women. There are more women in the industry than ever before driven by a love of horses.

We are seeing significant investment in infrastructure and a pipeline of trained workers, creating a sustainable future for the industry and creating local jobs in our rural and regional areas which are more critical than ever. Local, sustainable, ongoing jobs in rural and regional areas have flow-on effects across the whole economy and for our communities. That is the success of Mr Balding's tenure so far—this flow-on effect of the benefits of racing right down the line. This has helped to ensure a responsible, sustainable and competitive racing industry that delivers economic benefit right across New South Wales. This growth in revenue has been driven almost entirely by the advent of new races in the spring, particularly the Everest, the Golden Eagle, and the Kosciuszko for regional horses. The Big Dance, held on the same day as the Melbourne Cup, attracted record crowds this year.

The success of this rejuvenated Spring Carnival is felt all year round and is really pressing the case for New South Wales to be the number one racing jurisdiction in the country, and this Government supports the industry in its quest to be number one. We want New South Wales to be number one. It is more than just number one in terms of economic benefit, but also in terms of animal welfare. The Government supports a responsible, sustainable and competitive racing industry with the highest standards of animal welfare.

It is a fact of life nowadays that any animal-based industry will be under scrutiny, as it should be. If the racing industry can demonstrate that it has strong underlying principles on animal welfare, and that animal welfare is a key driver of all activity industry-wide, it can answer many of those criticisms. Since Mr Balding became chair, Racing NSW has further expanded its world-leading equine welfare program, including a \$34 million spend on procuring and upgrading properties for the exclusive use of Racing NSW's equine programs. Local Rule of Racing 114 prohibits horses being sent to knackeries or abattoirs and requires owners to find suitable new homes for their horses upon retirement.

Dedicated equine welfare vets undertake audits of retired horses to confirm that owners are meeting their obligations. There is now an excluded list for persons who, on welfare grounds, Racing NSW considers unsuitable to care for thoroughbreds. An end-of-life welfare program is in place to cover the cost of humane euthanasia where it is certified by a vet that it is in the horse's best interest and necessary on welfare and safety grounds. Retired horses have their own equestrian event, the Equimillion, with prize money of \$1 million up for grabs. In 2017, when Mr Balding became chair, around \$400,000 went towards welfare. In the 2022-23 year, \$3.9 million has been spent on equine welfare initiatives—a tenfold increase.

In 2015-16, Racing NSW announced that funding for welfare would be tied to prize money. That has seen a significant increase in funding over time for welfare. The success of racing is tied to animal welfare improvements in New South Wales through a percentage of prize money now allocated to the Racing NSW Equine Welfare Fund. The separation of regulatory and commercial functions occurs primarily through Racing NSW's organisational structure and is supported by the appeals processes under the Act and the Racing Appeals Tribunal Act 1983, known as the tribunal Act. All this has been established in Mr Balding's time as chair, but there is always more to be done.

My strong expectation with this appointment is that there will be increased transparency around welfare and rehoming, greater support for provincial racing and a continued commitment to supporting a responsible, sustainable and competitive racing industry. In addition to the extension of the chair's term through the bill, the deputy chair of Racing NSW, Dr Saranne Cooke, will be extended for a further two years. Dr Cooke has served a total of eight years on the Racing NSW board to date and is eligible for reappointment under the provisions of the Act. The Government wants to see strong progress across each of the reform areas that I have mentioned, and our expectation with progressing these extensions is that we will. The extension in the bill is targeted for two years

only and applies only to the current chair. It considers the circumstances facing the thoroughbred racing industry and what is in the industry's best interests.

The bill does not affect the maximum tenure requirements that apply for members of Racing NSW generally. While the extension in the bill is limited to two years, it will remain a statutory requirement that individual terms of appointment of four years maximum apply to Racing NSW board members before they need to be reconsidered by the Minister for Gaming and Racing. The Minister will also continue to have the power to remove any person from office as a member of Racing NSW or the chairperson at any time, in line with sections 15 and 16 of the Act. Collectively, these ongoing arrangements will ensure that the Minister continues to have regular opportunities to both assess and determine membership of Racing NSW, including through transparent, merit-based selection processes, as set out in the legislation.

I understand that there has been criticism of this decision and that there will be opposition to the bill, but I can assure the House that the Government looked at all the evidence. We looked at the reform coming down the track and I made a decision. As Minister for Gaming and Racing, I am here to make decisions. They will not always be popular, but I feel this is the right decision, given the range of challenges the industry faces. Russell Balding is an experienced and skilled chairman who, along with the Racing NSW team, has revitalised racing in New South Wales. Racing NSW is in the middle of a period of success. The current board is doing a very strong job, and it is important that continues.

In conclusion, the Government has carefully considered its position in relation to the current chair's term of office. We believe the targeted appointment extension is the best way forward, after considering the critical issues the thoroughbred racing industry is facing and related feedback from various industry participants. We recognise that there are extenuating circumstances here that warrant the extension of the current chair beyond the normal maximum tenure of Racing NSW members. We also recognise that safeguards will remain in place that ensure Racing NSW board member appointments can be regularly reviewed, with a maximum tenure limit still specified in the Act.

With this extension, the Government will continue to support Racing NSW in meeting upcoming challenges for the industry and building on the successes we have seen in New South Wales under its leadership. Successes such as the revitalised Sydney Spring Carnival and the introduction of innovative races like the Everest into the State's racing calendar, the richest turf race in the world. The Government will also continue its support of Racing NSW's efforts to ensure the Everest is given the group one status it deserves. We remain committed to a responsible, sustainable and competitive racing industry with the highest standards of animal welfare. In this regard, we expect that the two-year appointment provided for in the bill will help to provide Racing NSW with the necessary continuity of knowledge on its board to set up the industry for long-term success. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

TRANSPORT ADMINISTRATION AMENDMENT (TAHE) BILL 2023

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Ms Jo Haylen, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (14:48): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of the Transport Administration Amendment (TAHE) Bill 2023 is to make it clear that the principal objective of the Transport Asset Holding Entity of New South Wales, also known as TAHE, is to undertake its activities in a safe and reliable manner. With the bill, the Government ensures that TAHE will focus on maximising the safety and reliability of its transport assets, rather than maximising commercial returns. The bill marks the beginning of the end of the billions of dollars of intra-government transactions, which were required under the previous operating model.

This Government is committed to developing an optimal model for the delivery of transport services in New South Wales while providing for focused and strategic asset management and assurance. The bill is part of the transition to a new operating model for TAHE. As outlined by the Treasurer on 9 September this year, the implementation of the new operating model will be done in three stages. In the first stage of this reform, I gave a direction to the board of TAHE under the State Owned Corporations Act 1989 that, to the extent possible while it is a State-owned corporation, it operates in a fashion that is less guided by the commercial imperative and is more like other non-commercial New South Wales Government businesses. This direction was made after consultation with the Treasurer and the board of TAHE and aligns with the Treasurer's statements about the future of TAHE.

This shift in focus will enable longer term investment in rail assets, the transport network and broader Government objectives.

The bill is the second stage of the transition. The change proposed by the bill supports and strengthens the intent of the direction I have already given. It makes it clear that the primary objective of TAHE is to conduct its activities in a safe and reliable manner. The other objectives, which include being a successful business, will be secondary to that overriding objective. The safe and reliable management of assets is critical to delivery of essential transport services to passengers across the State. This Government is committed to improving the reliability and resilience of the Sydney Trains network. The Sydney Trains Review has been commissioned with an initial focus on the reliability and resilience performance, asset management and planning. The initial report of Sydney Trains Review, released in May of this year, identified that over 50 per cent of major incidents causing delays to passengers can be attributed to the performance of rail infrastructure and that the performance of infrastructure is declining.

The Government's Sydney Rail Repair Plan is now well underway at an estimated cost of \$97 million, the biggest coordinated program of rail maintenance ever undertaken in Sydney. This plan will address the maintenance backlog that has led to equipment failures and passenger disruptions. The next phase of the Sydney Trains Review will move to deliver long-term solutions for the rail network. The expert independent panel has indicated that as part of this work it will consider the governance, development and delivery of asset management strategies and plans. The findings and recommendations of this critical review due later this year will inform the further development of the transport operating model and the process to overhaul TAHE and improve the management of transport assets. The third and final stage of the transition of TAHE will be to remove its status as a State-owned corporation. The Treasurer will introduce legislation in mid-2024 to complete this phase. At that time, the organisation will be renamed.

The changes to TAHE and the transport operating model are being made in the context of the broader public sector review, which is considering the structure of the public sector. Our Government will always keep people at the heart of our decisions, and it is clear that we need to align our agencies with the most important issues facing our communities. The public sector review calls out the importance of our role to put community first, increase efficiency, reduce duplication and drive delivery of priority services. One of the guiding principles of the review is that each department should consider its purpose and focus, so that resources are deployed appropriately to deliver on the Government's priorities—housing, jobs and employment, transport, education, health and energy. I note the real potential for TAHE to be a contributor not only to the transport priorities of this Government but also to the housing objectives. In the future TAHE can increase its focus on maximising the value of its transport assets, especially surplus land near railway stations that could be repurposed to help solve the State's housing shortage. A team at Transport has been established to consider how we need to redefine Transport's operating model for the future and is well underway with this piece of work.

I now turn to the detailed provisions of the bill. Schedule 1 makes amendments to the Transport Administration Act 1988 to reorganise the prioritisation of the objectives of TAHE. The Act currently sets out five objectives and provides that all are of equal importance. These objectives are to undertake its activities in a safe and reliable manner; to be a successful business; to exhibit a sense of social responsibility; to conduct its operations in compliance with the principles of ecologically sustainable development; and to exhibit a sense of responsibility towards regional development and decentralisation. The amendment does not remove any of these objectives, nor does it amend the wording of them. Rather, it singles out the objective that TAHE is to undertake its activities in a safe and reliable manner as its primary objective. The other four objectives are to be treated as of equal importance amongst themselves, but not as important as the primary objective. The bill will ensure that we move in an orderly fashion towards a new operating model for the strategic management and assurance of the State's transport assets, which is vital to ensure the ongoing delivery of safe and reliable transport services as well as realising social objectives such as expanding housing supply. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

CASINO CONTROL AMENDMENT BILL 2023

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mr David Harris, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

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) (14:56): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Government is pleased to introduce the Casino Control Amendment Bill 2023. The bill seeks to amend the Casino Control Act to authorise the Treasurer to enter into a job guarantee agreement with the Star; clarify regulatory actions that are not subject to compensation from the Government; and create and rectify an inadvertent omission in relation to major change approvals involving close associates. The Star casino has agreed to enter into a job guarantee agreement to protect over 3,000 jobs related to its Sydney operations until 1 July 2030. Legislative provisions are required to authorise the Treasurer to enter into that agreement and to apply penalties where the guarantee is not met. The bill authorises the Treasurer to enter into a job guarantee agreement with the Star, through which the Star will guarantee a minimum number of workers are employed in relation to the casino. The bill also authorises the Treasurer to impose financial penalties on the Star for failing to employ the minimum number of workers. The final job guarantee agreement, and any variations to it, will be tabled in Parliament.

The second part to the Government's bill relates to regulatory actions. Under the Casino Control Act 1992 the Government is not required to pay compensation to a casino operator for the regulatory actions described in section 156 of the Act. Those important provisions were made last year in response to the Bergin inquiry. They are important because they ensure the New South Wales Parliament and the NSW Independent Casino Commission are able to properly regulate casinos without fear that doing so will result in casinos being entitled to compensation under commercial agreements. This is what the public expects. The bill clarifies the provisions in the Act to ensure that no compensation is payable where an Act affects or overrides a commercial agreement between the Crown and a casino operator; where an Act imposes a tax, duty or levy; or when the Government makes an announcement, statement or takes other action in preparation for a regulatory action. The bill makes it clear that these actions are captured under section 156.

The third part to the bill is to rectify an inadvertent omission in relation to major change approvals involving close associates. Under section 35 of the Casino Control Act 1992, casinos must obtain prior approval from the NSW Independent Casino Commission for any major changes in their operations. This includes people who become close associates of a casino. Close associates include senior executives, shareholders and related companies. Close associates must obtain approval from the commission to ensure they are suitable to be associated with a casino. When the Act was last amended in 2022, it expanded the definition of "close associates". It also amended section 42A of the Act to allow the commission to designate certain close associates to be exempt from having to obtain regulatory approval, having regard to the degree of control or influence of the close associate over the casino business.

The amendments made in 2022 omitted to address a similar provision for close associates in the major change provisions in section 35 of the Act. That omission means that an exempt close associate is still required to undergo an onerous probity assessment under the major change provisions. That is contrary to the legislative intention and undermines the purpose of the exemption created under section 42A of the Act. The bill amends section 35 of the Act so that, when a major change involving a person becoming a casino's close associate is considered, the commission can have regard to whether the close associate holds, or would be eligible for, an exemption granted under section 42A of the Act. This change enables the commission to approve a major change involving a close associate in situations where the close associate is exempt or is assessed as being eligible for an exemption where they have not yet been formally granted the exemption. This bill provides important measures for the regulation of casino taxation and operations. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

[Quorum called for.]

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

CRIMES AMENDMENT (PROSECUTION OF CERTAIN OFFENCES) 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) (15:06): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Government is pleased to introduce the Crimes Amendment (Prosecution of Certain Offences) Bill 2023. This bill makes a small but important amendment to section 93Z of the Crimes Act 1900. Section 93Z of the Crimes Act creates an offence that applies when a person, by a public act, intentionally or recklessly threatens or incites violence towards another person or a group of persons because of their race, religious belief or affiliation, sexual orientation, gender identity, intersex status, or because the person is living with HIV or AIDS. When the offence is committed by an individual, the offence is punishable by a fine of up to \$11,000 or up to three years'

imprisonment, or both. This important provision protects people from violence and makes it clear that we in New South Wales expect to live in a safe, harmonious and accepting society.

The amendments proposed in the bill will streamline the process for police to prosecute people who offend against section 93Z. It will do this by amending the Crimes Act 1900 to omit subsection (4) from section 93Z. Subsection (4) currently provides that a prosecution for a section 93Z offence is not to be commenced without the approval of the Director of Public Prosecutions, who I will refer to as the DPP. The requirement for the DPP to approve a prosecution under section 93Z was a part of the original offence introduced in 2018 by the Crimes Amendment (Publicly Threatening and Inciting Violence) Act 2018. This Act consolidated serious vilification offences previously contained in the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 into a single offence in the Crimes Act 1900. It also transferred responsibility for approving prosecutions from the Attorney General, under the pre-existing serious racial vilification offence, to the DPP under the new section 93Z offence.

Per schedule 1 to the Criminal Procedure Act 1986, section 93Z is a table 1 offence, meaning that, although it carries a maximum penalty of three years' imprisonment, it is to be tried summarily in the Local Court unless the prosecutor or accused person elects otherwise. As a result, section 93Z charges are typically prosecuted by the NSW Police Force in the Local Court. While the requirement for DPP approval was initially introduced as a safeguard to ensure appropriate prosecutions, recent concerns have been raised about the operational effects of this requirement. The time taken to refer matters to the DPP and obtain approval to charge may act as a disincentive for laying charges under section 93Z that relate to conduct otherwise appropriate to be prosecuted under this provision.

It is important to ensure that an appropriate balance is struck between protecting freedom of expression in New South Wales and preventing public acts that threaten or incite violence. It is also important to ensure that there are no unnecessary fetters in place that could impact on the efficient and appropriate prosecution of offences committed by those who publicly threaten or incite violence in this State. The New South Wales Government considers that removing the requirement for DPP approval to commence prosecutions under section 93Z continues to strike the right balance. Removing the DPP approval requirement will also make this offence consistent with the overwhelming majority of other offences in New South Wales, including the offence of displaying Nazi symbols in section 93ZA of the Crimes Act 1900, which includes no such requirement, and other serious and complex offences like fraud, which also include no such requirement.

Clause 1 of the bill sets out the long title, and clause 2 provides that the bill commences by proclamation. The provisions in the bill will commence on proclamation to enable NSW Police Force staff to undergo training to ensure that frontline and investigating police have a thorough understanding of section 93Z and the circumstances in which it is appropriate to proceed with charges under this section. Schedule 1 [1] omits subsection (4) of section 93Z. No further changes are made to section 93Z by the bill, and the offence itself remains the same. Schedule 1 [2] provides that the amendment to section 93Z will apply to proceedings that are commenced on or after this bill commences, regardless of when the offence was committed. This means that as soon as the NSW Police Force has finalised its training and the legislation commences, police will be able to charge a person with a section 93Z offence without DPP approval.

This bill is just one way that the New South Wales Government will continue to demonstrate its commitment to providing a safe and harmonious community for all people in New South Wales. The bill sends a clear signal that the New South Wales Government recognises that conduct that is violent or incites violence and, as a result, hurts people or makes people feel unsafe because of their race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, intersex status or because they are living with HIV or AIDS is not acceptable. It must be dealt with swiftly and appropriately, in accordance with the law. I am proud to be able to bring forward legislation in this place that will help to increase safety and the availability of protections for the people of New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

BUILDING 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) (15:12): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Building Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. The bill delivers on the Government's ongoing commitment to transformational reforms to the oversight of the New South Wales building industry. Our comprehensive reform agenda will secure behavioural change in the industry and uplift the quality of buildings in

New South Wales, helping restore public confidence in the construction industry. The New South Wales Government understands the serious impacts that unsafe building products and noncompliant buildings can have on people's lives. We have examined the data, listened to the public and the industry, and developed reforms that will make buildings in New South Wales safer and more reliable.

The bill makes amendments to various Acts to improve accountability and responsibility in the construction industry by, first, expanding proactive enforcement powers for the Building Commissioner, including rectification and stop-work orders for residential homes, to ensure greater oversight of and confidence in low-rise residential construction—a key recommendation of the Legislative Council's Public Accountability Committee's report *Further inquiry into the regulation of building standards* that this Government has already started to implement—secondly, imposing obligations and accountability on all persons in the building product supply chain to ensure the design, manufacture, supply and installation of safe and compliant building products; thirdly, enhancing the framework for decennial liability insurance to increase consumer protections for apartment building owners; fourthly, expanding powers for the New South Wales building regulator to tackle illegal phoenixing; fifthly, enabling immediate suspension of key building, design and certifier practitioners where allowing them to continue to work would pose a serious risk to public safety, consumers or other building businesses; and, lastly, ensuring existing data and information sharing arrangements remain viable when the NSW Building Commission is established towards the end of this year.

I want to firstly give an overview of the big-ticket items that the bill delivers. Schedule 1 to the bill will support the NSW Building Commissioner to carry out crucial proactive work in the residential building space. It will ensure that the building regulator has the right powers and access to information to weed out poor workmanship at the construction phase. We are using industry-leading, data-driven regulatory interventions so that the Building Commissioner can restore confidence for home owners, future purchasers and renters in the quality, safety and trustworthiness of low-rise residential buildings, as he has so successfully begun for high-rise residential apartments.

The work of the Building Commissioner in addressing serious defects in class 2 apartment buildings has been transformative for the people of New South Wales, giving owners confidence that the building regulator has the tools it needs to hold to account those who cause building defects. The amendments in the bill will extend those powers to ensure that the regulator can effectively oversee the construction of class 1 residential houses across New South Wales. As we prepare to set up the State's first Building Commission, we want to ensure that the commissioner has the right tools to support the work of the commission and ensure its effectiveness.

Schedule 1 to the bill also enhances powers for the building regulator to ensure that people who have been involved with a building company that has become insolvent or people who have engaged in intentional phoenixing activity cannot continue to operate in the industry. The level of harm that can occur where building companies become insolvent and set up new companies to avoid paying outstanding debts—often to subcontractors further down the contracting chain—cannot be overstated. The bill gives the building regulator new tools to target intentional phoenixing, providing better protections from this abhorrent behaviour.

The amendments set out in schedule 2 to the bill focus on ensuring that building products are safe and compliant, that the regulator has ample powers for early intervention in the construction of homes, and that consumer rights and interests are well protected. Those amendments will enable the regulator to identify, manage and respond to building products that pose a safety risk to consumers and building practitioners. All persons in the supply chain of building products will have a duty to ensure that the building products they design, manufacture, sell or install are suitable for their intended use. This will signal to the industry that everyone will be held accountable. Cutting corners will not be tolerated when it comes to safety.

In 2018 the Australian Government and the Building Ministers' Forum commissioned Dr Peter Shergold, AO, and Bronwyn Weir to examine compliance and enforcement problems across jurisdictions. One recommendation in their *Building Confidence* report was to establish a compulsory product certification system for high-risk products. To achieve this, the Australian Building Codes Board developed the National Building Product Assurance Framework. The framework was developed as a model for jurisdictions to use, with a view of providing national consistency through legislative reforms. New South Wales supports the goal of national consistency, given the international nature of supply chains. The bill has therefore taken the Australian Building Codes Board framework into account and will provide immediate improvements to New South Wales' oversight of building product safety.

Through schedule 3 to the bill, New South Wales will be well placed to offer stronger consumer protections for apartment building owners through decennial liability insurance, or DLI. DLI provides 10-year protection against serious defects in the common property of the building, starting from when the building is completed. DLI covers critical building elements, including the building's structure, enclosure, waterproofing, fire safety systems and building services. New South Wales is a national leader in providing this strong consumer protection for

apartment owners, a protection that applies even where the developer or builder has become insolvent. The bill will set up a procedural framework of administrative requirements, enabling DLI to continue operating and to expand as an alternative to the strata building bond. The amendments will provide DLI with the necessary legislative framework to encourage insurers to enter the market and will also encourage uptake by developers of available DLI products.

The Government intends to introduce more comprehensive and prescriptive DLI legislation to Parliament next year following detailed consultation with industry and insurers. It is a massive win for apartment owners in New South Wales and provides confidence for owners that they will not be out of pocket if there is a need to rectify the sorts of serious defects we have seen all too often in apartment buildings. The amendments are a precursor for future reforms to come. I am proud to introduce these building reforms, which will make the lives of the people of New South Wales safer and provide peace of mind to apartment owners through encouraging an insurance system that will cover serious defects in common property for up to 10 years.

I now turn to the substance of the bill. In terms of compliance and enforcement powers, schedule 1 to the bill will expand proactive regulatory powers to the building regulator for class 1 buildings. The expansion of such powers to buildings that include freestanding houses and terraces is critical and builds on the success of the NSW Building Commissioner in the stronger regulation of apartment buildings. The proposed amendments have been informed by the ongoing operation of the Residential Apartment Buildings (Compliance and Enforcement Powers) Act 2020, also known as the RAB Act. The RAB Act contains comprehensive and wideranging investigation powers. They include powers to issue rectification orders to eliminate or mitigate defects in class 2 apartment buildings. Class 2 buildings are defined as apartment buildings. They may also be single-storey attached dwellings with a common space below—for example, two dwellings above a common basement or car park.

That legislation has empowered the building regulator to proactively investigate, audit and target poor performers in the industry. Home owners deserve a building regulator that has sufficient powers to call out poor performers in the industry. The current rectification order provisions under the Home Building Act are reactive and can only be issued for class 1 buildings if a complaint or dispute is raised by the consumer. That puts pressure on consumers to pursue complaints and can lead to expensive litigation to have defects rectified. The emotional and mental stress of having to pursue rectification through the courts is taxing on consumers. Schedule 1 to the bill will enable rectification orders to be used proactively, ensuring that inspectors can identify issues early and defective work is rectified before the building is actually occupied.

As of March 2023, more than 37,000 class 1 houses were under construction in New South Wales. The regulator currently has no powers to audit the quality of construction in any of those houses during construction. Defective building work in low-rise residential construction costs Australian consumers more than \$700 million annually. That cost can be reduced, if not avoided, through proactive identification of defects early and having them rectified during construction. The bill will remedy the regulatory gap by giving the regulator powers to inspect, investigate and issue relevant orders while class 1 buildings are under construction. Inspectors will have powers to enter houses that are under construction and may seek the production of documents or information regarding building work. Of course, inspectors will need to obtain the consent of the home owner, or a search warrant, to enter homes that are occupied. But the key change here will mean practitioners cannot avoid scrutiny during construction.

The secretary may issue a rectification order for any defective work or for building work being carried out in a way that could result in a defect. That power will not only extend to work that has been contracted for but will also cover situations where the defective work has caused damage to parts of the building or other structures, including neighbouring properties. Further, to ensure that the rectification orders have sufficient impact, the amendments require the regulator to give a copy of the order to the local council of the area where the building work is being carried out. If the local council is not the principal certifier, a copy is also provided to the principal certifier. This is an extra measure to ensure defective work is rectified before it receives final sign-off from the certifier.

The bill will extend the powers of the regulator to issue rectification orders for residential homes being built. It will create a consistent approach across the industry with the existing powers currently available for class 2 buildings. The amendments send a strong message that the New South Wales Government will ensure the Building Commissioner has the power to tackle noncompliant work. The amendments will make compliance with a rectification order a licence condition for the licence holder, and failure to comply will result in disciplinary action. Failure to comply with a rectification order will also attract large penalties of up to \$330,000 for a corporation and \$110,000 for an individual. For every day the offence continues, corporations will be hit with penalties of up to \$33,000 per day, or \$11,000 per day for individuals. The penalties will ensure that noncompliant players are held accountable.

The New South Wales Government is aware of the impact those orders can have on the industry. Provisions in the bill ensure the amendments are procedurally fair. Parties will be given an opportunity to be heard or remedy any wrong before an order is made. The amendments will allow parties to appeal against rectification orders, preserving the parties' right to natural justice and making sure the provisions are balanced. To ensure that any building work that could cause or is likely to cause significant harm or loss is stopped, the bill will also introduce stop-work orders similar to those that have been effectively used to address serious defects associated with class 2 residential apartment buildings. Expanding the operation of stop-work orders to all residential building work will mean the developer of a project can be ordered to stop work if that work could result in significant harm or loss to the public or building residents.

The power is necessary and will enable the secretary or their delegate to take immediate action where necessary on unsafe work practices or serious noncompliance. A breach of a stop-work order is a serious offence and can carry penalties of up to \$330,000 for a corporation or \$110,000 for an individual. Procedural fairness will apply, with an appeal process available for a developer issued with a stop-work order. In the spirit of transparency and accountability, rectification orders and stop-work orders will be published on a public register. That will not only warn consumers about the existence of such orders but also signal the seriousness of those orders to industry and the public.

Schedule 1 to the bill also strengthens crucial protections to prevent people from holding contractor licences under the Home Building Act 1989 where they have been involved in insolvencies or intentional phoenixing activity. The construction industry experiences the second highest rate of external administration in Australia. We know insolvency has significant and devastating effects on trades, suppliers and consumers. While the oversight and regulation of corporate behaviour and insolvencies remain the primary responsibility of the Commonwealth, it is still critical that the New South Wales building regulator has sufficiently strong powers to take action in relation to those who have a history of insolvency to prevent them from creating further harm in the State.

In those circumstances, the bill introduces new powers in schedule 1 to prevent the issuing of licences, cancel existing licences and disqualify a person from holding a licence to disrupt dodgy corporate behaviour and stop poorly behaved players from operating in New South Wales. New section 22 enables the regulator to cancel a licence where the licence holder was a director or involved in the management of a company and that company is under administration or has been convicted of an offence under the relevant provisions of the Corporations Act 2001. The powers will extend to the period six months before those events to ensure directors and people with corporate influence are not simply allowed to walk away without consequence.

New section 33A of the bill largely mirrors those cancellation powers but permits the building regulator to disqualify a person or company from holding an authority under the Home Building Act. Where a person seeks a licence, the bill provides further insolvency reach by extending the period to be considered from the existing three-year period out to 10 years, again sending a clear message that this Government does not condone that type of behaviour. When applying for a licence, applicants will be required to disclose their prior association with a body corporate that has become insolvent.

In addition, the bill will reverse the presumption on a person applying for a licence. That means that, where the applicant has become bankrupt or been a director or person involved in the management of a company in the six months prior to that company becoming insolvent, they will have to prove why they are not a risk to consumers or subcontractors. The change has been made to capture the unlawful behaviours of some directors who deliberately surrender their directorships before insolvency to avoid liability, leaving others to deal with the consequences of their actions. The measures in this bill will hold individuals accountable where their actions or decisions have resulted in the insolvency of a company that has left consumers and subcontractors unduly exposed.

As I mentioned earlier, this Government is creating accountability in the building products supply chain through the amendments in schedule 2 to the bill. These proposed changes to the Building Products (Safety) Act 2017 will introduce a chain of responsibility for building products. New part 2A will create a legally enforceable regime of responsibility of compliance for all persons involved in building product supply. Those who design, manufacture or sell products, those who prepare building designs, and those who install products in a building, such as tradespeople, will be captured in the chain of responsibility.

New section 8B will allow lawmakers to respond to changing circumstances in the way products are manufactured and distributed by allowing the regulations to expand or limit those people captured in the chain of responsibility. This is particularly relevant given the rapid pace of change in technology and processes we are seeing in the construction industry. Currently, not all persons in the chain of supply for a building product are held to the same level of accountability as others. Licensed builders who install products at the end of a long supply chain can face high penalties for noncompliance, while those who produce or supply products do not bear much

responsibility. This provides less incentive for manufacturers and suppliers of products to provide compliant and fit-for-purpose products. To reverse this, the bill introduces clear duties for persons in the chain of responsibility.

The primary duty, as outlined in new section 8E, is to ensure products used on buildings are conforming and compliant. This means that not only does the product itself need to meet performance standards under the National Construction Code or prescribed standard, but it must also be used in a way that conforms with how it has been manufactured to ensure it does not create a safety or build quality risk. For example, certain wall systems are appropriate where they are internal but may be nonconforming if used for structural purposes. The offence attached to this provision means corporations will pay up to \$165,000, and individuals up to \$55,000, for failing to ensure their product is conforming and compliant.

To ensure that building products used in New South Wales buildings are compliant with the National Construction Code and relevant Australian standards, the bill will introduce information obligations on parties in the chain of responsibility, with the same penalties attaching to this duty as for that in new section 8E. Each person in the chain must provide certain information about a building product to the next person in the chain, such as whether the product is suitable for its intended use, whether the product is only suitable in certain conditions, instructions on how to ensure compliant use of the product, and how to maintain the product. For example, the bill provides that a building designer who incorporates or recommends the use of a particular product in a building must ensure that the required information is given to the person who will give effect to the design, such as the builder or installer. Likewise, installers and those who use a product in a building must ensure the owner of the building is given information about the product.

The focus to date of building reform has been on ensuring building work is compliant, safe and trustworthy. We rightly impose clear obligations on designers and engineers to design compliant buildings, and on builders to follow those designs to deliver buildings that meet the performance requirements of the Building Code of Australia. However, the missing piece has been ensuring that the products being used in the construction of buildings meet Australian standards and building codes. The first step to filling this gap is making information about the product available to all persons in the supply chain so that practitioners have accurate information to make informed decisions about whether the product is compliant and conforming for the intended purpose.

Therefore, the bill will introduce requirements for manufacturers, suppliers and importers to provide information or representations about building products. By enhancing transparency and information flow between players in the chain, the bill will allow for industry to self-regulate in conjunction with more formal government regulation. It will also clarify the role and responsibilities of each person in the chain, which will make it easier for people to exercise their rights and take action against the relevant party if something goes wrong.

Ensuring everyone in the chain has the information they need to perform their role effectively will also benefit consumers at the end of the supply chain. The bill will require a person in the chain of responsibility to inform the secretary if they become aware of a noncompliance or safety risk for an intended use of a product. We understand this duty imposes a small burden on industry. However, the benefits of creating better risk awareness and visibility are clear and will allow the Government to work hand in hand with industry to identify unsafe and noncompliant building products.

We know that there has been an unacceptable increase in the use of nonconforming building products on Australian construction sites. Inferior and sometimes dangerous products are being used in the construction of buildings that the people of New South Wales live and work in. Negligent and often deliberately fraudulent behaviour is occurring in the building products supply chain, including falsifying product test certificates and hiding underweight steelwork with water-filled tubes. This has to end.

We have designed a framework that industry representatives agree can work, and we have also proposed new regulatory powers to back up our chain of responsibility changes. The bill will give the secretary powers to identify and prevent nonconforming building products from being used in New South Wales buildings. The secretary will be able to issue a notice to warn consumers about a building product where there is a noncompliance risk or safety risk in relation to the product. Further, where the secretary is reasonably satisfied that a building product is noncompliant or unsafe, they may issue a building product supply ban to prohibit continued supply of the product. Under a supply ban, a person in the chain of responsibility who is in possession or control of the building product may be required to notify the secretary that they have the product and ensure they dispose of the product appropriately.

The bill provides powers to the secretary to issue a building product recall in circumstances where swift action should be taken to protect the public. The issuing of a compulsory recall will be limited to instances where the building product is a nonconforming product and a safety risk exists in relation to the use of the product. A safety risk exists if a product has caused, will cause or may cause death or serious injury to a person, or damage to or a defect in a building which results in the building being uninhabitable, destroyed or at risk of collapse.

Manufacturers will be given prior notice of the issue of a warning, recall or ban. Where the product manufacturer is based overseas, the secretary may give notice to the Australian importer or supplier instead. Where appropriate, the secretary may also call for public submissions on the question of whether a warning, recall or ban is warranted, and the proposed terms of the notice.

The residents of New South Wales are used to seeing product recalls for allergen risks in food or where there are choking risks for toys. Similarly, we owe it to the people of New South Wales to be able to quickly pull unsafe or otherwise nonconforming building products off shelves and alert consumers in the same way. If a compulsory recall is issued, the secretary can immediately alert the community of safety concerns and enforce the withdrawal of products without delay from the supply chain and the marketplace. To enhance accountability, the bill will provide offences for continuing to supply a building product where a building product supply ban is in place, or to cause a building product to be used where the secretary has issued a building product use ban.

Those who contravene or fail to carry out requirements and duties under a building product recall will also be guilty of an offence. Recognising the serious financial consequences and risks to human safety that can arise where unsafe and nonconforming products are used in or on buildings, a maximum penalty of \$1.1 million will apply to corporations and a maximum penalty of \$220,000 to individuals. Where the offence continues, a further maximum penalty of \$110,000 per day for corporations and \$44,000 per day for individuals will apply. The size of these penalties reflects the seriousness of these offences and will provide a strong deterrent for the use of unsafe building products.

The bill creates a similar offence for falsely representing that a product would be suitable for use in a building when the product is subject to a ban or recall. These penalties are entirely appropriate to protect the people of New South Wales from safety risks and the devastating financial impacts when shoddy products are used on their homes. The bill also gives the secretary powers to remove dodgy operators from the supply chain. Where the secretary is satisfied that someone involved in building product supply or use has repeatedly engaged in unlawful conduct, the bill gives the secretary powers to issue a show cause notice to the person. The person would have two weeks to make a submission as to why they should not be banned from carrying on the business of supplying building products.

The secretary must consider the submissions and may make further inquiries if necessary. If the secretary considers the person is likely to engage in unlawful conduct again, the secretary may apply to the Supreme Court of New South Wales for an order to prohibit the dodgy supplier from carrying on business either indefinitely or for a period of time, depending on the seriousness of the unlawful conduct. Although the secretary has this power under section 73 of the Fair Trading Act, existing limitations to consumer goods will not apply under the bill to the supply of building products. A benefit of the trade prohibition provision is that it would allow the court to order the supplier to give compensation to people in the chain or consumers who had incurred loss or damage.

The bill will also provide powers for an authorised officer to issue directions about the use of building products to appropriate persons where needed—for example, to address safety risks. The direction may require the person to cease using or supplying a product, cease using a product in a specific way or make a product incapable of being used or operated. An "appropriate person" for the purpose of new section 46B in the bill might be a person in the chain of responsibility, someone in possession of the building product, or an employee of a company where the building product is manufactured, supplied, stored or used. A direction will remain in force for 90 days unless revoked sooner. The bill also creates necessary enforcement and investigation powers so that noncomplying building products can be tested and seized, if needed, to determine whether they carry a noncompliance or safety risk or if an offence against the Act has already been committed in relation to the product.

Turning to schedule 3 to the bill, as I touched on earlier in my second reading speech, decennial liability insurance is a game-changing consumer protection insurance product for apartment owners in New South Wales. The insurance provides protection for strata buildings and is a first resort insurance product—that is, where an owner can prove there is defective work, the claim will be paid without the need to establish fault. DLI is currently a voluntary alternative to the Strata Building Bond and Inspections Scheme under the Strata Schemes Management Act 2015 for residential apartment buildings. The strata bond scheme requires developers to lodge a bond worth 2 per cent of the development's contract price for two years before the building is occupied. The bond covers the costs of defect rectification works up to the 2 per cent bond amount and is limited to defects identified in the first 18 months of the building being occupied.

However, the current bond often does not provide sufficient funds or time to deal with typical claims of a minor nature, let alone those that require rectification of a "serious defect". For example, a building with a contract price of \$10 million would only need a bond of \$200,000. To give an idea of how insufficient that amount of money is, a survey carried out by the Office of the Building Commissioner in 2021 identified that the average cost per building to rectify serious defects was \$332,000, with audits by NSW Fair Trading indicating the average cost of rectification exceeds \$40,000 per dwelling.

On the other hand, DLI provides cover up to the full construction value of rectifying the defects, providing a significant new consumer protection to apartment owners in this State. This is also at no additional project cost, with modelling showing that 2 per cent of the project contract value is likely to be the upper limit of premiums for a DLI product. This bill supports the uptake of an insurance scheme that will provide sufficient cover to rectify defects for up to 10 years for a class 2 building. Further, this coverage of the full construction value is generated from premiums paid for by the developer.

To firmly enshrine DLI in legislation, schedule 3 to the bill proposes important amendments to the Strata Schemes Management Act 2015 and its supporting regulation. These amendments set up a robust regulatory framework for DLI that will assure and encourage insurers to enter the market knowing they have the appropriate legislative support. The inclusion of new section 211AB in the bill makes clear that developers who obtain a DLI product for their class 2 apartment building project are exempt from the existing strata building bond and inspection scheme requirements except for section 206 of the Strata Schemes Management Act, which permits a builder reasonable access to a building to rectify defects.

We must work with industry to ensure the success of DLI in New South Wales. This includes making DLI an attractive proposition for developers of class 2 buildings and removing the unnecessary expense associated with a mandatory inspection scheme. This will allow insurers in the market to manage their own risk and have greater control in ensuring developers and builders produce defect-free buildings while concurrently extending the duration of remedies for home owners from two to 10 years.

New section 211AC in the bill enables regulations to be made that would allow DLI to be taken out as an alternative to home building compensation insurance for the construction of low-rise apartment buildings that are up to three storeys. It does this by providing exemptions from the insurance requirements of sections 92 and 96 of the Home Building Act 1989 where the developer has notified the secretary of the developer's intention to obtain DLI for the building work. The regulations can also set out conditions and requirements for DLI being used as an alternative to home building compensation insurance. This regulation-making power will only be exercised with careful consideration about the impact on strata home owners, and necessary conditions and requirements to protect their interests.

A DLI product will provide protection on a strict liability basis. In contrast, home building compensation insurance is claimable as a "last resort" where a building business has become insolvent. DLI is intended primarily as a market-driven solution to prevent and address building defects. However, it is important the secretary has sufficient powers to monitor the state of the market and ascertain when there is market maturity in the DLI space. Market maturity is a key factor in any future consideration of mandating DLI. To enable this, new section 211AD includes appropriate powers for the secretary to direct an insurer to give information about their DLI policies, such as the number of policies issued, including the terms and premiums payable; the names of developers where DLI policies have been issued and the buildings they relate to; and the number and value of claims made under DLI policies issued.

The amount and duration of the existing strata bond is intended to be increased and lengthened incrementally, with these changes being informed by the maturity of the DLI market. As a first step, the bill will amend the current 2 per cent strata bond mandated in the Act to enable a prescribed percentage in the supporting regulation. Likewise, the two-year period a bond must be held will be prescribed in the supporting regulation. The Strata Schemes Management Regulation will prescribe the strata building bond to increase to 3 per cent of the total contract cost of the build from 1 February 2024, providing more money to be set aside for consumers to rectify defects identified during inspections done under the scheme. These regulation powers will enable proportionate and responsible changes to the strata bond scheme to encourage greater uptake of DLI products, which is a far superior consumer protection for apartment owners in New South Wales.

Complementary to the direction powers for insurers are new powers in new section 211AE to direct developers to give information about their insurance. This will ensure the building regulator has sufficient ability to interrogate DLI policies that have been purchased by developers. Failure by an insurer or developer to comply with the secretary's direction attracts a maximum penalty of \$55,000 in the first instance and \$22,000 for every day the offence continues, providing appropriate incentive to comply. Importantly, these directions can also be issued to insurers and developers who are located outside of New South Wales where the building work is within New South Wales. New section 211AF also creates a general penalty provision of \$110,000 for a corporation and \$22,000 for any individual who knowingly gives the secretary information in relation to DLI that is false or misleading in a material particular.

In rare cases where a resident denies access to their unit, and this access is necessary to determine whether there is defective building work or to rectify defective building work, new section 211AG in the bill allows the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal to make an order requiring access to the building be granted. Finally, new sections 211AH and 211AI in the bill establish the necessary regulatory framework for DLI within the

building regulatory framework. The requirement for DLI will interact with the existing statutory building certification scheme under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979. A developer will be required to provide the secretary with a certificate of currency of the DLI policy for the building before an application is made for a construction certificate for the building work.

When a developer does not provide this notification, the application will not be able to be progressed, and consequently work will not be able to be carried out. Likewise, there will be a check and balance before an application is made for an occupation certificate to ensure that a DLI policy is in place. The insurance itself can commence once an occupation certificate is issued, but there needs to be evidence of the policy before an occupation certificate is applied for or issued. Like the construction certificate provisions, an application for an occupation certificate will not be able to be progressed until appropriate notification has been provided to the secretary.

As a backstop, there will be a new ground added to the RAB Act to prohibit the issuing of an occupation certificate where the developer has failed to notify the secretary of their DLI policy. If an occupation certificate is issued in contravention of a prohibition order it will be invalid by virtue of the prohibition order powers under the RAB Act. The reason there is such an emphasis provided at this stage is because occupation certificates are often used for strata buildings to settle contracts. The Government is committed to ensuring that people who live in and own apartments have the strongest consumer protections in the country, and DLI is a crucial step towards this.

Schedule 4 to the bill ensures that the building regulator will be able to immediately suspend players in the building process when their conduct poses a serious risk to public safety, consumers or other businesses. Under part 4, division 2 of the Home Building Act 1989, the building regulator has an existing power to immediately suspend an individual from holding a contractor licence, supervisor certificate or tradesperson certificate pending a determination by the secretary whether to take disciplinary action under the Act. The bill replicates this power in the Building and Development Certifiers Act 2018 and the Design and Building Practitioners Act 2020 to allow the secretary to immediately suspend a registered certifier or registered practitioner in circumstances that pose significant risk of harm to persons or buildings. Under these reforms, a certifier or design practitioner may be immediately suspended where that person has been issued a show cause notice.

A show cause notice is a procedural fairness mechanism that gives practitioners a chance to explain why their conduct should not attract cancellation or ongoing suspension of their registration. It allows them to make submissions to the secretary as to why they think their conduct does not pose a risk of harm, loss or damage to the public, consumers or businesses. The secretary must consider those submissions when deciding whether to proceed with cancelling or suspending a registration. The secretary must be satisfied that there is, or is likely to be, a serious risk to public safety, a consumer or another business if the person was to continue to do building, design, engineering or certification work during the show cause period. A suspension will be in place for no more than 60 days at a time and may be extended if the cause of action continues. However, the bill ensures that a suspended person has a right of appeal to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal if they are aggrieved by the secretary's decision to issue an immediate suspension or to otherwise take disciplinary action. These are strong but necessary preventative powers to ensure protection against unlawful, harmful conduct.

Finally, in schedule 5 the bill proposes some minor but important amendments to the Building and Development Certifiers Act and the Home Building Act to ensure necessary information sharing can take place between New South Wales government agencies to support the establishment of the Building Commission. The information that can be shared will be limited to that which is reasonably necessary to assist the secretary and relevant agencies to carry out relevant functions related to these Acts, such as allowing for the registration of certifiers. The amendments will ensure the new Building Commission has access to the information needed to assist with the investigation and enforcement of residential buildings in New South Wales.

The Government has made a commitment to delivering more housing for the people of New South Wales. However, we will not sacrifice quality for quantity. The Government sees the soon to be established Building Commission as a critical enabler to the Government's housing delivery strategy. The bill gives the commission the tools and powers it needs to execute this strategy. But this is not the end of the action our Government is going to take. Building failures across all building types are a risk to safety for people left with noncompliant building work and they increase costs to owners, other practitioners, financiers and insurers to remediate those defects. These failures tarnish the industry as a whole, even for those who produce quality work, and reduce confidence in the building and construction industry.

The bill implements important reforms and lays the groundwork for the sweeping transformation under our building bill to be introduced into Parliament next year. This is not a government that rests on its laurels with such an important industry. We are pushing forward with meaningful reform. Our rental reforms, the appointment of a rental commissioner, the injection of new money for the Building Commission and the reforms proposed by

this bill are strong indicators to industry and the community that this Government will deliver on its commitments to support industry to deliver compliant, safe and affordable housing across the State. I commend the Building Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 to the House.

Second Reading Debate

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (15:55): I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Building Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. I indicate from the outset that Liberal-Nationals members support the bill. It is the case that the provisions within the bill borrow and build significantly upon the important work of the former Coalition Government, which had been undertaken to strengthen the building industry sector and confidence, and consumers' rights within it. It is an industry where we should have high standards and practices, as well as appropriate safeguards for individuals to protect them when something does go wrong. Questionable, unscrupulous operators have no place in this industry and regulators need strong powers to respond.

Recently there have been well-publicised challenges in the building sector. We have seen some poor and unscrupulous practices, building defects that have proven costly for consumers and high levels of insolvencies. This has unquestionably adversely affected confidence in the industry. With an increased need to grow the State's housing stock to meet future growth challenges and address the home affordability crisis, consumers must have full confidence to make the big investment decision required to build a new home. We understand the bill is a precursor to a future more comprehensive building bill. The Coalition Government released draft building bills for public consultation in 2022: the draft Building Bill, the draft Building Compliance and Enforcement Bill, and the draft Building and Construction Legislation Amendment Bill and regulation.

Indeed, the former Government laid the groundwork for the measures before us today and the consolidated building laws to come that the current Government has now taken up. We welcome this, but there is much more to do. I make some observations on the bill's key provisions. All members will recall the building disasters in the apartment building sector involving the Opal and Mascot towers, among others. I acknowledge the incredible work that Building Commissioner David Chandler, OAM, has done since being appointed by the Coalition in 2019. The commissioner brings a tough but fair and consistent approach to the job, and rightly so. He is a strong cop on the beat, cleaning up the apartment building sector, seeking to weed out dodgy operators and practices, and rebuilding confidence for consumers and industry alike.

The Coalition supports expanding the commissioner's powers to class 1 dwellings, standalone single homes. This was something the previous Government was working on, and we have been pressing the current Government to proceed with this change. This expansion is a testament to the commissioner's work in the apartment space, as well as the success of the Residential Apartment Buildings (Compliance and Enforcement Powers) Act 2020—the RAB Act, as it is known—that empowers the commissioner and his work. The bill will allow the proactive investigation of building defects in standalone single residential dwellings, class 1, giving the commissioner powers of entry, inspection and making rectification and stop-work orders. This is a model that we know works through the RAB Act.

The Opposition supports this move so the commissioner can get straight to work on seeking to clean up the home building industry. We have seen too many unscrupulous operators inflicting financial and emotional pain upon home builders. These are real people and real lives that have been affected. We have heard the stories of young families waiting years for their home to be finished only for defects to emerge that are so bad the home must be demolished and rebuilt. By that stage, the builder has apparently gone out of business. We have heard examples in the media in recent weeks of homes not being completed and consumers who are seeking to build their home—sometimes their first home—waiting and waiting. That is often a heartbreaking experience.

I believe the work of the Building Commissioner, empowered by the regulatory tools provided in the bill, will go some way to cleaning up this industry and restoring confidence. The Opposition supports the moves to strengthen building product safety and establish a chain of responsibility. That has been informed by the National Building Product Assurance Framework, which is a national process aiming to establish consistency across Australian jurisdictions. We want harmonisation, and in government the Coalition engaged with that national process but was frustrated at the time it was taking to establish the national model. Establishing a chain of responsibility between manufacturer, supplier and installer was a feature of the Coalition's draft Building and Construction Legislation Amendment Bill.

The Opposition supports New South Wales getting ahead of the national model. That needs to be done with some urgency. Confidence needs to be returned to building products. I note that building products generally do not fall under the protections of the Australian Consumer Law. Products such as cladding materials, some of which have proven to be quite combustible, have resulted in extremely high rectification costs. The bill requires that persons within the supply chain for building products have a duty to ensure that the building products they design, manufacture, sell or install are suitable for their intended use. Other provisions assist in tackling the

problem of insolvency. It is a problem for the industry and for consumers left seeking redress when defects emerge sometimes years down the track.

The building industry has the second highest rate of insolvencies. Decennial liability insurance [DLI] is an emerging insurance product involving 10-year cover taken out by a developer or builder as a first resort protection for future owners for the cost of remediating building defects. Many strata corporations have faced large remediation costs when defects emerge later, particularly when the builder has since become insolvent. Decennial liability insurance would be used as an alternative to a strata building bond or the Home Building Compensation Fund, and the bill facilitates that by lifting some of the requirements in relation to bonds and the Home Building Compensation Fund where a DLI policy is in place.

The former Government authorised DLI as an alternative to the strata bond levy, subject to approval by the Secretary of the Department of Customer Service. In August 2022 a ministerial advisory panel reported on its research into the feasibility of introducing a DLI scheme in New South Wales. It found that once there is a mature market, DLI will not place an undue burden on project costs, housing supply or housing affordability. The bill involves a voluntary DLI rather than a mandatory model that would replace bonds. It is understood the Government has recently concluded consultation on a proposal to introduce later mandatory DLI for all new apartment buildings.

The Opposition acknowledges the measures to discipline practitioners who have engaged in phoenixing. We are united with the Government on that. Individuals who engage in phoenixing have no place in business, and the book must be thrown at them. It is underhanded and deceptive behaviour, and we support the regulator and courts having the necessary tools to stamp it out. On behalf of the Opposition, I thank the extensive list of stakeholders who were consulted on this bill. I acknowledge the wider building reforms that were in train under the Coalition. I acknowledge the tireless and diligent staff at Fair Trading who have worked on building reform for some period. I also acknowledge the Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading for his support and work on the important measures, along with his office. The Opposition awaits more measures from the Government to further boost confidence in the building sector. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (16:03): I contribute to debate on the important Building Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. The bill provides another piece of the puzzle in the broken and dysfunctional housing system in New South Wales. The purpose of the bill is to progress a range of reforms to strengthen consumer protections for home owners, ensure accountability for unsafe building products and provide necessary powers to address practitioners' noncompliant work and poor behaviour. The bill makes changes to the Building Commissioner's enforcement powers. Those changes were recommended by the Legislative Council Public Accountability Committee in its report entitled *Further inquiry into the regulation of building standards*. They will enable the new Building Commission to restore confidence to the New South Wales residential construction sector.

Liverpool, particularly in the CBD, has been on the front line of high-rise housing development over the past decade. I have spoken to many community members who live with the reality that their building is one of the four in every 10 residential apartment buildings built between 2014 and 2020 that have serious defects. I commend the Minns Government for taking swift action on this issue and commend the Minister and all the staff at Fair Trading for their work in this space over many years. I will specifically address some of the key aspects of the legislation. Firstly, the bill delivers an urgently needed reform agenda. The Building Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 will improve transparency, accountability and the quality of work in the building and construction industry in New South Wales. The New South Wales Government recognises the imminent need for more homes to ease pressure in the housing market and ensure that everyone has a safe place to live. But we cannot sacrifice quality for quantity. The Government is committed to ensuring the tens of thousands of new homes that New South Wales needs are quality homes.

The creation of a standalone Building Commission bolstered by \$24 million in funding and more than 400 dedicated staff will drive dodgy builders out of the market and ensure that buyers get the quality homes they deserve. The Building Commission will put trust and confidence back into the sector to ensure continued investment and give people confidence as they make what is sometimes the biggest investment of their lifetime. The legislation will support the crucial work of the Building Commission and deliver on the Government's commitment to transformational reforms to secure behaviour change in the building and construction industry. Building failures increase risks to the safety of families who live in those buildings and result in home owners having to fork out large amounts of money to fix defects. Those failures tarnish the industry, drive down consumer confidence and negatively impact traders who produce quality work. The bill will take some fundamentally important steps forward and improve building regulation.

However, the Government does not intend to stop there. The bill implements the first tranche of reforms this Government expects to make as part of the biggest overhaul of New South Wales building laws in the State's

history. The Government has made a commitment to introduce a whole-of-sector building Act to consolidate and modernise all New South Wales building legislation. That is the first step to providing immediate support to the Building Commissioner and responding to issues in the construction sector. That and other reforms form part of the Government's plan to transform and rebuild public confidence in the industry. I recognise the many voices who have been exposing the substandard work and dodgy practices that are rife in the industry. In the midst of a cost-of-living crisis, the last thing many in our community can afford is a defects or damages bill through no fault of their own. But that is a reality for many in the community.

The second aspect of the legislation I will highlight is its approach to tackling insolvency and phoenixing. For the 2022-23 financial year, the construction industry experienced the highest rate of insolvency in Australia compared with all other industries. Starting a new company after a failed company is a common and lawful part of the business cycle. There is an important distinction though between legitimate insolvency process and intentional phoenixing activity. Intentional phoenixing activity is where directors intentionally create a new company to continue the business of an existing company that has been deliberately liquidated to avoid paying outstanding debts, including taxes and payments owed to subcontractors and employee entitlements.

Company directors involved in intentional phoenixing activity usually transfer the assets of an existing company to a new company without paying the assets' true value, leaving debts with the old company. Once those assets have been transferred, the old company is placed into liquidation. When the liquidator is appointed, there are no assets to sell so creditors cannot be paid. That has significant and devastating impacts on traders, suppliers and consumers. While insolvency regulation is the responsibility of the Commonwealth Government, the bill will implement measures to help the New South Wales regulator stop those people who have been involved in intentional phoenixing from creating further harm in the New South Wales construction industry. The bill provides grounds to cancel a licence, refuse an application or disqualify a person if they have been involved in the management of a company that has become insolvent in the past 10 years. This will put the onus on applicants with a history of insolvency to prove that they do not present a risk to future customers in order to get a licence.

Finally, the bill ensures accountability of building product safety by expanding requirements in the Building Products (Safety) Act and introduce new duties on all persons in the supply chain for building products. The primary duty for each person in the supply chain is to ensure that the building product they design, manufacture, supply or install meets the National Construction Code and other relevant standards and laws and is suitable and safe for its intended use. The Australian Senate report into nonconforming building products found that nonconformance occurs across electrical, lighting, plumbing, wood, steel and PVC products, which is a frightening reality. The National Electrical and Communications Association expressed concern to the Senate that nonconforming electrical products can cause electrical fires and shocks, serious injury and death, and property damage.

HPM Legrand told the Senate about how it had discovered that counterfeit versions of its socket outlets had been manufactured in China and sold in Australia without its approval. With the help of NSW Fair Trading, the supplier was tracked down and issued a fine. The bill will ensure that, going forward, the building regulator has the power it needs to create meaningful deterrents against the production of dodgy products and take swift action to prevent these products hitting New South Wales shelves. I have previously spoken about the importance of the bill to so many parts of our community, especially in Western Sydney, which is bearing the brunt of this country's housing and population growth. This legislation responds to the alarming situations and experiences of many people in our community and the growing concerns held by many stakeholders. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (16:11): I make a contribution to debate on the Building Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. Decades of fast-tracking development at the expense of design excellence, sustainability and quality workmanship has made defects in new apartments a common occurrence. In the Sydney electorate, where 80 percent of my constituents live in apartments and any new development is a multi-dwelling, I have heard shocking stories of defects like flooding balconies, fire stairwells too small for an evacuation, and cracking foundations. Getting remedies through warranties is challenging, and often the cost ends up being borne by owners through massive levies despite defects not being their fault or something they could have foreseen. The situation has been unfair and it has undermined confidence in the building sector. Exposés of substantial defects at Opal Tower and Mascot Towers, which left owners in peril and unable to live in or rent their homes while facing bankruptcy, led the previous Government to act and commence real reform.

The Building Legislation Amendment Bill continues the recent trend of restoring consumer safeguards in the building industry. It comes at a vital time, as the State prepares to increase density and build more homes. Importantly, the bill will make it harder for builders and developers to phoenix their companies to avoid liability for defects they created. Phoenixing in the construction industry has been described as endemic in New South Wales. Directors create new companies for specific projects and as the project finishes up, profits are taken, assets

are moved to other companies and the initial company is placed into liquidation, leaving owners no avenues to pursue directors for building defects. Meanwhile, those directors and managers continue to operate in the industry through different companies. The bill will make it harder for persons who have been convicted of an offence under the Corporations Act, or who were the director or involved in the management of a construction company that has gone into administration, from continuing to operate by strengthening the conditions for issuing and renewing a licence and cancelling one.

The Owners Corporation Network has identified additional loopholes that should be closed to prevent builders from continuing to work in the industry if they have attempted to avoid their obligations to fix defects. A director of a company that becomes a debtor under a judgement of money is excluded from holding a builder's licence but no-one else involved in the management of the company is penalised. Furthermore, a builder or developer whose licence is suspended because they did not comply with a court tribunal order to pay money for a defect can continue to operate in the industry via other existing licences. I ask the Minister in reply to outline how these loopholes will be addressed.

Other changes in the bill will help facilitate and encourage the uptake of decennial liability insurance, which provides significant potential to give apartment owners a simple and quick pathway to resolving defects without the costs and administrative burden. Building insurance has been vexed since the collapse of HIH in 2001. To make home warranty insurance more sustainable for insurance companies, it became a last resort scheme, with claims limited to situations where the builder died, disappeared or became insolvent. Then the scheme was simply scrapped for buildings of four or more storeys.

The introduction of the defects bond was the first real opportunity in years for owners of new multi-unit dwellings to pursue defects outside the court system. However, the bond is too low for most defect bills, has a limited availability period and requires extensive negotiation between parties. The return of insurance through the decennial liability insurance scheme provides an alternative option that is superior. Decennial liability insurance covers fixes to all identified defects within a 10-year period. It has the benefit of encouraging good building practices, with good builders more likely to get insurance and insured builders more attractive to engage and buy from. I hope decennial liability insurance grows to be useful and sustainable.

Other changes create a chain of responsibility for building products, from design, manufacture, sale, designed use and installation. Everyone across the chain will have responsibility to ensure that products are safe and that unsafe products are identified and banned. The bill also extends the Building Commission's remit from only apartments to class 1 buildings, which include houses and terraces. The Building Commissioner has been a game changer for the industry, and I pay tribute to the passion, dedication and expertise of David Chandler.

Defects in a new home are challenging, regardless of the type. If we want to clean up the building industry entirely, we should take a holistic approach to enforcement and monitoring. For most people, a home is the biggest investment, and uncovering defects is the start of a headache. Defects affect liveability, value and insurance, and can significantly disrupt life. New South Wales is discussing how to move forward with a massive lift in the number of homes under construction to help improve affordability. But building new homes will only improve affordability if people have confidence that those homes will be safe, liveable and sound. I congratulate the Government on introducing this important bill.

Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (16:17): I make a contribution to debate on the Building Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. The bill makes amendments to various Acts across the Better Regulation and Fair Trading and Building portfolios. These Acts include the Home Building Act 1989, the Building Products (Safety) Act 2017, the Building and Development Certifiers Act 2018, the Design and Building Practitioners Act 2020 and the Strata Schemes Management Act 2015. These amendments will improve accountability, responsibility and confidence in the construction industry. This Government has openly committed to a progressive reform agenda for the oversight of the New South Wales building industry. The bill progresses a range of much-needed reforms to strengthen consumer protections for home owners, ensure accountability for unsafe building products, and provide the necessary powers to address practitioners' noncompliant work and poor behaviour.

We have all heard the horror stories and seen the serious impacts that unsafe building products and noncompliant buildings can have on people's lives and livelihoods. We all know someone who has been badly impacted and suffered huge financial losses to fix building defects as a result of often illegal building practices or the use of substandard products in order to save a few dollars. Defective building work in low-rise residential construction costs Australian consumers more than \$700 million annually. We do not need to be reminded about the Opal and Mascot towers debacle. Years later, those residents are still suffering the ramifications.

The Labor Government has unashamedly committed to tackling the housing crisis. However, it will not sacrifice construction quality for quantity. That is why it is creating a standalone Building Commission and investing \$24 million in funding with more than 400 dedicated staff to confront the shonky players in the building

market. In this, the bill has teeth. The Building Legislation Amendment Bill makes changes to the Building Commissioner's enforcement powers that were recommended by the Legislative Council Public Accountability Committee report entitled *Further inquiry into the regulation of building standards*. It will enable the new Building Commission to effect behavioural change while restoring confidence to the New South Wales residential construction sector, investors and, importantly, home owners.

The bill implements the first tranche of reforms this Government expects to make as part of the biggest overhaul of New South Wales building laws in the State's history. Further reforms to building legislation will be introduced to Parliament in 2024 by way of a whole-of-sector building Act to consolidate and enhance all New South Wales legislation, thus delivering this Government's reform agenda. The bill amends the Home Building Act 1989 to introduce new powers for the building regulator to undertake proactive investigation and order rectification of building defects in low-rise residential class 1 homes during construction. This will allow early detection of defects and reduce the burden on home owners having to lodge complaints or take costly legal action to rectify any building defects.

In the 2022-23 financial year, the construction industry experienced the highest rate of insolvency in Australia compared with all other industries. It is important that we increase powers to the commissioner to prevent practitioners with a history of insolvency or illegal phoenixing from working in the building sector. So what is phoenixing? Phoenix activity occurs when a new company rises from the ashes of a former company. It is of little or no value, and it continues the business of the existing company that has been liquidated or otherwise abandoned, thus leaving debts with the old company. The new phoenix company is formed with the intention to exploit the corporate form to avoid paying outstanding debts, which can include taxes, creditor debts and employee entitlements. It is important to address this abhorrent behaviour in the building industry.

Amendments to the Building Products (Safety) Act 2017 impose a range of obligations and accountabilities on persons who form part of a building product supply chain and expand current requirements to ban and/or recall the supply of building products that are deemed to be nonconforming. A nonconforming product is a building product that does not meet the National Construction Code, standards and laws, or is not suitable or safe for its intended use. The bill introduces new duties to apply to all persons in the supply chain of building products to ensure that products that are designed, manufactured, supplied and installed in buildings are safe and compliant with the relevant standards and building codes.

It is intended that the building product safety reforms will come into force at the same time as the comprehensive building Act that the Government intends to introduce next year. This is a commonsense approach to allow time for the Government to establish the dedicated Building Commission and to educate people in the building product supply chain about their new obligations. This will also give industry appropriate time to prepare to comply with its new obligations.

The bill amends the Building and Development Certifiers Act 2018 and the Design and Building Practitioners Act 2020 to enable the building regulator to immediately suspend practitioners who are subject to a show cause notice. This means the secretary is satisfied there is, or is likely to be, a serious risk to public safety, consumers or other businesses if the practitioner is allowed to continue work until the disciplinary action is finalised. This is much welcomed news in the local government sector, where there has been significant advocacy over many years on this issue.

The bill makes administrative changes to support the new Building Commission to share information with other government agencies. Extensive consultation has been conducted on the reforms contained in the bill. In August last year the Department of Customer Service publicly consulted on a wide range of building reforms, including the reforms proposed in the bill. Stakeholders provided feedback and comment on the draft bill and accompanying regulatory impact statements. The consultation received 1,477 survey submissions and 117 submissions from consumers, tradespeople and industry associations. There was broad support for the reforms contained in the bill. Indeed, I have received positive feedback from businesses in my electorate of Penrith.

Separate public consultation was carried out between August and October this year on the proposal to introduce mandatory 10-year serious defects insurance for all new apartment buildings. The proposals contained in the bill are separate from this consultation and are intended to enable the ongoing voluntary uptake of serious defects insurance. As I said, the bill introduces commonsense reforms that the Government is committed to delivering for the people of New South Wales, and it has further reforms on the way. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (16:26): I speak in favour of the Building Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. The bill will progress a range of reforms to strengthen consumer protections for home owners, ensure accountability for unsafe building products and provide necessary powers to address practitioners' noncompliant work and poor behaviour. The Minns Government recognises the imminent need for more homes to ease pressure

in the housing market and to ensure that everyone has a safe place to live. But we cannot sacrifice quality for quantity. This Government is committed to ensuring that the tens of thousands of new homes that New South Wales needs are quality homes. To ensure that homes are built to a quality we all expect, the Government will oversee the creation of a standalone Building Commission, bolstered by \$24 million in funding and more than 400 dedicated staff to drive dodgy builders out of the market and ensure buyers get the quality homes they deserve.

The Building Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 will improve transparency, accountability and the quality of work in the building and construction industry in New South Wales. The legislation will support the crucial work of the Building Commission and deliver on the Government's commitment to transformational reforms to secure behavioural change in the building and construction industry. The Building Commission will put trust and confidence back into the sector to ensure continued investment and give people confidence as they make the biggest investment of their lifetime.

I have worked within the building industry, and I know firsthand that building failures increase safety risks to families and result in home owners having to fork out large amounts of money to fix defects. These failures tarnish the industry, drive down consumer confidence and negatively impact tradespeople who produce quality work. The bill makes amendments to various Acts across the Better Regulation and Fair Trading portfolio and the Building portfolio, including the Home Building Act 1989, the Building Products (Safety) Act 2017, the Building and Development Certifiers Act 2018, the Design and Building Practitioners Act 2020 and the Strata Schemes Management Act 2015.

The bill amends the Home Building Act 1989 to introduce new powers for the building regulator to undertake proactive investigation and order rectification of building defects in low-rise residential class 1 homes during construction and to increase its powers to prevent practitioners with a history of insolvency or illegal phoenixing from working in the building sector. Amendments to the Building Products (Safety) Act 2017 impose a range of duties and obligations on persons who form part of a building product supply chain and expand the current requirements to ban and/or recall the supply of building products that are deemed to be nonconforming. A nonconforming product is a building product that does not meet the National Construction Code, standards or laws or is not suitable or safe for its intended use. Amendments to the Strata Schemes Management Act 2015 will clarify that obtaining 10-year warranty insurance on an apartment building means that developers are exempt from certain requirements under the current strata building bond scheme and home building compensation scheme.

The bill amends the Building and Development Certifiers Act 2018 and the Design and Building Practitioners Act 2020 to enable the building regulator to immediately suspend practitioners who are subject to a show cause notice where the secretary is satisfied there is, or is likely to be, a serious risk to public safety, consumers or other businesses if the practitioner is allowed to continue to work until the disciplinary action is finalised. One of the key reforms is the expanding of proactive enforcement powers for the building regulator class 1, which is low-rise residential buildings under the Home Building Act 1989. These reforms will allow for powers of entry, inspection, rectification orders and stop-work orders during the construction phase of residential homes.

On *ABC Illawarra* radio this morning, a representative from the Master Builders Association welcomed the news of these reforms and said, "This is a good thing. If you find a defect or issue early on in the build, then that is far preferable than finding the defect once the building is handed over." Not a truer word has been spoken. While the current proactive powers for apartment buildings have resulted in significant improvements and purchaser confidence due to the early detection and remediation of defects, we must build on this momentum and expand these powers to all homes built to ease the burden on home owners having to lodge complaints or take costly legal action to rectify building defects. Inspectors will now be able to enter residential homes under construction to not only inspect the build quality and order rectification work where defects are identified but also to test materials and components to ensure that they are compliant with Australian building standards. The regulator will also be given the power to issue a stop-work order where they consider that continuing building work could lead to significant harm to the public, residents or future residents of a building.

The bill makes it clear that the Government will not tolerate builders who do not do the right thing. Failing to comply with a rectification or stop-work order will attract a maximum penalty of \$330,000 for a company and \$110,000 in any other case. Where the offence continues, the penalty amount will increase every day by \$33,000 for a company and \$11,000 for an individual. For a person who holds a contractor's licence, disciplinary actions can be taken against the person if they do not comply with a rectification or stop-work order, which can result in suspension or loss of licence.

Last year I witnessed the perfect example of a residential build where rectification work was luckily identified before the new family home was handed over. The slab had failed and, just before handover, the split-level house was filled with water which was seeping into the house from the concrete stairs that separated the two levels. While the rectification work took many months to fix, the family was extremely lucky that they

had not moved in and the works had not been signed off. It could have been a long and drawn-out process—and a costly one. If the building regulator had the powers then to proactively inspect and investigate class 1 residential homes, it is likely that this fault would have been identified and not left to pure luck and a severe thunderstorm for the issue to be identified.

As already mentioned, the bill will also expand requirements in the Building Product (Safety) Act and introduce new duties on all persons in the supply chain for building products. The definition of a "building product" will not change—building products remain any product, material or other thing that is, or could be, used in a building. The definition excludes asbestos or asbestos-related products. The supply chain will capture all people who design, manufacture, import or supply building products. It will also include people who design, draft or write plans or specifications for a building or part of a building and recommend or incorporate the use of building products, such as architects, building designers and engineers. The "supply chain" will capture those who install or do building work where a building product is used. This new regulatory framework will be enforced and overseen by a dedicated building commissioner, and the Government will ensure that the NSW Building Commission is properly equipped with the expertise and capacity to use existing and new regulatory powers to respond to defective and untrustworthy design, building work, and products across the sector.

The bill will take some fundamentally important steps forward and improve building regulation. It will implement the first tranche of reforms this Government expects to make as part of the biggest overhaul of New South Wales building laws in the State's history. The Government has made a commitment to introduce a whole-of-sector building Act to consolidate and modernise all New South Wales building legislation. The bill is a first step to provide immediate support to the NSW Building Commissioner and to respond to issues in the construction sector. It is an important step. The bill forms part of the Government's plan to transform and rebuild public confidence in the building industry. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (16:35): I am delighted to contribute to debate on the Building Legislation Amendment Bill 2023, which is incredibly important to all home owners. The purpose of the bill is quite simple: to improve transparency, accountability and the quality of work in the building and construction industry. The bill amends the Home Building Act 1989 to introduce new powers to the building regulator. Those powers will allow the regulator to undertake proactive investigations and order building defects to be rectified for low-rise or freestanding homes. This will allow the regulator to inspect homes during the construction phase to ensure that works are rectified promptly. Importantly, the increased powers will also prevent practitioners with a history of insolvency or illegal phoenixing from working in the building sector.

Amendments to the Building Products (Safety) Act 2017 will impose obligations on those who form part of the building supply chain as well as expand current requirements to ban or recall the supply of nonconforming building products—a product that does not meet the National Construction Code. Amendments to the Strata Schemes Management Act 2015 will clarify that obtaining 10-year warranty insurance on an apartment building means developers are exempt from certain requirements under the current strata building bond scheme and home building compensation scheme. Amendments to the Building and Development Certifiers Act 2018 and the Design and Building Practitioners Act 2020 will allow the regulator to suspend practitioners who are subject to a show cause notice where the secretary is satisfied there is, or is likely to be, a risk to public safety. In essence, these amendments will ensure that those in the building and construction industry who are doing the wrong thing, either deliberately or through substandard work, are held accountable.

The Minister for Planning and Public Spaces has been handed one of the most difficult jobs in New South Wales politics: rectifying the myriad of planning mistakes of the former Government. The National Housing Accord targets stipulate that 377,000 homes need to be constructed in New South Wales in the next five years. We know that we need to reduce the red tape and get on with the job of improving the housing supply, but that does not mean we should accept shonky workmanship. Quality should not come at the cost of quantity—both can coexist. Improving accountability and the quality of work in the construction industry is of the utmost importance. The Opal Tower fiasco is perhaps the greatest recent example of what happens when quality is compromised. To those residents, Opal Tower was their home and their dream. However, it has been well documented how substandard work turned that great Australian dream of owning a home into a nightmare. I cannot imagine the anxiety and devastation that the residents felt. Under those opposite, shoddy builders and tradespeople were allowed to run roughshod and sign off on work that was well below expectations.

The amendments to the Home Building Act 1989 are an enormous and vital step to ensuring new home owners can move into their homes knowing the work has been completed to a high standard. Allowing the regulator to undertake proactive investigations means shoddy workmanship will be caught earlier. It will result in substandard work being rectified a lot earlier, and it will put those looking to cut corners on notice. We know the best cure is prevention, and that is exactly what these new powers are designed to achieve. The targeting of phoenixing is also significantly important.

Phoenixing is essentially an illegal practice that sees directors of companies abandon a company or transfer the business of an existing company to a new company. They do this without paying true market value—in other words, leaving the old company with the debts. It is fraudulent, it is immoral, and it is a practice that the New South Wales Government is serious about cracking down upon. That is why, as part of these amendments, the regulator would be given the power to prevent those with a history of insolvency or illegal phoenixing from working in the building sector. I thank the Minister for his prompt action. These amendments are great news for home owners in New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (16:40): I speak in favour of the Building Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. I thank the Minister for bringing forward this important bill. The bill is very much welcomed by the residents of Shellharbour, many of whom have arrived from all over New South Wales to start a new life in the Illawarra. As existing housing is in short supply, considering the high population growth, thousands of new homes have been built in the past decade, with thousands more on the way. The Minns Labor Government is on a mission to increase housing supply, but there is no point in encouraging the building of more houses if they are of such poor quality that the owners need to move out within a few years because of major repairs.

Like many fast-growing regional areas, most homes being built in New South Wales—particularly in Shellharbour—are class 1 buildings, such as freestanding houses. Those homes are being built in both new greenfield estates, such as Wongawilli or Shell Cove, and across other suburbs, such as Oak Flats or Shellharbour Village, via knockdown and rebuild. Like any industry driven by profit, the building industry needs government oversight. For too long, a minority of builders have been allowed to get away with building houses that just are not up to scratch. Way too many houses are being built that do not comply with strict building codes. Whilst most builders across the Illawarra do the right thing, this legislation targets the incompetent and lazy builders that give all honest builders a bad name.

I know these reforms will be welcomed by most hardworking builders, who hate the dodgy builders as much as I do. We need to restore confidence amongst buyers of new homes that their builder is doing the right thing and that their new house will survive many decades, rather than just a few years, before requiring major repairs. Buying a home with major defects has been the reality for many residents of the Waterfront development in Shell Cove, where Frasers has constructed numerous houses that fell apart within a few years of being completed. Indeed, some of the increased powers outlined in the bill were requested by the Building Commissioner after he visited Shell Cove on 24 June this year. As reported in the *Illawarra Mercury* at the time, the fantastic journalist Connor Pearce stated:

The NSW Building Commissioner has inspected the defect-riddled homes in The Waterfront development in Shell Cove and come away disappointed in Shellharbour City Council's flagship project.

I can assure the House that it is not just the Building Commissioner who is disappointed. The residents of Shell Cove who are impacted by these faults are absolutely disgusted, and rightly so, as they are living with major issues with waterproofing, as well as general poor-quality build—homes so poor that the owners must think that they were built by amateurs who watched a "how-to" video on YouTube just before showing up to the building site. That is how pathetic it is in the Shell Cove area for many home owners—roof construction so poor that the owners would have been better off leaving the roof off and having the whole house open to the sky; at least it would dry faster and there would be no chance of mould. I was delighted to read some quotes from Commissioner Chandler in last week's *Sunday Telegraph*, where he stated:

The message we want to get across is it is better and cheaper to get it right than have me come along and order it to be pulled down—and I will order it to be pulled down.

Frasers will be trembling at the thought of the Building Commissioner visiting one of its class 1 homes currently under construction. Frasers has many questions to answer, and it has many apologies to make. I hope that the builders across the Illawarra are listening, because they need to do better, and the Building Commissioner will be watching. I have seen the dodgy work myself, as I drive around my electorate. Frasers and developers will no longer be able to turn a blind eye. I have spoken with so many of my constituents who are frustrated with the current system, where no-one seems to care about building works on low-rise housing sites where poor workmanship is being ignored. These customers are in a difficult position under the current legislation because they need to pursue rectification orders through courts to get justice. They are generally up against experienced builders who will use every trick in the book to minimise the amount of work that they need to do to fix the problem or to avoid paying at least the most decent compensation possible.

Taking on a builder is stressful and mentally draining, and many customers simply give up and are forced to live in dodgy homes. It is not good enough, and that is why this Minns Labor Government is taking action. The people of Shellharbour are also delighted by the anti-phoenixing provisions of the bill. Dodgy builders should not be able to close one company and start another with a different name to continue to roort hardworking home buyers out of their money. I am looking forward to welcoming the Building Commissioner back to Shell Cove after this

legislation passes. I say to Frasers and to dodgy builders that they are on notice. They should do better, do their job and get it right the first time around. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (16:46): I contribute to debate and speak in support of the Building Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. The bill will improve transparency, accountability and the quality of work in the building and construction industry in New South Wales. The building and construction industry plays a pivotal role in shaping the landscape of our communities. It is not just about erecting structures; it is about creating homes where families thrive, businesses flourish and communities come together. Therefore it is incumbent upon us to establish robust legislation that not only governs the construction process but also instils confidence in the hearts of New South Wales residents.

The New South Wales Government recognises the imminent need for more homes to ease pressure in the housing market and ensure everyone has a safe place to live, but we cannot sacrifice quality for quantity. This Government is committed to ensuring the tens of thousands of new homes that New South Wales needs are quality homes. The creation of a standalone Building Commission, bolstered by \$24 million in funding and more than 400 dedicated staff, will drive dodgy builders out of the market and ensure buyers get the quality homes they deserve. The Building Commission will put trust and confidence back into the sector to ensure continued investment and give people confidence as they make the biggest investment in their lifetime. This legislation will support the crucial work of the Building Commission and deliver on the Government's commitment to ensure behavioural change in the building and construction industry.

Building failures increase risks to the safety of families who live in those buildings and result in home owners having to fork out large amounts of money to fix those defects. These failures tarnish the industry, drive down consumer confidence and negatively impact traders who produce quality work. The bill will take some fundamentally important steps forward and improve building regulation. However, the Government does not intend to stop here. The bill implements the first tranche of reforms this Government expects to make as part of the biggest overhaul of building laws in the State's history. The Government has made a commitment to introduce a whole-of-sector building Act to consolidate and modernise all New South Wales building legislation. The bill is a first step to provide immediate support to the Building Commissioner and respond to issues in the construction sector.

I now turn to the scope of the bill. The bill makes amendments to various Acts across the Better Regulation and Fair Trading, and Building portfolios. The recent surge in building defects has cast a shadow over the dream of home ownership and the safety of our built environment in New South Wales. Recognising the high incidence of defects in the residential market, the bill specifically provides compliance and enforcement powers for low-rise residential dwellings, otherwise known as class 1 buildings under the National Construction Code. They include houses and townhouses. The bill will also introduce new duties on all persons in the supply chain of building products to ensure that products that are designed, manufactured, supplied and installed in buildings are safe and compliant to relevant standards and building codes.

To build on the momentum to date, the bill will expand those powers to class 1 low-rise residential homes. It will allow early detection of building defects and reduce the burden on home owners having to lodge complaints or take costly legal action to rectify those defects. Inspectors will be able to enter residential homes under construction to inspect build quality and order rectification work where defects are identified. Inspectors will also be able to test materials and components to ensure that they are compliant. The regulator will also be given the power to issue a stop-work order where it considers that continuing building work could lead to significant harm to the public, or residents or future residents of a building.

The bill makes it clear that the Government will not tolerate builders who do not do the right thing. Failing to comply with a rectification or stop-work order will attract a maximum penalty of \$330,000 for a company and \$110,000 in other cases. Where the offence continues, the penalty amount will increase every day by \$33,000 for a company and \$11,000 for an individual. Disciplinary action can be taken against a person who holds a contractor licence if they do not comply with a rectification or stop-work order. That can result in suspension or loss of licence. I acknowledge that random inspections and audits of low-rise residential buildings may cause delays to construction; however, delays will only result where defects are found or rectification or stop-work orders are made in response.

Delays will be offset by the benefits of improving the quality and safety of buildings and protecting consumers from having to fix defects after they move into their new home. As we deliberate on the importance of building legislation, let us remember that its impact extends far beyond the drafting of rules and regulations. It is about nurturing an environment where residents feel secure in the structures that house their dreams and aspirations. The bill prioritises safety, quality and accountability not only to construct buildings but also to build confidence, trust and a brighter future for the people of New South Wales as they make the biggest investment of their lifetime. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (16:52): I make a contribution to debate in support of the Building Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. As we are aware, the median house price in Sydney is over \$1.1 million. In other major cities, it is just below that figure. The current population of New South Wales is over eight million people and is estimated to increase by about one million in 10 years' time and nearly two million in 20 years' time. Addressing the affordable and reliable housing shortage is one of this Government's top priorities. New South Wales is projected to require 904,000 new homes over the next 20 years. That means we need to build 45,200 new homes per year, including 28,500 in Greater Sydney and 16,700 in regional New South Wales.

In New South Wales the cost of defective building work is estimated to be up to \$700 million per year. Between 2019 and 2021, NSW Fair Trading received about 11,000 complaints each year, with poor quality construction being the most common complaint for new home buyers. Other major issues raised include defective work, incomplete work and unsatisfactory performance. We need to boost housing supply but at the same time restore confidence in the building industry. The Building Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 will improve transparency, accountability and quality of work in the building and construction industry in New South Wales.

The creation of a standalone Building Commission, supported by \$24 million in funding and more than 400 staff, will drive dodgy builders out of the market and ensure that buyers get the quality homes they deserve. The Building Commission will put trust and confidence back into the sector to ensure continuing investment and to give people confidence as they make the biggest investment of their lifetime. The bill makes amendments to various Acts across the Better Regulation and Fair Trading, and Building portfolios, including the Home Building Act 1989, the Building Products (Safety) Act 2017, the Building and Development Certifiers Act 2018, the Design and Building Practitioners Act 2020 and the Strata Schemes Management Act 2015.

Schedule 1 to the bill covers compliance and enforcement and expands the current powers provided to the Building Commissioner under the Residential Apartment Buildings (Compliance and Enforcement Powers) Act 2020 for high-rise residential apartment buildings, otherwise known as class 2 buildings under the National Construction Code. The current proactive powers for apartment buildings have resulted in significant improvements in purchaser confidence due to the early detection and remediation of defects. The bill will expand those powers to class 1 low-rise residential homes. Inspectors will be able to enter residential homes under construction to inspect building quality and order rectification work where defects are identified. The regulator will also be given the power to issue a stop-work order where it considers that continuing building work could lead to significant harm to the public, or residents or future residents of a building.

The bill also has appropriate procedural fairness. Except in emergency situations, the secretary must notify the person to whom the proposed order is directed about their intention to issue an order. That will allow the person issued with a notice to make written representations to the secretary as to why the order should not be given or about the terms of the order. If required, a person could appeal a rectification or stop-work order through the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. Those procedural fairness safeguards will ensure that everyone is sufficiently protected and that the laws operate in a fair and proper manner. Failing to comply with an order will attract a maximum penalty of \$330,000 for companies and \$110,000 in other cases. That sends a clear message to the industry that the Government will not tolerate builders who do not do the right thing. Disciplinary action can be taken against a person who holds a contractor licence if they do not comply with a rectification or stop-work order. That can result in suspension or loss of licence.

Schedule 1 to the bill also covers insolvency and phoenixing. For the 2022-23 financial year, the construction industry experienced the highest rate of insolvency in Australia compared to all other industries. Starting a new company after a failed company is quite common in the business cycle; however, the intention of phoenixing activity is different. It is where directors intentionally create a new company to continue the business of an existing company that has been deliberately liquidated to avoid paying outstanding debts, including taxes; payments owed to subcontractors; and employee entitlements.

Insolvency regulation is the responsibility of the Commonwealth Government; however, the bill helps the New South Wales regulator to stop people who have been involved in intentionally phoenixing from creating further harm in the New South Wales construction industry. The bill provides grounds to cancel a licence, refuse an application or disqualify a person who has been involved in the management of a company that has become insolvent in the past 10 years. Where such a person has become bankrupt or has been a director or person involved in the management of a company in the six months prior to that company becoming insolvent, the responsibility is on them to prove they are not a risk to the industry.

Schedule 2 to the bill covers building product safety. The bill will expand requirements in the Building Products (Safety) Act and introduce new duties on all persons in the supply chain for building products, including people who design, manufacture, import or supply building products and those who install or do building work where building products are used. Nonconforming building products are products or materials that claim to be something they are not, do not meet required standards for their intended use or are marketed and supplied with

the intent to deceive those who use them. All persons in the supply chain will also need to provide certain information about building products as they pass them to the next person in the chain. The bill seeks to promote public confidence by expanding the secretary's powers to protect public safety by introducing building product warnings, supply bans and recalls while maintaining the current power to issue building product use bans.

Schedule 3 to the bill covers the decennial liability insurance, or DLI. Currently, under the Strata Schemes Management Act 2016, DLI is offered as an alternative to the strata building bond and inspections scheme for class 2 buildings. DLI is a 10-year insurance policy that provides consumers with protection where serious defects arise in common property, including the building's structure, cladding, waterproofing and fire safety systems. It covers rectification of the defect up to the contract costs of the building works, and will be provided even if the developer or builder becomes insolvent. The cost of a DLI clause is estimated to be 1.8 per cent of the project contract value, compared with lodgement of a building bond, which is currently 2 per cent.

The bill proposes administrative amendments to make clear that developers who obtain a DLI product for their class 2 apartment building project are exempt from the existing strata building bond and inspection scheme requirements. Providing those exemptions in the bill will encourage insurers to enter the market, as they will have legislative assurance that DLI products will be supported. Schedule 4 to the bill covers the suspension of an authorisation. It will amend the Building and Development Certifiers Act, and Design and Building Practitioners Act, enabling the regulator to immediately suspend a certifier or registered practitioner while disciplinary action is being finalised.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): It being 5.00 p.m., debate is interrupted for the public interest debate. I set down resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a later hour.

Public Interest Debate

ASSET PRIVATISATION

Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (17:00): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Rejects the notion that the privatisation of electricity assets left New South Wales in a strong economic position.
- (2) Rejects that privatisation of essential assets is the only way to pay for infrastructure.

I will start with a bit of a story. When preparing for this debate, I did a little bit of research in my electorate. If a member of my family had a job interview at Sydney Olympic Park at 8.30 a.m. and needed to catch public transport to get there by 8.15 a.m., that member of my family would have to leave tonight at 7.00 p.m.

Mr Matt Cross: Shame!

Mrs SALLY QUINNELL: I agree, it is a shame. What happens in my area is that everybody has to drive. When that happens, every person in my electorate needs to get onto a toll road. People were telling me quite openly that they were paying in the vicinity of \$180 a week in tolls. This is proof that the privatisation of the tolling system—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): Opposition members will take their seats. Today's public interest debate will be civil and calm.

Mrs SALLY QUINNELL: It is very interesting that there was a quote from Damien Tudehope on 8 November 2022—

Mr Rory Amon: The greatest member of Parliament.

Mrs SALLY QUINNELL: Thank you. When answering a question on ports privatisation, Damien Tudehope said:

Members opposite clearly have an interest in privatisation. They do not know how to do it. We have done it successfully. We will continue to do it successfully ...

By "members opposite", I think he meant the current Government. I would like that member to come to Western Sydney, where people in my electorate and the electorates around me continue to pay in excess of \$100 a week for toll roads, which they are forced to take because there was no investment in infrastructure—the same investment in infrastructure that was supposedly going to come with the privatisation of essential assets. I also speak of that wonderful institution, Sydney Water, and I remind all members of an event in Wollondilly during the campaign.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): The member for Camden does not require assistance from members seated on the right or the left side of the Chamber.

Mrs SALLY QUINNELL: The question was asked, "Do you support the selling of Sydney Water?", to which the Coalition quite quickly answered, "Yes".

Mr Nathan Hagarty: I remember it.

Mrs SALLY QUINNELL: I remember it too. It was very big news in my electorate. We know that they were planning to privatise Sydney Water. They were looking at the election—

Mr Nathan Hagarty: What happened to Nathaniel Smith?

Mrs SALLY QUINNELL: You're right. Nathaniel Smith, the former member for Wollondilly, was shown the door for that reason. Members opposite reassured us in 2014 that they were finished with privatisations, but we know that if it was not bolted down it was going to be sold. We know that that has not been helping the people of New South Wales. I reject the notion that the privatisation of electricity assets has left New South Wales in a strong economic position. Quite clearly, we have just been handed the biggest debt in history, not just in the past 10 years.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): Order! Opposition members will cease interjecting or I will call them to order. I remind members that several of them are on calls to order—some are not in the Chamber—and there is no reason I cannot add to the list. Government and Opposition members will cease interjecting.

Mrs SALLY QUINNELL: We have been handed the biggest debt in New South Wales history, and that is after the former Government sold the electricity assets, the Port of Newcastle, Hunter Water, WestConnex and Transgrid.

Mr Matt Cross: What about Gentrader?

Mrs SALLY QUINNELL: I am interested in the interjections of Opposition members, who obviously find privatisation to be a touchy subject. They feel the need to defend themselves, even though on 8 November 2022 Damien Tudehope said:

I am happy to stand at this podium every day of the week and talk about asset recycling and privatisation.

That is the key. The words "asset recycling"—the idea of selling something once, rather than being able to gain an income from it for many years. I find that very interesting, because I would have thought that the Opposition would be interested in investment and the way business works. As a former business owner I know the way business works: hang onto your assets and use them to gain money rather than selling everything so that you have nothing bringing money in.

I commend the motion to the House. It rejects two notions. First, that privatising electricity assets left New South Wales in a strong economic position. It is fair to say that it left this State in a much worse position—not only is it not strong but it is worse off than it was before. Secondly, it rejects the idea that privatising essential assets is the only way to pay for infrastructure. Our current budget shows that that is clearly not the case.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): The member for Miranda will come to order. I call the member for Oatley to order for the second time.

Mrs SALLY QUINNELL: It was easy to see that in this year's budget some very important pieces of infrastructure were funded without the need for privatisation. I am proud to be part of a government that has protected the public ownership of Sydney Water in the Constitution. We are drawing a line under privatisation.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): Before I call the member for Miranda, I welcome Mayor Paul Phillips and General Manager Greg Tory to the public gallery. I am sure that the council chambers of Lachlan Shire Council are much more civil than this Chamber is at times. I hope they enjoy their experience of Parliament.

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (17:08): It is quite an interesting motion that we are debating today. Members opposite—and I say to the member for Camden that opposite does mean opposite in the Chamber—claim to be warriors against asset recycling, but they were all very happy to take the proceeds of the WestInvest program for their electorate. The member for Camden wants to talk about her electorate, so let us talk about it. The Camden local government area [LGA] received nearly \$120 million from the WestInvest program.

Mr Nathan Hagarty: Do you know the difference between the LGA and the—

Ms ELENi PETINOS: That is how the figures get reported: by LGA on the public record. Thank you very much, member for Leppington. I say to the people of the Camden electorate that their member of Parliament does not support their right to get infrastructure in their local area. That's right, their member of Parliament does

not support investments into their community, such as the \$24.7 million to the Scalabrini North project, \$4 million into the Camden Community Nursery—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): Government members will come to order.

Ms ELENi PETINOS: —\$14.9 million into the Liz Kernohan Drive intersection upgrade, \$1.5 million into the pedestrian access and mobility plan project, and \$11.7 million into the Amity College New Primary School stage two project. For the benefit of those opposite, these investments are all in the Camden LGA. Those opposite clearly do not understand—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Miranda will resume her seat. Government members, including the member for Leppington and the member for Penrith, will come to order. The member for Leppington has interjected a number of times. He will be called to order if he continues to do so.

Mr Rory Amon: I think he should go on a call.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): I do not require assistance from the member for Pittwater. The member for Oatley has also interjected a number of times. I remind him that he is on two calls to order. The member for Miranda has the call.

Ms ELENi PETINOS: There was another \$7.7 million for the Camden Civic Centre, \$9.7 million for the Narellan Town Centre, nearly \$1 million for the Ultimate Nature Challenge, \$23.1 million for Camden Town Centre enhancements and \$21.3 million for Scalabrini East. There has been so much money for members of that community, all of whom use these projects, whether they are within the Camden boundaries or just around the area. Those are big wins for the local community. Those opposite do not want to see that money go into the local community.

Members know that the Premier develops his policies in 120 characters on Twitter. He has consistently claimed that he will stop privatisation, but clearly the Premier suffers from privatisation amnesia. When the New South Wales Labor Party was last in government, it sought to privatise New South Wales electricity generation with the Gentrader transactions, a botched transaction that saw the people of New South Wales lose \$1.85 billion. If anyone is an expert on botching electricity privatisation and leaving New South Wales worse off, it is Labor.

It was the Premier who led the charge within Labor to overturn the party's policy of banning privatisation in order to privatise Parklea prison. Even worse, it was the Premier who, when he was chief of staff to John Robertson, signed off on the privatisation of Parklea prison, a rushed privatisation that was incredibly disastrous and led to a serious lapse in security and major problems with contraband. The Premier says that "privatisation doesn't work", but what he actually means is that he doesn't know how privatisation works. Members on this side of the House know you cannot trust Labor to run the State and you certainly cannot trust it to not privatise things badly. I am so gravely concerned about this motion that I seek to amend it. I move:

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

- (1) Notes that the Minns Labor Government is undertaking "privatisation by stealth" by waging war against New South Wales bowling clubs.
- (2) Notes that asset recycling has enabled the delivery of infrastructure that would otherwise not exist, such as the Sydney Metro Northwest, NorthConnex, WestConnex, Rozelle interchange, regional bridge infrastructure, schools and hospitals.

I believe this is such an important debate and one worth having. We highlight to everyone in the community that those opposite truly do not support investing in our schools, our infrastructure and the regions. Labor members do not know where the regions are. All that Labor has been doing of late is increasing the rent on the poor Bondi Bowling Club, which is why I include that in my amendment. We are talking about the impact on bowling clubs so let us talk about Bondi Bowling Club. It has suffered a 425 per cent rent hike. It is a volunteer-run, not-for-profit cooperative bowling club that has seen its rent increase from \$22,000 per year to \$95,000. That is nearly \$100,000 in rent on a bowling club.

Mr Rory Amon: That's bad.

Ms ELENi PETINOS: That is bad, as the member for Pittwater says to those opposite. Labor cannot manage the economy, cannot manage the budget and cannot do anything economically responsible. It is little wonder that those opposite do not understand that the measures we took in government have benefited— [*Time expired.*]

Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (17:14): Today I speak on this important matter. I thank the member for Camden for bringing this motion to the House regarding the alarming concerns about privatisation.

Specifically, we must confront the misguided notion that privatisation, especially that of electricity assets, has left our great State in a position of economic strength. In fact, our financial position after 12 years of the Coalition Government's reckless spending and budget deficit is a clear demonstration to the contrary. Further, we must challenge the fallacy that selling off essential assets, or "asset recycling", is the sole path to finance crucial infrastructure projects.

We have witnessed the repercussions of privatisation in the electricity sector, an experiment that has left consumers and workers worse off. The fragmented and mostly privatised electricity system has become a quagmire for electricity consumers, with costs soaring as consumers foot the bill for exorbitant increases in management, administration and marketing expenses. For example, the sale of the Vales Point generating station for a nominal \$1 million—later revalued at \$730 million—stands as a symbol of the mismanagement of public assets. It was an historical blunder that reverberates through our economic history.

The list of such blunders is long, but my personal favourite is Eraring Energy, sold for \$50 million by the previous Government, which then tried to buy it back for \$239 million; it paid over \$3.1 million to advisers. Then there were Mount Piper and Wallerawang power stations, Green State Power, Bayswater and Liddell power stations, Colongra Power Station, Vales Point Power Station, Transgrid, Brown Mountain Hydro, Ausgrid, the Country Energy retail business, the Energy Australia retail business and the Integral Energy retail business.

The Australia Institute's report entitled *The Costs of Market Experiments* further reinforces the detrimental effects of privatisation on electricity prices. It exposes how the relative price of electricity has surged due to the fundamental shift in the industry's economic structure post-privatisation. The further privatisation of critical transportation infrastructure, including ports and airports, has not fared any better. Instead of fostering competition and efficiency, privatisation has enabled private investors to prioritise profits over public access, reliability and fair user fees. The privatisation of Port Botany, taxed with restrictive monopoly terms, obstructed the much-needed expansion of container traffic through the Port of Newcastle, illustrating how privatisation explicitly interferes with efficiency rather than enhancing it.

Even urban bus services have not been spared, with private operation leading to adverse effects on reliability and working conditions. Members have heard in this place about kids being left on the side of the road while trying to get to and get back from school. A legislative committee in New South Wales has documented reductions in service frequency and quality associated with private ownership, prompting recommendations to bring those services back under public delivery.

The evidence is clear: Privatisation, even in seemingly unrelated sectors, disrupts services, diminishes reliability, compromises the wellbeing of workers and threatens jobs. There are well-documented case studies from overseas following privatisation debacles where governments have had to buy back the assets at exorbitant prices. In the context of comprehensive privatisation in New South Wales, we must learn from the mistakes of the previous Coalition Government. Privatisation across various sectors has consistently demonstrated its shortcomings.

The collective electorates of New South Wales have said enough is enough. As we stand on the precipice of decisions regarding essential services, let us reject the illusion that privatisation is the only path to economic strength. Instead, let us explore innovative financial models that prioritise the long-term interests of the people of New South Wales. This Labor Government has those long-term interests clearly in its view. In conclusion, the lessons from past privatisations echo through our concerns about comprehensive privatisation. Let us not be blinded by the false promises of economic strength through privatisation. Instead, let us embrace responsible governance, protect essential services and ensure that the public interest prevails over short-term gains. The people of New South Wales deserve no less. I commend the motion to the House.

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (17:19): It gives me great pleasure to contribute to the public interest debate. Before I do, many members know that I often quote Bob Carr in the House. I place on record my condolences to Bob on the passing of his wife, Helena. Gessika and I were very sorry to hear the news. It is good to have his successor in the Chamber, the member for Maroubra. I think it is important to mention that.

Mr Michael Daley: Thank you. That is very nice of you.

Mr MATT CROSS: As I said, I quote Bob Carr in the House quite a bit, and today I continue to do so. When we talk about privatisation or asset recycling, often in the Chamber those opposite forget that there was a history before the 2011 election. It is important that we tell everyone about what their record was when they were last in government that particularly involved privatisation. This motion has come up many times. I remember on budget day we debated this motion. It very much feels like groundhog day. To those people in the Premier's office who think about what to debate today, can they please come up with something original? We have debated this on and off. I will continue to remind the House about what Labor did when it was last in government between

1995 and 2011. Let us look at Labor's greatest hits of privatisation. In 1998, TAB, privatised by Labor; 2002—FreightCorp, privatised; 2002—Integral Energy, privatised; 2002—Powercoal, privatised; 2003—Pacific Power, privatised.

Opposition members: Privatised.

Mr MATT CROSS: In 2004—Plug & Power, privatised.

Opposition members: Privatised.

Mr MATT CROSS: In 2005—Qstores and cmSolutions, privatised.

Opposition members: Privatised.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): Order! Opposition members will remain silent. We do not require a chorus response. The member for Davidson has the call.

Mr MATT CROSS: In 2010—NSW Lotteries, privatised; 2011—WSN Environmental Solutions, privatised. Of course, much of this happened under the premiership of Bob Carr. What does Bob say in his book *Run For Your Life* that I continually read? The member for Mount Druitt is frustrated that I continue to bring it up. He states:

Our privatisations also made this point. There were three big ones—the TAB, freight rail and coalmines, but because the Ministers won over the relevant unions, when it came to these last two potentially controversial ones, they got through the system without attention.

I tell those on the other side: They privatised. To come into the House and pretend that history started in 2011 is completely false. Members might know the quote from Mo Ibrahim that says:

We should practice what we're preaching. Otherwise, we are hypocrites.

I call it out. Those opposite are hypocrites when it comes to privatisation. They privatised over 20 New South Wales Government enterprises between 1995 and 2011. There is one particular asset that was privatised that I bring to the attention of the House, and that is none other than the Gentraders. They complain that electricity assets cannot be privatised because prices go up. Guess what? They did. There is an interesting article from 15 December 2010, which states:

The NSW Government has sold a giant slab of the state's electricity assets for \$5.3 billion, completing a late-night deal with power generators.

There you have it. It goes on:

After a day of high drama in which eight of the 11 board members of two of the state's power generators quit in protest ...

Who were they? One was none other than Michael Knight, who I understood was helping with some transition. I am sure he gave some advice about when this Government privatises next, how to do it properly. Of course, four out of six directors of Eraring Power Station quit the board. Those opposite have really great form when it comes to privatisation. Are they doing it again? They are moving these motions. I came across this media release from the Australian Greens dated 21 August 2023. It states:

Today the NSW Minns Labor Government has broken an election promise and shamefully announced it will press ahead with plans to privatise half of the Waterloo South public housing estate.

There you go. What else is the Government doing? On 1 November *The Daily Telegraph* stated:

Premier Chris Minns has been accused of waging a war on local bowlos with crippling rent rises of up to 1,100 per cent, with claims the NSW government is attempting 'privatisation by stealth' ...

I will leave it there—absolute hypocrites. [*Time expired.*]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): Order! The member for Terrigal will come to order. The member for Leppington will come to order.

Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (17:24): I contribute to the public interest debate and highlight the former Government's appalling record regarding privatisation. History shows that those opposite sold anything they could get their grubby hands on. They treated our State's public assets like items at an auction, selling everything they possibly could to the highest bidder. They justified this abhorrent course of action by saying our State would be much better off financially as a result. It was a blatant lie, and they knew it.

When the Minns Labor Government was elected on 25 March, the State's finances were in disarray: \$188 billion of debt and \$7 billion in unfunded commitments. It is the legacy those opposite have left after 12 long years. In 2013 Eraring Power Station, located in Lake Macquarie, was sold off. The member for Hornsby decided to offer almost \$240 million to keep the power station open for another three years. The negotiations regarding

the Eraring Power Station debacle ultimately failed, but not before those opposite spent \$3.1 million on advisers. That is not what I would describe as responsible fiscal management.

In 2014 the Liberal and The Nationals turned their attention to the Liddell and Bayswater power stations. They were eventually sold as a two-for-one deal worth \$1.7 billion. One year later Transgrid was privatised for \$10.3 billion; 50.4 per cent of Ausgrid and Endeavour was sold off in 2016 and 2017 respectively for a total of \$23.8 billion. Even the Land Titles Office was not safe. It went for \$2.6 billion. Not too far away from my electorate of Heathcote, the Kurnell desalination plant was sold in 2012 for \$2.3 billion.

Mr Matt Cross: What about the lotteries?

Ms MARYANNE STUART: You've had your go; be quiet. Those opposite had not been in government for two years before their privatisation-happy agenda began to take shape: Port Botany for \$4.3 billion; Port Kembla for \$760 million; and the Port of Newcastle for \$7.75 billion also had to go in the great New South Wales fire sale. It took \$9.3 billion for those opposite to hand over half of WestConnex in 2018. Of course, we know three years and an extra \$11 billion later, the rest of WestConnex followed suit. One of the first acts of the Minns Labor Government was to put an end to selling off State assets, and that is why the ownership of Sydney Water is now protected in the Constitution. The move not only protected a great State asset for future generations, but it also importantly sent a message to those opposite: Keep your hands off Sydney Water.

Those opposite have claimed that selling off those public-owned assets was a move to raise funds for projects throughout the State, but good governments are visionaries—they do not focus solely on the present. Anyone who has run a household budget knows that if you pawn everything you own, there is nothing to fall back on when you really need it. That is something those opposite failed miserably to comprehend. Selling off State assets like the Land Titles Office for a one-off lump sum injection puts an end to a valuable income stream. State assets all act like rivers that feed into the one big pool. By selling those assets, those opposite essentially dammed a vital funding stream, which in turn impacts the overall level of the pool. As a result, they put New South Wales finances into a state of drought. I read with interest some quotes from a member in the other place, Chris Rath, regarding his take on privatisation. On 30 May he was quoted as saying:

Those opposite should look carefully at their language when they say that privatisation has been bad for this State. I think it has been a good thing.

Mr Matt Cross: Who said that?

Ms MARYANNE STUART: Chris Rath.

Mr Matt Cross: Who's that?

Ms MARYANNE STUART: Listen. Stop talking and listen, as I sat and listened to you. The same respect should apply. It is a debate. I cannot fathom how anyone would believe that the mass privatisation undertaken by the former Government was beneficial to the State. It beggars belief that someone could actually form that view. The appalling financial mismanagement by those opposite has left our State in a precarious financial position. We are lucky to have a Treasurer like the Hon. Daniel Mookhey. If there is anyone that will clean up the mess left by the former Government, it is our Treasurer. When the people of New South Wales voted for a Minns Government, they sent a clear message that the privatisation had to stop. We certainly got the message, and so did members of the Opposition.

Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater) (17:29): Can anyone smell that? Can you smell that?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): The member for Pittwater will direct his comments through the Chair.

Mr RORY AMON: The Government benches reek of the smell of rank hypocrisy.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Terrigal will come to order. The Attorney General will leave the Chamber quietly.

Mr RORY AMON: The member for Maroubra has quite rightly been very quiet during this debate, signing his Christmas cards and going through his briefs. He knows the history of privatisation and the benefits that privatisation can deliver to the State of New South Wales and has delivered for Australia and various other States. The AG is the OG of privatisation. As the member for Davidson rightly said, Labor delivered various privatisations to the people of New South Wales. It is interesting to note that the only Government members who spoke in this debate were only just elected. That is because no other member of Parliament with any knowledge of history or any shame would speak against the virtues and the benefits of privatisation. Members know and have seen firsthand, not only after the former Government—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Davidson will come to order. The member for Terrigal will come to order. The member for Pittwater does not need their support; he is doing a fine job.

Mr RORY AMON: It is apt that the member for Maroubra has been replaced in the Chamber by the member for Monaro, who also knows the virtues and the benefits of privatisation. Coming back to the essence of the debate, the motion rejects the notion that privatisation left the State in a strong economic position. But we know that of the \$178 billion invested in infrastructure by the former Government, only \$35-odd billion came from asset recycling. The balance came from good fiscal management, good running of the State and adequate fiscal and financial controls and policies. This Government has absolutely no plan to fund infrastructure and is cancelling it. The Government and the Labor Party are projecting their own inadequacies upon our Government. They know that whenever they have privatised things, the State has been left worse off. They know that when we privatise things, the State is left better off.

There is a reason you do not give a motor vehicle to a child. They will crash it; they cannot be trusted. In the same way, the State of New South Wales should not be given to the Labor Party because it does not know how to drive it. It will be a train wreck; it will be a car crash. When the Coalition is behind the wheel, as responsible drivers on our full licence, we drive up those beautiful motorways that we have built and down those gold-paved highways that we have rolled out across New South Wales, and travel on the Parramatta Light Rail and on WestConnex. One of the great things about asset recycling is that we not only get to keep the old TV and watch it but also get a brand new TV and get to watch that too. Members can have a wonderful experience on WestConnex, missing over 50-odd traffic lights and saving 40 minutes. If they do not want to use that road, that is fine; they can use Parramatta Road and save time too because we have diverted traffic onto a toll road so the quality of life is improved for everyone.

Ms Donna Davis: On the northern beaches.

Mr RORY AMON: On the northern beaches this Government cut infrastructure. We do not recycle any infrastructure on the northern beaches because Labor sells off the only infrastructure we have—like Beacon Hill High School, which it closed when it was last in government, and various other assets—or cuts projects that were not funded through asset recycling but rather the good fiscal management of the former Government. Asset recycling proceeds went into the Restart NSW fund. I note the member for Lismore was quite a fan of that fund. She begged the then Minister for Regional Transport and Roads in writing for money from the fruits of privatisation, calling for Transport for NSW to expedite a project. I thought what she said was very interesting. She said, "Fund it from Restart NSW." Labor members are happy to extol privatisation or campaign against privatisation, but when the benefits improve the lives of every member's constituents they are nowhere to be seen. I am baffled and confused and, quite frankly, I am very disappointed in every single one of them.

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (17:35): I welcome the motion moved by the member for Camden as a matter of genuine public interest. I believe the essence of the motion is that it is right to now rethink the drive to privatise and its value. After nigh on four or five decades of a neoliberal conservative approach to economics—some of which I admit has been necessary—it seems that the privatisation drive has meant a downsizing of government and a downsizing of accountability. I illustrate that by describing a project in my electorate that I think has suffered from the privatisation mania, and that is the privatisation of electricity assets and the effect it has had on the HumeLink powerline project. That project is highly unpopular, delivering massive overhead powerlines suspended from giant pylons through some of my electorate's most economically valuable and scenically beautiful country.

The problem is not that the project is providing infrastructure for renewable energy. I acknowledge, as do the people in my electorate, the importance of renewable energy and the importance of linking those sources in the grid. The issue is that the project is essentially being driven by the need for low costs and providing a return on investment for company and pension fund shareholders rather than by what is best for the community. That price-driven priority has meant a lack of community consultation. At the start, the people affected by the project who were having this infrastructure rammed through their properties were basically ignored. That affected their wellbeing. The stress was intense.

After much fighting and advocating, we were able to get an improvement on community consultation. But why was it so hard to get that consultation on a publicly funded project? Where was the Government? The question is did that privatisation mean we had outsourced government? We did get route changes and some increases in compensation, but even after all that we are still being told we need to accept overhead powerlines. Members have heard me speak about overhead powerlines in this Parliament before, and I will continue to speak about them. They are ugly and they are going through the beautiful Snowy Valleys country. It will wreck the environment. We are sacrificing valuable farmland and scarring our landscape—not to mention the increased risk of bushfire in one of the State's most bushfire-prone regions.

The project is planned and conceived on economic grounds, but economics is about more than price; it is about communities. Numbers are not just dollar figures; they are about people. As for privatisation, we have a decision divorced from government agencies and government oversight, and our communities are paying the price. There is a solution that will deliver the renewable energy links and the aims of the project, and that is to put the powerlines underground. That process has been shown to be less expensive than the developers claimed, and would put people before profits and long-term benefit before short-term gain. It is not too late to choose undergrounding as an option. It is the right decision for future generations. When government is downsized and government accountability is outsourced, the short term is chosen over the long term—and that is one of the flaws of privatisation.

The decision-making process for our community assets must be about doing what is best and not what is cheapest. Unfortunately, in my view, with overhead powerlines we are doing a cheap, short-term gain and not getting the long-term benefit that our communities deserve. Communities feel as though the Government has been removed from them for the sake of private profit. They believe things are happening to them, not for them. The lesson is that when it comes to privatisation, be careful—be very, very careful. I accept that there are situations where it has been of use—and I acknowledge the points made by the members of the Opposition—but, at the end of the day, we must not outsource government. That is absolutely fundamental. Government by the people, of the people, for the people is something that we must retain, hence I welcome this motion and the caution it brings to the issue of privatisation. As far as my electorate is concerned, we can begin to recover the community's confidence by putting those powerlines underground.

Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (17:40): In reply: I thank all the members who spoke in this public interest debate. The member for Miranda talked about a lot of areas around my electorate but very few actually in my electorate, which is really quite telling. She said that people in my electorate do not support getting infrastructure, but they spoke loudly in March about what they thought they were getting from the former Government. The member for Miranda also stated that she cannot trust the Minns Government to run the New South Wales economy, yet it is clear that the people of New South Wales have. The member for Penrith talked about how the privatisation of power infrastructure and assets has led to a quagmire for electricity users. Not only is it hard for users to interface with the companies, but we have also seen the relative price of electricity surge. That has interfered with the efficiency of delivery and compromised the wellbeing of workers, which Labor members are very passionate about. I thank the member for Davidson—I think!—for the history lesson. The important thing is to learn from history.

Mr Matt Cross: It was about all your privatisation.

Mrs SALLY QUINNELL: Be quiet. You've said enough. I thought it was interesting that the member for Davidson needed to get his information on how to challenge us from The Greens. The member for Heathcote spoke next. She outlined the \$188 billion debt, which quite clearly is not a strong—or even an okay—economic situation for New South Wales to be in. She also spoke about how the privatisation agenda was called the great New South Wales fire sale and that Labor has committed to making sure that Sydney Water is protected. It was interesting that she brought up information that made me think that it has to be about long-term interest for New South Wales, not short-term cash. That is the difference between the Government and the Opposition.

The member for Pittwater gave us a history lesson. He is right; the AG is the OG. It was interesting that he spoke about Parramatta Road, because I guarantee that hardly anyone who has been on Parramatta Road is extolling the virtues of how quickly you go on it. The member for Wagga Wagga spoke very effectively about how our job here is not to allow the downsizing and outsourcing of government and accountability. That is very important. People need to have accountability over the assets they need. This Government is talking about looking after New South Wales in a way that is better, not cheaper.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): The member for Camden has moved a motion, to which the member for Miranda has moved an amendment. The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes31
Noes48
Majority.....17

AYES

Amon, R
Anderson, K
Ayyad, T
Clancy, J

James, T
Kemp, M
Lane, J
Layzell, D

Singh, G (teller)
Sloane, K
Speakman, M
Taylor, M

AYES

Cooke, S	Marshall, A	Thompson, T
Coure, M	Perrottet, D	Toole, P
Cross, M	Petinos, E	Ward, G
Crouch, A (teller)	Preston, R	Williams, R
Davies, T	Roberts, A	Williamson, R
Di Pasqua, S	Saunders, D	Wilson, F
Hodges, M		

NOES

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

PAIRS

Griffin, J	Car, P
Henskens, A	Minns, C
Kean, M	Saliba, D
Provest, G	Park, R
Tuckerman, W	Atalla, E
Williams, L	Cotsis, S

Amendment negatived.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bills

BUILDING LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2023

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (17:56): I continue my contribution to the debate in support of the Building Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. Schedule 4 to the bill covers suspension of authorisation. The bill will amend the Building and Development Certifiers Act and the Design and Building Practitioners Act to enable the regulator to immediately suspend a certifier or registered practitioner while disciplinary action is being finalised. The regulator must be satisfied there is, or is likely to be, a serious risk to public safety, consumers or other businesses if the licence holder is allowed to continue to work while disciplinary proceedings are in progress. This power is already in place for builders and contractors under the Home Building Act. A suspension will be in place for a maximum of 60 days at a time and may be extended if the cause of action continues. I understand the New South Wales Government will continue to consolidate and modernise the State's building legislations. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (17:58): I speak in support of the Building Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. Across New South Wales, the number of new buildings plagued with defects is simply unacceptable.

Therefore, I welcome the bill, which will improve transparency, accountability and the quality of work in the building and construction industry in this State. New South Wales is in the throes of a housing crisis that does not discriminate. Right across the State, the pressure to increase housing supply is great, but we cannot sacrifice quality for quantity.

Our Government is committed to ensuring that the new homes that New South Wales needs are quality homes. The first step to achieving this is the creation of a standalone Building Commission. With more than 400 dedicated staff, the Building Commission will have a pure focus on removing dodgy builders from the industry and ensuring that families and individuals across our State get the quality homes they deserve. This will not be an easy fix. Our Government has provided \$24 million in funding and a strong legal framework to ensure the Building Commission delivers on our commitment to transformational reforms to secure behavioural change in the building and construction industry.

All of us remember Christmas Eve 2018, when in my electorate over 3,000 people living in or near the Opal Tower in Sydney Olympic Park were evacuated. That 34-storey apartment building, consisting of 392 apartments, was approved in June 2015 via a State-significant development approval. The building was found to have inconsistencies in its structure related to under-design and the use of lower quality materials. The failings within the building and construction industry uncovered by the Opal Tower incident were not the first and have definitely not been the last of their kind. Unfortunately, building failures have continued to be identified, increasing risks to the safety of families and individuals who live in those buildings and resulting in home owners having to fork out large sums of money to fix defects.

Those failures have tarnished the industry in New South Wales, reduced consumer confidence and negatively impacted tradespeople who produce quality work. Our Government has made a commitment to introduce a whole-of-sector building Act to consolidate and modernise all New South Wales building legislation. The bill is a first step to provide immediate support to the Building Commissioner and respond to issues in the construction sector, forming part of a holistic plan to transform and rebuild public confidence in the industry.

The recent surge in building defects has gravely impacted people in my local community. People who have invested their savings and taken out mortgages to knock down freestanding homes and build duplexes have ended up tens and even hundreds of thousands of dollars out of pocket trying to fix the unfixable due to shoddy workmanship from people masquerading as builders who have not spent a day of their lives on the tools. This has broken hearts and driven people to their wits' end while they deal with the unthinkable: failure to adhere to hydraulic engineering plans, resulting in internal flooding when it rains; failure to remove spoil and building waste and instead dumping it on the property; noncompliance with Australian standards for electrical and plumbing works; failure to comply with the BASIX statement; tradespeople with no trade qualifications working on building sites; and double garages that cannot fit one let alone two cars. This is unacceptable.

I welcome this bill because it makes amendments to various Acts across the Better Regulation and Fair Trading portfolio and the building portfolio. By recognising the high incidence of defects in the residential market, this bill specifically provides compliance and enforcement powers for low-rise residential dwellings, including houses and townhouses. The bill will ensure that individuals are held accountable for intentionally phoenixing and will clarify requirements for decennial liability insurance being taken up as an alternative to the existing strata building bond. The bill will also introduce new duties on all persons in the supply chain of building products to ensure that the products that are designed, manufactured, supplied and installed in buildings are safe and compliant with relevant standards and building codes.

The bill expands on the current powers provided to the Building Commissioner under the Residential Apartment Buildings (Compliance and Enforcement Powers) Act for high-rise residential apartment buildings. The current proactive powers for apartment buildings have resulted in significant improvements and purchaser confidence due to the early detection and remediation of defects. I welcome that this bill will expand these powers to class 1 low-rise residential homes, allowing for the early detection of defects and reducing the burden on home owners having to lodge complaints or take costly legal action to rectify building defects.

Inspectors will be able to enter residential homes under construction to inspect build quality and order rectification work where defects are identified. Inspectors will also be able to test materials and components to ensure that they are compliant. The regulator will be given the power to issue a stop work order where they consider that continuing building work could lead to significant harm to the public, residents or future residents of a building. Importantly, the bill embeds appropriate procedural fairness safeguards to ensure that everyone is sufficiently protected and that the laws operate in a fair and proper manner.

This is a hard row to hoe. I commend the Minister for his tenacity and commitment to find solutions to the problems New South Wales is experiencing in our building and construction industry. Those doing the wrong thing have been getting away with it for far too long, putting profits ahead of public reputation and profiteering at

the expense of others. The Building Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 will help to restore common sense, transparency, accountability, quality of work and faith in this sector at a time when it is so desperately needed. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (18:04): The Building Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 will protect community members across New South Wales by ensuring improved transparency and accountability while guaranteeing that the quality of work in the building and construction industry across New South Wales is of the utmost importance. The Government is committed to significantly increasing housing supply across our State, ensuring affordability and access to housing for all. However, this increase cannot come at the cost of quality.

Home ownership is an Australian dream. As a young child living off the grid in a caravan my dad made, I realised that owning a home was important in life and that having a tangible building was important to getting ahead. That is what most Australians aspire to and lots of Australians have achieved. In achieving this dream, it is important that our community is given the confidence to feel secure when they make the biggest investment of their lives. This bill is part of the first tranche of reforms that make up the biggest overhaul of building laws in our State's history, restoring integrity and accountability to our building and construction system. I commend the Minister and his team for their work.

By providing immediate support to the Building Commissioner, the bill takes swift action to address issues in our community. This comes without action from the previous Government, and it should have happened before now. Importantly, the bill will give inspectors the right to enter residential homes under construction to inspect building quality and order rectification works where building defects are found. The bill will further give the regulator the right to issue a stop work order in a case where significant harm to the public, residents or future residents may occur.

It is sad that this bill comes too late for some of the residents of my electorate. The member for Parramatta spoke about Opal Tower in her electorate. In Gosford, we have another dire situation for 54 apartments in the Vue building on Kendall Street. The residents came to see me to tell me about it. The builder went into liquidation along the way and the project was taken over by renowned local investor Tony Denny. Unfortunately, it is a disaster. The building contains over \$800,000 worth of defects—the common areas have rain coming through them, and some apartments have leaking windows and doors, meaning the residents cannot live there during the rainy season. The water defects are a disappointment.

It is sad that it has come to the point of needing to legislate to make sure builders do their jobs properly. So many people in the Vue apartment building and other apartment buildings have been left by builders who went into liquidation partway through construction. People's life savings go into their homes, and they do not have enough money to pay to rectify defects. There is not enough money in the pot of the apartments to keep repairing the shoddy work. Residents bought into those apartments in good faith.

While this legislation is too late for the residents of the Vue apartments, it will benefit consumers at the end of the supply chain in the future. High-profile examples of poor building works have cast a shadow over home ownership in our community, which is sad as the Gosford community moves into the apartment era. I am confident that the current builders of ALAND and St Hilliers will do an excellent job for our community on the first high-rise building in the area.

The bill ensures that there is now oversight and that the commissioner has the power to shine a light on poor practice across the industry. The bill also protects consumers from contractors who phoenix by intentionally creating a new company to avoid the consequences of the liquidation of existing debts. For an industry which has experienced a high rate of insolvency in Australia—the second-highest of all industries compared with other industries—this issue is of significant concern across the community. By requiring individuals who have become bankrupt or directors who have been involved in a company that has become insolvent in the previous six months to prove that they are not a risk for consumers, the New South Wales Government is committed to protecting our community from dodgy dealings.

From large-scale builds to the great Australian dream, our community should be able to trust that work will be completed to a high-quality standard, and this bill will ensure that that trust will be restored. I commend the work of the Minister in bringing the bill to the House. Knowing that we have confidence in the industry moving forward, people will be able to not only buy and live in their great Australian dreams but also keep them to sufficient standards.

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (18:10): The Building Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 amends the Home Building Act 1989 to introduce new powers for the building regulator. The bill is designed to progress a range of reforms to strengthen consumer protections for home owners, ensuring accountability for unsafe building products, and to provide necessary powers to address practitioners, noncompliant work and poor

behaviour. This in turn will improve transparency, accountability and quality of work in the building and construction industry in New South Wales.

The bill aligns with the Government's commitment to tackling the housing supply crisis after a decade of inaction that allowed the quantity of homes to come at the expense of the quality of homes. The NSW Building Commissioner will have the power to enter any apartment or freestanding home in New South Wales to uncover defects before completion of buildings. The NSW Building Commission will also get more than 400 dedicated staff and a \$24 million funding boost. This will allow it to scale up to ensure quality buildings are being delivered in New South Wales, many of which are being built in my electorate of Leppington. Supercharging the regulator's powers will ensure that, as the State meets the urgent need for more homes, buyers can be confident about the quality of home they are buying. These measures are further supported by the Minns Government's commitment to develop a pattern book endorsing housing designs for low-rise and mid-rise buildings that will also enhance the continuity of quality standards across new developments.

The bill will expand proactive enforcement powers for the building regulator in class 1 low-rise residential buildings. It will impose obligations and accountability on all persons in the building product supply chain to ensure the design, manufacture, supply and installation of safe and compliant building products. It will give the Secretary building product warnings, product use bans and product recall powers to ensure quick responses to the use of unsafe or non-conforming building products. It will clarify the framework for 10-year building warranty insurance to increase consumer protections. The bill will also enable immediate suspension of key building design and certifier practitioners' authorities where allowing them to continue to work would pose a serious risk to public safety consumers or other businesses. Finally, it will ensure existing data- and information-sharing arrangements continue to support the NSW Building Commission when it is established.

Consultation on the reforms has been extensive. In August 2022 the Department of Customer Service publicly consulted on a wide range of building reforms, including the reforms proposed in this legislation. Stakeholders were invited to provide comment on the draft bill and accompanying regulatory impact statements. The consultation received well over 1,000 submissions and 177 submissions from consumers, tradespeople and industry associations, and there was broad support for the reforms contained in the bill. Separate public consultation was carried out in August, September and October of this year on the proposal to introduce mandatory 10-year serious defects insurance for all new apartment buildings. The proposals contained in the bill are separate from that consultation and are intended to enable the ongoing voluntary intake of serious defects insurance.

Last Sunday, I was pleased to have the Premier, Minister Chanthivong and the Building Commissioner at Leppington to mark the expected passage of this legislation. We were at HomeWorld Leppington. I think many people are familiar with HomeWorld—there are now five; one of the newer ones is at Leppington—where some of the better builders in our industry get together to display homes and give consumers a choice in one area. One of the houses we inspected was by reputable builder Eden Brae Homes—the first builder to receive certification on the quality of its class 1 residential buildings.

As I said, my electorate houses a lot of new subdivisions and is experiencing a fair bit of the housing growth in this State. While that is the case, as of a few months ago, to my knowledge, my electorate has no actual class 2 building—so no apartments in all of my electorate despite the fact that it is growing rapidly. What that means is that at present the Building Commissioner has little power to act, despite the fact that there is a lot of construction going on in my part of the world. That, of course, will change should this bill pass through both Houses. I welcome that.

The electorate of Leppington and the Liverpool local government area, which is in my electorate, have seen some of the worst examples of poor building practice. I am aware of an example of a class 2 building in Lurnea, which falls in the electorate of Holsworthy. From memory, it is a six-storey building, and it has sat practically finished and empty for three or four years. I made inquiries as to what was going on. Effectively, what has happened is that the private certifier has been pulled out and council has been put on as the certifier because, despite being a five- or six-storey building, it was constructed without any fire sprinklers. The building has a series of very serious defects which all relate to fire safety. But that was only discovered after the Building Commissioner received complaints, made an inspection of the site and acted. Pleasingly, with the passing of this bill, we will also be seeing that on class 1 buildings.

In my short time as the local member, I have had several complaints about class 1 buildings in Leppington, and I saw plenty when I doorknocked many of those new houses. A house in Denham Court stands out starkly in my memory. It could not have been more than three or four years old. I knocked and the owner opened the door. Right down the hallway was a very distinct, very visible mould line. It was a double-storey building with obvious severe leaking happening. As I said, that building could not have been more than three or four years old. Unfortunately, those stories are repeated across Leppington. Several constituents have come to my office complaining and I have seen some very poor examples.

One example is a house under construction at the moment, where they had to bury the water tank to save space. They decided that the best space to do that was under the driveway in the garage because if there were any issues with it, they could dig up the garage. The builder made a grave mistake and buried it halfway between the kitchen and the living room, so if there are any issues with the water tank they will have to rip up half the house. These are the kinds of issues that the Building Commissioner and the agency will be able to act on. It is a positive move. Certainly, the response in my electorate since the announcement on Sunday has been very welcome and very positive. I could go on all day with examples about poor building practice, but I will not bore the House. I am sure members are all aware of the issue and will be happy to see the bill passed.

The sweeping changes proposed in this bill will give the Building Commission unprecedented power over the entire sector. These changes will be critical, and we are determined to have the best building sector in the nation. Next year we will introduce a single reformed building Act to centralise the licensing regulation and enforcement of standards across the whole sector. These laws will ensure that homes in growing areas like Leppington meet the quality standard that buyers expect. I commend the Minister for his work on the bill. I wrote to him early in the piece, as the member for Leppington, about a couple of issues concerning some of the shortcomings that currently exist. Home owners and such currently do have recourse to take things to NCAT, but I have written to him with a couple of examples where that has not proven to be effective. Obviously, the bill will go some way to fixing those issues. The new law will ensure that, in growing areas like mine, it will be harder for dishonest builders to cheat home buyers. It goes a long way to rebuilding trust and integrity in the construction industry and will ensure that home buyers are better off. That is what the Government is aiming to achieve. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (18:19): The Building Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 is incredibly important, and I support it 100 per cent. The legislation will support the crucial work of the Building Commission and deliver on the Government's commitment to transformational reforms to secure behavioural change in the building and construction industry. Our homes are often the most expensive investment we will ever make, and the Building Legislation Amendment Bill will improve transparency, accountability and the quality of work in the building and construction industry in New South Wales for all new homes. The Building Commission will put trust and confidence back in the sector to ensure continued investment and to give people confidence.

The Building Commissioner has been incredibly important for high density developments, putting shonky builders on notice and holding them to account. We are expanding their powers to cover all new homes. That is particularly important. In recent years we have seen huge problems with Stroud Homes and Porter Davis—to name just a few—where new home owners were left in the lurch and tens of thousands of dollars out of pocket. The creation of a standalone Building Commission bolstered by \$24 million in funding and more than 400 dedicated staff will drive dodgy builders out of the market and ensure buyers get the quality homes that they deserve and have paid for.

The Government has made a commitment to introduce a whole-of-sector building Act to consolidate and modernise all New South Wales building legislation. This bill is a first step to provide immediate support to the Building Commissioner and respond to issues across the entire residential construction sector. The Government is committed to delivering more homes. We need to ensure quantity does not replace or undermine quality. There has been a huge loss of confidence in the market in recent years. That is why people will not buy off the plan anymore, which is undermining finances for developers. In addition, costs have increased and the cost of borrowing has increased as well. That has done a lot to slow down the construction sector.

One thing we can do is try to restore confidence back into that market. Other financial pressures are beyond the scope of the New South Wales Government, but we can certainly do a lot to improve confidence in the sector by improving the quality of builds in New South Wales. Those and other reforms form part of the Government's plan to transform and rebuild that confidence. The bill makes amendments to various Acts across the Better Regulation and Fair Trading and Building portfolios, including the Home Building Act, the Building Products (Safety) Act, the Building and Development Certifiers Act, the Design and Building Practitioners Act and the Strata Schemes Management Act.

The recent surge in building defects has cast a shadow over home ownership and the safety of our built environments. Often health impacts—not just mental health but physical health problems—arise from poor construction. Recognising the high incidence of defects in the residential market, the bill provides compliance and enforcement powers for class 1 buildings—the low-rise residential buildings under the National Construction Code. We have all heard horror stories. Many have worsened. We are seeing record insolvencies in the construction industry—not just for high-rise developments but at all levels. The financial pressure to cut corners is enormous.

The bill will ensure individuals are held accountable for intentionally phoenixing and will clarify requirements for decennial liability insurance being taken up as an alternative to the existing strata building bond.

It will also introduce new duties on all persons in the supply chain of building products to ensure that products that are designed, manufactured, supplied and installed in buildings are safe and compliant to relevant standards and building codes. The current proactive powers for apartment buildings have been incredibly successful, resulting in significant improvements in purchaser confidence due to the early detection and remediation of defects. To build on that momentum, those proactive powers will be spread to low-density buildings as well. We are expanding the powers to class 1 residential homes, allowing early detection of defects and reducing the burden on home owners having to lodge complaints or take costly legal action to rectify building defects. The sooner defects are rectified, the sooner they can move into their home and move on with their lives.

The regulator will also be given the power to issue a stop-work order where it considers that continuing building work could lead to significant harm to the public, or residents or future residents of a building. Acknowledging the serious nature of rectification or stop-work orders, the bill also embeds procedural fairness, which is incredibly important. The secretary will not have to give notice about their intention to issue an order if they believe that there is a serious risk to safety or it is an emergency, but only in those instances. In those instances, the secretary can appropriately target high-risk building work.

The bill also makes it clear that the Government will not tolerate builders who do not do the right thing. Failure to comply with a rectification or stop-work order will attract a maximum penalty of \$330,000 for a company and \$110,000 in any other case. Where the offence continues—this is really critical—the penalty amount will increase every day by \$33,000 for a company and \$11,000 for an individual. Time and again, when defects are uncovered during the process of construction, the builder will stop all work and just leave people with a half-built home. Because it is a very common practice, it also sends a message to the market that it is best not to complain. By making sure the penalty increases every day after the rectification order is issued, we will make sure that that stops.

In terms of insolvency and phoenixing, during the 2022-23 financial year the construction industry experienced the highest rate of insolvency in Australia compared to all other industries. Starting a new company after a failed company is a common and lawful part of the business cycle. It is important to make sure that it does not happen to avoid obligations and penalties. We have also seen, more so with the class 2 buildings, that it is very common to set up a new construction company for every new build. That has been done to essentially protect a business empire from problems generated on one site. The whole thing becomes a house of cards. It can make insolvent trading impossible to stop, because an insolvent company can have multiple other names and places and still work.

Currently, a person is only required to provide information to the regulator if they have personally become bankrupt or they have been the director of an insolvent company in the past three years. Where they have been a director or a person involved in the management of a company in the six months prior to that company becoming insolvent, the bill will require them to prove why they are not a risk to consumers or subcontractors and that they have sufficient measures in place to avoid future bankruptcy. That goes an enormous way towards tackling the problem of phoenixing.

The six-month window was chosen to ensure that directors who do try to jump ship just before insolvency to avoid their obligations are still captured under those grounds, but directors who legitimately left a business are not unfairly affected. All those things will go an enormous way to making sure that home owners can have the confidence to invest in new builds. It will help address the shortfall in housing, because it will make more people confident about building a new home in New South Wales. That is incredibly important. We have seen too many defects in recent years at all levels, not just in high-rise buildings. I commend the bill to the House and I commend the Minister for introducing it.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (18:29): The Greens support the Building Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. The bill proposes welcome amendments to the Home Building Act 1989, the Building Products (Safety) Act 2017, the Strata Schemes Management Act 2015, the Building and Development Certifiers Act 2018 and the Design and Building Practitioners Act 2020. Together, these amendments will significantly enhance consumer protections in the building and construction sector—protections which have been severely lacking. As talk of new supply dominates discussions about alleviating the housing crisis that so many in our communities are facing, it is crucially important that building quality is safeguarded and not compromised in the interests of quantity.

We know that consumers have for too long been left exposed in a building sector that has been mired in scandal, and that if we are to build more homes for our communities in the coming years these homes must be safe, reliable and of a high standard. The bill is a welcome step in the right direction towards ensuring those things. It is based largely on the findings of the Public Accountability Committee 2019 report entitled *Further Inquiry into the regulation of building standards*, which resulted from an inquiry chaired by former member of the upper House, and my Greens colleague, David Shoebridge. That report formalised and put on record what so many in the community had already experienced and already knew: that building standards in this State had fallen far short

of the mark needed to protect people, that flammable and dangerous cladding is in alarmingly high use in buildings across New South Wales, and that there is a stunning lack of regulation and oversight of the industry by government.

Nobody should face financial ruin and housing precarity because of poor or noncompliant workmanship on their new family home, yet the inadequacy of current regulations within the building and construction industry means that for many people, including residents in my electorate of Newtown, this is sadly the case. Owners in Chippendale's One Central Park complex are facing a multimillion-dollar remediation bill for flammable cladding on their building. In nearby Mascot, Mascot Towers residents are still unable to live in their homes more than three years after they were forced to evacuate when massive structural cracks were found in their basement.

I urge the Government to step in to support those residents and the many more people impacted by the resulting financial, economic and personal challenges, many of whom are facing dire financial pressures. In the case of the Mascot Towers, I urge the Government to seriously consider buying back the whole defective block, remediating it and converting it into much-needed social and public housing. We know that the problem is not going to go away. The New South Wales Government and the Premier consistently talk about the need for urgent delivery of supply. That building is sitting there. The Government could step in, financially relieve those individuals, remediate the building and turn it into urgently needed public housing for the community.

The Greens support the proposed changes in the bill to the Building Products (Safety) Act to require persons in the building product supply chain to ensure the quality of products with which they engage. This obligation would go a long way towards preventing dangerous products like flammable cladding from even entering the market and causing untold devastation and risks to community safety. I turn now to the bill's introduction of the option for decennial liability insurance as an alternative to strata building bonds or home building compensation. This is a 10-year insurance taken out by the developer of a strata scheme in favour of the owners' corporation to cover costs associated with serious defects and potential collapse of a building after completion. This form of insurance is already in place in a number of other jurisdictions, including in France, where it originated. It would provide peace of mind for consumers and an avenue for alleviating the huge financial pressures they face when something goes wrong.

Finally, I turn to the expansion of the powers of the Building Commissioner under the Home Building Act to allow the commissioner to inspect buildings still under construction and to intervene without first receiving a formal complaint. The bill amends the Building and Development Certifiers Act and the Design and Building Practitioners Act to give the commissioner powers to immediately suspend a building practitioner who is subject to a show cause notice if the secretary is satisfied there is, or is likely to be, a serious risk to public safety or consumers if the practitioner is allowed to work pending disciplinary action. The Greens wholeheartedly support this expansion of the commissioner's powers.

We know that in the face of deep, pervasive, systemic issues, the utility of a commissioner as a way of providing independent oversight, and their ability to carry out their remit and deliver the change required to tackle these kinds of complex issues, is only possible if they are given the power, independence, resources and support that are being offered to the Building Commissioner, which we absolutely support. Unfortunately, and on a related note, the much-touted appointment of the Rental Commissioner earlier this year is an instructive example of the huge differences and discrepancies between the independence, resourcing, support and powers given to commissioners in this State.

It is unclear, in comparison with the powers and legislative role of the Building Commissioner, whether the Rental Commissioner has been provided with an office and resourcing of staff, what kind of budget they have, and the level of independence that is available to them outside the office of the Minister or the department itself. This is not a reflection on the Rental Commissioner and their role. Rather, I am being very clear that in providing a position of commissioner, we need to be ensuring that there is a robust and independent power provided to that commissioner. These powers should mirror the powers provided to the Building Commissioner, recognising the complexity of engaging with a highly fraught industry where people's homes, livelihoods, and financial status and situation are all at play.

Unfortunately, and very disappointingly, we are yet to see any movement toward key protections for renters, including an end to no-grounds evictions and a freeze on rents, or indeed any attempts to control the rising rents in New South Wales. I urge the Minister to intervene to ensure that the Rental Commissioner has the level of resourcing, power and independence they need to be able to deliver on the protections and reforms needed for renters, just as the Building Commissioner has been able to do and will continue to do as a result of this legislation. Whether it be the Building Commissioner, the Rental Commissioner, the Fair Trading Commissioner, the ICAC Commissioner, the Anti-Slavery Commissioner or any of the other commissioners in the State, it is critical that when we give these commissioners roles and powers, we also provide them the appropriate resourcing and support they need to carry out their vital work.

If we are to boost housing supply in this State—which The Greens absolutely support, provided it includes a boost to the supply of public housing and genuinely affordable housing—we must ensure that protections for consumers and industry regulations keep up with the rate of growth. The Greens support the measures proposed in the bill, as well as the raft of enhanced consumer protections they would deliver. However, we urge the Minister to consider giving the powers currently given to the Building Commissioner—powers to stand up against dodgy builders and dodgy problems in the sector—to the Rental Commissioner, who requires the same level of independence and autonomy to be able to carry out their work.

We believe it is absolutely crucial that the Rental Commissioner is able to stand independently with power if they are to deliver the kind of success and reform that we have seen to date as a result of the work of the Building Commissioner. We believe it is critical that the commissioner has the power, level of resourcing, independence and support required, including the backing of this Parliament, to ensure that they are able to do their work in what is an incredibly complex and highly contested housing market.

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) (18:38): In reply: I thank all members who contributed to the debate on the Building Legislation Amendment Bill 2023—namely, members representing the electorates of Willoughby, Sydney, Liverpool, Penrith, South Coast, Heathcote, Shellharbour, East Hills, Cabramatta, Parramatta, Gosford, Leppington, Granville and Newtown. I welcome their contributions. The recent surge in building defects has cast a shadow over the dream of home ownership and the safety of our built environment. The scale of this problem is significant, and it demands urgent attention. The work of the New South Wales Government in addressing serious defects in residential apartment buildings has been transformative for consumers in New South Wales, improving confidence in class 2 residential apartment buildings.

Buildings are not just bricks and mortar; they house our dreams, our aspirations and our daily lives. It is unacceptable that some of our citizens live in buildings that are unsafe and pose a threat to their lives. It is our duty as representatives of the people to ensure that buildings are safe and resilient and meet the needs of home owners. The bill is the first step in the Government's significant building reform agenda. The Government is continuing to work on a holistic new building bill and expects to introduce it into Parliament next year. Expanding compliance and enforcement powers to class 1 buildings will ensure that the building regulator has the tools it needs to hold those who cause building defects accountable. That needs to be complemented by a robust regulatory framework to strengthen accountability for the products that are used in the design and construction of buildings.

The Government's efforts are paying off. We are now the first Australian jurisdiction where decennial liability insurance is being offered. That product covers a building's critical elements, including its structure, waterproofing and fire safety systems. It provides a 10-year warranty for those elements. That is a big win for building owners throughout the State. It is a clear sign that confidence is returning to the market, and home owners in New South Wales can be confident that buildings will be compliant, safe and resilient going forward. The measures contained in the bill strike the right balance. They create new, necessary powers for the building regulator to protect unsuspecting home owners; enhance the obligations of directors; and support market-led solutions that will give developers and purchasers real choices between untrustworthy and trustworthy operators in the industry.

I now briefly comment on the issues that were raised during debate. I thank the shadow Minister, the member for Willoughby, for speaking in broad support of the bill. I address his comments surrounding the push for national harmonisation of building product safety regulation. When developing the bill, both the national framework and the operation of the Queensland approach to building product safety were considered, to provide a consistent approach. The Government will continue to advocate for a nationally consistent approach to the safety of building products in construction. Although national harmonisation cannot be achieved yet, the amendments in the bill will provide immediate improvements to oversight building product safety in New South Wales.

I thank the member for Sydney for raising concerns on behalf of the Owners Corporation Network [OCN], a peak body representing the interests of people who live in strata buildings. I reassure members that the OCN has been a valued stakeholder during the development of the bill. Stakeholders have been widely consulted on the bill. In August 2022 the Department of Customer Service publicly consulted on a range of building reforms, including the reforms in the bill. The draft legislation was published on the New South Wales Government Have Your Say website, along with regulatory impact statements unpacking the proposed reforms. The consultation received close to 1,500 survey responses and 117 submissions from consumers, tradespeople and industry associations. The surveys and submissions revealed overwhelming support for the amendments in the bill.

The Department of Customer Service has also engaged in continuous consultation with industry stakeholders about the Government's proposed building reforms. Over 80 peak bodies comprising around 200 representatives have seen draft iterations of the bill and have been given an opportunity to provide feedback.

The Government has carefully considered all feedback received from the public and industry in landing the bill we see today. The member for Sydney, on behalf of the OCN, was concerned that loopholes may remain in the Home Building Act, in particular section 33B (1) (a) (iv). That section prevents an authority being issued or renewed to a director of a body corporate that is a debtor under a judgement for money. An authority here means a contractor licence, endorsed contractor licence, or supervisor or tradesperson certificate.

The member for Sydney noted that, under that provision, no-one else involved in the management of the company is prevented from holding an authority. That could result in a building company continuing to operate under different licences where a director of the company has been denied a licence themselves. The Government understands the OCN's intention to prevent builders who operate in the industry from trying to avoid their responsibility to fix defects. The Government will consider that proposal as part of the proposed building bill that I hope to bring to Parliament in 2024. Part of that process will be about finding the right balance to ensure that we are addressing the risky and untrustworthy behaviours of practitioners and entities, without unduly burdening them when they are engaging in legitimate business practices such as incurring justifiable debts that are discharged in a timely fashion.

The Government also supports the proposal to make sure, if a person loses their authorisation to carry out work under one of their licences, that there is an automatic consideration of how that impacts other licences held in their name or where they are involved in the running of the licensed business. While the Government supports progressing that policy concept, we need to ensure that such an amendment aligns with the broader reforms. The building regulator already has disciplinary powers to use if suspending all authorisations attached to a person or body corporate is appropriate. The Government does not support setting up the automatic suspension of all contractor licences at this time. We need to see how it will integrate into the broader regulatory framework and to understand how the new NSW Building Commission will effectively enforce those rules across the industry. I welcome the engagement from the member for Sydney. I have committed to reporting back to him on how the Government proposes to progress that policy proposal in the new building bill.

I also welcome the support from across the Parliament for the Government's work to introduce decennial liability insurance, also known as DLI. I note that the member for Newtown has spoken in support of it, as has every other member in this House. It is supported across industry as well. The Government has engaged with industry and the community to understand how to transition from voluntary decennial liability insurance to a mandatory scheme. That will take time and will require a measured response to ensure that we support industry to develop a mature market where DLI is affordable to trustworthy operators.

As a first step, the Government will increase the strata bond from 2 per cent to 3 per cent. That will not only enhance the existing consumer protections but also send a signal to the market that New South Wales is serious about making DLI the future of consumer protection for apartment owners across the State. However, we need to ensure that the conditions are right so that the DLI market has the necessary capacity to take on that extra work. While the Government has proposed 1 February 2024 as the date to increase the strata building bond rate from 2 per cent to 3 per cent, it will only increase the bond rate where there are multiple and proportional operators in the market. Government members welcome the work of Resilience Insurance to start the DLI market in Australia. We want to encourage other providers into the market before we increase the bond rate. That will ensure competition and market capacity, and will give confidence to the market that the Government is committed to making DLI a permanent feature of the New South Wales housing market.

In closing, buildings are not a luxury but a necessity. Passing the bill supports the Government's ongoing commitment to transformational reform of the New South Wales building and construction industry. It is focused on improving building quality and restoring confidence in the building and construction industry. I acknowledge the contributions of the NSW Building Commissioner, Mr David Chandler, and NSW Fair Trading for their efforts to help the Government deliver its reform agenda and for their ongoing input. In particular, I thank the staff at NSW Fair Trading for their work on the bill. I thank Angus Abadee, Donna Harris, Lauren Freemantle, Katie Harbon, Michael Marks, Gumneet Mangat, Urvashi Bandhu, Alison Morris, Ryan King and Michelle Devine. The Government's reform agenda has received genuine bipartisan support, and I very much thank all my colleagues for supporting this important bill and this significant reform. I look forward to working with each member to restore confidence in the New South Wales construction sector. 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 ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

ROAD TRANSPORT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (AUTOMATED SEATBELT ENFORCEMENT) BILL 2023

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 18 October 2023.

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (18:49): I lead for the Opposition in support of the Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Automated Seatbelt Enforcement) Bill 2023. I thank the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads for her carriage of the bill, and I thank the Minister's staff, who are no doubt here today, for their work. They are helping to save lives. I have a confession to make. Over the weekend my wife, Gessika, and I may or may not have watched the most recent season of *The Crown* in what could potentially be described as a Netflix binge. We know that *The Crown* is not entirely historically accurate, but it reminds us of major historical events. In particular, in this season is the death of the Princess of Wales in Paris on 31 August 1997. I think all of us will remember where we were when we heard that tragic news. After watching *The Crown*, my wife and I shared a conversation about the importance of wearing seatbelts in cars. At the time, David Douglas, a former senior officer at London's Metropolitan Police, said, "Experts tell us there was probably an 80 per cent chance that they would have survived the accident."

That brings me to the importance of seatbelts. As we all know, seatbelts save lives. They became mandatory in New South Wales in 1971. As the Minister said, it was Milton Morris, her predecessor as the member for Maitland, who was the Minister at the time who brought that legislation in. Transport for NSW states that every year around 30 people are killed and 90 people are seriously injured on roads in New South Wales because they do not wear a seatbelt. Wearing seatbelts is commonsense behaviour. Despite that, over 10,500 infringement notices were issued in 2022 to people who were not wearing seatbelts. Those are people who clearly did not comply with the law. Wearing a seatbelt doubles the chance of an individual surviving a motor vehicle accident. Over the past five years, 15 per cent of people who died in road accidents were not wearing seatbelts. The proportion of road fatalities involving people not wearing seatbelts is sadly increasing, from 13 per cent in 2019 to almost 20 per cent in 2021. The NSW Liberals take road safety very seriously and the party is clearly very open to supporting road safety initiatives.

I now turn to the detail of the bill. The bill proposes changes to the current legislation that will allow Transport for NSW to utilise cameras to detect when seatbelts are not being worn. I note there will be a warning period, which I understand will potentially be amended in the other place. The bill proposes a very similar system to fines issued from mobile phone detection cameras. The fines from the automated seatbelt enforcement will be paid into the Community Road Safety Fund, meaning that every cent paid in fines will go to supporting road safety programs and not just go into consolidated revenue. Automated seatbelt enforcement will further remind passengers to put on their seatbelts or face the consequences. I hope it also means that drivers and passengers engage in safer behaviours.

The bill forms part of the 2026 Road Safety Action Plan, which was launched and funded by the previous Liberal-Nationals Government in 2021. The plan was developed through extensive engagement with the community and key stakeholders. It involved detailed analysis of trauma trends and safety evidence, and considered best practice at every stage of the process. The plan aims to reduce fatalities on New South Wales roads by 50 per cent by 2030, and reduce serious injuries by 30 per cent, with a vision of achieving zero trauma on our roads by 2050. That is an important vision. The plan takes a holistic approach to road safety. It looks at all aspects of the road environment, from regional roads to metropolitan roads, and from drivers to cyclists and pedestrians. It combines infrastructure improvements with better education for the community about road hazards and safe behaviours. The Opposition remains committed to improving road safety.

What is happening today? Looking at a year-on-year comparison, as of 20 November 2023 there have been 316 road fatalities in New South Wales compared to 245 in 2022. Sadly, this means we could lose even more lives on our roads before the end of the year. Each fatality is a tragedy and it is imperative that we do everything we can to reduce the number of deaths on our roads. I believe almost all of them are preventable. Finally, I acknowledge my late cousin, Miranda Patterson, who died in a car accident in April 2008 in the Hunter Valley, through no fault of her own. Miranda was in the third car in an accident that involved two other cars. It was very sad that her son, Mitchell, who is my second cousin, was left without a mother. Every legislator in this place needs

to do everything possible to have a road toll of zero. Automated seatbelt enforcement will assist in achieving that. It will save lives. It will make people wear seatbelts. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (18:55): I make a brief contribution in support of the Road Transport Legislation (Automated Seatbelt Enforcement) Amendment Bill 2023. The bill will make various amendments to the Road Transport Act 2013 and the Transport Administration Act 1988 to enable the use of automated camera detection of seatbelt offences in New South Wales, which will encourage road safety, reduce injury and save lives. That will be done by extending the capabilities of mobile phone detection cameras and red-light speed cameras to include seatbelt enforcement.

The bill proposes the introduction of automated camera detection technology for seatbelt offences. That technology will supplement existing enforcement measures and contribute to a comprehensive approach to road safety. All automated camera devices used for enforcement must undergo approval for a specific use. The bill grants authority to the Governor to approve cameras that meet the outlined capabilities for detecting seatbelt offences. The bill mandates that approved devices must record the date, time, and location of the photo. For seatbelt offences, the cameras must also capture the vehicle's registration number, which ensures accountability and accuracy in enforcement.

The bill clarifies that photos taken by other devices, such as mobile phone cameras or red-light speed cameras, can be used as evidence of seatbelt offences if they have the capability to detect such violations. That aligns with existing legislation for mobile phone cameras. Seatbelt offences, as defined in the bill, include violations of road rules that require drivers and all passengers to wear a seatbelt properly adjusted and fastened. The proposed amendments emphasise that both drivers and passengers are subject to fines and demerit points for noncompliance.

The bill introduces owner onus provisions, holding the registered operator responsible for the offence unless they nominate a different driver. That streamlines the enforcement process and facilitates efficient, automated enforcement. The legislation addresses operational aspects, assuring the community about the steps in the offence detection process. It emphasises the consultation with the Privacy Commissioner and the implementation of data security measures to protect the privacy of individuals. The bill highlights the use of AI in screening photographic images for potential seatbelt offences, a technology previously employed successfully for detecting mobile phone offences. That approach enhances efficiency by reducing the need for human review of compliant drivers.

The bill ensures that before issuing fines, three stages of human review will occur to ensure the accuracy of detected offences. This underscores the commitment to fairness in the enforcement process. Automated detection of seatbelt offences is expected to begin around the middle of 2024. A warning letter period will precede the issuance of fines, providing motorists with sufficient time to adapt their behaviour and comply with seatbelt regulations. The bill introduces a comprehensive three-phase public education strategy emphasising early education through digital content and social media, a warning letter period and ongoing statewide campaigns to raise awareness about seatbelt compliance. Fines from camera-detected seatbelt offences, consistent with other road safety offences, will be directed to the Community Road Safety Fund. This fund supports various road safety initiatives outlined in the 2026 Road Safety Action Plan.

The amendments signify a proactive and technology-driven approach to enhance road safety. By leveraging automated enforcement, prioritising public awareness and reinforcing accountability, the bill aligns with broader road safety goals outlined in the 2026 Road Safety Action Plan. It emphasises the Government's commitment to reducing road trauma, saving lives and working towards the ultimate goal of Towards Zero fatalities on New South Wales roads. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (19:00): I speak in support of the Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Automated Seatbelt Enforcement) Bill 2023. A lot of members in this Chamber would have had the mandatory wearing of seatbelts enforced since childhood. From the outset, I say that I find it very strange that anybody can hop into a motor vehicle and drive it for any distance without a seatbelt on. Even in my own driveway at home or in our underground car park, if I am moving the car, I put the seatbelt on out of habit. I find it staggering that, in this day and age, after decades of it being illegal, people still think they can drive without a seatbelt. It has been a crime for decades.

But it is not just about it being a crime. It is our frontline workers who have to pick up the pieces of the disasters caused by people not doing the right thing in automobiles. All members of this House have at some point spoken about people in our electorates, regions or communities having been tragically killed in automobile accidents. Some of those accidents are incredibly horrific, with people going through the front windscreens of automobiles because they were simply not wearing a seatbelt. Those fatalities could have been avoided had those people done the right thing and put their seatbelt on. I feel sorry for our frontline workers—our paramedics and

our police—who have to go and visit those horrific sites. Those are things that, hopefully, none of us will ever have to see, but those people have to live with that for the rest of their lives. I commend the incredible frontline workers who have to deal with those tragedies, because people do not think it is ever going to happen to them or, worse, cannot be bothered putting on a seatbelt.

Of course, the Opposition will not oppose the amendment bill—I welcome it—because it is high time people realised that they are not just putting their own lives at risk, but also harming people, like their own families. They are not the ones who have to go to a front door in the middle of the night and notify a family and loved ones that someone has been killed in a motor vehicle accident that could potentially have been avoided. When I was first elected to this place in 2015, I had the privilege of being appointed to the Staysafe committee. Many members in this place had the privilege of serving on that committee, and it is eye-opening to see how dramatically road safety has improved, given that there are all of these safety devices to keep people safe. The messaging to our young people around road safety has improved enormously since we first learnt to drive, and some of those images that are shown to our schoolkids when they are getting driver licences—images of people going through windscreens of cars and being needlessly killed—are incredibly confronting.

I note that the previous speaker, the member for Mount Druitt, mentioned the 2026 Road Safety Action Plan. I remind him that it was launched by the former Coalition Government in 2021. We have all worked on this issue collectively, because it is in our interest and that of our communities to ensure that we drive the road toll down. Every single number is a father, mother, daughter, brother, sister, cousin, aunt, uncle or grandparent who is not coming home to their loved ones because of a potentially avoidable road accident. Technology has been a wonderful thing when it comes to road safety, whether it be automatic cruise control, the introduction of anti-lock braking systems or the introduction of airbags. But it still comes back to some of the basics, including the good old seatbelt.

Some of us might remember that when we were young our parents had cars that did not have seatbelts. It was a very unnerving experience to get into a car with no seatbelts, because it was an automatic reaction for all of us that the first thing you did was put your belt on. The introduction of seatbelts has literally saved thousands of lives. I remember when wearing seatbelts was first made mandatory and people said, "It's my democratic right. I have a choice." It was the same when we introduced breathalysers. There was opposition to that as well. The reality is that those implementations, by all forms of government, have saved people's lives and avoided needless tragedy. That is why this initiative is excellent.

I note that it was the former Government that introduced mobile phone detection cameras for drivers. We have all seen cars swerving across the road because the driver is on the phone. A good example is the M1, which is the motorway we regularly use from the Central Coast. The member for Shellharbour is in the Chamber, and that happens on her regional roads as well. There is nothing more terrifying than somebody going past you at over 100 kilometres per hour when they are on their phone. The reality is that they are covering a football field every six seconds, and that can do damage. I firmly supported the legislation introducing cameras to detect mobile phone usage. The images from those cameras showing drivers' lack of attention are pretty confronting. And while it might seem to be a NIMBY attitude, it is done for a reason: to remind people that they need to be safe. Having a driver licence is a privilege, not a right. You are on the road with a vehicle that can kill you and other people around you. You need to treat it with care and responsibility and be mindful.

I welcome the amendment bill by the Minister. I think it is important that we use every piece of technology in our armoury to make people more aware of their driving behaviour. Let's be honest: We have all heard people complain about the quality of the roads, when the reality is that the majority of fatal accidents, not just in New South Wales but right around the country, are caused by driver behaviour. It is up to us, as governments and oppositions, to stand united and remind drivers that it is a responsibility they owe to themselves and every person around them to do the right thing. That is why the program to introduce the cameras to capture people not wearing seatbelts is a good initiative. We know the technology is already there, because we have used it with mobile speed cameras. I ask the Minister to do everything possible to speed up this process, because every minute counts when it comes to motor vehicle safety. We have seen how many people have been caught using mobile phones by those cameras. Hopefully, the fine that goes with it is a reminder to them that what they have done is wrong and dangerous. Sometimes hitting people in the hip pocket is the way to remind them.

I welcome the fact that we are going to use technology to check seatbelt usage, and I believe it is the same one as has been put in place to capture mobile phone users. As I said, every weapon in our arsenal should be used to keep people safe. The only thing I have concerns about is that we are going to provide people with a nine-month warning for what is already a crime—that is, to not wear a seatbelt. The police have been booking people for decades for not wearing seatbelts. Everybody knows that not wearing a seatbelt is illegal. I am not sure, but I believe the Opposition may be looking to move amendments to the bill. Frankly, a nine-month warning period for a driver who is already committing a crime that they know about is far too generous. They have done the

crime. The fact that they have been picked up by a camera as opposed to a police officer is irrelevant. The fact is that we need to be absolutely resolute in driving this sort of behaviour down, because it is usually our frontline workers and our police who have to knock on the door and tell someone that their loved one has met a tragic end because they could not be bothered putting a seatbelt on.

I request a reduction of that nine-month warning period, and I think the Opposition will look at moving amendments and discussing this with the Government. There is six months of technology being implemented. There is plenty of time to tell the public what the system will do. People got used to cameras being able to pick up mobile phone use. They know the technology is there. I hope that the Government will look at reducing the nine-month warning period. That is almost a whole year of people being warned that they have been caught doing something illegal. I am pleased that every single dollar raised by these infringements is going back into community road safety programs. That is exactly where it should go. These things are not revenue raisers. This money goes back to the Community Road Safety Fund, which educates young drivers and drivers of all ages about how to be safe on our roads. The recent increase of the road toll raises a concern that people are not listening again. We need to do everything we can to remind them. *[Extension of time]*

I thank the members for their indulgence. Again, I welcome the bill. I think it is a good piece of legislation. However, I would look at reducing the warning period because it is an existing offence. Every time we have a fatal road accident in the Central Coast region the repercussions are enormous. The regions almost wear it harder. Usually the police officer who attends the incident knows the person or the family. There are a lot of regional members in the Chamber tonight. In some cases, we have seen entire families wiped out in accidents that in theory are preventable. Our frontline workers bear the brunt of the tragedy and see things they can never unsee.

For most members of this place who sat on the Staysafe committee, it was a good experience. We have seen the rapid advancement of technology in good ways to help make motoring safer for people, whether it be airbags or semi-autonomous driving, which also works better with long-haul heavy vehicles. The technology is advancing rapidly. As members of Parliament, we have to embrace every bit of technology that we can as quickly as possible. We need to utilise it in the best way to remind people that they have the onus to do the right thing every time they get behind the wheel and put the key in the ignition.

We have seen the same change in behaviour with drink drivers. There is nothing more offensive to all of us than when we see drink drivers who get done for multiple offences, multiple times. These people end up killing someone innocent because of their bad behaviour and poor decisions. If this bill goes some way to reminding those people to take the three seconds to pull the belt across and clip it on, that is a good thing. It will not be them who has to live with the consequences of their poor choices; it is everybody else around them. I acknowledge that the Opposition will support the bill. I am obviously cognisant of the fact that amendments will be moved and I hope the Government will listen. Most people have zero tolerance towards bad behaviour on our roads because I think most have had near misses at some time, including me. We all take road safety seriously. The former Government put massive amounts of funding through the Community Road Safety Fund to help get the messaging through and explain to people how to be safer on our roads.

In 2021 the road toll hit a 99-year low. We should all be proud of that because we are all doing the same messaging. But as of only yesterday, 20 November, this year 316 people are not going home to their families because they died on our roads here in New South Wales. That is a tragedy. Everything we can do to reduce that number is welcome. It is great that we want to set a road toll of zero, and that would be fantastic to achieve—the best thing we could ever do—because it would mean everyone is getting home safely to their families every day. Again, the Opposition is committed to improving road safety and hopes the Government will keep taking proactive steps where possible to keep people safe. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (19:14): I speak in favour of the Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Automated Seatbelt Enforcement) Bill 2023. I thank Minister Aitchison for bringing it to the House. I fully support the bill, as it will introduce camera-detected seatbelt enforcement and therefore encourage people, simply, to buckle up. As a regional MP and the Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Transport and Roads, I am extremely passionate about road safety, as I am sure all MPs in this place are. Whilst the Minns Labor Government is working hard to reduce the number of trips people need to take via motor vehicle, the reality is that residents of regional New South Wales do spend a relatively large amount of time in our cars, often travelling at high speed over long distances. Since I was elected in 2011, far too many people have died or been injured on our roads within the Shellharbour electorate. My thoughts are with everyone impacted by road trauma throughout New South Wales.

My enthusiasm for road safety was one of the main reasons that I was keen to be the Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Transport and Roads assisting the Minns Labor Government's efforts to make sure that everyone who uses our roads gets to their destination safely. Unfortunately, motor vehicle accidents do happen, which is why this bill is so important. Quite simply, a person is twice as likely survive a car crash if they are

properly wearing a seatbelt. I find it shocking that seatbelt non-use was a factor in 15 per cent of vehicle occupant deaths on New South Wales roads between 2018 and 2020. Somehow, with all of the road safety education available to drivers these days, the percentage of vehicle occupant fatalities where the available seatbelt was not worn increased from 13 per cent in 2019 to 19 per cent in 2021. Whilst the figure dropped to 16 per cent in 2022, clearly we need to do better.

Every reminder that we give motorists to buckle up will reduce deaths and serious injuries. Once drivers know that the cameras are being used to detect seatbelts, they will check twice to ensure they are buckled up before every trip. I endorse the words spoken by my friend the Opposition Whip. Drivers are in no doubt that they need to not only buckle up themselves but ensure their passengers are also safe and wearing seatbelts. This is especially important when we teach our kids what to do. The message that we send them now will stay with them for their lives and become generational, which is important to remember.

Legislating to save lives is one of the most rewarding parts of our role as MPs in this place. Experts estimate that the camera enforcement of a seatbelt in New South Wales could save up to 26 lives and prevent up to 62 serious injuries over a five-year period. Of course, the stories of those who are saved by this new legislation over the next five years will remain unknown. Those saved may quickly recover from a relatively minor injury simply because they wore a seatbelt. They may never think twice about the many happy years they have ahead of them. They will most definitely not thank those MPs who vote for this bill. But this is what drives us as members of Parliament and gives us purpose. I am not here for thanks or to cut ribbons. I am happy to get the odd letter from an unhappy constituent who gets caught by one of these cameras for not wearing a seatbelt.

Another huge benefit of this legislation is the impact it will have on our emergency services staff. Many members have raised that very issue in this debate. Our first responders who attend serious motor vehicle crashes have a hard enough job as it is without having to see death and injury that could so easily be prevented by wearing seatbelts. If this bill encourages even one person in the future to double-check that they are wearing a seatbelt, just in case one of those cameras catches them out, that is good enough for me. Even if they curse the Government as they buckle up because they want to avoid a fine or a demerit point because of "those bloody cameras" that they will talk about, that is okay with me as well. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (19:19): On behalf of The Greens, I indicate our support for the Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Automated Seatbelt Enforcement) Bill 2023. I acknowledge that the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads is in the House and recognise that the bill will amend road transport legislation and related legislation to allow automatic detection of seatbelt infringements, relying on existing infrastructure used for mobile phone related infringements. This is important because we know that the non-use of seatbelts is a significant contributing factor in road-related fatalities. We know that Australia's road toll continues to rise, despite vehicles being safer than ever before and constantly improving. Whatever we can do to reduce the risks associated with having so many cars on our roads, and tragically so many deaths, we absolutely must do.

The simple act of strapping into a safety belt is one of the most important steps that vehicle occupants can take. That is why it is illegal to drive without wearing a properly fitted seatbelt wherever one is available. It is why drivers have a legal responsibility to ensure that passengers are safely strapped in. That should not be news to anyone. These are long-established rules, and we are familiar with the finding that a driver or passenger is much more likely to survive an accident if they are wearing a seatbelt properly. The amendments in the bill will authorise the approval of existing cameras to detect certain seatbelt offences, to photograph vehicles when detection occurs and for the resulting images to be used as evidence of a seatbelt-related offence. A number of additional amendments will also be made to ensure the proper administration of the scheme.

One thing that is missing from the bill is detail about how and when the new detection method will become operational, and the processes by which road users will be made aware of these changes. We have been briefed by the Government that there will be a nine-month period when people who disregard these long-established rules and do not wear a seatbelt and who are caught by existing cameras that will now be allowed to detect them will be given a warning rather than a fine. While it makes sense for some kind of grace period to apply so that drivers can get used to the new rule, The Greens question whether a nine-month warning period for something that is already a requirement can be justified in terms of compliance with an existing and well-understood rule.

Notwithstanding this concern, The Greens support the bill and hope to work with the Government not only to ensure that all road users across New South Wales are aware of the change, but also to address whether the requirement for a warning period of that length is necessary when the rules about buckling up and wearing a seatbelt are already in place.

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (19:22): I speak in support of the Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Automated Seatbelt Enforcement) Bill 2023 and I thank the Minister for Regional Transport and

Roads for bringing the bill to Parliament for our consideration. I note that the Minister is in the Chamber. In her second reading speech, the Minister said:

The impact of road trauma is real for so many in our communities. In fact, it would be almost impossible for someone alive today to not have been impacted by some significant trauma from a road fatality or serious incident.

This is a key motive in presenting the bill to the Parliament: to save lives and stop families being torn apart with grief by losing a loved one in a road accident whose life could have been saved simply by wearing a seatbelt. Last Sunday I joined the Minister at Grace's Place to commemorate the World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims hosted by the Road Trauma Support Group. Other government agencies, including Transport for NSW and the police, were present, joining with the many family members who have been devastated by the loss of a loved one and who continue to honour their memory by attending the service.

The bill is designed to amend road transport and related legislation to introduce automated detection and enforcement mechanisms for camera-detected seatbelt noncompliance in New South Wales. In July this year the New South Wales Government outlined its 2026 Road Safety Action Plan to achieve better safety outcomes on our roads. Increasing seatbelt compliance is a commonsense step to accomplish this. Seatbelt use was made mandatory in New South Wales in 1971—52 years ago. A major cultural shift was required to make people wear seatbelts. There was a time when cars did not have to have seatbelts fitted retrospectively. Some members in the Chamber may remember that. Growing up, our family HT Holden had bench seats in the front and back and the kids rolled around on the back seat with no seatbelts when the car swerved. In 1988 I recall hiring a car while on holiday in Fiji. As Australians, we had been indoctrinated about wearing seatbelts. The person I leased the car from told me, "Don't worry about seatbelts. Police are only out on Tuesdays and Thursdays." It was a Wednesday—we did not need to worry about wearing a seatbelt. However, being good Australians, we wore the seatbelts.

Thankfully, times have changed dramatically. Today the minimum fine for a driver or passenger found not wearing a seatbelt is \$387 and three demerit points. However, there are still people who do not buckle up and this puts them at a completely unnecessary and unacceptable risk on our roads. Seatbelt noncompliance was a factor in about 15 per cent of vehicle occupant deaths on our roads between 2018 and 2022. Even worse, the percentage of vehicle occupant fatalities when an available seatbelt was not worn has been consistently high: 13 per cent in 2019, 19 per cent in 2021 and 16 per cent last year. Additionally, regional communities are overrepresented in these figures: Seatbelt noncompliance was a factor in 84 per cent of fatalities and 67 per cent of serious injuries in accidents on country roads. High-speed crashes that occur on roads in country areas—which potentially are also poorly lit—can have particularly severe outcomes if the driver is not protected by a seatbelt.

Evidence shows that a person is twice as likely to survive a car crash if they are wearing a seatbelt. Independent modelling estimates that camera enforcement of seatbelt compliance could save between 17 to 26 lives and prevent 41 to 62 injuries over a five-year period. The social benefits and monetary savings for families, workplaces and society from saving lives and reducing injuries will be massive. There is absolutely no logical reason that anyone would oppose such legislation. In 2022 there were 292 road fatalities compared with 1,300 in the early 1970s. To achieve the greater safety outcomes we all desire, no new offences are being introduced. Only minor road rule amendments are required so penalties that already apply to drivers for failing to ensure their passengers wear a seatbelt can be readily enforced if the alleged offence is detected by a camera.

Amendments will also be made to clarify when medical exemptions apply. The Government is designing a process that allows people with exemptions to avoid receiving camera-detected infringements. We now know that the majority of road users are deterred from risky behaviour by the certainty of penalties being enforced. Automated enforcement will be delivered through systems and camera infrastructure that is already deployed for the mobile phone camera detection program. The bill also clarifies that photos taken by other road safety cameras can be used as evidence of seatbelt offences if they are capable of detecting those offences. This is consistent with the existing legislation regarding mobile phone cameras. As with other road offences, operator onus provisions will apply and will enable registered operators to nominate the driver of the vehicle at the time of the offence.

Unlike the former Government, the Minns Government is not about senseless revenue raising through fines. This reform is designed with road safety as its one and only priority. Enforcement will be preceded by the issuing of warning letters for a period and a large-scale awareness-raising campaign because the Government wants to ensure that motorists have ample time to do the right thing. As with speeding, red light camera and mobile phone detection camera fines, every cent raised from fines for camera-detected seatbelt offences will go directly into the Community Road Safety Fund to be used to deliver a broad range of road safety initiatives such as those outlined in the 2026 Road Safety Action Plan. This is exactly the sort of innovation we need to achieve the Road Safety Action Plan. I thank the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads as well as the Minister for Roads in the other place for their commitment to ensuring maximum safety on New South Wales roads. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (19:29): I am in favour of the Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Automated Seatbelt Enforcement) Bill 2023. As a member of the Staysafe committee, and having spent over two decades working in and around the automotive industry, I have a particular interest in road safety. I can say with some confidence there are few passive safety measures as effective as seatbelts. Deaths on our roads are tragic. A fatal or severe accident affects entire communities. They affect not just the family and friends of the people who lose their lives but also those who are called upon to attend and assist at those accidents. The first attendants on a crime scene are often the police; sometimes they are tow truck drivers or paramedics. In some cases, the prevention of such a trauma is straightforward and it can be achieved by the simple act of wearing a seatbelt, which has been mandatory in New South Wales for over 50 years.

Getting into the car and buckling up should be a subconscious action, yet some people still do not do that. Of the road fatalities between 2018 and 2022, 15 per cent of people involved were not wearing a seatbelt. That caused 142 deaths. That is a mind-boggling percentage of fatal accidents where seatbelts were available but not used. That statistic was 13 per cent in 2019, 19 per cent in 2021 and 16 per cent in 2022. That is both senseless and baffling, especially given that the modern three-point safety belt was developed by Volvo in 1959. Volvo recognised the potential that seatbelts had to save lives and gave away their patent, making it a technology that was free to the world. Since then, the three-point safety belt has been credited with saving over one million lives. They have been modernised slightly with retractable belts and pretensioner technology, but the basic lap sash design remains the same.

The number of fatalities on New South Wales roads has declined by 50 per cent since wearing a seatbelt was made compulsory in 1971. The evidence shows that a person is twice as likely to survive a car crash if they are wearing a seatbelt. Unfortunately, according to the Transport for NSW Centre for Road Safety, in 2021 drivers aged between 16 and 24 were the least likely to wear a seatbelt. The Centre for Road Safety also found that this group had the highest number of serious injuries and fatalities as a direct result of not wearing a seatbelt. That is a concerning trend as young drivers are already at an increased risk of being involved in a car crash.

The bill does not seek to introduce a new offence. It is already an offence to drive a car without wearing a seatbelt properly or to allow a passenger to travel in a car without wearing a seatbelt properly. The bill seeks to make adjustments to driver and passenger behaviour to save lives. According to independent modelling, implementing camera enforcement for seatbelt use could potentially save lives and prevent serious injuries, translating to cost savings of between \$139 million and \$210 million for the taxpayers of New South Wales over a five-year period.

Camera detection to enforce road rules is not new to New South Wales and has been used for many years. In fact New South Wales was one of the first jurisdictions in the world to introduce speed cameras. The first speed cameras were installed in Sydney in 1980. Since then camera detection has been expanded to include a variety of road rules, including mobile phone use and running red lights. Camera detection has been shown to be an effective way to reduce road accidents and save lives. For example, a study by the Centre for Road Safety found that red-light speed cameras reduce crashes at intersections by as much as 30 per cent. Another study found that mobile phone detection cameras reduce the incidents of drivers using mobile phones by up to 40 per cent.

Camera detection is an important tool for improving road safety in New South Wales. It is a fair and effective way to enforce road rules and protect the lives of road users. Implementation of camera enforcement will require minor road rule amendments so that offences that currently apply to drivers for failing to ensure that passengers wear a seatbelt can be readily enforced if the alleged offence is detected by camera. Amendments will also be made for steps to establish whether medical exemptions apply. The Government is designing a process so that people with a medical exemption can avoid receiving a camera detection seatbelt infringement. The combination of camera detection and on-road efforts by the New South Wales Police Force will heighten driver awareness to the likelihood of being caught without a seatbelt. This initiative aims to encourage drivers to use seatbelts consistently, leading to a reduction in fatalities and serious accidents throughout the road network of New South Wales.

The Minns Government will undertake a large-scale awareness campaign and warnings will be issued preceding any infringement notice. Utilising variable message signs and the fixed signs currently deployed for mobile phone detection systems can serve as a means for prompting seatbelt usage cameras. Owner onus applies to the camera detection, meaning the car owner is presumed to be liable for the offence unless they nominate a different driver. At this stage, cameras can only be used to detect seatbelt offences in the front seats. However it is expected that the change in behaviours will be positive across the whole car, meaning rear seat passengers will be encouraged to put their belt on as well.

The penalty for driving without a proper fastened seatbelt or failing to make sure that passengers are wearing a seatbelt is a \$387 fine and three demerit points. Double demerit points also apply for seatbelt offences during holiday periods. Few people wear a seatbelt properly. The correct way to apply a seatbelt once it has been

clicked in is to grab the sash that comes over the shoulder and pull it tight so the belt around the waist pulls the passenger back into the chair. Fines will go directly into the Community Road Safety Fund and not into consolidated revenue. Revenue collected will be used to deliver a broad range of road safety initiatives as outlined in the 2026 Road Safety Action Plan.

The bill seeks to improve road safety by changing driver behaviour to heighten awareness and increase seatbelt usage to save lives. It is not about raising money; it is about saving lives. The bill introduced by Minister Aitchison and Minister Graham ultimately improves the chances of a parent coming home to their family. It reduces the chances of a young adult losing their lives because they did not reach over their shoulder and click, clack, front and back. I thank the Minister for introducing this important improvement to road safety in New South Wales and reiterate my support for the amendments. I commend the bill to the House.

Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (19:37): I make a contribution to the debate on the Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Automated Seatbelt Enforcement) Bill 2023 and indicate my support. I thank the Minister for Roads and the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads for their work in preparing this important legislative reform. The bill will amend the Road Transport Act and related legislation to introduce camera-detected seatbelt enforcement. The bill is the first legislative change that delivers on the actions in the New South Wales Government's 2026 Road Safety Action Plan. That plan aims to ultimately reduce fatalities and serious injuries across the road network through targeted improvement initiatives.

No new offences are being introduced. Rather, the bill seeks to amend the definition of "detectable traffic offences by a camera" to include seatbelt offences. Expanding upon pre-existing detention and enforcement activities, the bill will authorise cameras to detect certain seatbelt offences. The device in use must be capable of recording the date, time and location of the photo, and, for the seatbelt offences, the registration number of the relevant vehicle. Further to that, the provisions in the bill enable the photographs of vehicles taken by approved traffic enforcement devices to be used as evidence of a seatbelt offence. This automated enforcement will be delivered through systems and camera infrastructure already in use for other road safety offences, such as for the mobile phone camera detection program.

The amendments also include applying the operator onus provisions to enable registered operators to nominate the driver of the vehicle at the time, which is consistent with legislation pertaining to other camera-detected offences. The bill also amends the Transport Administration Act 1988 to require fines from camera-detected seatbelt offences, as with other camera-detected road safety offences, to be paid into the Community Road Safety Fund to be used for road safety purposes. Ensuring that ample warning is given, enforcement of the legislation will be preceded by a warning letter period and a large-scale awareness campaign.

Despite seatbelts being mandatory in New South Wales since 1971, more than 10,000 people a year are still fined for not wearing a seatbelt. In the five years to 2022, seatbelt non-use was a factor in 15 per cent of vehicle occupant deaths. Evidence demonstrates that a person is twice as likely to survive a car crash if they are wearing a seatbelt. The new measures proposed in the bill, including cameras that support on-road New South Wales police enforcement, are expected to reduce noncompliant seatbelt behaviour by increasing drivers' perceived and actual risk of being caught. Ultimately, that is likely to contribute to a reduction in fatalities and serious injuries across the road network. Furthermore, independent modelling has estimated that camera enforcement of seatbelt use could save between 17 and 26 lives and prevent 41 to 62 serious injuries over a five-year period.

We lose too many people to road accidents every year. Many others are injured to a severe degree in avoidable accidents that could have been prevented. In 2022 alone, Transport for NSW recorded that 415 people from the Fairfield local government area were involved in crashes—four were killed, with another 110 seriously injured. This House has the opportunity to make a difference. We need to do more to address road trauma and accidents, and this bill propels New South Wales in the right direction. I commend the bill to the House.

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (19:42): I make a brief contribution to debate on the very important Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Automated Seatbelt Enforcement) Bill 2023. I support the bill. Quite simply, it encourages the small minority of road users who are not wearing seatbelts to do the right thing by themselves and their passengers and it will save lives. Every year, about 30 people are killed and 90 are seriously injured on New South Wales roads because they were not wearing a seatbelt. That is 120 lives either lost or seriously changed. One death is one death too many, so it is entirely appropriate that we take tougher action to protect this minority of motorists from themselves, because the damage is not just to them; it is to their families and their communities. Wearing a seatbelt doubles the chances of surviving a crash, yet for some reason some people will not do it. I hope the bill gets people to do the right thing.

As a former emergency department doctor, I know only too well of the cost of trauma and the damage it inflicts on the body. Forty years ago, when I worked at St Vincent's Hospital and at Wagga Wagga Base Hospital,

road trauma was a huge issue. In those days—and I guess this is ancient history for people, but I still remember it—the death toll on our roads was upwards of 1,300 a year. It is extraordinary to think of the public health achievement in the ensuing 40 years that meant that a couple of years ago the death toll almost got down below 200. This extraordinary achievement has been about random breath testing, safer roads, vehicle design and seatbelt wearing.

I remember the controversy when seatbelt wearing was first introduced and all the discussion about civil rights and so on, but the constant effort by our society and our Government through the Staysafe committee, initiatives in school zones and the countless other interventions—all of them on their own perhaps small, but together they have taken that road toll down—is an extraordinary achievement. In the time that the road toll has gone from 1,300 down to a couple of hundred—and a couple of hundred is still too many; we need to get to zero—there have been vast increases in population, road users and cars. It is an extraordinary achievement.

The bill is really important. I acknowledge that many members have said that—and, in some ways, I am repeating it—but I make the point that the road toll is creeping up. Already this year it is over 300. Not long ago we had the debate about whether speed cameras were too much. I accept that there were issues about signage and the way the cameras were implemented, but at its heart that was another initiative to help bring the road toll down, because speeding kills. I emphasise the importance of staying focused on eliminating road trauma. Members have spoken about the trauma for families and the injuries to individuals, but you have to be there to truly see the effect on people who are involved in accidents and their families. Members have also spoken about the police and ambulance officers—the frontline personnel—and the many parts of society that are affected. We should never accept any level of deaths on our roads, so we need to continue to fight.

I congratulate the Government and the Minister on her efforts in introducing the bill. I support the bill. I re-emphasise that we cannot take our eye off the goal here and become complacent. We need to continue to drive on this because the job is not done. This is a particular issue in regional communities, which make up one-third of the population but whose roads see two-thirds of the deaths. The regions are particularly affected by this. I hope that the automated detection of seatbelt offences will provide the necessary deterrent to save the small percentage of drivers who are doing the wrong thing and help us drive down the death toll. People talk about this being a civil liberty issue but, at the end of the day, we all suffer from this and we all need to do the right thing and pull together. I am pleased to support this important road safety initiative. I look forward to achieving the goal of saving lives and preventing injuries.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (19:46): In reply: I thank the members who contributed to the debate on the Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Automated Seatbelt Enforcement) Bill 2023. The member for Mount Druitt, the Parliamentary Secretary for Police and Counter-terrorism, spoke about his commitment to law enforcement. The member for Davidson, who is on the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety, shared his personal story. The member for Terrigal spoke of a sense of urgency, which I will come to later. The member for Shellharbour, the Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Transport and Roads, talked about her personal commitment to safety and her sense of purpose in working on this legislation. She also raised the important aspect of reducing the terrible impact on first responders when they are faced with a fatality on our roads.

I thank the member for Newtown and The Greens for their support. It is great to have multipartisan support for the bill. The member for Blacktown, the Parliamentary Secretary for Planning and Public Spaces, mentioned that he was with me on the weekend at the Road Trauma Support Group's day of remembrance for victims of road traffic crashes. The day really affected all who attended and was spoken about earlier today in a ministerial statement. The member for Riverstone, the Deputy Chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety, spoke about his lived experience of the industry; the member for Cabramatta spoke about his passion for change in this area; and, of course—as always—the member for Wagga Wagga was very passionate from a regional perspective, which is such a strong part of this debate because it is such an area of impact.

I reiterate that the Government is completely committed to improving safety on our roads. When I introduced this legislation on 18 October, the road toll was sitting at 282. Today, just over a month later, it is sitting at 318. These are not just numbers, as has been said by many members in this place. The grief, the pain, the regret and the trauma of all of these deaths, of these people, of these loved ones, has an lifetime impact on all of us. I again thank the member for Davidson for sharing his personal story. So many of us have those to share. It does inform our actions in this space. I also take this opportunity to thank Bernard Carlon from the Centre for Road Safety, who is here in the gallery today, and Ralston Fernandes. I thank the members from my team who have been through this with me: Christine, Zena, Peree and Ryan. I also thank the Minister for Roads in the other place, John Graham, and Katie and Tori from his office as well. This is such a collaborative piece of legislation. We really, as a government, want to see change in this space.

I do not want to receive the text that I get pretty much daily at the moment telling me that someone else has died on our roads. It is a big burden. The five actions that we can all take are not speeding, not using your mobile phone, not consuming alcohol or other drugs when you are driving, not being tired and giving yourself rest breaks and, of course, wearing a seatbelt. That action should be the easiest, yet to hear that people avoid using a seatbelt just beggars belief. The 2026 Road Safety Action Plan has targets to reduce our road deaths by 50 per cent and to reduce serious injuries by 30 per cent by 2030. But, of course, our goal is to reduce it to zero. One of the initiatives of that plan is to expand the use of existing mobile phone cameras—this legislation will achieve that. Some Opposition members have had conversations about the timing of how this will roll out. This is a serious offence. For any driver caught under this legislation, the penalty is three points and a \$387 fine. That is a lot for anyone in this situation. We want to make sure that we put safety first and we are open to having conversations with Opposition members about it. Road safety, as I have said repeatedly in this House, should never be a partisan political issue.

We know that, on average, every year 29 people die and 76 people are seriously injured because they were not wearing a seatbelt. The independent modelling says that we could save around 17 to 26 lives just by this change and prevent 41 to 62 serious injuries over a five-year period. That is a really important change we can make, but we have to get the legislation in place to do it. I hope that Opposition members, here and in the other place, will have that discussion with my office and Minister Graham's office. We want this to have the best outcome for our communities. We know that mobile phone detection cameras have been effective in reducing the use of mobile phones while driving, and we expect the same result of safer behaviour as we expand their use into seatbelt enforcement. We want to give people every chance to do the right thing. The warning letter period is obviously something that will need to be discussed, given the issues that have been raised. But I hope we can come to strong agreement because the bill is one of the most important pieces of legislation that I will probably move in this place; it is about saving lives. I commend the bill to the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich): The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

Third Reading

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

ENERGY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2023

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Ms Trish Doyle, on behalf of Mr Jihad Dib, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (19:54): On behalf of Mr Jihad Dib: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Energy Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. The Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap, the roadmap, sets out how New South Wales will deliver its electricity system transition strategy. The legislative amendments proposed in this bill will help smooth the delivery of the energy transition. The bill amends two existing pieces of legislation that provide the framework for implementation of the roadmap: the Electricity Infrastructure Investment Act 2020, which I will refer to as the EII Act, and the Energy and Utilities Administration Act 1987, which I will refer to as the EUA Act. The bill implements some of the Government's response to the recommendations of the Electricity Supply and Reliability Check Up, the Check Up, to assist roadmap entities to successfully deliver on their functions. There are no large policy shifts introduced in the bill, keeping intact the current policy intent, which continues to enjoy multi-party support. I will address each schedule to the bill individually.

I turn first to the amendments in schedule 1 to the bill. In total, 15 amendments are made to the EII Act. These are minor amendments to some of the existing arrangements for entities that play critical roles in delivering the roadmap. They can be categorised into three areas of amendment, being changes to: the Energy Security Target Monitor, or ESTM; the Consumer Trustee; and miscellaneous amendments. The first of these amendments relate to the ESTM. The purpose of the ESTM amendment is to enable a new based ESTM to oversee ongoing management of electricity supply reliability and the exit and entry of new generation capacity. That implements

the New South Wales Government's response to recommendation 3 from the Check Up report. Those amendments require the secretary to exercise the functions of the ESTM—rather than the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal—if a person or body has not been appointed in the role. That is consistent with the existing approach where the secretary takes on the functions of the Consumer Trustee in the absence of an appointment of the Consumer Trustee. As a consequence of the ESTM amendment, the terminology prescribed in reference to the default Consumer Trustee provisions will be amended to ensure consistency between both sections.

The proposed bill also allows for the secretary to delegate those functions to an employee of the department and any person exercising those functions will be protected from personal liability. The bill will enable the ESTM to share protected information with the Australian Energy Market Operator [AEMO] when the ESTM considers this necessary in the course of exercising ESTM's functions. For example, information may be shared if AEMO continues to carry out the technical modelling to inform the ESTM report. Consequential to this, amendments in the proposed bill prevent AEMO from disclosing any protected information it receives, without the Minister's approval. An example of what protected information could be includes information that stakeholders disclose in confidence when being interviewed by ESTM. It is important that this information stay protected, so that the ESTM has up-to-date and accurate information for the energy security target and stakeholders have confidence in how the information will be protected when disclosing this information. The bill also amends section 76 of the EII Act to enshrine the ESTM as an authorised officer who can issue penalty notices for offences under the Act.

I turn now to the amendments relating to the Consumer Trustee. Section 31 of the EII Act sets out how the Consumer Trustee considers the infrastructure planner's recommendations when authorising a network operator to carry out a renewable energy zone, or REZ, network infrastructure project. The EII Act prescribes that the Consumer Trustee may, after considering the infrastructure planner's recommendations, recommend to the Minister that a direction be given to a network operator for a REZ infrastructure project to be carried out. The Consumer Trustee may alternatively authorise the network operator to carry out the infrastructure project. The section further prescribes that, if the Consumer Trustee authorises the network operator to carry out the infrastructure project, it must set a maximum amount for the prudent, efficient and reasonable capital costs for the development of the infrastructure project and advise the regulator of this amount. The section, lastly, prohibits that maximum amount being disclosed to any person and allows for the regulation to prescribe the eligibility criteria and selection process for network operators which may be authorised or directed to carry out a network infrastructure project.

The proposed bill clarifies this process by creating a new head of power in section 31 of the EII Act. This head of power will allow the Minister to make a regulation about the exercise of the Consumer Trustee's functions under this section. This amendment is consistent with a range of existing heads of power that enable the Minister to make regulations about how the Consumer Trustee will carry out its independent functions—for example, recommendations about long-term energy service agreements and the matters to take into account when preparing the infrastructure investment objectives report.

The bill also amends the minimum infrastructure investment objectives and the definition of long-duration storage. The primary purpose of these amendments is to make the original policy intent explicit—that is, that long-duration storage has to have at least two gigawatts of capacity that can be dispatched for at least eight hours. Two gigawatts times eight hours is 16 gigawatt hours. We are proposing to amend section 44 to make this explicit and to provide certainty to the market about the minimum infrastructure investment objectives. The proposed amendment enables the Minister to respond flexibly to long-duration storage needs by creating a head of power for the regulations to prescribe a different period of time.

The overall objective of these amendments is to accommodate longer periods where the demand for electricity is greater than the supply, hence this amount of energy storage is needed. The Minister for Energy will decide whether to make a regulation in 2024 to specify a different duration, following a review by AEMO Services Limited. I note that AEMO Services Limited is a subsidiary of AEMO, which I spoke about earlier. AEMO Services Limited has been appointed as the Consumer Trustee under the EII Act. Before making any decision about whether to specify a minimum duration different to the current eight hours, the Minister for Energy will consult with industry as part of the review.

Together, the long-duration storage amendments in the bill provide flexibility to the Consumer Trustee in how it tenders for long-duration storage to meet the reliability standard. The bill preserves the Consumer Trustee's independence in deciding which mix of projects and duration is needed to achieve the minimum infrastructure objectives. The bill also amends when the Consumer Trustee must prepare the infrastructure investment objectives report stipulated in section 45 of the EII Act. The section, as currently particularised, creates a potential interpretation that it must publish on an exact day, which is not the intent. The bill clarifies that the two-year cadence is approximate.

Then there is the risk management framework. Section 51 of the EII Act provides that the Minister for Energy may require the Consumer Trustee to amend the risk management framework following a review of the risk management framework by the regulator. The proposed amendments will ensure that any amendment to the risk management framework must be in accordance with a recommendation made by the regulator following its review. This amendment will clarify the protective nature of the Minister's power so that they may only make a direction to the Consumer Trustee if it is consistent with a recommendation from the regulator. The bill also proposes miscellaneous amendments that relate to the scheme financial vehicle [SFV] and correcting cross-referencing errors.

The bill amends section 55 of the EII Act, which relates to payments out of the Electricity Infrastructure Fund. This is a minor amendment to allow the SFV to recover administrative costs directly from the Electricity Infrastructure Fund, subject to ministerial authorisation. Administrative costs include legal and insurance costs, which the SFV currently recovers via the Financial Trustee. Without these amendments, the administrative costs process is complex and lacks transparency. The proposed amendment streamlines the SFV's administrative processes and provides greater transparency because costs will be in its own name. It will also bring the process in line with other entities such as the Consumer Trustee and the Financial Trustee, which recover their costs directly from the Electricity Infrastructure Fund under section 55 (b) of the EII Act. This is a minor statutory revision that addresses an omission in the legislation.

When the EII Act was made, it was envisaged that the Financial Trustee would have a greater role in the administration and operation of the SFV. However, the SFV has a more substantive role in its operation than was originally envisaged. The ability to recover operating costs will address practical issues with invoicing and will enable the SFV to procure legal advice and insurance in its own name. The last proposed amendment to the EII Act is to correct a minor cross-referencing error in the application of division in section 36 that arose when the original bill was passed by both Houses of Parliament. This ensures that the Minister is satisfied of the relevant matters before authorising network operators to carry out a priority transmission infrastructure project.

I now turn to schedule 2 to the bill. Schedule 2 amends the EUA Act related to the governance arrangements for the Energy Corporation of NSW—EnergyCo. EnergyCo is constituted as a corporation under the EUA Act. The EUA Act sets out the governance arrangements for EnergyCo. EnergyCo has functions under the EUA Act, and it functions as the infrastructure planner under the EII Act for New South Wales renewable energy zones and priority transmission projects. The amendments in schedule 2 recognise the important role that EnergyCo is playing in the energy transition under the bipartisan roadmap. Schedule 2 makes changes to EnergyCo's governance arrangements to establish a formal governance board and associated reporting structure for EnergyCo. These amendments will support EnergyCo moving to a mature operating state, with improved decision-making and risk management processes, as committed to by this Government in response to recommendation 8 of the Check Up.

These amendments will introduce a governing board that consists of between three and eight members appointed by the Minister, which will replace the secretary and advisory board, once dissolved, which currently manages EnergyCo under the EUA Act; retain a ministerial power of direction and control which prevails over a policy or direction of the board to the extent of an inconsistency; enable a chief executive officer to be appointed by the secretary and be responsible for the day-to-day management of EnergyCo; introduce provisions about the members and procedure of the board; enable advisory committees to be established to provide advice to the board, including provision for the continuation of existing committees and power to dissolve committees; require EnergyCo to determine its service delivery priorities, having regard to the Minister's expectations; require EnergyCo to prepare a statement of corporate intent for each financial year and to exercise its functions under the EUA Act and any other Act, including EnergyCo's infrastructure planner functions under the EII Act, in accordance with the statement of corporate intent, and of which regulations will set out further details of the reporting requirements; and update existing delegation powers to reflect the new governance arrangements.

Lastly, schedule 2 makes other minor and consequential amendments, omits redundant provisions and inserts a standard provision to enable savings and transitional regulations to be made. Schedule 2 will commence on proclamation, which enables EnergyCo to continue to be managed under the existing governance arrangements until the board and chief executive officer are ready to be appointed. The changes in schedule 2 are necessary to introduce a governing board and associated reporting structure for EnergyCo to address recommendation 8 of the Check Up, within the existing legislative framework. Schedule 2 does not change EnergyCo's functions under the EUA Act or the EII Act. Schedule 2 also does not change the Minister for Energy's power of direction and control of EnergyCo.

Making these changes now is a priority for the Government and will enable the new governance arrangements to be put in place for EnergyCo in the first half of 2024. These changes will better enable EnergyCo to deliver on its functions as infrastructure planner for New South Wales' renewable energy zones and priority

transmission projects, with sufficient ministerial oversight, whilst maintaining the flexibility to act quickly and with a view to its long-term delivery mandate. These amendments recognise the important role EnergyCo is playing in the energy transition and reflect the move from the set-up phase to a mature organisation. These amendments set EnergyCo up for success in delivering its functions and are an important step in the evolution of the bipartisan roadmap. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

Community Recognition Statements

RAMSAY CLINIC THIRROUL

Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (20:11): Since August 2022, the lives of countless women have been transformed, thanks to their treatment at Ramsay Clinic Thirroul. The hospital is Australia's first and only standalone, trauma-informed mental health service. In its first year, the facility treated almost 800 women who walked through the doors. It is an incredible number that was only made possible due to the hard work, dedication and passion of the entire staff. I was fortunate to visit Ramsay Clinic Thirroul earlier this year to get a greater understanding of what types of treatments were offered and how patients were cared for. I was incredibly impressed and grateful for such a service for women. Types of therapies include psychological, cognitive behaviour, art, and acceptance and commitment therapy. There is also a pool located in the facility that is also utilised by patients. The 43-bed facility specialises in patients with mood and anxiety disorders, trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder. I congratulate and thank all the staff at Ramsay Clinic Thirroul for the tremendous role that they play in assisting women who have experienced trauma.

JANE VAN BALEN

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove) (20:12): Today I am honoured to celebrate Jane Van Balen and her remarkable work in writing *A Gentle Artist: The Life of H. Leonard Greening (1904-1984)*. Her efforts have earned her the 2023 Lane Cove History Prize. Jane Van Balen's narrative brilliantly illuminates the story of immigration, underscoring the rich tapestry of multiculturalism that is foundational to Australian society. Her essay delves into her own grandfather's journey from England to Australia in 1924, offering a personal and poignant perspective. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to Jane on her exceptional achievement and being named the 2023 Lane Cove History Prize Winner. Her contribution is indeed a significant one, and it is heartening to see her efforts recognised. Well done, Jane!

PINK RIBBON BREAKFAST

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (20:13): The eleventh Pink Ribbon Breakfast was held on 29 October at Parravilla in Parramatta, raising funds for the National Breast Cancer Foundation and promoting awareness of breast cancer, especially amongst women of South Asian background. I thank and congratulate Rekha Rajvanshi and Sue Advani, Meena, Bharti, Shipra and Poornima on organising this visually pleasing event that brought scores of women together, donning saris and outfits in every shade of pink imaginable, in support of breast cancer research and awareness. The Pink Ribbon Breakfast provided an opportunity to hear from those who have been impacted firsthand from breast cancer. Anita Jadeja spoke about the loss of her daughter, Joy, and the impact on Joy's husband, Brendan, and daughter, Clara. Other speakers focused on the importance of prevention; encouraging women to consult their GPs, have regular breast mammograms and monitor for signs and symptoms of the disease. We are fortunate to have Rekha, Sue and their team supporting a cause that affects one in seven females in Australia.

GRAFTON JACARANDA FESTIVAL

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence) (20:14): Tonight I congratulate the Grafton Jacaranda Festival committee on organising an outstanding event. Grafton's Jacaranda Festival is the oldest floral festival in Australia. Toby Power was crowned King, Tilly Sparrow was the Jacaranda Princess and Sarah Langford was the highest fundraiser. Special recognition goes to Renee Hankinson, who was the Matron of Honour. The titles of Junior Jacaranda Queen and Junior Princess went to Holly Cooper and Millie Lloyd, respectively. The Troy Cassar-Daley, Jem Cassar-Daley and Don Walker concert was the standout, with locals loving each and every beat. A heartfelt congratulations to Wendy Gibbs, who was awarded life membership of the festival—a well-deserved honour. Top marks to Mark Blackadder and Amanda Brotherson, and their dedicated volunteers on delivering an outstanding Jacaranda Festival and a job well done.

TRIBUTE TO BOB BRAINWOOD

Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (20:15): I take this opportunity to inform the House of the passing of Bob Brainwood from Vincentia. Bob and his wife, Gina, took over Nowra's Roxy theatre nearly 50 years ago, and, with the passing of Bob on 28 October, an era in the Shoalhaven's entertainment scene has ended. Theatre

was something that Bob had always had a passion for and began with his first job in a cinema at age 13. When Bob and Gina took over the Roxy in 1976, there was just one cinema in operation, and that Christmas there were five sessions a day, screening *Smokey and the Bandit*. The Roxy Cinema in Nowra has gone on to become one of the oldest cinemas still operating in New South Wales, and, under Bob's ownership, the former one-screen cinema has become a five-screen complex. Bob was recently acknowledged by industry with the 2023 Independent Cinemas Australia Lifetime Achievement Award. Bob will be remembered for his generosity, passion for cinema and community spirit. My heartfelt condolences to his family.

NOWRA SHOW

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (20:16): Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises and congratulates the 2024 Nowra Show Young Woman, Maddison Perry. I am so pleased to see Maddison progress to the next stage and embark on this role for the next 12 months. I acknowledge and thank all entrants, including Izabella Dewsbury-Love, Jacqueline Ferguson and Alicia Ford, who were all exceptional entrants, gave outstanding public speeches and are all worthy of equal recognition and congratulations. It was a beautiful evening, hosted by the Nowra Show Society Social Committee at Coolangatta Estate Winery, celebrating 150 years of the Nowra Show Society ball.

Lots of history was shared with the outgoing 2023 Nowra Show Young Woman, Lisa Horner, who was also a terrific ambassador. The 2024 Nowra Show will be held on Friday 9 February and Saturday 10 February 2024. Make sure you are planning to be there for the celebrations. I know that I will be out helping sell tickets at the gate, as I always do. The Nowra Showgirl competition was first held in 1963. Since then, the Nowra Show Society, through the competition, has assisted many young women to develop valuable life skills. I acknowledge committee members Wendy Woodward and Ralph Cook and president James Thomson.

KARITANE

Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (20:17): Karitane's 100-year journey of supporting families is truly remarkable. It has been a lifeline for parents and children, offering expert support, education and advice through targeted early intervention programs. Karitane has also pioneered essential research, in partnership with universities and other organisations, to improve clinical practice and outcomes for children and families. In a community like Fairfield, that is crucial. The presence of a Karitane centre in Carramar and Karitane Linking Families in Fairfield Heights is more than a symbol of hope; it is a real driver for positive change. Families deserve access to expert and tailored parental support, education and advice right at their doorstep, especially our most vulnerable. I am thankful for Karitane doing just that. A hundred years means countless staff, volunteers and participating families have shaped Karitane to where it is today. I thank them for making a difference in Fairfield.

PLAN B - A MOVIE MUSICAL

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (20:18): On 15 November 2023 I attended the grand opening of *Plan B - A Movie Musical*, presented by St Ives High School and St Ives High School P&C. This movie extraordinaire is a funny, moving story about a group of high school friends navigating the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. There is a lot of instant noodles, singing, dancing and detention. It is *High School Musical* meets *The Plague*. I acknowledge the over 100 students who participated, including 45 cast members, seven basketballers, four band members, 10 dancers and 47 chorists. This was a mammoth production effort. A special shout-out to the main characters, Bea, played by Mary Peter, and Jake, played by Aden Zaki. I also thank P&C president Sarah Gibbons, Principal Nathalie Bodley, and writer, director, composer and parent Sean Peter. Their leadership helped make this idea become a reality. There is no doubt that students from St Ives High will be going onto the silver screen and theatre, from Hollywood to Broadway and the West End. Finally, I pay tribute to St Ives High, one of the great performing New South Wales schools, based in the Davidson community.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis): I have seen the preview of that. It looks fantastic. It certainly will go to the silver screen.

MILPERRA PUBLIC SCHOOL ATHLETICS TEAM

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (20:20): I celebrate the remarkable achievements of four outstanding students from Milperra Public School who have emerged victorious in their zone athletics events. Zachariah Sharpe, Dylan Harris, Isaac Aad and Brody Sani have not only demonstrated their extraordinary dedication and talent but also their exceptional skills in their representative events. The young athletes are set to represent Sydney South West at the upcoming State athletics carnival. Zachariah will participate in the 100 metres, high jump and relay events, while Brody will compete in the 100 metres and relay alongside relay partners Isaac and Dylan. The students are exceptional examples of dedication, perseverance and sportsmanship. I wish all those talented children the very best of luck as they take to the track at the State athletics carnival. With their outstanding

performances so far, I am sure they will give it their all at the carnival. The Milperra community is extremely proud of their efforts. I congratulate Zachariah, Dylan, Isaac and Brody.

MR KEVIN ARROW

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst) (20:21): I acknowledge the principal of Holy Family Primary School in Bathurst, Mr Kevin Arrow, who is retiring after 31 years of service to the school. Beginning and ending his career at Holy Family school, Mr Arrow is now teaching the children of some of his first students in a full-circle moment. As principal he has managed to triple the school's enrolments, expand its high-calibre teaching staff and build new facilities at the school that make it a desirable educational facility for so many families. After 43 years in education, Mr Arrow has chosen to spend more time with his family and let the school he has successfully run for so long embark on a new era. Mr Kevin Arrow has been an inspiration in my own career, showing me what a great impact a teacher may have on young minds when he taught me in both years 5 and 6. He was one of the driving factors for me to pursue my own career in teaching. The Holy Family school and wider Bathurst community thank Mr Arrow for his service to the school. We wish him all the best in his retirement.

NICOLE CHRISTODOULOU

Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (20:22): I congratulate Nicole Christodoulou and the ParaMatildas, who recently competed in the 2023 International Federation of CP Football Para Asian Cup. Nicole is a wonderful staff member at Magdalene Catholic College in Narellan and competed with the ParaMatildas in the tournament. The ParaMatildas played four group matches, beating Japan 3-0 and Nepal 14-0, with Nicole scoring five goals. The ParaMatildas then played Japan again, winning 4-2, with Nicole scoring a goal, before the team played Nepal again and won 6-0. In the final Nicole played for 45 minutes, scoring another goal to add to her already impressive tally and helping the ParaMatildas win the final and clinch the tournament. After winning the final, the ParaMatildas were crowned tournament champions and Nicole was named Player of the Tournament—a monumental achievement and thoroughly deserved. Once again, congratulations to the ParaMatildas and Nicole on their outstanding achievement.

THE OAKS PROBUS CLUB

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (20:23): The Oaks Probus Club has emerged as a beacon of companionship and active living for the retired and semiretired individuals of our community. Through a blend of social engagements, enriching discussions and thoughtful outings, the club crafts a nurturing environment for its members to thrive in their post-retirement phase. By regularly hosting guest speakers, the club ensures a continual flow of fresh perspectives and vital information, enhancing the lives of its members. The positive ripple effect of the club's endeavours does not stop within its walls but extends throughout the community, cultivating a culture of mutual respect, empathy and lifelong learning. The club's commitment to fostering a lively, inclusive and supportive community is truly commendable. This recognition statement is a modest attempt to honour the relentless efforts and significant impact of The Oaks Probus Club. Through its laudable initiatives, the club not only enriches the lives of our elderly residents but also sets a sterling example of community service.

EMMA MARTIN

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (20:24): There is a special kind of magic to face painting. It is a gateway to imagination and fantasy and, with a few delicate strokes of a paintbrush, a young person can be transformed into anything from a fairy princess to a growling tiger to Spider-Man. It takes a special kind of artist to work such magic. I am pleased to report that the best face painter in Australia for two years running is a Charlestown local. Emma Martin, the artist behind Emmie's Face Painting and Balloon Twisting, has been mastering the art of face painting over the past 16 years. She was named Australian Face Painter of the Year at the 2023 Australian Party Stylist of the Year Awards. Emma emerged with the award over a field of hundreds, judged on the basis of artistic ability, business management and client feedback. And, if the smiles on the faces of her clients are anything to go by, she absolutely deserves every accolade she gets. I congratulate Emma and thank her for the magic.

FREE TRADE DAY

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (20:25): I take this opportunity on behalf of a grateful community to acknowledge and thank the organisers and everyone who participated and volunteered their time, skills and materials in this year's Free Trade Day, which was held recently on the Central Coast. Free Trade Day started in 2017 as a local initiative by Ryan and Yvette Wilson of Terrigal Electrical Services. Now an annual Australia-wide event, Free Trade Day strives to improve the lives of ordinary Australians by working with businesses and trade communities to deliver services to those that need it most. It assists those who are physically unable to repair their property due to age or disability and those who may have a home but are struggling. Now run by the

Terrigal-Wamberal Lions Club on the Central Coast, it was wonderful to see so many local tradies and small businesses donating their time, services and support to those in need in our community. To the organisers and the many tradies, businesses and sponsors who participated to make the day such a success, we express our deepest thanks for their generosity and incredible community spirit on the Central Coast.

SEVEN HILLS-TOONGABBIE-WENTWORTHVILLE RSL SUB-BRANCH REMEMBRANCE DAY EVENT

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (20:26): It was an honour to attend the Seven Hills-Toongabbie-Wentworthville RSL Sub-Branch Remembrance Day commemoration and deliver the Remembrance Day address. At 11.00 a.m. on 11 November 1918 the guns fell silent, the fighting stopped and the horrors of the Great War reached an end. On 11 November every year we remember the brave men and women who sacrificed their lives to shape our nation, especially the 62,000 World War I and 39,000 World War II Australian heroes who made the ultimate sacrifice. On Remembrance Day we honour the sacrifices of past and current Australian Defence Force personnel and their families to protect our sovereignty. We recognise their legacy of courage, endurance and mateship at the heart of the Australian spirit and our duty to carry it forward. I thank branch president Ross Coughran and the Seven Hills-Toongabbie-Wentworthville RSL Sub-Branch members for a thoughtful and moving service. Lest we forget.

NARRANDERA ROTARY CLUB CHARITY GOLF DAY

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (20:27): I acknowledge the Narrandera Rotary Club for another successful solar farmers of Narrandera charity golf day held in early October. Over 80 players took the course, raising much-needed funds for Can Assist Narrandera, Motor Neurone Disease Research Australia and the Rotary Club's Lil Mills Youth Projects. The aim of this year's event was to form relationships among businesses and community whilst raising vital funds. I extend a massive congratulations to organisers Jason Haines and Craig Hartin on bringing together local businesses and tradespeople to help build connections and friendships and fill employment gaps in Narrandera. The winners of the big day were the Fig Tree Motel team, the "Fig Tree Sleepers". I congratulate all involved on organising the event and thank all of those who participated for coming on board and raising much-needed funds for charity.

TRIBUTE TO PRIVATE DAVID MULLETT

Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (20:28): On Saturday 28 October a service was held at Bega Cemetery where the formerly unmarked grave of Private David Mullett was finally granted a proper military dedication. Private David Mullett was a Gunditjmara man from the Lake Condah reserve in south-west Victoria who served his nation as a volunteer in the 1st Australian Remount Unit of the Australian Light Horse brigade during the Great War of 1914 to 1918. He died on 4 July 1938, aged 64, after having lost his children to the Stolen Generations and having experienced nearly 20 years of denial of military pay and pension and the rejection of requests to settle at Lake Tyers Mission. After years of representation from his family, the Bega Valley Legacy group and Candelo RSL members, his grave is finally formally dedicated. The dedication was attended by four generations of his descendants and he lies under a flowering callistemon so there will always be flowers on his grave.

FRENCH-SPEAKING ASSOCIATION OF THE NORTH SHORE

Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (20:29): Today I recognise the French-speaking Association of the North Shore and its diligent work in supporting the French community on the northern beaches. Founded in 1998, the association has worked to build and sustain the French community in Wakehurst. This organisation supports families in maintaining their language and cultural identity, whilst also teaching French to the wider community through its French bilingual program at Killarney Heights Public School. From humble beginnings, the French-speaking Association of the North Shore has now grown into a thriving organisation, teaching 560 students across 27 classes.

I was delighted to attend the seventeenth edition of the French Markets on 5 November this year with the French ambassador, who flew up from Canberra that morning, reflecting the high regard in which the event and organisation are held. I also acknowledge the achievements of Clemence Duprat, leader of the French Markets, who has been nominated for Woman of the Year in the 2023 French-Australian Excellence Awards. Through the hard work of volunteers, employees, school parents and teachers, the French-speaking Association of the North Shore is a true source of pride for our community, and I thank its members.

KARITANE

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (20:30): I acknowledge Karitane, which is celebrating 100 years of parenting services. Last week I was privileged to join the Minister for Health to open its brand-new

establishment in Campbelltown Hospital, which is a 19-bed unit. It is a recognition of its service over 100 years to provide something so vital for local parents and their children: the care that they need at the time that they need it most. It was so good to be there. I thank the Government and the Minister for Health. I thank everyone involved in delivering this great project that will continue to deliver something so important for local mums, dads and their children.

DION ALEXANDER

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (20:31): I bring to the attention of the House Dion Alexander, whose journey as the second runner-up for Mr Gay World was not just a personal achievement but also a testament to his commitment to fostering inclusion in the realm of sports. As a tenpin bowler, he rolled his way into the hearts of many, breaking stereotypes and advocating for a more diverse and accepting sporting community. Beyond the lanes, his involvement with the Rainbow Swans showcased his dedication to creating safe spaces for LGBTQI+ individuals within the sporting world. Dion's impact extended beyond the sports arena. His role as a former instructor at F45 West Ryde, Meadowbank and Macquarie Park exemplifies his passion for fitness and community building. In these spaces, he not only coached physical strength but also championed the strength found in embracing one's true self. The amalgamation of his athletic prowess, advocacy for LGBTQI+ inclusion and fitness instruction paint a picture of a well-rounded individual committed to breaking down barriers. Dion's journey echoes the sentiment that inclusion is not just a concept but also a lived experience. I congratulate him on his extraordinary achievements.

MAI-WEL GROUP

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (20:32): I acknowledge and congratulate Mai-Wel on its first ever awards, held on 25 October this year. I particularly congratulate Evelyn Kucharski of Rutherford on her 45 years of service to the Mai-Wel organisation. Over 80 people attended the exclusive event, which celebrated staff anniversary milestones, organisation value award winners and top supporting businesses and employers. Evelyn was the overall highlight of the night, acknowledged and celebrated for her incredible milestone of 45 years of service. Evelyn currently works as an operations assistant in business services within the Mai-Wel enterprises team. When asked by emcee Craig McGregor what she loved about working at Mai-Wel, Evelyn said, "My friends, and I love the work." The night was a huge success, celebrating not only the team but also some fantastic partners and employers too. Catering was by Mai-Wel's own Thrive Catering, a project-based learning model used to assist jobseekers to develop experience, skills for work and the confidence to transition successfully into further study or employment.

TRIBUTE TO LEO FRANSEN

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (20:33): I celebrate the commitment of Captain Leonardus "Leo" Fransen. Leo was a dedicated Rural Fire Service volunteer and a committed life member of the Diamond Beach Rural Fire Brigade, which he joined in 2010. He was a loving husband and father to two children. Leo was part of the strike force that was deployed to the Walgett local government area to assist with the bushfire in the small mining community of Glengarry. Tragically, Captain Leo passed away due to injuries sustained whilst in the line of duty. Captain Leo Fransen will be remembered in Barwon for years to come due to his commitment and sacrifices for not only his own local area but also the Glengarry community.

DRESS FOR SUCCESS

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (20:34): I was thrilled to recently meet with the new Dress for Success CEO, Melissa Collins, and head of philanthropy and partnerships, Amelia Lawrence, at their fantastic new premises at the Inner West Sustainability Hub in Summer Hill. Dress for Success has performed a magical transformation of the old council depot from a bare cement and brick shed into a beautiful, stylish and inspiring space. Assisting more than 2,500 women across Australia each year, Dress for Success now has room for its more than 400 volunteers and for its rows of clothing to be distributed at no cost. The tireless commitment of the team to empowering individuals through professional attire and career development services is an invaluable asset to our community. The move to the new space signifies a pivotal moment in the team's journey, and it is a testament to their growth and dedication to uplifting individuals on their path to success. I am confident that the new premises will serve as a haven for empowerment and transformation, further solidifying their indispensable role in our community. I congratulate Melissa, Amelia and all the team at Dress for Success.

JOHN HOBAN

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (20:35): I recognise an incredibly selfless member of my local community, Mr John Hoban. Throughout his life, John has dedicated himself to serving his community, the State and the country. Beginning his professional life working as a career army officer, John served in both Papua New Guinea and Vietnam. Subsequently, he worked as a training system adviser at various army schools, collaborating with

infantry, artillery, signals and intelligence. Continuing his spirit of service, John also served the community in his role with NSW Fire Brigades, where he held the position of senior admin. Even after his retirement, John has been actively involved with the Royal Humane Society, the TPI Association and the Penshurst RSL Club, where he has proudly served as president since 2016. Community heroes like John are the backbone of the St George community, ensuring it is one of the best places in the State to live, work and raise a family. I commend the work of locals like John, who inspire us to engage with our community. I thank John for his service and wish him all the best in his future endeavours.

MAYA THIRUCHELVAM

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (20:36): I congratulate young spelling genius Maya Thiruchelvam on being named the Premier's Spelling Bee champion in the junior State final. Maya represented Hamilton South Public School and the wider Newcastle and Hunter region at the Sydney showdown against 29 other students. She took out the top spot with the winning word "tortellini". This achievement has taken lots of practice and hard work. This spelling master is only in year 4, and I am sure she will be back next year for the senior spelling bee.

IRIS NASTASI

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne) (20:37): I acknowledge and congratulate Iris Nastasi, principal of Rosebank College in Five Dock. On 27 October the Teachers' Guild of New South Wales held its 2023 World Teachers' Day celebration, where Iris was recognised with an honorary fellowship of the guild. The fellowship recognises outstanding educators who have made major contributions both within their mainstream sphere of work and more broadly across the education profession. Iris' dedication to Rosebank College and advancing the education profession was also acknowledged with a World Teachers' Recognition Award. I sincerely congratulate Iris on this well-deserved recognition of her commitment to education and all that she does to inspire and prepare our future leaders. I have been privileged to get to know Iris and to see her passion for her work and for her school community. She is a leader to be admired. Again, I congratulate Iris, and I wish her all the very best.

BELGRAVIA LEISURE

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (20:38): I acknowledge the success of Belgravia Leisure at the 2023 NSW Aquatic and Recreation Institute awards, which recognise excellence in the leisure industry across a variety of categories. This year Belgravia Leisure, which is responsible for the operation of both the Whitlam Leisure Centre in Liverpool and the Michael Wenden Aquatic Leisure Centre in Miller, walked away with several prestigious accolades, including the Diversity and Inclusion Award; the Lifeguard of the Year award, which went to Washington Canellas; and the Emerging Leader Award, won by New South Wales area manager Liz Stranix. Belgravia Leisure also received the Social Impact Award for its work in the Liverpool area. Having seen the programs and services Liverpool's leisure facilities work to provide, I can attest to the profoundly positive impact Belgravia Leisure has on our community. I extend my sincere congratulations to the entire Belgravia Leisure team in Liverpool for their commitment to creating vibrant and inclusive recreational experiences.

BERYL LUCAS

Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy) (20:39): I congratulate Beryl Lucas on being presented with the Order of Liverpool Award 2023. With a remarkable membership spanning over two decades at the Quota club and seven years at the Liverpool Probus club, Beryl has been a pillar of support for her community. Her dedication extends beyond affiliations. She has actively engaged in fundraising initiatives and provided assistance to those facing challenges. Prior to her retirement, Beryl operated a hairdressing service at Masonic Homes in Glenfield, ensuring that residents looked and felt their best. Her commitment to service goes beyond professional endeavours. She has consistently demonstrated compassion and generosity. Beryl's altruistic spirit shines through in her efforts to support teenage mothers in need, organising Mother's Day parcels for the Liverpool women's refuge and spreading joy during the holiday season by delivering hampers to local charities. I congratulate Beryl Lucas on her unwavering commitment to having a positive impact on the lives of others.

SAFE HAVEN, GOSFORD

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (20:40): The Central Coast community now has access to life-changing mental health support with the opening of Safe Haven in Gosford. Safe Haven is not just a name but a true haven of solace and support for people struggling with their mental health. Safe Haven is a fantastic addition to our community, creating a safe space for people who are living with mental illness or have suicide concerns. They can visit a very gentle location where people with lived experience of mental illness and expert support clinicians provide wraparound support for both individuals and their families to provide necessary care. I particularly thank the peer workers involved in Safe Haven, Gosford, for their expert and generous care of members of the Central

Coast community based on their own lived experience. I ask the medical experts and management team, our beautiful psych nurses, admin staff and marketing team, the ED and everyone else involved to please accept my sincere gratitude. I encourage the people of the Central Coast to use this facility, which is open from 9.00 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. every weekday. I thank the Minister for Mental Health for supporting this opening.

WILLOUGHBY ELECTORATE SMALL BUSINESSES

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (20:41): October was Small Business Month in New South Wales. As a strong supporter of small business, I recognise and thank all the hardworking small business operators across the Willoughby electorate. Small business is the engine room of our economy and in so many ways the fabric of our communities. It is vital to our success as a people, community, State and country. I constantly seek to convey support for small business proudly and regularly in dealings with local businesses and chambers of commerce, and at business awards events, fairs and more. I recognise all the efforts of local business chambers, including Chatswood Chamber of Commerce, Artarmon Village Inc., Crows Nest Mainstreet, Neutral Bay Chamber of Commerce, Naremburn Chamber of Commerce and the recently reinvigorated North Sydney Chamber of Commerce. Small businesses have faced many challenges with the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences, more recently among them rising inflation and cost-of-living pressures. The resilience, passion and strength of our local small business community across Willoughby is inspiring and impressive. I urge all local residents to support our local small businesses every month, as I am proud to do. Well done to Willoughby and thank you for Small Business Month.

Private Members' Statements

CITY OF NEWCASTLE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (20:42): In July *Newcastle Herald* journalist Donna Page began reporting on dozens of derogatory letters to the editor sent over years. They were nasty letters about the good people of Wallsend. Page reported that over the past six years Mr Scott Neylon, an Australian expat living in Japan, penned disparaging letters to the editor, often misspelling his own name and giving several different addresses. Any community member or politician questioning the City of Newcastle [CON] was admonished. I was the prime target. The letters, meanwhile, heaped praise upon CON. Mr Bath and Mr Neylon, who has lived and worked in Japan for decades, are close friends. Ms Page discovered that both were enrolled at Mr Bath's address. Mr Neylon has intricate knowledge of the Newcastle political scene. In his letters he stated that he "bumped into" me down the street, which was a lie. He also said that he was a pensioner and had teenage children—more lies.

Mr Bath's history of astroturfing campaigns started when he worked at Clubs NSW and is well known. While at Clubs NSW, his IP addresses were linked to online comments about former Premier Bob Carr's blog connected to an account called "Scott Neylon". Mr Bath denies his involvement in writing the letters. It is undeniable that Mr Jeremy Bath, CON CEO, is the author of the letters and arranged for Mr Neylon to take the fall for him. Mr Bath has shamefully abused his \$550,000-a-year job, funded by our Newcastle taxpayers. Following the release of Ms Page's articles, CON Lord Mayor Nuatali Nemes was under pressure to clean up the mess made by her hand-picked CEO—a mess that brought CON into disrepute.

At council's July meeting councillors were forced to respond to questions about these damaging letters. Councillor Carol Duncan spoke, proposing a motion accusing me of committing a criminal act by leaking private electoral roll information to journalists. Six other councillors willingly endorsed this motion and the false and defamatory remarks made by Councillor Carol Duncan. They were based on no evidence and suggested that I had done something wrong. These allegations made by Councillor Carol Duncan—assisted by councillors Nemes, Clausen, Winney-Baartz, Wood, Adamczyk and Richardson—were designed to humiliate me. They were concocted to take the heat off the Scott Neylon debacle and its direct links to CON. Consequently, I sought legal advice and sent a defamation concerns notice to the councillors involved. I have reserved my right to subsequent legal action.

I call for the dismissal of disgraced CEO Mr Jeremy Bath due to his involvement in the writing of the Neylon letters. Further, I call for a public apology and retraction of the baseless lies and defamatory statements and endorsements from councillors Nemes, Clausen, Duncan, Winney-Baartz, Wood, Adamczyk and Richardson. It has been 18 weeks since the investigation into Mr Bath was launched and there has been no update from CON. Our community has lost faith in the CEO and demands that this sorry CON saga be resolved.

ORGAN DONATION

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove) (20:47): Tonight I extend my heartfelt congratulations to a remarkable young individual, Jake Spiden, a year 6 student at Saint Ignatius' College Riverview. Recently Jake sent me an email with a proposal to improve the way government can promote registrations for organ donations. For school, Jake had to come up with something that exists today that society could innovate or change for the

better. His headmaster suggested that he share his proposal with me. Jake's proposal addresses the vital need for easier access to organ donor registration forms. By recognising the importance of simplifying the registration process, Jake is aiming to attract more potential donors, thereby drastically increasing the chances of saving thousands of Australian lives.

Specifically, Jake is proposing the distribution of organ donation forms alongside the ballot papers on election day and allowing voters to submit this form whilst still at a polling booth. Jake is clearly passionate about this issue and has done the research to back up his proposal. He conducted a survey and his data suggested that many people would like to be donors but are unaware of how to register or whether they are already a donor. He believed if we could make the process easier, we would see a spike in registrations. What a unique idea—a genuine display of out-of-the-box thinking. Many of us will be jealous we did not think of it ourselves. His innovative idea not only demonstrates a keen understanding of a critical issue in our society but also serves as an inspiring call to action for us all.

The significance of organ donation cannot be overstated. It is not merely a selfless act that saves the lives of others; each organ donor has the potential to save up to eight lives. In this place you would be hard-pressed to find a member who has not faced challenges with this system themselves or for a loved one. Organ failure does not discriminate. It affects people no matter their heritage, their income or their age. It is an issue that every Australian has a connection to and should be motivated to solve. It is important that we consider the sobering statistics. Approximately 1,800 Australians are on the organ transplant waiting list and an additional 14,000 are on dialysis. The shortage of donors poses a threat to lives. It is estimated that we would save 1,300 lives a year by closing the gap between donors and recipients, making it imperative for us to encourage increased donorship. Not only does this save lives, but it also alleviates the strain on our healthcare systems by reducing the number of patients waiting for transplants and dialysis.

Jake's idea is more than a proposal; it is a call for collective responsibility and community understanding. The physical and mental strain faced by individuals on organ transplant waiting lists is daunting and Jake's empathy shines through as he advocates for increased support for them. His transformative idea is a beacon, highlighting a path towards a more compassionate and responsive healthcare system. If a child in year 6 can recognise the gaps in our health system, it is incumbent on all of us to follow Jake's lead.

Let us bring attention to similar issues and actively participate in actions that support and care for those who are enduring challenging circumstances. Jake's example encourages all youth to be proactive in raising awareness about issues affecting their communities and to contribute to positive change. I extend my sincere gratitude and that of the House to Jake for his innovative and transformative idea. I am watching eagerly to see what other ideas Jake comes up with going forward. If this is the kind of proposal he is putting together at 12 years old, I can only imagine what he will be able to contribute to our community and nation well into the future. Well done, Jake.

DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (20:50): I focus on a very important event in our communities. Reclaim the Night is a movement against sexual violence and violence against women. Reclaim the Night began in the mid-1970s as coordinated women's marches against sexual harassment and rape. The first Reclaim the Night march was in 1977 in Leeds in the United Kingdom. Inspired by similar marches in West Germany, the Leeds march was partially in response to the Yorkshire Ripper murders and the police reaction, which was to tell women they should not go out at night unless necessary. These early Reclaim the Night marches fought for a woman's right to walk without fear at night. They made it clear that women should not be restricted or blamed because of men's violence.

People march today because they believe everyone has the right to feel safe, be safe and to show a united front against violence of all kinds. On Thursday 26 October I had the privilege to attend the first local Reclaim the Night rally in the Narellan Library forecourt, organised by the Camden-Wollondilly Domestic Violence Committee. The night was hosted by Ally Redondo from C91.3 and included drummer, a drumming troupe where everyone can join in the fun; singing from Elina R-T Music; food and drinks; resources; and a torch for everyone attending. It was fantastic to attend and see so many people from the community coming together and standing united to make it clear that violence against women and children is unacceptable. It was a freezing cold and wet night but people came anyway.

In New South Wales and across Australia domestic violence and violence against women is an epidemic. Domestic violence, sexual harassment and violence against women are unacceptable. We must address the pervasive issue of domestic and family violence, along with sexual harassment. It is essential that we create an environment where everyone, regardless of their identity, feels safe when they step outside their home. Initiatives like the Reclaim the Night movement serve as a powerful reminder of our collective responsibility to reclaim our

streets from fear and violence. As we head into the festive season, we all need to be reminded that Christmas is a time when family violence spikes, due to several factors. Research published in the *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy* suggests that this spike is because of increased contact between victim and perpetrator due to more time spent at home and family events, as well as increased consumption of alcohol and high levels of financial stress experienced by families.

It is through collaborative efforts that we can break the cycle of violence and harassment. Our commitment to creating safe spaces must be unwavering, not only in words but also in action. Let us strive to make every community, as well as our local Camden community, a shining example of a place where individuals can move freely, unburdened by the fear of harm or harassment. Together we can build a society where every person, irrespective of their background, can reclaim the night with confidence and security. If anyone would like to be an advocate for change, the Camden-Wollondilly Domestic Violence Committee is holding a SayNo2DV breakfast on Wednesday 29 November. The breakfast will showcase the value of sports clubs standing up to say no to domestic violence. I encourage anyone interested to purchase tickets for this important event.

The International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women this year will be held this Saturday 5 November. It marks the launch of the UNiTE campaign, an initiative of 16 days of activism. The 2023 campaign, Invest to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls, will call on citizens to show how much they care about ending violence against women and girls and call on governments worldwide, like this one, to share how they are investing in gender-based violence protection. Domestic violence is unacceptable in all forms and there is no excuse for this kind of behaviour. The statistics are alarming and we can all do more to help prevent violence against women and children. I encourage everyone in the community to think about how they can become an ally to end violence against women and children for good. I call out to anyone who needs help to seek help. They are always welcome in my office.

MOREE INTERMODAL OVERPASS

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (20:55): I express my and the Moree community's absolute disgust and horror at the announcement from the Federal Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development of Australia, Catherine King, that the Moree Intermodal Overpass [MIO], a key plank of the \$224.8 million Moree Special Activation Precinct, has been scrapped. It is a callous, cold, heartless decision that fails to appreciate the importance of not only the agricultural sector but also the value that the Moree Plains shire plays in the State and Australian economy. This is a heavy vehicle road link going from the Newell Highway over the top of the Inland Rail line into the special activation precinct. It is being funded by this State Government. In fact, to its credit, in September this year the current State Government put additional money into the special activation precinct in the budget. I again thank it and give it absolute credit for doing so.

I fear, as does the community and council, that the decision to scrap the \$44 million overpass, this callous and misinformed decision by the Federal Government, has the potential to completely derail—excuse the pun—the whole Inland Rail and special activation precinct project. It will rip 4,000 potential full-time jobs out of a community of 7½ thousand people. Instead of growing grain, cotton and other primary produce and trucking it to the Port of Brisbane, those people were looking to value-add those products through the special activation precinct by constructing an intermodal so they could containerise those products and put them on rail. This would take thousands of trucks off local, State and Federal roads each year. It would save producers in the region around \$25 a tonne on their produce because rather than trucking it to another State, such as Queensland, the money would stay in New South Wales.

All of that is now completely up in the air because of this decision by the Federal Government. I do not understand why. An amount of \$35.2 million was committed a number of years ago. The Australian Rail Track Corporation [ARTC] was chipping in and so was Moree Plains Shire Council. Indeed, the plans for the overpass were completed and approved by the New South Wales Department of Planning and Environment. They were part of the consent that was granted to the ARTC to do the major upgrade of the existing rail line in the Moree Plains shire as part of the critical Inland Rail project. The real problem is that road was a key plank of the east-west connector. Page 4 of the Moree Special Activation Precinct briefing paper from the New South Wales Department of Planning and Environment states:

The MIO serves as a future link for the East-West Connector, a road bypass south of Moree which will reduce freight traffic through the Moree township.

That means road trains do not travel through urban areas on 50 kilometre per hour streets that were not designed for vehicles of that weight, length or speed, especially through the school zones. The project is expected to cost \$44 million, and the special activation precinct final business case includes the East-West Connector. It is intended to deliver this portion in stages during the implementation of the project. The whole purpose of and the whole business case for the special activation precinct, for which the taxpayers of this State are investing \$224.8 million,

hinges on a \$44 million federally funded project to get road trains off the Newell Highway and into the darn thing in the first place over the Inland Rail line. All of that has been ripped away and put at risk.

Where do we go from here? I support the calls of Federal member for Parkes Mark Coulton to have Catherine King in the Federal Government review this decision. The business case stacks up beyond anything that we have seen before, given the value of the produce in this special activation precinct. But, failing that, my question then comes back to the current State Government. What are we going to do together to make sure that the Moree community does not lose those jobs, the precinct and all of the work that has been done to get the jobs and value-add to agriculture?

WESTERN SYDNEY LOCAL HEALTH DISTRICT

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (21:00): Blacktown and Mount Druitt hospitals, both vital healthcare institutions in Western Sydney, are receiving substantial investment. The Government has allocated \$120 million to the hospitals, enabling them to expand their capacity and better serve the growing population in the west and north-west of Sydney. The Minns Government's commitment to restoring our healthcare system is of utmost importance. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the dedicated healthcare workers and pledge to work relentlessly to ensure that our health system can cater to the growing needs of our community. Fixing the shortcomings of the former Government is not an easy task, but we are committed to addressing the 12 years of neglect.

It is essential to recognise that the latest data from the Bureau of Health Information covers the final months of the former Government, offering a snapshot of the challenges we inherited and are committed to addressing. The statistics are alarming. Across the entire Western Sydney Local Health District, a staggering 11.5 per cent of patients, which amounts to 5,880 individuals, were compelled to leave emergency departments without completing their treatment. That is an unacceptable situation, one that should stir our collective conscience. Those are not mere numbers; they are our friends, family members and neighbours who found themselves caught in the crossfire of a faltering healthcare system. Despite the staggering failures, it is crucial to recognise and applaud the dedication and professionalism of our frontline essential health workers. They have shown unwavering commitment, often under overwhelming circumstances, to provide care and comfort to those in need. They are the unsung heroes who tirelessly work to alleviate suffering and save lives, regardless of the challenges they face.

In response to this crisis, our actions are multifaceted. We are working closely with the Federal Government in rolling out urgent care services across New South Wales. I am grateful for the recent opening of an urgent care service clinic in the suburb of Rooty Hill in the heart of the Mount Druitt electorate. Those centres will ensure that care is accessible and prompt, alleviating pressure on the Mount Druitt emergency department. Furthermore, we are expanding virtual care services, employing innovative virtual models to make health care more accessible, even for our youngest patients, all while reducing the reliance on emergency department visits. But that is not all. We are investing in geriatric outreach services to provide care in the homes or residential care settings of our aging population. That will not only ease the burden on our emergency departments but also offer a more compassionate and efficient solution for our seniors, reducing the need for paramedic interventions.

We are committed to working closely with NSW Ambulance, the dedicated teams at NSW Health and communities across the State to ensure that alternative pathways are not just a vision but a reality. This Government aims to guarantee that everyone can access the right care at the right place at the right time. Together we can build a healthier future for New South Wales. While there has been much disappointment over the past 12 years with the neglect of the former Government, the future is brighter as the Minns Labor Government is tackling the failures head on. Western Sydney Local Health District emergency services are the backbone and the lifeline of a prosperous society. I look forward to seeing the initiatives being delivered for the benefit of my Mount Druitt community.

MODERN SLAVERY

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (21:05): I report to the House on my attendance at a workshop on modern slavery held by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association [CPA]. We believe with pride that we have abolished slavery. That is seen as a triumph of human rights, and yet sadly slavery is still with us. Modern slavery is a reality. International human rights group Walk Free defines modern slavery as an umbrella term referring to situations of exploitation where a person cannot refuse or leave work because of threats, violence, coercion, deception, poverty and/or abuse of power.

According to the International Labour Organization, 50 million people across the world were living in modern slavery in 2021. That is one in 150 people. Of those, 28 million were in a form of forced labour and 22 million were trapped in forced marriages. Forced labour includes state-imposed labour, child exploitation, human trafficking, forced commercial sexual exploitation, debt bondage, and exploitation of those vulnerable

because of their immigration status. The International Labour Organization also notes that modern slavery is not restricted to particular cultures or ethnic or religious groups and is not confined to poor countries. In fact, more than half occurs in upper-middle-income and high-income countries. In Australia it is estimated that up to 41,000 people currently experience modern slavery, with as many as 16,000 in New South Wales.

I am pleased to note that New South Wales has been a leader in tackling this issue with its Modern Slavery Act and the appointment of an Anti-slavery Commissioner. It is, I believe, the only jurisdiction in the world that has a modern slavery parliamentary committee. As chair of that committee, I recently attended a three-day workshop in Nairobi on modern slavery in supply chains and gender-based violence. It was hosted by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association UK in conjunction with the Kenyan National Assembly. There were 12 jurisdictions in attendance, including six African countries.

With a shared parliamentary and legislative heritage, the CPA provides a unique platform in which representatives from vastly different situations can come together to learn from each other. An example of that was an extensive discussion on the issues involved in hearing from those with lived experience. It was also important to learn what barriers exist even where there has been anti-slavery legislation. In the United Kingdom, for example, there has been an Act since 2015 but progress there has been slow. It was disturbing to also hear of domestic servitude in foreign countries where a particular survivor who sought help from her government was essentially told to turn to prostitution. It was also disturbing to hear of death threats to politicians who dare to question the power of established elites and to hear of the impact of Western trade practice on the wages and conditions of workers in African countries.

It seems that the desire for profit drives down price, and that also drives down wages and creates the environment where exploitation of workers can occur. That led me to ask this: Do we in the rich, developed countries preach the evils of modern slavery while at the very same time demanding cheaper and cheaper goods for ourselves and excessive profits for our companies? It is time to wake up to the realities of global supply chains that mask real suffering, drive down conditions for workers and create the environments for modern slavery. It is important that we are aware of the areas in our own society where there is a real risk of people living in modern slavery.

Importantly, the workshop reached agreement on a number of matters. It noted that modern slavery is a global problem. In fact, it is described as the greatest human rights abuse today, generating criminal profits of at least US\$150 billion a year. There is no room for any kind of slavery in the Commonwealth or anywhere in the world. Delegates pledged to share best practice and information about how local modern slavery and similar laws are being implemented and enforced. They requested that the CPA establish a global network of parliamentarians to end modern slavery and provide engagement and support to allow the exchange of knowledge to strengthen our understanding, to better address this issue through legislation and advocacy.

The conference also noted that the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting is being held in 2024. It called on those heads of government to agree to support actions to eradicate modern slavery and human trafficking, in line with United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 8.7, and report back on the various steps they have taken, the effectiveness of those steps and how they are monitoring progress. The conference also called on parliaments to ensure the security of their members and support their health and wellbeing as they work together to eliminate the abuse of millions of vulnerable people around the world.

SUMMER HILL ELECTORATE WASTE REDUCTION

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (21:10): Inner westies are passionate about improving their local environment. All across the Summer Hill electorate, residents are considering ways to lower emissions, like leaving their cars behind, harnessing the opportunities of renewable energy, reducing waste, and improving the quality of our soil, air and water. Last week was National Recycling Week, and I am proud that the inner west is home to multiple organisations that support and nurture the circular economy. Established organisations like Reverse Garbage and the Bower have served our community for decades and continue to save tonnes and tonnes of items from landfill. They have been joined by newcomers like Among The Trees in Marrickville, which is a local reclaimed timber shop, woodworking school and artist space. The goal is to save some of the estimated 1.5 million tonnes of timber that goes into tips across Australia each year by reclaiming local timber from building sites and refurbishing and upcycling it for use in new projects. I also recently met with Circle Paints, which is committed to reducing the waste paint being put into landfill.

There have been some exciting new developments at the old Summer Hill council depot, including the Inner West Sustainability Hub, which brings together some of the most innovative and hardworking organisations in the inner west and is home to the council's Green Living Centre; the Bower; Re Place, an initiative from the Village Project; and Dress for Success. The site will also soon feature a new Return and Earn vending machine

and electric charging facilities. These organisations are inner west institutions that continue to inspire inner westies to give their waste a new lease of life.

Another exciting development in the inner west has been the introduction of food recycling, or FOGO—food organics, garden organics—which removes food waste from landfill, instead diverting it for professional composting to improve the quality of the soil we use to grow food on farms. FOGO is a feature of waste collection in councils across Sydney, including Randwick City Council and Penrith City Council, and has been in operation for years in many regional councils. When food scraps are sent to landfill, they rot and create potent methane and greenhouse gases. By diverting them for use on our farms, we can lower emissions and reduce the total volume of waste in landfill. There have been challenges with the rollout, but I have heard from countless inner westies who are excited and supportive of the new scheme. Residents have expressed to me that they are excited to do their bit to improve their local environment and are even thinking through the amount of food they buy and, ultimately, waste. I congratulate everyone in the inner west community who is participating in food recycling and doing their bit to reduce the amount of waste being sent to landfill.

Reducing waste is key to making our land, air and water clean. Inner westies are passionate about protecting our natural environment, including our local river, the Cooks River. There are so many extraordinary groups doing diligent work, like the Mudcrabs, the Cooks River Alliance, the Cooks River Valley Association, the River Canoe Club, the Inner West Environment Group and many more. They are led by hardworking local volunteers who give up so much of their lives to reduce litter along our waterways, plant trees and vegetation along the riverbanks, and improve the water and air quality.

The noble ambition of restoring the Cooks River is supported by all levels of government, and I am very proud that the Federal Albanese Government has committed \$10 million to revitalise the river. Projects funded by this commitment will ensure that Indigenous rangers are in partnership with local volunteer organisations. I am equally proud that the Minns Labor Government has committed a further \$1 million to support works that aim to restore the river, including looking at naturalising the riverbanks. Inner westies know that the greatest gift we can give our children is a cleaner, greener and brighter world. We know that work begins in our homes and in our communities by not only volunteering with local environmental groups but also changing our behaviours to make sure that we reduce our ecological impact and ensure that environmentalism is one of the core principles we bring to our community each and every day.

DRUMMOYNE ELECTORATE YOUNG ACHIEVERS

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne) (21:14): We can learn a lot about the aspirations and dreams of young people when we listen closely to them and pay attention to the challenges they are facing. Tonight I speak of a few inspiring young leaders in my community. First I acknowledge two local students who participated in the Y NSW Youth Parliament that was held over the July school holidays. At the Youth Parliament I met the two young "members for Drummoyne": Paul Braoudakis and Nikita Sherbakov. As part of a week of activities, these two "members" had the opportunity to make contributions to debates in this House. I chaired a mock private members' statements session, where I heard Paul and Nikita make their contributions. I wish to share them tonight. Paul's speech was delivered as follows:

The Y NSW is not the only community organisation that believes in the power of inspired young people. The Australian Defence Force Cadets currently prepares twenty-eight thousand young leaders of tomorrow across the Air Force Cadets, Army Cadets, and Navy Cadets. Every member of the ADF Cadets render a service to their community that is second only to the soldiers and officers of the ADF, who safeguard our nation faithfully at home and abroad. All cadets owe the skills they learn to the volunteers who dedicate their precious time to the development of others. While uniformed volunteers do receive payment for their time, our State lacks the foresight to pay the ordinary civilian instructors - just good, honest Australians - who dedicate themselves for weeks at a time to the Cadets organisation ... Speaker, in the midst of our current cost of living crisis, this is completely unacceptable. If we want to keep on raising generations of young leaders and professionals - those who will sit in this time-honoured Chamber after we are long gone - the least we can do is pay every volunteer who trains them an honest wage for their time.

Nikita's speech was delivered as follows:

With great conviction, I propose that Australia not only stays on its current path but sets the table—a table that prioritises diplomacy and peace over aggression. It is in our collective hands to shape a future where dialogue and understanding prevail. Australia, as a nation, has always been known for its resilience, innovation, and unwavering spirit. But with recent events of violent acts of war in Ethiopia, Myanmar and Ukraine we have seen how easily people and nations are affected. Speaker, I believe that true strength, a truly admirable and virtuous nation, not only sits down at the table but also extends an unwavering hand of compassion and understanding, inviting others to join them in breaking bread, sharing stories, and embracing the power of dialogue and diplomacy. Speaker, my family has run away from the collapse of the Soviet Union and the conflict in the Middle East, do not put my mother and brother through that again. Sit down at the table.

Both of these speeches are powerful and considered. I acknowledge Nikita and Paul for spending their holidays in this House trying to make our State a better place for all, particularly young people. I am always encouraged to see young people who want to get involved, and I sincerely congratulate them on their participation. It was lovely to meet them both and I wish them all the best.

I also recently hosted Lucy Cologna from Rosebank College for a week of work experience in my electorate office. During this time, she shared what she believes are the top issues facing young people and suggested how we, as parliamentarians, can help shape the future to better support young people. Lucy noted the important themes that affect young people today: mental health, social media, education, climate change and civic involvement. She also offered a vision for the future of education that is equitable for all and where civic education in schools is promoted. Lucy highlighted key areas of concern for young people, particularly regarding the impacts of social media on youth mental health, and climate change—ensuring that we are conserving our environment responsibly and in a forward-thinking way. Lucy wants to be involved in her local community and to be an active voice in discussion around policy. She sees voting as an opportunity to have a say in policy and to be heard.

What I have described is that young people like Lucy, Paul and Nikita are facing challenges, and as their representatives we must listen so that they are empowered to participate and supported to thrive. I thank Lucy for volunteering her time to work in my office and to serve our community. I thank Lucy also for bravely sharing her ideas and being a voice for young people. I know that her family, friends and school community are immensely proud of her.

DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (21:19): I speak about one of the biggest issues confronting our State and our nation—domestic violence. The stark reality is that it could be a neighbour, a work colleague, a friend or a family member who is a victim or a perpetrator of this hideous crime. My electorate is not immune to domestic violence. In the Sutherland shire local government area [LGA] alone, there were 677 recorded domestic violence related assaults in 2022. In the Wollongong LGA there were 667 recorded incidents during the same period. We know the nature of domestic violence means many incidents happen behind closed doors and are not witnessed by others, so I say with the utmost confidence—and sadness—that the number of total incidents in both LGAs was much higher than those recorded. After being elected as the member for Heathcote in March this year, one of my first meetings was with the commander of the Sutherland Shire Police Area Command. I was alarmed, yet not surprised, to hear that domestic violence was the number one incident police in the Sutherland Shire Police Area Command attend to.

Figures from the NSW Bureau of Crimes Statistics and Research paint an incredibly alarming picture regarding domestic violence in our State. From 2003 to 2022 there were 667 domestic violence related murders recorded in New South Wales. I will say that again: There were 667 domestic violence related murders recorded in New South Wales in the 20-year period beginning in 2003. On average, that is 33 people who were killed each year. In the five-year period beginning in 2018, 25 children were victims of domestic violence related murder. Of those children, 21 were aged under 10. I cannot comprehend on any level whatsoever how that number could be one, let alone 21. As a parent, it is an horrific thought to know that there are perpetrators out there who have made such decisions and will make those decisions in the future. We know there is no one solution that can end domestic violence. However, that does not mean we should throw our hands in the air and put the issue in the too-hard basket. Victims deserve better than that. I was buoyed to see the NSW Domestic Violence Helpline mark 30 years of service. In an ideal world, there would be no need for such a service to exist. Devastatingly, as the Bureau of Crimes Statistics and Research figures show, that is not the case.

Education, funding, shelters, health centres and services like the Domestic Violence Helpline all play a vital role in raising awareness and assisting victims. Events like White Ribbon Day—held on Friday 17 November this year—also help shed light on a crime that is often committed in the shadows and behind closed doors. Education is particularly important for young people. Recently, the Australian Institute of Family Studies revealed almost one-third of teenagers aged between 18 and 19 had experienced violence from a partner. That is horrifying. Another disturbing statistic highlighted by the Bureau of Crimes Statistics and Research stated that in the five-year period beginning in 2018, 53 per cent of victims were killed by a current spouse or partner, and a further 39 per cent were murdered by an ex-boyfriend or ex-girlfriend.

The New South Wales Government has made a number of funding commitments to address domestic violence. That includes \$11.6 million over four years to expand and upgrade audiovisual link facilities in courts and tribunal rooms to allow victims of domestic violence to give evidence without being in the same room as the perpetrator. There has been \$1.32 million allocated to complete a client management system for the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service at Haymarket, and \$13 million has also been allocated to the expansion of the Shared Equity Home Buyer Helper to assist in providing long-term housing for domestic and family violence victims.

The Government is also providing rental assistance to victims of domestic violence through schemes such as Rent Choice, Advance Rent and Bond Loan. Furthermore, the Government provides free ambulance services to victims of sexual, domestic and child abuse. I thank the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and

Sexual Assault for her incredible advocacy in this space. I also thank the police, women's shelters and all other organisations and agencies supporting victims of domestic violence.

TRIBUTE TO LEO FRANSEN

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes) (21:24): I pay tribute to a true hero from the Myall Lakes, Captain Leonardus Jacobus Fransen, a volunteer firefighter and dedicated member of our community whose life was tragically cut short last week. Captain Fransen was a very passionate firefighter. A life member of the Diamond Beach Rural Fire Brigade, he joined the brigade in 2010 and was recently made captain. At the age of 75, Captain Fransen was at the front lines battling the Hudson bushfire in north-western New South Wales. He was struck by a falling tree branch during his three-day deployment with a strike team from the mid North Coast. I thank Captain Fransen's fellow crew members, who provided first aid until the paramedics arrived. These crew members continued to fight the fire because they knew Captain Fransen would have expected them to finish their shift. They honoured his memory by doing so. I thank the paramedics for doing everything within their power to address immediate medical needs in dangerous conditions and support both Captain Fransen and those at the scene.

The loss of Captain Fransen leaves a void not only within the Diamond Beach RFS but also in our community at large. Our thoughts are with his family: wife Margaret, daughter Julia, son Paul, and his extended family during this difficult time. I personally knew Captain Fransen. He was more than a firefighter; he was such a big part of our community. Leo was a resident of Halliday Shores, a local retirement village. On Friday nights you would find him behind the bar for happy hour. Afterwards, he would play the role of chauffeur to ensure everyone safely returned to their villas. Committed to his sense of duty, he refrained from alcohol and was always ready to respond to a fire call at a moment's notice. He remained close to home and maintained a 24/7 on-call status. During the fire season, Captain Fransen could be on call-outs up to five times a day. He was dedicated to his community's safety.

Captain Fransen took shifts driving the community bus into town so residents could do their shopping and have a day out. His selflessness earned him the nickname "the Mayor of Halliday Shores". Captain Fransen was recognised as the Hallidays Point Citizen of the Year in 2020. His contributions and volunteer efforts reflected his eagerness to make a positive impact on the lives of others. Simply put, Leo loved helping people. He played the role of Santa, in which he was joined by fellow Diamond Beach RFS crew members. The fire brigade drives around Hallidays Point handing out lollies, with Santa in the front seat. It is a Christmas Eve tradition that Hallidays Point children look forward to every year. Tributes have flowed in on community Facebook pages as locals fondly remember Leo for his eagerness to lend a hand. Here are some of those tributes. Diamond Beach RFS wrote:

His passing will be felt right across the RFS but Leo's selfless attitude in serving his community will continue to inspire fellow members and will be his everlasting legacy.

Wendy Pulsford, a Halliday Shores village resident, wrote:

We are so saddened in our village on the loss of Leo. A much loved and admired part of Halliday Shores village. I'll miss our morning chats.

Angela Sullivan wrote:

It's hard to imagine this world without our Leo! All his life he was an example to us all and never let anything beat him or failed to help wherever he could!

Heather Self, a friend of Captain Fransen, wrote:

There will never be a caring and compassionate person as good as Leo always was. He was a true gentleman and gave everything he ever could to make others happy ... if you were happy then Leo was happy ... that contagious smile he gave will remain forever ... he was magic and the way he tucked his ears in and then made them pop out again ... just one of many things that Leo was certain would make us laugh ... R.I.P. Leo ... you are an amazing, very loved friend and ONE IN A MILLION that will remain in our hearts forever.

We all acknowledge the bravery of Captain Leo Fransen. He has made the ultimate sacrifice, and we thank him for his service. Captain Leo Fransen, the fire is out now. May you rest in peace.

SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (21:28): I will talk about social housing in our community, affordable housing on the Central Coast, the importance of the fantastic organisations we have and the journey that we have taken with the Minister for Housing to secure 32 new houses at East Gosford. This beautiful story started with a pop-up office at East Gosford near the art gallery, just as the 2020 COVID outbreak was arriving and lockdown was occurring. A lovely gentleman called Graham came running up to me, saying, "Liesl, they are going to sell our affordable housing." I thought, "Goodness gracious." I did not really know that there was affordable housing,

and I have doorknocked that beautiful community. They were just community to me; I did not know that they lived in social and affordable housing. I found out that there were 32 houses in the facility that were going to be put on the market, as well as the aged-care facility. It is challenging to find new spaces for 32 people in our community in a housing crisis and to find an aged-care facility.

I spoke to Presbyterian Aged Care, the original owners of the facility. They talked about the circumstances and about possible developers in the community, one of whom was a lovely gentleman called Laurie Ellis, who represented developers that wanted to invest in the facility. Presbyterian Aged Care eventually sold to these great Central Coast investors. They were open-minded enough to work alongside Women's Community Shelters, Action on Housing for Older Women and the Older Women's Network on the Central Coast to hold onto the existing 32 affordable housing spaces. They also opened up the aged-care facility as the seniors moved into other facilities across the coast or meanwhile housing in a space called Allawah House, which is a beautiful facility administrated by a lovely lady called Dawn Keft and overseen by Women's Community Shelters.

Further down the track, as interest rates rose, this beautiful group of Central Coast investors realised that they had to sell part of the investment, which were 32 affordable housing spaces. I said, "Oh my goodness, what do we do?" I spoke to Minister Jackson's office, which was fantastic. Because of Dr Gordon Reid and the Federal Social Housing Accelerator fund, we were able to negotiate to hold onto 32 of these places on the Central Coast. They were private investments, but the great news is that they became public investments in social and affordable housing on the Central Coast thanks to Minister Jackson and the collaboration between two local members of Parliament. That is the beauty of having Labor Federal and State governments.

It was a great thrill when the Department of Communities and Justice contributed \$8 million from the \$2 billion Social Housing Accelerator fund together with a co-contribution from Central Coast based community housing provider Pacific Link Housing. I put on record that Pacific Link Housing and all of its staff members are amazing, selfless, community-serving individuals. Pacific Link Housing has taken over the running of this amazing social and affordable housing facility, which is right on the edge of Hylton Moore Oval on the Central Coast. It is a lovely facility. The handover of this private facility into public hands was so beautiful for the lovely community members. Permanent, secure housing is important for all of us. But for these people who have been living in unsafe tenure, the handover was so important.

I thank Dr Gordon Reid and Pacific Link Housing. I thank Laurie Ellis and his investors. I thank Women's Community Shelters for its investment in women escaping domestic violence, and for its support and oversight of the transition from social and affordable housing into other parts of housing. Most importantly, I acknowledge the residents who now have secure housing. I thank Pacific Link Housing for its beautiful oversight and its incredible staff, who know and understand every aspect of vulnerable people's lives while living in insecure housing and the importance of looking after them. I also thank Minister Jackson for her work for not only this situation but also the future of the new organisation Housing NSW. I thank her for the movement of our social housing maintenance from private to public hands and for looking after local contractors in our community. Social housing in our community is in safe hands under the current Government.

WOLLONDILLY ELECTORATE DEVELOPMENT

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (21:33): Two out of every three workers in Wollondilly are associated with trades and the labouring and machinery work attached to trades. These tradies are being hit successively with what I have dubbed the "tradie tax" by successive governments and poor policy planning. The tradies of Wollondilly are forced to deal with many extra costs: the costs of travel, the costs of not being able to use our land due to developers down the road claiming the rights to it; the costs of missing this economic development; the costs of having no local infrastructure; the costs of having no schools for their high school students; the costs of driving 40 minutes each way for a hospital; the costs of having no police area command; the costs of empty promises to build ambulance stations; the costs of no public transport; and the costs of the destruction of the environment through the approval of mass developments.

Add to this the rising cost of living that we all have to deal with, the common delays and costs of developments that hurt small providers, plus requirements of old building standards that raise costs and provide little environmental benefits, such as current BASIX requirements. With an area home to one of our highest representations of tradies, this all amounts to a tradie tax. It is not right that today we can build a 20-bedroom home on one block, but we cannot build two three-bedroom homes on the same block. It is not right that we cannot build small affordable homes, known as granny flats, on our land for our children and elderly parents. It is not right that our tradies have to travel up the M5 and M4 to work on the homes of people in Penrith, Parramatta and Penshurst, but they cannot do the same work in Wilton and Warragamba. It is not right that the major developers are able to build thousands of homes with no infrastructure, while our land is used to justify their environmental destruction.

Wollondilly has all the downsides of the new airport but none of the employment opportunities because the distance to travel for residents is unrealistic for a daily commute. The State Environmental Planning Policy (Precincts—Western Parkland City) 2021 has restrictions that defer development until the completion of information regarding the new airport. The area of Wollondilly Shire Council to the north, near the townships of Silverdale and Warragamba, has large blocks but the current rules prevent the building of additional dwellings on blocks that already have a primary residence. It is a law by stealth against granny flats. The flight paths are now released, and it is not viable to hold off any development within the area identified by the State environmental planning policy beyond the local vicinity for the estimated 30 years it will take to complete the full capacity. Further studies will not allow a workaround, and the information based on building requirements and planning could be put in place today to allow development.

Further restrictions such as the biodiversity offsets placed on individual landowners have also restricted land usage in favour of large developers. Landowners had these additional building rights on land to allow granny flats until 2021. These rights were removed overnight to favour the large developers that applied for the Wilton and Appin growth areas to be rezoned. The Government allowed the developers to lead the strategy, and the result was that biodiversity offsets were placed on private land outside the major developer lands. The threatened community supposedly on this land—plant community type 3616—covers more than half of Wollondilly. Much of the land marked for biobanking is dry sclerophyll forest that cannot be biobanked. Land that has been incorrectly identified as koala crossing is restricting landowners, while developer land has been cleared of any koala habitat.

The mapping of land is procedurally unfair and was done to appease major developers in the Wilton and Appin area, while small landowners had their own land identified to offset this development. Legally supported by the Government's own SEED mapping website and studies, the Minister needs to step in to reverse both the restrictions through the Wilton and Appin growth areas and the State Environmental Planning Policy (Precincts—Western Parkland City) 2021 and allow tradies to get onto work in our area.

NEWCASTLE ELECTORATE SURF LIFESAVING CLUBS

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (21:38): From world-class surf beaches like Merewether Beach to family favourites like Bar Beach, all the beaches in Newcastle have one thing in common: a dedicated, well-trained and passionate surf lifesaving club and team. We have a scorching summer ahead of us, and our lifesavers will be working overtime to keep our beaches safe. I take this opportunity to recognise the six surf lifesaving clubs in my electorate. I thank them for their decades of service and show my support for them in the 2023-24 summer and in the years to come.

Stockton Surf Life Saving Club is the northernmost club and one of the oldest. Founded in 1908, the amazing lifesavers at this club have been patrolling Stockton Beach for well over a century. It is a beach that means so much to me and to the community. I am proud to have worked closely with many of the Stockton Surf Life Saving Club committee members towards restoring the beach. I thank Paul Bernard, Jo-Anne Dryden, Wayne Findlay, Callan Nickerson, Trevor Upton, Brendon Ryman, Willow Forsyth and James White for their devotion to the beach and to the Stockton community.

Nobbys Surf Life Saving Club is the next one down the coast. Nobbys is very proud about celebrating its centenary this year. The club marked this milestone with a week-long celebration, called taking a "Walk Down Memory Lane", and covering the club from floor to ceiling in Nobbys memorabilia. I thank president Narelle Blick and the committee that stands with her for carrying Nobbys Surf Life Saving Club into its 100th year. I also congratulate Olivia Hughes on being named the Surf Life Saving NSW 2023 Youth Volunteer of the Year. Keep up the great work! Newcastle Surf Life Saving Club is the oldest of them all. Founded just three weeks before Stockton Surf Life Saving Club, it has been patrolling Newcastle's main beach ever since. The volunteers at the club raised the flags a little early this year to make sure that beachgoers could cool down safely on the few stinking hot days we had in early September. I thank president Mike Collins and the team for their passion and excitement to kick off the 2023-24 season.

Cooks Hill Surf Life Saving Club has been the proud protector of Bar Beach since 1911, and it has one of the biggest nippers programs in New South Wales, with almost 700 nippers each season. Cooks Hill also has a great training program for junior surf sport competitions and an array of huge awards to show for it. Lily Egan and Lexi Sutherland were named Surf Life Saving Australia's 2023 Surf Sport Team of the Year after winning gold at the Hunter Branch Carnival, the New South Wales State championships and the Aussie titles. These two superstars have now also been named in the 2024 New South Wales Surf Interstate Squad, alongside clubmates Alex Walker and Will Munro. I thank youth committee members Paris Ryder, Mackenzie Clancy and Imogen Egan for helping these young Novocastrians reach their goals. I also thank the rest of the committee and president Michael Clancy.

Dixon Park Surf Life Saving Club may be the youngest of Newcastle's surf lifesaving clubs, established in 1932, but that does not make it any less mighty. In the 2022-23 season, 72,624 people went to Dixon Park Beach over almost 3,000 patrolled hours. In that time, the lifesavers made 15 rescues and took over 5,000 preventative actions to keep beachgoers safe. I thank all the club members for patrolling Dixon Park Beach, as well as the committee: Peter Brown, Geoff Padgett, Toni O'Donoghue, Paul Murray, Peter Eden, Dean Rowe, Tom Newman, John Miller and Peter Wilkinson.

Last but certainly not least is Merewether Surf Life Saving Club, founded in 1908, which has been looking out for all our athletes at the various competitions held at Merewether Beach. Most recently, the beach was host to the third of the Beach Stormers Series, a running race along the beach. I especially thank club president Nick Newton and the rest of the committee and offer my congratulations to Rachel Soars, the Surf Life Saving Australia 2023 Official of the Year. I thank every one of the lifesavers at each of these clubs for keeping my community and my family safe. Each of these clubs has a thriving nippers program and has been educating the children of Newcastle about beach safety.

In 2022-23, 28 people drowned at New South Wales beaches. Empowering and supporting our surf lifesavers is the key to reducing those deaths and keeping people safe. Well done for their years of service. I wish them good luck in the season ahead and thank them for watching over Newcastle's beautiful beaches.

BADGERYS CREEK ELECTORATE SPORTING CLUBS

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek) (21:43): This evening I address an issue of ongoing concern that began when the Minns Labor Government was elected and has now been highlighted by Mr Andrew Mackie. Andrew is the president of Mulgoa Valley Football Club, a valued local sports organisation in my electorate of Badgerys Creek. Earlier this year Andrew, along with other community leaders, was invited to a community cabinet event in Penrith—a gesture by the new Labor Government that would imply a willingness to listen and then respond to the needs of the people of Western Sydney. Sadly, this event has proven to be nothing more than a facade—a sham that has left many disillusioned with the true motives of this new Labor Government. Questions were asked, pleas were made, solutions to existing problems were even offered, but the voice of my community continues to be met with silence and indifference.

The recent cuts to the New South Wales budget, particularly to the Active Kids voucher program, have cast a long shadow over our community. This program, a flagship of the previous Coalition Government's commitment to nurturing the health and wellbeing of our children, has been stripped down to its bare bones by this Labor Government. Over 400,000 children who once reaped the benefits of this initiative and joined a local sporting team are now left on the sidelines. Their opportunities for growth, friendship and healthy living have been cancelled in one fell budgetary swoop. The repercussions of this decision are far reaching.

Sports clubs like Mulgoa Valley Football Club are the backbone of our local communities. They are where our children learn not just to kick a ball but also to build character and to foster life skills that extend well beyond the playing field. These clubs are where lifelong friendships can be forged, where a sense of belonging and community is also nurtured. By halving the value of these vouchers and limiting their availability, we are not just taking away a child's play; we are dismantling essential stepping stones to their development. For many families already struggling to make ends meet in this escalating cost-of-living reality, this cut is not just devastating; it signals the end of their child's extracurricular engagement. It pains me to say that the Premier's decision regarding the Active Kids voucher in the first budget for Labor in over a decade has caused the most significant blow to the aspirations of our young ones. This decision is not an act of fiscal prudence; it is a blatant disregard of the health, social and developmental needs of our future generations.

Our local sports organisations, already fighting an uphill battle for survival, are now facing an even greater challenge. The anticipated reduction in membership due to these cuts may very well spell the end for many such clubs or see them stagnate and struggle to form enough teams. It is a potential death knell for community cohesion, for the spirit of active living and for the sheer joy that comes from participating in a sport one loves. Andrew and his club represent just one of the many voices in a chorus of discontent. The story of Mulgoa Valley Football Club is the story of many clubs across New South Wales, all echoing the same sentiment of abandonment by a government that has failed to keep its promises. The sham that was the community cabinet in Penrith has laid bare a government content with pretence over action and with creating a semblance of engagement while turning a deaf ear to the very concerns it pledged to address.

The fabric of our communities is woven through local sports and activities—vital threads that the Active Kids voucher program once robustly supported. As the member for Badgerys Creek, it is my duty and honour to stand up for our children's access to these life-shaping experiences. The Minns Labor Government must re-evaluate its priorities and ensure that support for positive early childhood experiences is upheld so children can engage in healthy, active and socially connected opportunities. This Government promised a "fresh start". That

should mean that this Parliament fortifies—not forfeits—this commitment. My hope is that the Government leads with the same foresight that the previous Coalition Government showed on this issue. Only time will tell. Nevertheless, I will continue to passionately echo my community's collective voice in this Chamber and hold this Government to account.

STUDENTS AGAINST PLACEMENT POVERTY

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (21:47): Gough Whitlam was a champion of south-west Sydney, and his impact on my community was transformational. Sadly, however, the challenges he identified and worked to change are not unique to his time and echo through the decades. Many across our great country would reflect on the Whitlam Government changing the game when it came to access to education, especially university education. His policies enabled many to be the first in their families to attend university and ensured that talent and merit, rather than means, were the keys to educational attainment. Indeed, he said:

Poverty is a national waste as well as individual waste. We are all diminished when any of us are denied proper education. The nation is the poorer—a poorer economy, a poorer civilisation, because of this human and national waste.

Today, however, universities are still grappling with the question of how to reduce barriers to entry and ensure that students from diverse backgrounds finish university. In fact, this is a major plank of the Australian Government's bid to overhaul the university sector. So far the *Australian Universities Accord: Interim Report* has identified that compulsory unpaid work placements are a significant barrier. Many professional courses such as nursing, teaching, social work, psychology and the allied health professions have significant work placement requirements. Students must often take time out of paid work for those placements, which can take place over multi-week blocks away from home.

Placement poverty occurs when the costs of undertaking such placements, which are compulsory to graduate, push financially marginalised students into poverty and sometimes out of their studies. It occurs across several degrees, including education and social work, but there are some specific features of health placements that make health students, particularly nurses and midwives, vulnerable. The hours of unpaid placements that they must undertake are extensive—a minimum of 800 hours for nurses and 1,600 hours for midwives—across the course of their degree. Nursing placements may also reflect a nurse's roster and include night shifts and weekends and, for many students, can be more than 100 kilometres from their homes. They are hugely important for student learning, but the time commitment means that students must often give up paid work. There can also be extra travel, accommodation and clothing costs.

I can personally attest to the difficult position that often puts people in. As a student occupational therapist, I made the decision to commence my study part-time so that I could continue to work for as long as possible and build up my savings. Then in my final year I had to quit my job so that I could undertake four months of full-time unpaid placement. I was lucky; I had the support of family to save on costs and had some savings to rely upon. Unfortunately, many in my community—indeed, many of the talented students that we want to encourage to pursue further education and work in health, education and other industries that are currently facing enormous pressure due to staff shortages—do not benefit from that.

Placement poverty compounds existing challenges that our hospitals face across the country. Forcing health students into poverty to complete their degrees is not productive public policy. It both harms individuals and undermines the future health workforce. Liverpool has one of the largest hospitals in the Southern Hemisphere. We are proudly developing a world-class health and innovation precinct. However, less than one in four of us have tertiary qualifications. Conversely, many in my community, including health workers, speak to me about the lack of staff and long wait times that result. They speak about staff turnover as well as staff who travel from other regions and areas who find positions closer to home. The only solution is to build a local talent pipeline where students can access university placements, training and job opportunities close to where they have family and support networks—where they have skin in the game.

However, there is hope. Students Against Placement Poverty is a grassroots organisation started in New South Wales with the aim of abolishing unpaid placements. Professional peak bodies like the Australian Association of Social Workers, unions like the Australian Services Union and universities have all been vocal on the issue. Several weeks ago the Minns Government announced that New South Wales police recruits would be paid while they trained at the Goulburn Police Academy. That removes a huge barrier for those who have thought about joining the force but could not due to financial circumstances. However, ending placement poverty can only happen when multiple stakeholders come together. It needs our industrial relations system, institutions, universities, placement providers and governments to address the social and economic progress limiting challenge. I am once again reminded of the words of the great Gough Whitlam:

We are all diminished when any of us are denied proper education, housing, health care, or equal opportunity to live up to our potential.

BATHURST COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst) (21:53): Tonight I wish to talk about a great organisation in the electorate of Bathurst: Bathurst Community Transport. The tyranny of distance is becoming a thing of the past for local residents as they reach their twilight years. It is great to know that Bathurst Community Transport has opened up more seats for its town cars and buses in the city, providing opportunities for people to get to where they need to go in a safe and efficient manner. I want to help get the message out that this organisation is not only there to help the aged get to medical appointments; it offers much more than that. In reality that is just the beginning. The service can assist people over the age of 65 years to go to a wide variety of places in the area and beyond, including health, beauty and wellbeing appointments, visits to the supermarket for grocery shopping, recreational activities such as bingo, or even social visits.

Bathurst Community Transport offers a subsidised transport service to eligible community members to help them remain independent in their own home. It ran its first ever community transport buses in 1978. It was the first community transport organisation established in New South Wales. Now there is one in every local government area in Australia. It is another great idea that has come out of Bathurst. We are fortunate to have Bathurst Community Transport on our doorstep doing all that it can to support older members of our community to retain their independence for as long as possible. Making use of the services that Bathurst Community Transport offers could not be easier. All someone has to do is get in touch with the service and make their booking in advance. The driver will collect the person from their home, meet them at the door and take them to wherever they need to go. In some cases that might be to Sydney. It might be to Lithgow, Katoomba, Dubbo or Orange.

Return trips can be arranged, as can regular bookings for people who need to get to the same place each week in a town car, which is a shared vehicle. It is also important to highlight the fact that Bathurst Community Transport is a godsend for people experiencing isolation and loneliness, even if they are mobility challenged, because the vehicle can cater for people with wheelchairs or other mobility aids. Many of the clients of the organisation live alone, so getting picked up in the town cars gives them the interaction with the driver and a chance to have a good chat. Another benefit comes by volunteering as a driver with Bathurst Community Transport. It can bring meaning and purpose to people's lives, while increasing self-esteem and wellbeing. Volunteering can also relieve stress and help alleviate symptoms of depression. As well as having a positive impact on the community, volunteering can improve relationships. Volunteers with Bathurst Community Transport receive full training, a uniform, out-of-pocket reimbursement and a wonderful sense of wellbeing and inclusion in a great community organisation.

There is also a cancer bus that runs from Bathurst to Orange each week, helping those families and individuals that need to get that service which is around 50 kilometres down the road. At the recent 2023 Carillon Business Awards, Bathurst Community Transport received two awards: Excellence in Customer Service and Outstanding Community Organisation. I congratulate the CEO of Bathurst Community Transport, Kath Parnell, the board, the volunteers, the drivers and all the staff on what they do in our local community. They bring a smile to all those clients that they come in contact with—in some cases they may be the only contact that those individuals have during the entire week. Bathurst Community Transport is one of those good news stories in our community. As the local member I am proud to be a supporter of Bathurst Community Transport and I thank the organisation for all that it does in our local community.

NORAH HEAD LIGHTHOUSE

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast) (21:57): Lady Norah has turned 120 years old. Lady Norah is the local name for one of the Central Coast's historic tourist attractions: Norah Head Lighthouse. On Saturday 18 November we celebrated 120 years of operation when volunteers, former board members, supporters and friends gathered to celebrate the special occasion. The celebration acknowledged the work of the longest serving local volunteers with a lighthouse tour and the cutting of the anniversary cake. It was a special day to be a part of history and to celebrate with many locals who shared their stories and memories of the iconic lighthouse.

In the late 1800s Noraville resident and Wyong pioneer Edward Hargraves witnessed several shipwrecks off the coast, including the coal-carrier *Esperanza* in 1868, and urged that a lighthouse be built. In 1901 construction began on the 27-metre-high lighthouse, including 96 stairs to the top, and it was officially opened and illuminated on 15 November 1903. The lighthouse lens was rotated using a mechanical weight and clockwork mechanism that the lightkeeper had to wind up every four hours, with three male lightkeepers appointed to work four hours each overnight. The lens is a Fresnel design of the late seventeenth century that creates 700 prisms and weighs five tonnes. Each side of the bivalve lens concentrates the light source received over its whole area into a single beam that has an intensity one thousand times stronger than its source.

The lighthouse was secluded from civilisation. When lightkeepers lived on the property with their families, they grew their own produce, raised sheep and goats, and caught fish. 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 as an important community asset. The lighthouse is a popular wedding venue, winning six Brides Choice Awards in a row, and it is a prime spot for whale watching from May to November each year. There is also award-winning accommodation. The heritage-listed lighthouse keepers quarters and the assistant lighthouse keepers quarters offer visitors not only a glimpse into history but also a chance to linger a little longer in this beautiful region. Perfect for larger family groups, friends' weekends away or get-togethers with friends, these cottages offer the perfect base from which to explore. There are also some good stories of ghosts to keep visitors company.

At the celebration, the 17 years of volunteering by Colin and Vivien Paulson, as well as the work of current volunteers, former board members and the community, were celebrated. The site of Norah Head Lighthouse was also an important site for Aboriginal people in that region and had very sacred significance. It is now an amazing place to watch whales, as I said, and view the breathtaking coastal scenery. Norah Head Lighthouse is also recognised as a symbolic icon for the Central Coast. It has featured in several publications concerning the coast. There are three ways people can volunteer at the lighthouse. They can become a lighthouse tower tours volunteer, conducting tours of the magnificent lighthouse tower. These tours provide a link between past and present, with guides sharing technical information and a rich history with visitors and guests. Training is provided. They can work at the lighthouse reserve shop selling souvenirs, serving ice creams and cold drinks, and acting as an information person for all of the reserve's visitors.

The third way is to volunteer for Coastcare. Volunteers are definitely needed to bolster these ranks. This hardworking, friendly team of volunteers propagate and plant a variety of native vegetation, plus control weed growth on the lighthouse reserve. It is a great way to enjoy the outdoors and maintain one of the most beautiful natural areas on the coast. It was a big day and there was a good crowd there with much celebration of this iconic lighthouse. I wish Lady Norah a huge happy birthday, celebrating 120 years serving not just our community but also the maritime shipping lanes off the coast of Norah Head. We hope that in 120 years it is still flourishing, with its light shining brightly right across our community.

SHOALHAVEN CITY COUNCIL

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (22:02): As members would be aware, my electorate touches four council areas. As much as I love them all, I live in the Shoalhaven. At the age of 22, I was elected to Shoalhaven City Council. I learned a great deal during that time. I learned how to stand up and fight for people and principle, to deliver outcomes, and to get things done. I had the privilege of working with some incredibly smart and talented council staff, from John Gould to John Wells, and from the late Barry Russell to Ernie Royston, Carmel Krogh, Peter Dunn and Russ Pigg. I worked with some truly passionate and dedicated local councillors. Whilst not always on the same side of every debate, we were focused on delivering the best possible outcomes for the people we served and were united in the pride we all shared for our community.

When I was elected deputy mayor at age 26, I took on some very heavy jobs, including chairing the council's budget committee, which involved significant budget repair work. It was a tough job, but I worked hard, made tough decisions and kept rates low. However, so little care does this council have for the city's finances that the Labor and Greens majority do not even have a budget committee to oversight the city's fiscal position. In a democracy, you cannot have leadership without accountability. These principles are inextricably linked in every possible way. When leaders make decisions, they own them. As a councillor and as a member of Parliament, I have had to make tough decisions and, whilst not everyone has always agreed with me, I am proud of my record. I am also proud that when I have made a promise, I have always got it done.

Last night, Shoalhaven City Council held an extraordinary council meeting to consider hiking rates by 44 per cent. When I read the proposal in the business paper last week, my immediate response was total disbelief. Local people are doing it tougher than ever. This is a rate increase the Shoalhaven simply cannot afford. Leading the charge for this increase is The Greens party mayor, Amanda Findley, supported by her Greens-Labor alliance, which controls the council. I am diametrically and completely opposed to this rate increase. For many, this comes on top of interest rate increases that are making housing even more challenging. This rate increase will also be passed on to renters, forcing more people into housing stress and onto the streets.

When Mayor Findley ran for re-election, she said that she wanted to do something about homelessness. This election pledge does not contrast well with the reality. In the mayor's backyard, Safe Waters Ulladulla tried for 18 months to get an occupation certificate to open a shelter for the homeless. I know the mayor was aware of this because this matter was raised at a homelessness taskforce meeting that we both attended. Assurances were given, yet that property stood unnecessarily vacant for months. At a second location, council purchased a property

specifically to be used for homelessness services in St Vincent Street, but the council obfuscated on its own DA over a property the council owns, with the building still not serving our most vulnerable.

This mayor has talked a big game about housing in the run-up to the council election but recently opposed a major subdivision at Callala Bay which involved hundreds of private homes, including 40 affordable homes, at a time when local rental vacancy rates are the lowest in living memory and housing costs continue to go up. I should note that, as part of this development, the developer was proposing to gift more than 1,000 hectares back to the Jervis Bay Marine Park estate, but The Greens and Labor voted against it. This mayor talked a big game about increasing heights and consolidating lots in the Nowra CBD, which is something I have strongly supported. But nothing has happened. In the lead-up to the State election, for which the mayor was The Greens candidate for the seat of South Coast, she told us that she was the only person with the demonstrable leadership skills and experience our community needs. We have experienced the mayor's experience, and the community has had enough.

At last night's council meeting, the mayor asked councillors which services they would cut to avoid a rate hike. The suggestion that a 44 per cent rate increase is required to maintain service delivery by this council is not a credible claim when considering the state of council services, particularly roads. To borrow a phrase, I do not believe the council is doing such a good job that I feel inclined to donate more. The proposed \$3 million in savings in last night's report is laughable. Council wasted millions on their whiz-bang waste initiative, Bioelektra. But the deal that council had signed turned out to be with a shelf company, with an individual that had never delivered a waste management contract. The community is still waiting for answers on how council could so monumentally stuff this up.

As part of her latest ad hominem attack on me on 2ST, during which the mayor mentioned me not less than nine times, the mayor made the remarkable claim that I am somehow responsible for the higher waste charges facing the city on green bins. The reality is we do not have a green bin because the mayor, when she was a councillor, voted against green bins. The vote went down 6-7. We would not have waste going into landfill if it were not for that decision back then. This is an outrageous rate increase, and I oppose it entirely and completely.

SOCIAL HOUSING MAINTENANCE

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (22:07): Of all the State Government issues that are brought to my Charlestown electorate office, social housing maintenance is always number one in terms of volume. The privatisation of the maintenance system by the former Government resulted in chronic miscommunication, jobs left undone, delays and minor issues being allowed to snowball into major structural problems. It also left social housing tenants feeling frustrated, unheard and with the lasting impression that their living conditions were not a government priority. That is why I cannot express to this House strongly enough my absolute support for the Minns Government's plans to overhaul the approach to housing maintenance. The Government is proposing a back-to-basics model that will focus on quality, accountability, better outcomes for tenants and better value for taxpayers. To that I say, "Yes, please," and "Finally!"

This is a Government that listens to its constituents, listens to its MPs, listens to its departments and most of all—most importantly—listens to its tenants. This boots-on-the-ground approach, which will streamline maintenance requests through a one-stop maintenance hub, will help prevent delays and waste. Trained experts will be on the ground to answer tenant questions and coordinate work orders. The development of a new app will allow people to see the status of their requests, which will be an absolute game changer for social housing tenants in the electorate that I serve and, no doubt, right across New South Wales. The lack of cohesion and communication in the privatised system has been clear in the feedback I have had from constituents.

I cannot tell you how many times I have heard the same story: "I reported the problem through the maintenance line. Someone came and took photos and that's the last I heard." That is when they come to my office looking for help. The progress of maintenance requests has been opaque and offers zero certainty to the affected tenants. Tenants reported putting in multiple maintenance requests to fix different aspects of the same job. For example, they have had to request that water-damaged timbers are replaced at the same time as requesting that leaking pipes within a bathroom wall are fixed. Worse still was the case of one family whose walls were ripped out and temporarily replaced by plastic sheeting—and then the tradesmen never came back. It had been incorrectly marked as "completed" in the system. Tenants contacting my office have been absolutely appalled by the waste of resources in having multiple people come out multiple times to assess a job or having to get tradesman in repeatedly to finish work. When asked by my office whether measurements had been taken for their particular maintenance issue, a constituent replied, "Yes, three times now."

Social housing tenants are incredibly frustrated when small things such as an upstairs bathroom leak are left to continue unchecked until it is not just a leaking pipe that needs replacing but the entire bathroom, the floor

and the downstairs ceiling. I know I have the support of my Government colleagues when I state that this is simply not good enough. We heard the need for urgent action. It was a key election commitment ahead of the March election, and reform is now on its way. I assure members that the news of these reforms has been met with sincere enthusiasm in the Charlestown electorate. On social media one of my constituents commented:

So good to have a State government that works for the people and looks after the most vulnerable—

followed by the clapping hands emoji. Most importantly, these reforms are not happening in a silo. It is part of a fundamental shift in the way that social housing is approached in New South Wales. It is coupled with a \$35 million commitment in the 2023-24 budget to help ease the maintenance backlog. The brand-new agency Homes NSW will bring together the Land and Housing Corporation, the Aboriginal Housing Office and the Department of Communities and Justice's housing and homelessness functions. The maintenance hub will exist inside this new agency.

Members can see the pattern forming here—one of cooperation, collaboration and coordination. We are listening to the people who are at the heart of this system and taking on board their concerns. I commend the work of my colleague the Minister for Housing, the Hon. Rose Jackson, MLC, for her vision in bringing these reforms forward. I very much look forward to continuing to share the good news with my constituents and to them having their homes looked after.

ROTARY CLUB OF KENTHURST

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill) (22:12): I acknowledge in the House the anniversary and work of the Rotary Club of Kenthurst. On 6 November 2023 the club celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. The club was chartered in 1973 and its first president was Mr Gordon Rowe. Since its formation, the Kenthurst Rotary club has served not only the community of Kenthurst and the Hills but also international communities. The hard work and dedication of the club is continually inspiring. Throughout the years there is much the members of the Kenthurst Rotary club have accomplished, from domestic and local projects to international outreach and charity works. In the past the club managed to acquire 25 acres of land from the charity Riding for the Disabled Association and has continued to work with the charity to build fencing and roofing to make the land suitable for the charity's purpose. The club has worked closely with men's sheds, securing funding and providing support to these ventures. In 2007 and 2008 it set up the Kenthurst Men's Shed for local men. It has supported local and international communities in times of crisis, particularly in the form of much-needed financial aid.

Over the past 50 years the Rotary Club of Kenthurst has worked with and undertaken projects in Japan, Brazil, Cambodia, Canada, East Africa, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Scotland, Sri Lanka, Timor, Tonga and so many more countries. In 2008 the club built a five-classroom school in a village called Fomu in the highlands of Papua New Guinea. The club continued to work with the school, delivering necessities in the years that followed. Two teams worked on the Hog Harbour project in Vanuatu, where the club built a medical centre for the local people. At present the club is undertaking the building of a dental clinic in Korogu village in Papua New Guinea with the aid and fundraising of committee members and other Rotary clubs in the district. The local people currently have limited access to medical facilities and do not have access to dental facilities. The clinic will serve an estimated 200,000 people living along the Sepik River and inland. Once the dental clinic is built, the Kenthurst Rotary club will organise volunteer dentists from Australia and around the world to provide dental services to the clinic through non-government organisation projects.

The Rotary Club of Kenthurst holds annual events in our local community and is very much loved. Those events provide time and space to have fun and unwind, connect with others and appreciate life. The four main events held every year in my community are the Kenthurst Fair, Carols in the Park, and Anzac Day and Australia Day ceremonies. The club continues to provide upgrades and maintenance to the John Beynon Rotary Park. Upgrades to the playground were completed recently for the enjoyment of the families and children in my community. In its history the club has had 44 Rotarians as president. The Rotary Club of Kenthurst is currently led by the hardworking Chris Gaskin, who continues the impressive legacy of presidents past. I thank Chris Gaskin for all his work. I also thank vice-president Mike O'Connell, secretary Rob O'Neill, treasurer Tony Goode and all current members of the Kenthurst Rotary club. Their service is honoured and appreciated by my community. They continue to make both the community and previous members of the club proud with their hard work in our community.

As members can see, the Rotary Club of Kenthurst has done outstanding work throughout its history. Certainly I could not list all its numerous accomplishments. However, it is clear that the members continue in their service of humanity. One of the mottos of Rotary is "Service Above Self". The Rotary Club of Kenthurst is a fine embodiment of those words. The motto is no mere sentiment to the Kenthurst club. Its members bring those words to life through their continued support of and service to local and international communities. The Rotary Club of Kenthurst is truly continuously inspiring and a fine example of the work of Rotary. I thank current

committee members and all past members and presidents of the club. I look forward to working with the club in the future.

M7-M12 INTERCHANGE

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (22:16): Last week the Federal Government released the *Independent Strategic Review of the Infrastructure Investment Program*. The report reviewed hundreds of projects and recommended that 82 projects be ceased. Some 17 of those to be cut are in New South Wales—more than in any other State. As Treasurer Mookhey put it, at a time when our State's population is surging, Commonwealth funding is faltering. One of the cuts announced is to the M7-M12 interchange, part of which is being constructed in my electorate. I repeat in this House the comments that I made recently in the media: This is extremely disappointing. Electorates like mine are shouldering the bulk of the Federal Government's population policy. As a result, our existing roads already experience day-to-day gridlock. To alleviate this, we need our existing roads upgraded and new roads like the M12 to be completed.

For members unfamiliar with the M12, Transport for NSW describes it as a "new motorway that will provide direct access to the Western Sydney International Airport at Badgerys Creek and connect to Sydney's motorway network." The M7-M12 interchange project is that very connection to Sydney's motorway network. Without it, the M12 becomes a road to nowhere and the vehicles transporting passengers, freight and fuel to and from the airport will be forced onto local roads, such as the already run-down, two-lane Elizabeth Drive. Given the importance of the airport, there are few more essential transport connections.

It beggars belief that the Commonwealth would seek to withdraw funding from this project, especially considering it is already under construction. The November 2023 update on the project website tells us that vegetation has been cleared, earthworks are ongoing and utilities are being relocated and installed. In fact, anyone who has driven through the area in recent months—as I have on multiple occasions—will have seen that those works are well underway. Despite all this, the Commonwealth has pulled \$110 million in funding. Ensuring transportation investment is well ahead of the airport's development is essential to the airport's success. It sends a signal to investors and major corporations looking to set up shop at the airport. Last week's announcement has now created uncertainty and risks the airport becoming, as my colleague the member for Liverpool so aptly put it, "a white elephant sitting there without the connecting pieces".

I have spoken previously in the House about the importance of the airport and aerotropolis. It must be noted that the Western Sydney Airport is a Federal Government project. As a local MP, and before that a Liverpool councillor since 2016, I have witnessed firsthand the development of the Western Sydney Airport and aerotropolis. One thing that has defined this project is the bipartisan support it has received across all three levels of government. The Western Sydney City Deal is a testament to that cooperation. The airport is a once-in-a-century project that will transform not just the region but the State and national economies. The airport will open with the capacity to process 220,000 tonnes of cargo a year, with room to grow that freight precinct to handle 1.8 million tonnes a year if required. For that potential to be unlocked and for that freight to move, the M7-M12 interchange is critical. It is in the national interest.

I welcome confirmation from the New South Wales Treasurer that the M7-M12 interchange will be completed. It must be—however, it has to be completed with the same level of cooperation that we have seen regarding the airport. Contracts have been signed and the Federal Government is as much a beneficiary as anyone. It must not pull the pin. It has to stump up its fair share. The response from the State Government is clear. We will not go into hiding like those opposite did when a Federal Liberal Government sought to short-change New South Wales. I have led calls to reinstate the funding and have spoken recently with my Federal counterpart and relevant Ministers since last week's announcement. I know the Treasurer and roads Minister are working hard to get a fair deal for New South Wales, and I urge Minister King and the Commonwealth to come to the table and fix this grave error.

CENTRAL COAST CHILDCARE SERVICES

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (22:21): I take this opportunity to bring to the attention of the House the situation of childcare services on the Central Coast and in my electorate of Terrigal. Recently I was contacted by local mum Jess Coulson, who is leading the charge for change in child care. Jess and I spoke at length about the situation. As a mother of one, she has had difficulty trying to access child care on the Central Coast. She told me that families are told to apply to upwards of 20 early childcare centres within a 60-minute travel radius for a chance to secure a place. With each new childcare centre, there is a new application to fill out. This is a constant source of frustration and anxiety for parents—in one case it was described as a "punishment".

Jess is not the only one. Kate, an Avoca local, contacted me to tell her story of trying to get child care for her two daughters, a 2½-year-old and a six-month-old. While Kate has been able to secure child care in an early

childhood centre, the cost and ability to secure the extra days she needs are impossible. For Kate, the cost of child care has gone up by 20 per cent—and I am sure it is the same for many families on the Central Coast and in my electorate of Terrigal. In Kate's fantastic mothers' group, six mothers have been unable to secure any day care for 2024 and have been told that they may not have day care in 2025, despite being on waitlists since 2023. With Kate's current day care having a 600-plus waitlist for 120 placements across all age groups, one can understand the difficulties.

Hearing these stories from local mums and families tells me that we need change. I am proud to sponsor in the New South Wales Parliament an ePetition launched by Jess, whom I spoke about earlier. It calls for action on child care on the Central Coast. The petition calls on the New South Wales Government to act accordingly to take action to alleviate this crisis, to increase funding and resources to expand childcare facilities, to enable the hiring of educators and, of course, to try to reduce waitlists. That is no easy task, as action on child care requires a two-pronged approach from both the State and Federal governments. While we can increase funding and build more childcare centres, there is no point doing this without extra staff.

Nicola, a local early childhood educator, has raised this issue with me. The sector is grappling with a shortage of qualified staff. Nicola was able to elucidate all the issues with me. It leads to burnout and excessive working hours for existing employees. That means childcare centres may be unable to function at full capacity and plays a major role in placement shortages. The shortages are not only on the Central Coast but also across New South Wales. Simply put, the childcare sector is not an attractive place to work in. That is why the Federal Government needs to step in and take action. The remuneration under the Children's Services Award, which covers employees of childcare centres, is too low to make their job an attractive career choice. I am pleased that the Fair Work Commission announced a 5.75 per cent increase in the Children's Services Award but we still need to make early child care an attractive career choice to help alleviate the staffing issues.

As well as the issue of pay for childcare educators, other issues plague the sector as a whole. These include the administrative burden, which has caused a disproportionate focus on administrative tasks rather than on early childhood education, inadequate facilities due to the lack of ability to expand and grow, and insufficient funding for additional support for children with special needs. I was proud to be part of a government that was committed to childcare reform and improving childcare education in this State. We passed landmark childcare reforms in 2022 to enable access to cheaper, higher quality child care, including an investment of up to \$5 billion over the next decade to expand access to child care. The Labor Government has talked a big game on early child care, promising 100 public preschools across the State. We have four Labor MPs on the Central Coast and I will be calling on them to join me to ensure that the Central Coast is on the list to receive one of the 100, as we are one of the fastest growing regions in New South Wales. I also encourage everyone on the Central Coast to sign the petition, support Jess' call and take the first steps for change and reform to alleviate the current crisis we are in.

I have learned from talking to these mums that the stress and the pain they are going through, their fear and not knowing whether they will be able to access child care is getting worse. Part of the problem is getting infrastructure built. The Minister for Planning and Public Places must address the bureaucracy and cut through local government red tape to build childcare services in growing regions. It should not be this difficult; it should not take this long. We are putting families under undue pressure. I express my deep thanks to Jess, Kate, Nicola and all the other parents for reaching out, getting in touch with me and telling their stories. I promise that I will hold the Government to account and call on the Federal Government to do the right thing to assist with the provision of child care on the coast.

MAITLAND HOSPITAL

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (22:26): I give an update to the Maitland community about what is happening with our health services because a lot of things have changed, particularly in the past seven or eight months. In 2022 the Maitland community obviously welcomed the opening of the new Maitland Hospital in Metford. It followed a seven-year campaign to ensure that that significant health investment remained in public hands. Unfortunately, nothing else changed. The caps on health worker wages, systemic staff shortages and temporary contracts continued under the former Government, even with the new hospital. We are still experiencing difficulties. The emergency department at Maitland Hospital had the highest walkout rate in the State. One in four people left the Maitland emergency department before receiving treatment. It did not matter whether it was at the old hospital, which has been on its site at Campbells Hill for 175 years, or the new hospital at Metford.

So what has happened since then? Minister Park visited my electorate before the election and spoke to many health workers. They told us some challenging stories about the difficulties they had securing staff. I am talking not just about nurses and midwives—and I acknowledge that there was a walkout at the hospital earlier this week—but everyone: the ward staff, security, admin, cleaners, allied health professionals and doctors. Under the former Government, the hospital lost its accreditation to offer junior doctor training. Minister Park has made

an intense effort to try to improve the situation. The community continue to contact me regularly to tell me about people's experiences at Maitland Hospital. I know we have an issue with orthopaedic staff and attracting surgeons. Monique Murray and Kathy Chapman from the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association are massive fighters for our hardworking nurses. Tracey Gaddelin from the Health Services Union spoke to me recently about the issues that nurses are facing. Of course, the Australian Salaried Medical Officers' Federation has always raised issues.

Minister Park has been meeting with the unions to discuss those issues. He is talking also to hospital management. I know that he is listening. What has happened as a result? We have attracted 20 new registered nurses to Maitland. We have started to turn the situation around and deliver much-needed change. But there is much more to do. The Government's commitment to safe staffing levels will mean that 1,200 additional nurses across the State will be recruited by 2025-26, and Maitland will be getting them. The Government wants to make permanent the equivalent of 1,112 full-time nursing and midwifery positions. We are working with all of the unions engaged in our health services. One thing I have learnt over many years of dealing with issues at Maitland Hospital is that it takes systemic change to get benefits for patients.

That change has to happen across every job in the hospital. Every single job is so important. The Morisset mental health services will be moved to a new facility on the site in the future. That represents an opportunity to improve our mental health services. We have secured funding for a new community health service to be located on the site of the new hospital. That will bring the last of those health professionals working at the old site, along with the mental health patients, to the new site.

The old Maitland Hospital is a disgrace. We have not had communication. We have not had consultation by the former Government. It had eight years to prepare for the shutdown of that hospital and it did nothing to prepare for it. Recently I had a meeting with Minister Kamper and Minister Park, and we put their agencies in contact to hopefully deliver on the community consultation that people want. People have contacted me for years about this issue. In good faith, I put all of those suggestions to the former Government, and it did not take up one of them. With Minister Park and Minister Kamper, I know that real and positive change will happen at the new Maitland Hospital in the staffing and health services that my community deserve, and also at the old Maitland Hospital to ensure that it provides services and facilities for our community into the future.

TRIBUTE TO DR HARI HARINATH

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (22:31): I recognise and pay tribute to a true visionary who has changed New South Wales for the better. Dr Hari Harinath was an exceptional man and a great friend who sadly passed away on 18 November, surrounded by his family and loved ones. I was absolutely devastated to hear of his passing. I had the privilege of knowing Dr Hari before my time in Parliament. He lived locally in Kogarah Bay and worked in his medical practice at Westfield Eastgardens. Dr Hari was an incredibly busy man but he was always up for a chat with anyone. He was quiet but he also carried a genuine presence and a kind demeanour.

Dr Hari arrived in Sydney in 1971, beginning his medical work at the Mercy Hospital in Tasmania. He soon became involved in the sport he would come to love the most, cricket. Dr Harinath joined the Balmain Cricket Club in 1977 and rose up the ranks. While he started as the club's team doctor, it was not long before Dr Hari's enthusiasm and love for the game led him to the role of club presidency. He held onto that position for more than 30 years, which is an incredible legacy. Not long after, Dr Hari became the chairman of Cricket New South Wales and a board member of Cricket Australia. While serving with Cricket New South Wales and Cricket Australia, he always aimed to create a more inclusive sporting culture. Thanks in part to Dr Hari's efforts, cricket has become a platform where people from diverse backgrounds can thrive and excel while making long-lasting friendships.

Dr Hari's commitment to inclusivity extended far beyond the realms of cricket. He channelled this passion into the Multicultural NSW advisory board, which he joined in July 2013. In New South Wales, the Multicultural NSW advisory board helps to provide advice and guidance, celebrating cultural diversity and addressing challenges faced by multicultural communities. In our State, almost 30 per cent of the current population was born in another country. That is why Dr Hari understood the importance of hearing the views and concerns of all multicultural identities. Thanks again to his outstanding work ethic and dedication, Dr Hari became the chair of Multicultural NSW, a position he held for eight years.

He was a true friend and champion of our multicultural communities in New South Wales. It was my great privilege to work closely alongside Dr Hari during my time as the Minister for Multiculturalism. He served on the advisory board with the utmost dedication and expertise. Dr Hari also had an ability to connect with anyone he met. He believed that our diversity in New South Wales is our strength, and his leadership and professional achievements reflected that. Putting that sentiment into practice, Dr Hari attracted qualified and highly respected professionals to join the board under his leadership. He was an advocate for gender equity within and appointed youth members to ensure that everyone had a say.

His legacy extends beyond his official capacity. Dr Hari built bridges between communities, recognising that our multicultural State was a source of unity rather than division. His contributions recognised at not only a State level but also a national and international level. Dr Harinath was awarded an Order of Australia Medal in the 2009 Queen's birthday honours for service to cricket through his executive roles at State and national levels, and to the community. He was also awarded the highest honour conferred to Indians living overseas by the President of India in 2017.

Dr Hari's significant achievements are a testament to his passion and love for people. No matter what role he was in, Dr Hari always put people first. He was an incredibly compassionate man. His efforts have not only transformed Multicultural NSW as an organisation but have also made our State a better, far more inclusive place to live. He leaves behind an incredible legacy. In his passing, we mourn the loss of a leader and a true friend to our diverse communities in New South Wales. To his beloved wife, family, friends and all who admired him, may the memories of Dr Hari's kindness and dedication provide comfort during this difficult time. Vale, Dr Hari Harinath. Your legacy of compassion, inclusivity and service to others will continue to resonate with all of us.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua): I also express my condolences and the condolences of the House on the sad passing of Dr Hari Harinath. He was a kind and compassionate person, and he made, as we heard, a tremendous contribution to New South Wales. I pass on my sympathies to his wife, family and friends. May he rest in peace.

STATE BUDGET AND VAUCLUSE ELECTORATE

Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (22:36): I will talk about the Minns Labor Government's repeated failures to deliver for my local community, the electorate of Vaucluse. Tonight I will speak about the silence on planned wharf upgrades, the failure to allocate for roads and transport, dodgy election grants and hefty rent increases for local bowlos, not to mention the constant snide remarks about the eastern suburbs and development. Since their election in March, this Premier and his Government have demonstrated time and time again that they would rather engage in postcode politics than show leadership. They would rather pit communities against one another than do the hard work of governing for all the people of New South Wales.

The Government's budget in September failed to invest in any major upgrades for local schools in my community. It also failed to provide any significant investment in local roads, in infrastructure and to ease congestion on roads in our community so families can get home safer and sooner. The budget cut essential cost-of-living programs for families and increased taxes. I will outline a few examples of where this Labor Government is letting down our community. Firstly, I will talk about transparency. Earlier this year we learnt about the Minns Labor Government's Local Small Commitments Allocation program, which allowed Labor candidates, without transparency, to allocate \$400,000 worth of taxpayer money in each electorate. It has been eight months since the election and three months since the budget, and my local community has not been told where that \$400,000 is being spent in our local community.

Let us be clear: You have the absurd situation where an unelected candidate, without consultation and behind closed doors, gets to decide where \$400,000 of New South Wales taxpayers' money is spent. This program was not opened up transparently for applications so that all community groups could apply. People had to be invited to apply by a Labor candidate who was never elected. Plain and simple, this just stinks. My local community and the people of New South Wales deserve transparency. My local community also deserves transparency when it comes to the Watsons Bay ferry wharf. At the end of last year I attended a community meeting of more than 100 locals in Watsons Bay, where Transport for NSW's proposal for wharf upgrades to improve accessibility for people with disabilities and mobility issues, as well as a vast range of other issues, was discussed. The consultation period closed in December, and I was advised in January this year by Transport for NSW that a consultation report would be finalised in early April. It is now nearly December and no consultation report has been released.

In June I wrote to the Minister for Transport asking when the report would be made public, but more than five months later and there is still no report. This is how the Government treats our community: with silence on issues we care about. My community has had not only silence and a lack of transparency from this Government but also plain meanness when it comes to what it is doing to Bondi Bowling Club and a whole lot of other bowlos in my electorate. I have spoken in this place before about the Bondi bowlo, which is a great local club run by volunteers. In September it was notified by the Minns Government of an annual rent hike from \$22,000 a year to \$95,000 a year. That is a \$70,000 rent hike. The reality is that if the Government does not reconsider this increase, the Bondi bowlo will have to make some difficult decisions about its services and opening hours.

So my community has had silence, a lack of transparency and meanness. Now let us look at the postcode politics. The Premier keeps saying that the eastern suburbs needs more development, constantly suggesting that we are not pulling out weight despite the fact that we have one of the highest population densities in the State.

Two-thirds of the electorate live in flats and apartments and almost 15 per cent live in semis. This is a much higher density than in the Premier's electorate of Kogarah. We have been pulling our weight for a long time and we will continue to pull our weight. But those arguments are not about the facts or about fairness. Labor does not care about our community. We are almost at the end of 2023 and it is getting very tiring. My wish for 2024 is for fairness from the Minns Government, and I will certainly be fighting very hard for that outcome.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 22:42 until
Wednesday 22 November 2023 at 10:00.**

Written Community Recognition Statements

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

CHIEF INSPECTOR WAYNE KELLY

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt)—I wish to recognise Chief Inspector Wayne Kelly of the Mount Druitt Police Area Command, who was recently awarded a 35 Year Clasp to the New South Wales Police Medal for his three and a half decades of dedicated service to the Police Force. The New South Wales Police Medal is presented to sworn personnel of the New South Wales Police Force upon achieving a decade of dedicated and morally upright service. The clasp accompanying the New South Wales Police Medal signifies the duration of their ethical and diligent contributions. I would like to thank Wayne for his 35 years of dedicated service. His commitment to the Police Force is truly commendable.

DURAL MUSIC SOCIETY PERFORMANCE OF GREASE

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)—The Dural Musical Society have been entertaining our community for over fifty years. The recent performance of the musical Grease was spectacular. The original musical scores were flawlessly performed by the cast. The performance included the iconic songs including Summer Nights; Greased Lightning; Hopelessly Devoted to you; Beauty School Dropout; There are worse things I could do; and You're the one that I want. The performance took the audience on a nostalgic trip back to Rydell High School. And what talent! The lead actors, Tamsyn Willey (Sandy) and Reuben Hann (Danny) were excellent. The performance by River Williams (Kenickie); Hannah Aouchan (Rizzo); Talia Graham (Frenchy); James Reve (Sonny); Emily Mordini (Marty); Olivia Vaile (Cha Cha) were all fantastic. I thank specifically the Co-Directors, William Pully, and Rodrigo Medina Noel (Co-Directors), Isabelle Venice (Assistant Director); Kailin Hillier (Choreographer); Erica Williams (Vince Fontaine/Production Manager/Costume Manager) and Peter Miller (Stage Manager). I give special recognition and acknowledge the Dural Musical Society John Nawotka (President), Karen Smyth (Secretary), Erica Williams (Costume Manager) and Jack Foley (Treasurer). The success of the production was clear from the audience cheering and clapping throughout the entire performance. Well done to everyone involved.

DIWALI EXTRAVAGANZA BY EMPOWERED BWB

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)—Empowered Brave Women Building Futures presented this year's successful Diwali Extravaganza. The Diwali Extravaganza was hosted at USANA at Castle Hill and was held on 20 October 2023. The event showcased many wonderful businesses from Western Sydney including Genius Abacus from Baulkham Hills; Indian Matrimonial; She Magazine, Procure Physio and much more. There was wonderful cultural dresses, dancing, and food for everyone. I express appreciation to USANA for hosting the wonderful event. The event was presented by Empowered BWB. Empowered BWB is a community organisation which promoted Mental Health and Wellness, Fashion and Beauty, Life Coaching, Business Coaching and much more. Empowered BWB aims to help, support, motivate, inspire, uplift and empower women. I thank the founder of Empowered BWB, Tiya Gorain and to all those involved in organising the wonderful Diwali Extravaganza.

DURAL PUBLIC SCHOOL COUNTRY FAIR

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)—On Saturday, 21 October 2023 I attended the fantastic Dural Country Fair. The Dural Country Fair is a bi-annual event held at the Dural Public School within my electorate. The Fair is a tradition which dates back more than twenty years. It has become a well-known and much loved bi-annual event within the school and the wider community. It is also the Parents and Citizens major fundraising event. There were rides, entertainment, market stalls, music, displays, food and drink, a giant raffle, games, prizes, a chocolate wheel, auctions, petting zoo, art, craft, music, and plants and much more. The weather was kind and the community enjoyed hospitality of the Dural School Community. The Country Fair would not have been possible without the spirit of the Parents and Citizens Association. I particularly recognise the spirit and contribution given by Cara Marcelli (President) and Shannon Keskeridis (Deputy President). I thank Cara and

Shannon not only for this year's fair but for their long and dedicated service to the school community over many years. I thank the entire school community for another great year.

CLARE WHEELER'S GOAL

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)—On Sunday 29 October, the Matildas went into their Olympic qualifier match against the Philippines, and the Tillies put in an electric performance which sealed the deal eight-nil. It was a game full of highlights, with an early goal from Mary Fowler paving the way for hat-tricks from both Caitlin Foord and Sam Kerr—but for those of us from the Charlestown electorate, the greatest moment came courtesy of our hometown hero Clare Wheeler. Clare came up through the Adamstown Rosebuds, Northern NSW and the Newcastle Jets, and now plays for the English Women's Super League club Everton. In the seventy-second minute, Clare caught a pass from Caitlin Foord and then took her shot—a brilliant strike past two defenders and the goalie. It was her first international goal for the senior Matildas side, and a moment all the more special for taking place in front of a record 59,155-strong crowd at Optus Stadium! Clare's performance saw her named in the Starting XI against Chinese Taipei. With another win under their belts the Matildas are well on their way to Paris. I could not be more proud. Thank you, Clare!

CASS DAVIS'S GOAL

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)—It's not just at the women's football at the international level which is sparking the imagination of sports fans across Australia—club membership and A-League Women's game attendance is climbing, and women and men of all ages are finding new sporting heroes to cheer on. Cass Davis is a Kotara local and veteran of the Newcastle Jets. She's the team captain, the team's most-capped player and an absolute legend of the women's game in the Newcastle area—and in the Jets' Round 3 clash against the Western Sydney Wanderers, she once again proved her football bona fides with a scorcher of a goal in stoppage time. It was a hard-fought game, possession pretty closely evenly matched between the sides. The first goal didn't come until the seventy-ninth minute, with the Wanderers' Vicky Bruce finding the back of the net with a header—but the Jets did not let up. Two minutes into injury time, Captain Cass kicked a legendary goal—in her milestone 132nd game, she scored one for the ages to take the game to a tie. What a moment! Good on you, Cass!

BANDFEST NEWCASTLE

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)—It is always great to see young people get involved in making and enjoying music, which is such a beautiful and important part of life. Bandfest Newcastle celebrates the performance development of primary and secondary public school bands, and this year was held at Newcastle City Hall from Monday 16 to Wednesday 18 October. Each year, Bandfest serves as a showcase for fantastic school bands from around the Newcastle and Lake Macquarie area to showcase their talents to one another in a friendly, music-filled environment and receive constructive feedback from musical expert. A number of Charlestown electorate schools competed, including Charlestown South Public, Dudley Public, Eleebana Public, New Lambton South Public, Warners Bay Public and Warners Bay High. Charlestown South Public School won the primary school "developing" category, a great follow-on to their "preliminary" category win in 2022. It's wonderful to see local musical talent fostered in our public schools, and I want to congratulate the students and a special thanks to all the music teachers for helping them pursue their musical studies.

CRONULLA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT LEADERS

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)—I congratulate the 2024 elected school leaders at Cronulla High School. Emily Aiken and Cristian Katsikas were elected as school captains, and Grace Dyer and Sam Niumataiwalu as vice captains. Charlotte Ball and Duke Garnsey were elected as SRC president and vice president respectively. Lachlan Clark, Gypsy Gilbert, Asher Mudimu, Sophia Papadatos, Rosa Phelan, Rome Southwell, Sonny Williams, James Young and Jayda Zammit-Mayer were elected as school prefects. Sienna Horner and Leah Menzies were elected as Creative and Performing Arts Captains. Tahli Christensen and Angus Sampson were elected as sports captains. Student leadership is a valuable opportunity to develop skills in communication, leadership and public speaking - skills which are important for school, the modern workplace and life generally. Student leadership is also an opportunity to enrich the life of the school and to serve others, and to have fun doing so. I wish the leadership team best of luck and every success in their roles and studies in 2024.

KIRRAWEE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT LEADERS

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)—I congratulate the 2024 elected school leaders at Kirrawee High School. Molly Fitzpatrick and Patrick Pike were elected as school captains, and Anaya Ghelani and Taj Bennett

as vice captains. Tara Collier is Principal's representative. Elias Koroneos, Kynan Di Cesare, Thomas McAfee, Tobie Lennon, Will Hutcheon, Dylan Phillips and Lexie Lake were elected as school prefects. Student leadership is a valuable opportunity to develop skills in communication, leadership and public speaking - skills which are important for school, the modern workplace and life generally. Student leadership is also an opportunity to enrich the life of the school and to serve others, and to have fun doing so. I wish the leadership team best of luck and every success in their roles and studies in 2024.

WOOLOOWARE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT LEADERS

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)—I congratulate the 2024 elected school leaders at Woollooware High School. Keira Bauer and Hayley Blanch were elected as school captains, and Mitchell Bolte and Ethan Stark as vice captains. Olivia Davey and Grace Sutherland were elected presidents of the SRC. Oscar Golding, Natasha Gosby, Will McKay, Nina Qin, Nancy Treanor and Coby Ward were elected as prefects. Student leadership is a valuable opportunity to develop skills in communication, leadership and public speaking - skills which are important for school, the modern workplace and life generally. Student leadership is also an opportunity to enrich the life of the school and to serve others, and to have fun doing so. I wish the leadership team best of luck and every success in their roles and studies in 2024.

NAZARETH CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL - SOCKTOBER

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I would like to congratulate Nazareth Catholic Primary School for their involvement in Catholic Mission Month. During 'Socktober' students showed their goal shooting skills when they created their own 'sockball' out of recycled materials and entered into the 'Sockball Shootout' competing against other classes. The shootout happened on Friday 27 October 2023 and students were asked to bring in a gold coin donation for the privilege of entering. Students were also encouraged to wear their own crazy socks to add to the fun. Socktober 2023 will contribute vital funds to projects around the world, including Timor-Leste, where a medical clinic and a children's home are providing hope for generations of young people. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour community, I would like to express our congratulations to Nazareth Catholic Primary School and thank them for participating and fundraising for this worthy cause.

JASON QUIGLEY

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I would like to congratulate Jason Quigley, a Lake Illawarra Detective, for training to take part in Australia's mightiest ultra-marathon challenge – Bravehearts 777 Marathons next year from the 1 to 7 July. He will run 7 Marathons in 7 States in 7 Consecutive Days, to raise funds for the prevention of child sexual abuse for the Bravehearts Charity. Bravehearts charity, is a not-for-profit organisation responsible for raising awareness, the prevention, and ongoing care of child sexual abuse victims, a silent crime of which is often unreported. If reported, this is a crime Detectives take carriage of, and they often go above and beyond for the victims and families. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour community, I would like to express our support for Detective Quigley and wish him well in his training and fundraising for this worthy cause.

GEORGE HARLE

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I would like to congratulate George Harle, from Shellharbour, for his generous donation of three paintings and a painted saw for the Shellharbour Hospital Auxiliary's Pink Ladies Luncheon. The Shellharbour Hospital Auxiliary raises money for the purchase of medical equipment for Shellharbour Hospital and its most recent fundraiser luncheon was held at the Warilla Bowls and Recreation Club on 14 October 2023. Mr Harle is a local artist that specialises in painting landscapes, seascapes and country scenes and often generously donates his artworks to be raffled or auctioned for a variety of causes. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour community, I would like to express our gratitude and well wishes to Mr Harle for his generous donation to this worthy cause.

JODIE AND SUMMERLILLY WELCH

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast)—Local mother and daughter Jodie and Summerlilly Welch generously donated to children and families gift packs, brand new toys, games, clothes, and bags through local organisation We Care Connect this Christmas. The front of my office was showered with gifts, and it is amazing to see this young lady Summerlilly making a difference in our community with a carload of donations to share with other families. The mother and daughter duo have been giving back to the community through Central Coast charities for 13 years, donating to local radio stations, Salvos, Vinnies, churches, women shelters and kids from rural communities. Their gift giving started at Christmas when Summerlilly was 3 years old being showered with love and gifts from Santa, her mother, aunts, uncles, and grandparents. Jodie decided the following year to give Summerlilly a few less gifts and instead she would take

her shopping when she had spare money to purchase a small toy or art pack from the store. They saved the gifts for an entire year to be given to children and families that needed a little bit of joy at Christmas time.

MEXICOAST CANTINA

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)—Mexicoast Cantina are recognised as Best Regional Family Restaurant at the Restaurant & Catering Hostplus Awards for Excellence 2023. The restaurant is recognised for their hard work, exceptional food, and outstanding service in this vibrant industry. Mexicoast was a dream starting with Michael Cross who travelled with his wife Linda throughout the USA and the Baja peninsula of Mexico back in the early 2000's exploring the great little Mexican eateries. Michael became enamoured with the tastes, sounds and colours of Mexican culture. He returned home to search for Mexican food and unfortunately did not come across anything close to his experience overseas. This inspired Michael to open a little cantina called Mexicoast and contacted a lifelong friend Jim Constantinidis and wife Yvette and within 6 months the team opened their first Mexicoast Cantina at Terrigal. In 2020 the team relocated Mexicoast in Toukley, sharing a huge love and passion for the town and the people of this wonderful community since early 1970's. The vibrant and enjoyable restaurant for locals and tourist alike share the wonderful food, beers, cocktails and company for what Mexicoast is popular for. Congratulations to the owners and staff for reaching this outstanding achievement.

FESTIVAL OF CREATIVITY

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)—Art At Work Festival of Creativity will celebrate their seventh annual event will be held at Red Tree Theatre in Tuggerah from the 3 to 12 November 2023. This year's theme is based on Picasso "Every child is an artist; the problem is staying an artist when you grow up". The community will have the opportunity to meet the artists and watch them create as they hold daily demonstrations of their individual techniques. More than 30 local artists' will showcase their art pieces including wood carving, glass works to ceramics, paintings, and textile design. There will be more than 100 artworks on show with the opportunity to purchase directly from the artist and vote for your favourite piece in the exhibition. Founder Marion Mikkelsen from the Central Coast, started Art at Work in 2017 bringing artists and locals together to share their creative sides. Marion is a painter, sculptor, mixed media, textile artist and will be showcasing her work at the upcoming Festival of Creativity. Surprisingly by 2019 numbers grew to 34 exhibiting artists and the creative arts expanded to include a Community Choir and a poet. Art at Work continues to expand in the community.

RHONDA BRAIN

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—Mr Speaker, September marked the 25th anniversary of an Australia-wide program which has helped half a million children get the reading bug and which had its inception in the Central West. Early literacy initiative Paint the Town REaD marked a quarter of a century with a dinner back where it began last month - Parkes. Joining the celebration was former Parkes school principal Rhonda Brain OAM, who was recognised for her work in founding the program with a 'Star of Parkes' award. Rhonda was one of a handful of principals from the district who acted after studies indicated children had a better opportunity to grasp reading and writing skills if they were read to from birth. Fellow founder, former Parkes Christian School principal Judy Huda described Rhonda as the force behind PTTR. Judy explained Rhonda organised events to spark interest including having the former Great Southern Rail dedicate a carriage for the book relay from Parkes to Broken Hill in 2005 and having the Reading Bug jump from an Airforce plane. PTTR is used by 80 communities Australia-wide. It targets communities where the statistics show over 20% of children struggle with literacy. Well done, Rhonda.

JULIE SYKES

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—Speaker, Julie Sykes, known for her unwavering passion for literature, has an intrinsic connection to libraries no matter where she is. Orange City Library is where Julie left her mark during the past 12 years, starting as an on-call library assistant before dedicating her time to children's activities and then settling into the role of full-time librarian. She attributes her tenure at Orange Library to the wonderful staff, loyal patrons, and her drive to assist people in their search for knowledge, be it from books or online. After relocating from Mackay to Orange, Julie's natural curiosity led her to the Orange Historical Society and the city's family history group. She recently completed a diploma in family history from the University of Tasmania, revelling in the joy of discovering hidden gems of information. Julie speaks of her role as similar to a detective, unearthing insights that others overlook. Having previously been a teacher working in school libraries, Julie has chosen to retire, hoping to delve into her family's history. As she steps into this chapter, she remains grateful to

everyone at Orange City Library, ensuring her dedication to the Historical Society and family history group remains unwavering.

DR GABRIELLE STANIFORTH

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—Speaker, I would like to recognise Dr Gabrielle Staniforth. Dr Staniforth, based in Orange, has been a beacon of innovation and empathy in women's healthcare in the Central West. With personal experience spanning a decade in IVF, Dr Staniforth understands the challenges in accessing comprehensive women's health services. This understanding prompted her to establish The Papillon Clinic in 2023, a unique space offering patient-centric care. The clinic offers a holistic range of services, including menopause, vulval dermatology, and facial aesthetics. A lifelong country girl, Dr Staniforth is committed to changing regional perceptions around gender-affirming care. Her mission resonates with her core values of listening, believing, and assisting those in need. I congratulate Dr Staniforth for her vision and enhancing women's healthcare. The Papillon Clinic stands as a testament to her dedication to the women of the Central West.

SARAH QUINN FROM PENRITH CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney)—Sarah Quinn, a Year 7 student at Penrith Christian School, is representing New South Wales at the Australian National Figure Skating Championships. Sarah will travel to the Central Coast next month, to compete at the Skating Championships. Sarah and her team have done incredibly well in recent competitions. In October, they won gold at the NSW State Championships. This is a great achievement for Sarah and her team, I have no doubt that they will continue to thrive and influence our next generation of figure skaters. Congratulations on your achievements thus far Sarah, the community and I will be cheering you on at the Australian National Figure Skating Championships!

HUNTER SCHOOL OF THE PERFORMING ARTS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle)—Congratulations to the boys and girls from the Hunter School of the Performing Arts Primary School on their fantastic performance of Madagascar: A Musical Adventure which has been named the Most Outstanding Production at the 2023 Junior Theatre Festival Australia. Although the students took to the stage last October, the excitement has not died down. What a huge achievement, well done! The Junior Theatre Festival Australia is held annually at the Civic Theatre in my electorate. The year, hundreds of young performers from across the country came to Newcastle, with their eyes on the prize of taking out one of the 24 awards. It was great to have all the students in our wonderful city and I hope they all return to our Civic Theatre stage in the future.

LUKE BAILEY

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle)—Congratulations Luke Bailey on a remarkable performance at the 2023 World Para Athletics Championships. Luke secured a commendable 9th place in the 100m race, 15th place in the 400m, and 17th place in the 800m. Luke's outstanding journey includes his 7th-place finish in the T54 100m at the 2019 World Para Athletics Championships and qualifying for the 2020 Tokyo Paralympics. Luke has overcome much adversity, having missed out on selection for the 2018 Commonwealth Games due to injury and having to move away from his friends and family in the pursuit of his sporting career. His journey is a testament to the power of determination and his achievements are a great source of pride. I wish Luke the best of luck in qualifying for the 2024 Paralympics.

ROSE DAVIES

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle)—Rose Davies, the Novocastrian sensation on the track, has once again proven her incredible stamina and speed on the global stage by securing a commendable 19th place in the 5000m race at the 2023 World Athletics Championships. This isn't the first time Rose has represented Newcastle and Australia on the world stage; she qualified for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and the 2022 Commonwealth Games, running in 5000m heats at both competitions. She is also a two-time Zatopek 10,000m champion, a testament to her consistent excellence in long-distance running. These accomplishments are the culmination of years of hard work and unyielding commitment. I'm sure we will be seeing her again at the 2024 Paris Olympics, as her future in the sport continues to shine brightly. Well done on this fantastic achievement.

SARAH CLIFTON-BLIGH

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)—I wish to offer my heartfelt congratulations to Ms Sarah Clifton-Bligh a young resident of my Summer Hill electorate who recently competed at the 2023 World Para Athletics Championships held in Paris. In a remarkable achievement Sarah placed 7th in the 100m, 7th in the 800m and 7th in the shot put, wonderful recognition of her dedication, perseverance, and talent.

Sarah is also a Commonwealth Games representative, competing at the Birmingham Commonwealth Games in 2022. Beginning her athletics career at just eight years old in primary school, Sarah has been mentored and coached by champion athletes Louise Sauvage, Angie Ballard and Madison de Rozario. Not just a great athlete Sarah is a champion for the inclusion of people with disabilities, successfully lobbying her high school to make their sports carnivals more inclusive. Now setting her sights on the 2024 Paris and 2032 Brisbane Paralympics I wish Sarah every success both on and off the track!

INNER WEST COUNCIL - WINNER OF 2023 BLUETT AWARD

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)—I extend my sincerest congratulations to the Inner West Council for the wonderful achievement of winning the prestigious 2023 Bluett Award. This honour is a testament to the unwavering dedication, innovation, and collaborative spirit of all involved at Council. The Council's unwavering commitment to fostering a thriving, inclusive, and vibrant community has been exemplary. This recognition reaffirms the dedication of our residents, businesses, and local organisations in shaping an environment that celebrates diversity, sustainability, and social progress. Our collective efforts in enhancing public spaces, promoting cultural initiatives, and advocating for sustainable practices has truly set a benchmark for excellence. This accolade is a tribute to the hard work, resilience, and passion of every individual who contributes to making the Inner West a truly remarkable place to live, work, and thrive. I acknowledge the great leadership of Mayor Darcy Byrne, General Manager Peter Gainsford, all of the Councillors and Council leadership team. May this accomplishment inspire us to continue our journey towards building a stronger, more connected community. Congratulations to the entire Inner West community for this outstanding achievement.

BAKER'S TWO DOZEN YEARS - BAKERS DELIGHT LAVINGTON

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to acknowledge Belinda Daggett who has for the past two decades been the mastermind behind the delicious delights that have graced the shelves of Bakers Delight at Lavington Square. The business was purchased in 2002 by Belinda's parents and became a family business. This October 25, Belinda decided to bid farewell to her career at the Bakers Delight Franchise. What began as a part time job for Belinda when she moved to Albury from Cobram to commence university in 1999, quickly blossomed into her life's passion. Three years into her journey at the age of 22, Belinda Daggett achieved a milestone by becoming Australia's youngest Bakers Delight franchisee. During her tenure, serving over five and a half million customers, baking more than 3 million loaves of bread, 165,000 Christmas tarts, and over 400,000 Hot Cross Buns on Easter Thursdays. Thank you, Belinda, for 25 years of wonderful service. Your contribution will be remembered with fondness, your legacy will continue to rise like the dough in your ovens, a testament to the power of your hard work, passion and the love for your community.

ALBURY'S FOUNDING FAMILIES CELEBRATE

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to extend my appreciation to Yvette Nesire-McNeil for her efforts organising an extraordinary reunion in Albury. This remarkable event brought together over 100 individuals in honour of celebrating the legacy of three sisters, Saleemy, Marion and Kathrina Keamy. The reunion, which took place at Albury's SS&A Club on October 15, recognised a significant moment in Albury's history. The three sisters had embarked on a courageous journey during the late 1800's and early 1900's, crossing oceans to reach Australia and then on to Albury. Despite facing language and cultural barriers, their determination and support for one another enabled them to establish thriving drapery and vegetable businesses. Their contributions were instrumental in Albury's commercial growth, whilst also reaching out to support the needs of rural and remote farming families. I also would like to acknowledge the roles played by the following families: Nesires, Farrahs, Doumanis, Mannerings, Abikhairs, Metrys, Batrouneys, Mellicks, Assads and Dihoods. Their connection to the Keamy sisters has left an unforgettable mark on Albury's history and heritage. To the organisers of this event: thank you for continuing to remember these inspiring stories and for passing these on to later generations.

LEE-ANNE WHEELER ALBURY POST OFFICE RETIRES AFTER 40 YEARS

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to extend my congratulations to a remarkable individual—Mrs Lee-Anne Wheeler, who has decided to embark on a well-deserved retirement after a 40 year career at the Albury Post Office. Mrs Wheeler's journey over the last four decades began with her delivering telegrams on a humble motorbike and, over time, exploring dispatching and before moving higher in the organisation to become the Area Manager for the ACT and Riverina. Throughout her tenure she has witnessed significant transformation in the postal industry, particularly with the introduction of digital platforms such as Electronic Point of Sale (EPOS), which have shaped the dynamics of our local Post Office services today. Beyond Mrs Wheeler's professional achievements, she has touched the lives of countless individuals in our community, forging many friendships along the way. Lee-Anne, as you step into the next exciting chapter of your life, may your journey be filled with adventure and quality time with family and beloved grandchildren.

TWENTY-FIFTH ANNUAL NSW HEALTH AWARDS - RNSH

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—I am pleased to honour the wonderful achievements of staff in the Northern Sydney Local Health District who were recognised at the recent 25th Annual NSW Health Awards. The following four awards recognised the outstanding performance and contribution of our health professionals at Royal North Shore Hospital (RNSH). The first was the Winner of the Patient Safety First Award for their exceptional contribution to the RNSH Multidisciplinary Concussion Service. The second was a Finalist of the Environmentally Sustainability Health Award for their contribution to RNSH initiatives to reduce anaesthetic greenhouse gasses. The third was a Finalist of the Excellence in the Provision of Mental Health Services Award for their creation of a mental health group for participants to express themselves creatively. Finally, the fourth was Highly Commended for the Health Research Award for producing ground-breaking research on the use of fluid resuscitation to reduce mortality in critically ill patients. The ingenuity and achievements of our health professionals are all too often overlooked, so I welcome these awards as fitting way to recognise their priceless contribution.

CASTLECRAG FAIR

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—I commend Willoughby City Council and the Castlecrag Progress Association for staging another successful Castlecrag Fair for 2023. Held on Sunday 22 October in Castlecrag, the Fair provided locals and visitors with a great day of fun, food, music and community. Featuring art, craft, food, garden, bric-à-brac, and book stalls, together with sausage sizzles and live bands, the Castlecrag Fair offered something for everyone. There was wonderful community participation including from St John's Ambulance, local Rotary Clubs, Scouts and Guides all hosting stalls. The Castlecrag Fair was a wonderful occasion for our community to come amid difficult times, both at home and abroad. I was proud to sponsor the face painting stall – so much fun for kids. I thank each of the stall holders and participants for making the day a great success.

NORTHBRIDGE PUBLIC SCHOOL CEREMONY

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—I warmly congratulate Northbridge Public School on its Centenary. To celebrate this wonderful milestone, Northbridge Public staged an open day on Saturday 28 October. Featuring a sausage sizzle, high tea, craft stalls and a historical exhibition, the open day was a wonderful opportunity for the school community and broader public to celebrate Northbridge Public's 100 years of primary education since 1923. There was an historical exhibition of memorabilia that showcased the school's long history down the ages—a history that includes my family as my grandfather Jack was an early student. The display of old photos, books, school reports, medals, pins, ribbons, and school uniforms just demonstrated what a proud and rich history Northbridge Public has. I am both proud and grateful for the great contribution that Northbridge Public has made to educating local families. Celebrating a century of building a learning community of excellence where students are supported and empowered to achieve their personal best, Northbridge Public School can truly bask in its motto of Finnis Coronet Opus, 'the end crowns the work'.

BAILEY ROGAN SMITHTOWN TIGERS

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)—I rise today, congratulating a rising star in the Rugby League scene, Bailey Rogan for taking out the Kempsey Macleay RSL Sportsperson of the Month for October. Only 14 years old and Bailey has already proven to be a formidable force on the field and within the community. After an impressive 2023 season under the Smithtown Tigers banner, Bailey was not only dubbed the best and fairest for a consistent performance but also claimed the oldest trophy at the club – the Cocky Bennet Players Trophy. Bailey's talent landed him a gig in the North Coast Bulldogs development team which enabled the 14-year-old to gain invaluable experience to take the Rugby League passion further into the future. Well done, Bailey for your achievements this year. As you starting gearing up for the under-15's team next year, we look forward to watching you grow and tackle another season ahead.

DEAN RUTLEDGE FAREWELL

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)—After an incredible 41 years of dedicated service to justice, protection, and our community we farewell Detective Senior Constable Dean Rutledge, and thank him for his time in uniform. Dean was inspired to join the police force after receiving good advice from friends already wearing the badge. His career began in Bankstown, then by 1984 was stationed in Moree before moving to Kempsey in March 1993 where he stayed since. Dean is described as 'very community orientated' and will be remembered for his long-standing dedication, experience and proficiency through any investigation that landed on his desk. From tedious tasks to extensive cases, Dean's knowledge and approach will be sorely missed. It was fantastic to see Elbow Street, West Kempsey lined with colleagues and community members sending off our hometown hero. The official 'March Out' celebrated his extensive career and was topped by a generous loan from the Police

Museum of an original police car. Congratulations on your achievements over the past four decades, Dean. As a community we wish you all the best into your next chapters in life. Thank you.

MACLEAY DISTRICT MOTORCYCLE CLUB SUCCESS

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)—Motors were rearing in an impressive display of skill and speed. Today, I rise to congratulate the Macleay District Motorcycle Club on their cracking performance at the Jacaranda Dirt Drags, where they represented the Club to the highest calibre and brought home some impressive results. The Drags, which the South Grafton Ex-Services Motorcycle Club hosts, is a competition, open to riders of all ages and bike types. The 'Sullo Shield' is the main event for all aspiring riders and is appropriately named as an enduring trophy in honour of Anthony Sullivan. It was Kempsey local, Logan Davis who took out top spot after an impressive performance. Levi Sutherland, Daniel Benson, Jarrad Loveday, Logan Davis, Riley Holder and Jayden Holder all came away with exceptional results and should be proud of their efforts. Additionally, Skyann Davis is also commemorated as the fastest female rider with a time of 8.82 seconds. Events like this bring communities together to support and celebrate the sport of motorcycle racing. The result that the Macleay exhibited are fantastic and it is incredible to see the talent of our Oxley region shining to full success.

ALICE LEHANE - JUBILEE COMMUNITY SERVICES

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, I rise to congratulate Alice Lehané, who has made significant contributions to our community during her time with Jubilee Community Services. Jubilee Community Services is a fantastic local organisation, providing assistance and support for those in the Georges River LGA. They offer services for those with dementia, aged residents and their carers, children, individuals suffering with their mental health and adults. Their commitment to the community has been unparalleled, offering affordable and accessible services that are constantly changing to suit the needs of the local area. Alice has been with the organisation since 1995, becoming treasurer in 1996. This was a role that she held up until November of last year, which is an impressive 26 years of service. During her time, Alice oversaw many projects including money raised for Trivia Nights, which provided the much-needed funds to support the work of Jubilee Community Services. Her contributions ensured that many were able to receive the support that they required. I would like to congratulate Alice once again for her fantastic service and invaluable contributions to our local community. I wish her all the very best in her future endeavours.

BIRGITTE MAIBOM - LEARNING LINKS

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, I rise to congratulate and thank Birgitte Maibom, CEO of the Learning Links organisation. Birgitte recently announced her departure from Learning Links after 10 years of dedicated service to our community. As a charitable, not-for-profit organisation, Learning Links supported almost 5000 children and over 3000 families in 2012-2022, delivering outcomes that improved the learning and wellbeing of local kids. During her time as CEO, she oversaw the significant expansion of new learning centres across Sydney. New centres were opened in Bella Vista in 2017, Alexandria in 2019 and Gledswood Hills in 2019, with the Liverpool Centre upgraded in 2018. Furthermore, Birgitte oversaw the funding to establish a Prep 4 Preschool early intervention playgroup in Oatley. This aims to provide support for families in my area, allowing their little ones to transition smoothly into an early education setting. Alongside the hard work of her dedicated team, Birgitte has continued to support children and young people to achieve the very best in life. I wish Birgitte all the best in her future endeavours, as she seeks out new and exciting opportunities. Your contributions were second-to-none, and you should be incredibly proud!

COMMUNITY LANGUAGE SCHOOLS SUBCONTINENT LANGUAGE TEACHERS CONFERENCE

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, I recently had the opportunity to attend the Subcontinent Language Teachers Conference, organised by the NSW Federation of Community Language Schools. Representing over 26,000 students and over 2500 teachers, the NSW Federation of Community Language Schools works collaboratively with language schools throughout the state to ensure traditional languages continue to thrive. As the Shadow Minister for Multiculturalism, I believe that language is such an important tool for people to connect to their culture and heritage. It enables knowledge to be passed down from generation to generation, and I am so proud of the work they continue to do. Their work is a testament to the Multicultural success story of New South Wales, which is the best states in the nation to receive a world-class education. I would like to thank Mr Thiru Thirunanthakumar, Vice Principal of the NSW Federation of Community Language Schools, as well as the entire team who do an absolutely incredible job. I look forward to working closely alongside the NSW Federation of Community Language Schools well into the future.

PADSTOW BOWLING CLUB'S MINOR SINGLES CHAMPIONSHIP

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills)—I would like to recognise Padstow Bowling Club for hosting its Minor Singles Championship, and the club's commitment to fostering camaraderie and competition within our

community. The Minor Singles Championship, keenly contested and open to individuals of all ages, is a testament to the inclusive spirit of Padstow Bowling Club. This event, which is limited to members who have not previously secured a Minor competition victory, serves as a platform for both seasoned members and newcomers to showcase their talent. In a series of knockout rounds, the championship unfolded in thrilling fashion, ultimately seeing long-time member, Sam Annetta, emerge as champion. Sam's journey to victory was not without its challenges, as promising young member, Jack Barclay, gave Sam some serious competition. The final game, played with exceptional sportsmanship, drew a supportive and encouraging crowd. The Padstow Bowling Club's dedication to promoting lawn bowls in our community and providing opportunities for all, irrespective of age or experience, is commendable. Their commitment to making the sport accessible is a testament to their role in enriching the lives of all community members.

KIARA DE DOMIZIO

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills)—Kiara De Domizio whose passion and talent have taken her to new heights in the world of soccer. At just 22, Kiara De Domizio recently made her debut with Melbourne Club Western United in the A-League Women's competition. A former student of St Felix Bankstown and Georges River Grammar, Kiara's journey to this moment was marked by hard work and determination. Known for her exceptional athleticism, Kiara has excelled in various athletic competitions from a young age, participating in a range of sports, from football to track and field to OzTag. Her dedication to constant improvement and her desire to make a lasting impact in the sport is a testament to her ambition and drive. As Kiara embarks on this exciting journey, she will have the unwavering support of the Bankstown community, who will be there to watch her play and cheer her on. I commend Kiara De Domizio for her dedication to the sport and her inspiring journey in the A-League Women's competition. Her story serves as an example of the remarkable potential of the East Hills community.

GREYSTANES FC - ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—It was great to attend the Greystanes Football Club 2023 Annual General Meeting on Monday 13th November. Greystanes FC have been an important part of our Western Sydney community since the club's formation in 1970. They offer an inclusive hub for our local community to learn and play football together. Catering to players from age 5 to 45, there is a place for every football fan on the pitch. Instilling important values of teamwork, sportsmanship and the pursuit of excellence, Greystanes FC is assisting to foster all-rounded leaders in our community. The club's success wouldn't be possible without their dedicated Executive Committee. I want to thank Club President David Apps, Vice President Eamonn Donohoe, Secretary Joanne Seymour, Treasurer Shane Camilleri and Women's Coordinator Kristina Dijanosic. I also thank Competition Secretary & Grounds Officer Steve Lazanas, Assistant Secretary Kent Seymour, Equipment Officer Martin Forbes, Publicity Officer Tony Tadros and Member Protection Officer Mark Lowndes for your service as members of the Executive Committee. Thank you as well to all the committed volunteers and enthusiastic players at Greystanes FC for offering a fun, friendly space for our community to keep fit and improve their skills.

INDIAN SUPPORT CENTRE - EIGHTH ANNIVERSARY

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—Congratulations to the Indian Support Centre on eight years of fantastic service to our community. It was a pleasure to join this special celebration and represent the Hon. Steve Kamper Minister for Multiculturalism on 10th November, in Wentworthville. Established in 2015, the Indian Support Centre offers services to welcome individuals and families migrating from India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bhutan and the Maldives. The Indian Support Centre assists new members of our community to establish themselves through employment opportunities, access to services and help to set up a home. They also offer guidance through a range of immigration, legal, education and domestic and family violence matters. The Centre adopts a varied use of one-on-one programs and community initiatives to provide tailored support, that builds cultural bridges. Bringing people together to keep culture, language and traditions alive, the Indian Support Centre encourages people to celebrate their origins and fosters opportunities to engage with their new community here in NSW. Thank you to President Subba Rao Varigonda, the ISC Board Members Dr Saryu Rao Varigonda, Jaspreet Chopra and Prajay Perambakkam, and the selfless volunteers who offer tireless care to our migrant community.

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION - GORDON SCOBLE

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—Congratulations to Gordon Scoble on receiving a Justice of the Peace Certificate of Appreciation by the Cumberland Branch of the NSW Justices Association on Monday 16th October, in Wentworthville. 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. Gordon has generously given his time to our community as a volunteer JP in the NSW JA – Cumberland Branch for 20 years. Congratulations again Gordon on your receipt of this significant award. Thank you for your dedicated tenure. I also thank NSW Justices Association State President Dr John Brodie for your considered support of JPs in our community.

MACKILLOP COLLEGE TOURNAMENT OF THE MINDS 2023

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—Congratulations to the bright and talented students from MacKillop College in Port Macquarie for winning the NSW Tournament of the Minds, Secondary Schools STEM category, in September 2023 and achieving a second place at the International Finals in Melbourne in October. This competition invites primary and secondary school students to compete in the disciplines of the Arts, STEM, Language Literature and Social Science. Students are provided the opportunity to solve authentic, open-ended challenges and to foster creative, divergent thinking whilst developing collaborative enterprise, excellence and teamwork. The STEM stream takes the application of curriculum studies in Mathematics, Design and Technology and Science as well as developing a presentation of their work for the judges. I acknowledge the team members: Milly McGrath and Miya Freeman in Year 10, Paige Goldie, Lucas Morris, Tori McGrath and Jesse Taylor in Year 8 and their coach Mandy Palin, Leader of Enrichment, for their combined impressive efforts. This is an outstanding result for a regional school and both the Port Macquarie community as well as MacKillop College should be very proud of the achievements of this team.

DANIEL HUTCHISON - 2023 AUSTRALIAN OLYMPIC CHANGE-MAKER

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—Congratulations to Year 11 student Daniel Hutchison from Hastings Secondary College Westport Campus for his successful nomination into the Australian Olympic Change-Maker program for 2023. Chosen from one of just 25 young leaders from across Australia, Daniel was selected into the elite Olympic Change-Maker program for his leadership and sportsmanship qualities at school and his commitment for excellence on and off the sporting field. Daniel will attend December's National Summit at the Australian Institute of Sport in Canberra where students work alongside Olympians to offer a youthful perspective and provide recommendations to the Australian Olympic Committee. The theme for this year's National Summit is #PowerTheChange2023 which recognises the significant role secondary students play through their work in creating positive social impacts. To be selected, students must actively demonstrate leadership through sport which improves health and wellbeing and a focus on driving social change. Daniel is described by his school as an exceptional young mentor who leads by example and champions educational initiatives. He will enter 2024 as the School Captain for Hastings Secondary College Westport Campus and I have no doubt he will succeed in all his future endeavours. Congratulations Daniel!

JOHN ATKINSON

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)—I would like to recognise and celebrate seasoned radio personality, John Atkinson for his remarkable tenure volunteering for 90.1 NBC FM radio station. 90.1 NBC FM is a community radio station and has been broadcasting locally in the St George area since 1983. Since the early days of the radio station, John has been a key figure at the station, contributing to its diverse program line-up. His versatility as a presenter is evident through his involvement in a range of programs, including the breakfast program, drive time show, and a dedicated country music program. These days, you can catch John on Thursdays from 9 am to 11 am, where he continues to captivate and entertain listeners with his distinctive style and love for music. As one of the two original volunteers who remain at the station, he serves as a living link to its rich history and a source of inspiration for those who follow in his footsteps. I would like to sincerely thank Mr Atkinson for his unwavering dedication and passion to 90.1 NBC FM and his ongoing contributions to the world of radio.

ANDREW DRYLIE

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)—I would like to acknowledge and celebrate Mr Andrew Drylie for his prolific dedication as a volunteer at the 90.1 NBC FM radio station. 90.1 NBC FM is a community radio station and has been broadcasting locally in the St George area since 1983. Volunteering for four decades, Andrew has left an indelible mark on 90.1 NBC FM's operations. He has been deeply involved in all aspects of the station often presenting engaging content to listeners on various programs. Likewise, he has played a pivotal role in the operational aspects of the station, ensuring its smooth day to day functioning. What truly sets Andrew apart is his unwavering commitment to 90.1 NBC FM. Remarkably, he is one of only two original volunteers who remain actively involved with the station after all these years. His enduring work is an inspiration to both newcomers and veterans in the field. I want to thank Mr Drylie for his unwavering passion and commitment to 90.1 NBC FM. His legacy as a presenter and operational stalwart serves as a shining example of what can be achieved through dedication and a genuine love for the medium of radio.

DR REBECCA GOODMAN

Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote)—The way health practitioners engage with the community has changed dramatically over the past few decades. The emergence of the digital age in particular allowed doctors and specialists to spread information far and wide – instead of it being limited to a surgical room. Some doctors have gone the extra mile and penned columns, started blogs or embraced the world of podcasts. It was particularly heartening to see Bulli Medical Practice's Dr Rebecca Goodman in the Illawarra Flame discussing Cervical Cancer Awareness Week – which was held from the 13th to the 19th of November. As Dr Goodman pointed out, 900 Australian women are diagnosed with cervical cancer each year – making it the 5th most common cancer in women aged 15-44. The best protection against cervical cancer is the HPV vaccination for 12 to 25 years, and regular cervical screenings for 25 to 74 year olds. Thank you to Dr Goodman for taking the time to pen the column and spread the word about such a deadly disease.

SPRING GARDEN COMPETITION

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)—I bring to the attention of the House those living in my electorate who placed in the Ryde Spring Garden Competition, a revered annual event for over thirty years standing. The 2023 competition encouraged residents to engage actively in enhancing their gardens, creating spaces of relaxation and joy. The event's hands-on approach and active participation make it more than just a contest; but a celebration of community and creativity. Winners across various categories highlighted diverse gardening talents with Sarnav Karimi clinching 3rd place in the Front Garden category. I acknowledge Rae Roy for winning the Back Garden contest, followed by Helen Russell and Erica Goldfinch, who also won the Edible Garden category. In the Native and Habitat category, Frances Reddacliff and Keri Gallagher were victorious, with Courtyard and Balcony winners including Julie Broadhead and Margaret Feltham. Special Judges Awards recognized Katharine Lam's Challenging Balcony and the innovative efforts of Tao Li and Rui Zuo. The pinnacle of the competition was the Champion Garden category, which was also won by Rae Roy. The competition exemplifies Ryde's dedication to community engagement, creativity, and environmental stewardship through gardening. I congratulate our winners and wish their gardens much prosperity and growth!

SUSTAINABILITY CHAMPION

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)—Congratulations to Margaret Mossakowska, the City of Ryde's sustainability champion! A Denistone local, Margaret is a beacon of environmental stewardship, passionately imparting her wisdom to the community. Margaret's sustainability ethos is built on three pillars. First, she advocates for a weather-resistant home, minimising the need for energy-intensive air conditioning and heating. Her strategy includes roof insulation, draft proofing, double-glazed windows, and natural shading solutions like awnings or trees. These measures not only conserve energy but also reduce costs. Secondly, Margaret emphasises the importance of growing food. Her garden of homegrown fruits, vegetables, and herbs not only yields healthier produce but also conserves water. This approach aligns with the Stockholm Water Institute's findings on the extensive water usage in food production, particularly in meat consumption. Finally, Margaret champions traditional homesteading skills. Drawing from her childhood in rural Poland, she teaches how to make homemade preserves, cheeses, soaps, and herbal remedies. These practices are not only cost-effective but also healthier, reducing the intake of artificial additives and plastic waste. Margaret's dedication to sustainable living is an inspiration, showing the profound impact of individual efforts on community and environmental well-being. Congratulations, Margaret, for leading the way towards a greener future.

SPRING FOOD FESTIVAL

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)—On Saturday, 4th November, the North Ryde Uniting Church organised their Spring Food Festival. Like so many community events in Ryde, the church combined many culinary delights with their strong and well established community ethos. Attendees enjoyed Korean and Sri Lankan gourmet dishes, alongside the traditional Aussie sausage sizzle. Live entertainment added vibrancy to the festival, complemented by child-friendly activities. The Spring Food Festival organised in conjunction with neighbouring Nasum Church raised over \$6000 which will support 'Together For Ryde' and their work in our community. 'Together for Ryde' is a collaboration of local churches and Christian ministries that fosters community connections in the Ryde area. As a congregation and Church Council, North Ryde Uniting is concerned by those who, by whatever cause, find themselves on the margins or even left out. Their specific aim and focus of their support for Together For Ryde, is to lend a helping hand to those who are facing acute food and financial pressure in the Ryde area. It is important work, and I give thanks to all involved, particularly Church Council Secretary Howard Clark, who extended invitations and brought this event to the attention of so many in Ryde.

COUNCIL YOUTH FORUM

Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone)—I want to congratulate students from St John the 23rd College and The Ponds High School on attending the recent Blacktown Council Youth Forum event. Riverstone is home to the highest youth population, so it only makes sense that they should be able to give input into policy making decisions. During the forum, students took part in workshops aimed at tackling key issues such as the cost-of-living crisis, racism, bullying, climate change and more. I cannot stress the importance of young people taking an active role in policy making, they are our future generation, and it is not only our job to provide for them but also to listen to them. I again congratulate the students from my electorate who attended this event, I hope you continue to play an active role in the policy making process. I encourage all other young people in Riverstone to do what you can in shaping your future, my door is always open to have a chat.

PINK FUTURES

Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone)—Mr. Speaker, I want to speak about a fantastic initiative at Riverstone High School. Supported through the Educational Pathways Program, the "Pink Futures" initiative involves the collaboration between students from Riverstone High School, Job Quest, and Pink Finss. Students are being taught how to engage with local businesses in order to secure sponsorships. These sponsorships then drive fundraising events hosted and developed by students of this program. From communication skills to team-building exercises, students are instilled with holistic skills that allow them to interact with the community in a resourceful manner. The proceeds from the fundraising events are directed towards Pink Finss charity, which strives to serve as an information centre for individuals, both men and women, who have been diagnosed with cancer. I commend the students of Riverstone High for a wonderful initiative, a perfect example of holistic education, instilling real-life skills, and bolstering community interactions, all for a terrific cause.

THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF QUAKERS HILL HIGH SCHOOL

Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone)—Congratulations to Quakers Hill High School on reaching the remarkable milestone of 30 years! This journey has been shaped by the dedication of a succession of outstanding leaders. From the ambition of former principals, Ian Wing, Ian Hudson, Laretta Claus and Andrew Skehan to the current visionary leader, Jason White, each has played a pivotal role in fostering a culture of learning and growth at QHHS. We also celebrate the commitment of a distinguished teacher, Anthony Head, who embarked on his teaching career three decades ago at Quakers Hill High School and was a cornerstone of the institution until his retirement this year. His passion for education and enduring impact on countless students over the years fully embody the spirit of QHHS. Throughout its rich history, the collective efforts of the school's students, staff, and the broader community have contributed to the school's success, creating an environment that nurtures both academic excellence and personal development. As we commemorate this milestone, we reflect on the legacy of Quakers Hill High School and look forward to the continued success and growth in the years to come. Congratulations and all the best for another 30 years!

DAD'S ARMY

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)—I would like to acknowledge a dedicated group of volunteers that go by the name of Dad's Army. These mostly retired individuals come together week after week to clean and maintain the Black Head Ocean Baths. Established in 1988, Dad's Army now boasts approximately 40 dedicated members, with a dozen to twenty present on any given maintenance day. The process they undertake is no small feat, involving pool draining, sweeping, scrubbing, and a delicate chlorination process, which all adds up to a 10-hour labour of love. Thank you, Dad's Army, for ensuring that the Black Head Ocean Baths remain clean and safe for all, your efforts are much appreciated by the community.

VALLEY INDUSTRIES

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)—I would like to acknowledge Valley Industries for their commitment to creating a community for individuals with disabilities. "The Valley Way" officially opened recently comprises of 10 homes with features for supported independent living. Four homes are Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) homes, that are specially built for people with high support needs and one accommodates multiple occupants. Over half the homes are already occupied, with opportunities for NDIS participants seeking accessible accommodations. Valley Industries plans to add more homes to "The Valley Way" and construct additional homes in Taree and Forster. Valley Industries' dedication to an inclusive community deserves recognition. I commend Valley Industries for their contributions to our community and anticipate the continued positive impact of their projects.

COASTAL BREWING COMPANY

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)—I would like to acknowledge The Coastal Brewing Company, an award-winning microbrewery in Forster offering a unique and high-quality beer experience. The Coastal Brewing Company's crafted brews reflect the essence of our coastal paradise, with names linked to the Barrington Coast region - Palms Ale, Diamond Beach Pilsner, Boomerang Beach Pale Ale, 2428 Draught. They even brewed a limited edition WMF Pilsner for the Wingham Music Festival, showing their dedication to local culture. Their beers can be found in bottle shops, bars, and restaurants across the region and nationally, spreading the taste of our coastal haven far and wide. The Coastal Brewing Company is not just about brewing beer; they are active participants in our community. They generously support local festivals and sporting clubs, making a positive impact on the lives of our residents. With weekly taproom tours, Brewing Experience Days, food trucks on-site, and regular Sydney tasting tours, they open their doors to share their passion with us. Thank you, Coastal Brewing Company, for your dedication to our community and your outstanding contributions to our local culture and economy.

BRAD LENNON

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)—Local Cobar resident and employee Brad Lennon of the Cobar Fire and Rescue NSW Station 256 has recently retired. Brad joined the Cobar station in January 2005, he was their 151st firefighter and served as their captain for almost 8 years. Brad dedicated 18 years of service as a Retained Firefighter and throughout those years he became Station 256's 18th captain and one of their longest serving. I congratulate Mr Lennon for his hard work and dedication in helping keep the Cobar community and surrounds safe and I wish you all the best for your retirement.

TUG O' WAR CUP

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)—On 22nd November 2023, Canterbury Bankstown City Council hosted their annual Tug O' War Cup which was held at John Mackay Indoor Sports Centre in Bankstown. I would like to thank Canterbury Bankstown City Council Mayor, Bilal El-Hayek, for hosting this significant event, particularly considering the harrowing year that saw the deaths of several women through domestic violence. The Council successfully holds the Tug O' War Cup every year to bring about change and awareness of domestic violence. While the event is symbolic it calls on the community to get involved and take a stand against domestic violence. This year's competition featured stalls, activities, and a barbecue for all attendees, and the Canterbury Bankstown Domestic Violence Liaison Committee was in attendance to offer support to the local community. The Tug O' War Cup has grown into an important community event and is supported by many local businesses, schools, services, and residents who help to raise awareness of domestic violence. Once again, thank you, to Mayor Bilal El-Hayek and his team for hosting this event and for the incredible work that they do in the community.

BUPA BANKSTOWN'S WIN IN THE BUPA'S GOT TALENT

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)—Congratulations to the Bupa Bankstown residents on their win in the Bupa's Got Talent competition. Designed to engage and entertain the aged care residents, Bupa's Got Talent is an opportunity to showcase the fact that age is no barrier to talent in our community. This event was a great opportunity for the residents to enjoy time together and find new tasks to enjoy. I am happy to see the fantastic work that has been put into setting up this event and I am pleased that residents could enjoy their time with each other. I would like to thank the Bupa Bankstown staff and the General Manager Sirjana Kc for the hard work and devotion that they have put into this event. Winning the Bupa's Got Talent 2023 means a lot to the residents and staff as it is a very important and meaningful win for them. This experience also raises a sense of belonging and pride, proving that, at any age, passion, and talent know no bounds. Once again, congratulations to Bupa Bankstown for this remarkable win and I am amazed by the talents that the residents have.

JAYDEN GWYNNE - TAE KWONDO BLACK BELT

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 Jayden Gwynne for his amazing achievement in receiving a black belt in Tae Kwondo at such a young age. Jayden attended Wiley Park Public School before entering Punchbowl Boys High School which are both located in the Bankstown Electorate. I am very pleased to acknowledge that Jayden has set a great example for the youth in our community. By doing something he loves, Jayden has been putting his hard work and dedication into his Tae Kwondo for years. His accomplishment is a great way to show others that they should keep trying no matter how difficult something is as one day you will be successful. When Jayden was in year 7, he experienced an incident that almost ended his

career, but he never gave up and continued to train even while being in a wheelchair. He has set a great example and has shown what great family and community support can achieve and how important it is to never give up on something you are passionate about. It is great to see such determination in someone so young. Well done to Jayden on his great achievements!

GLENMORE PARK HIGH SCHOOL OPEN GIRLS BASKETBALL TEAM

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)—I rise with immense pride to recognise the Glenmore Park High School Open Girls Basketball Team for their historic achievement. For the first time, a team from Glenmore Park High has qualified for a National Tournament in basketball. Through unwavering commitment and exceptional skill, these young athletes have succeeded in a series of competitive rounds to reach this prestigious point. Their journey is a narrative of perseverance, team spirit, and sheer talent. As they prepare to represent our community in Queensland from the 26th of November to the 1st of December, they carry with them not just the hopes of their school but the collective support of our entire community. I extend my best wishes to this remarkable team as they vie for the title of the nation's best. They have already made us proud with their efforts and stand as role models for what can be achieved through hard work and dedication.

ORAN PARK GREGORY HILLS CHARGERS RLFC

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)—I rise to acknowledge and celebrate the remarkable achievements of the Oran Park Gregory Hills Chargers Rugby League Football Club—an exceptional local sports organisation in our vibrant community. This past season, the Chargers have exemplified the spirit of teamwork, sportsmanship, and community engagement. Over 26 teams took to the field, a testament to the club's growing strength and appeal within the sport. It is with great pride that I report a significant increase in participation, with 320 registered players donning the Chargers jersey and showcasing their talent, up considerably from the previous year. This surge in numbers is not just a triumph for the club, but a positive reflection on the young people from our part of Sydney. The Chargers have provided a platform for youth to not only engage in physical activity but to also learn valuable life lessons about dedication, discipline, and the importance of teamwork. The rise in participation also speaks volumes about the club's management, volunteers, and the supportive environment they foster—none of which would be possible without the tireless efforts of the coaches, staff, and the families who support their players.

SIXTY YEARS OF EXCELLENCE AT CONDELL PARK HIGH SCHOOL

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills)—I would like to celebrate a remarkable milestone in our community. Condell Park High School recently marked its 60th anniversary, an occasion that brought together past and present students, staff, and the wider community in celebration. For six decades, Condell Park High has played a pivotal role in shaping the education and lives of countless local students. Founded in 1963, the school has a rich history of learning and has grown over the years, both in student numbers and learning opportunities. Its enduring commitment to educational excellence has left an indelible mark on the hearts and minds of all who have passed through its halls. I was thrilled to attend the school's anniversary celebration on Saturday, 4 November. The school's dedication to nurturing young minds and fostering community bonds is inspirational. I commend Principal Susie Mobayed for her unwavering commitment to the school and its students. I cannot wait to see how the school community continues to build on its 60-year legacy. I wish the school all the best for the future. I am delighted the Minns Labor Government is providing new facilities to this important school.

HILLS FLOWER MARKET - 100TH BIRTHDAY

Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)—I congratulate Hills Flower Market on their 100th Birthday. Hills Flower Market offers an extensive range of florals for all occasions, right in the heart of Terrey Hills. Floral arrangements are timeless, used to mark special occasions or share a caring message, and Pittwater locals know they can trust and rely on the team at Hills for all their flower needs. Over the years, the Hills have been there for countless wedding days and special events, and our community knows how lucky we are to have such a high-quality flower market in our backyard. From their beginnings growing flowers on site in 1923, to the vibrant community hub hosting retail, industrial and hospitality businesses – including the famous tastebuds café, it is the team's dedication to service and community that has made the Hills such a success. The Hills recently did the florals for my Pittwater Community Leaders afternoon tea, and many of the centrepieces went missing before the end of the event. Congratulations to Rudi and the whole team on this remarkable milestone. I am pleased that acknowledgement of Hills Flower Market is now preserved in the records of the oldest parliament in our nation.

MONA VALE PUBLIC SCHOOL - STANSW YOUNG SCIENTIST COMPETITION

Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)—I congratulate Mona Vale Public School students, Amy, Calinda and Hannah on earning a distinction at the Science Teachers' Association NSW Young Scientist Competition for their project on pollution on the Northern Beaches. The team's report, titled 'A Pollution Solution? An Investigation of

18 Beaches – what can we do to help?', offers a range of suggestions regarding how we can keep our beaches clean, from smart bins to investment into education campaigns. The team invested hours of their time into this project, collecting their own primary data and recording how much litter they found at 18 beaches. I commend the team on their passion. I am sure you will each go on to be changemakers and leaders in our community. And a special thank you to their teacher, Ms Tier, for all you do to support and empower your students.

LAURA ENEVER - BIG WAVE WORLD RECORD

Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)—I congratulate Laura Enever on breaking the world record for the largest wave ever paddled into by a woman, as verified by the World Surf League and Guinness World Records. Laura caught the record-breaking 13.3 metre wave on the North Shore of Oahu, Hawaii in January 2023. While often big wave surfers require jet skis to tow them into waves at speech, on this occasion, conditions allowed Laura to paddle in. Before pursuing big wave surfing, Laura spent seven seasons on the WSL championship tour. Pittwater and the Northern Beaches are passionate about the ocean and passionate about surfing, and our community is so excited to see a North Narrabeen local succeed on the world stage. As declared by WSL Chief of Sport, Jessi Miley-Dyer, 'Laura is fearless, committed and a real inspiration'. On behalf of our community, thank you, Laura, for encouraging the next generation of pro-athletes and surfers to pursue their dreams. I am so pleased that acknowledgement of Laura's achievement is now preserved in the records of the oldest parliament in our nation.

LOGAN MERRICK

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)—14 year old Logan Merrick from Bathurst is a rising star in the archery world after successfully competing at his first championship competition. Mr Merrick first travelled to Penrith to compete at the NSW State Target Championships earlier this year and came home with a first prize in the under 16 males compound bow section. Moving forward to compete at the National Postal Youth Target Championships held at Warringah, Mr Merrick won third place in the men's under 16 competition. Not only a bronze medal but Mr Merrick also received a gold pin for shooting all six arrows in the gold. This is an outstanding accomplishment considering Mr Merrick only took up the bow and arrow less than 18 months ago. Mr Merrick's sportsmanship is a credit to himself, his family and the Bathurst Archers Club he represents. Congratulations Logan.

GRAEME SMITH

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)—After over two decades of dedicated service, Graeme Smith, General Assistant of Millthorpe Public School, will retire at the end of 2023. Mr Smith's passion for tending the school grounds has made them a source of pride and joy for the school and wider community. Mr Smith has poured his heart and soul into transforming, maintaining and enhancing the school grounds. Mr Smith's dedication behind the scenes has contributed to many memorable moments for our school community. His involvement in school events like the Millthorpe Markets and sports carnivals is greatly valued and he contributed generously to help teachers make performance props and backdrops for school productions. One of the most rewarding elements of Mr Smith's time at Millthorpe Public School has been the genuine connections he builds with students. He has left an indelible mark on countless young lives by showing a genuine interest in each child's wellbeing. As Mr Smith embarks on a well-deserved retirement, we extend our deepest gratitude for over 20 years of excellence. Thank you, Graeme, for enriching the lives of students and for being an integral part of the Millthorpe Public School family.

LILY COLE

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)—Bathurst's Lily Cole has taken the Australian dancing scene by storm by recently featuring in the Sydney Opera House's 50th Birthday celebration. Lily features prominently in two short films that have been recently released by the Sydney Opera House, one being a musical number starring Tim Minchin with Lily right by his side and the other, a behind the scene making of the film where her professionalism and friendliness shone through. Lily has been training with the Sydney Dance Company for the last two years in contemporary dance working towards an Advanced Diploma of Dance (Elite Performance). This was Lily's first time performing professionally on screen, with choreographers and production staff taking note of the rising star and offering her a week's secondment with her Melbourne dance company to develop her skills even further. Congratulations to Miss Lily Cole for her dedication and talent to dance and her commitment to her studies. I wish her all the best for her future endeavours and upcoming graduation.

CAMDEN ROTARY CLUB SPRING SALE

Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden)—Congratulations to the Camden rotary club who recently held their charity spring sale. This year's spring sale contained scores of quality products for sale, including small furniture, household goods, paintings, books, antiques, artworks, collectibles, toys and much more. In addition, a specialty feature auction was held at midday on the fourth of November at the Camden RSL Hall. It is so great to see events like these taking place in our local community. All proceeds of the spring sale have gone towards rotary

charities in Camden, helping make a big difference across a wide variety of fields and activities across the Camden area. Thank you to the Rotary Club of Camden for organising such a wonderful event.

CAMDEN MEN'S BOWLING CLUB COMPETITIONS

Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden)—I would like to congratulate members of the Camden Men's Bowling Club who participated in the Major Singles and the Ted Salmon Challenge Pairs. The major singles were won by Josh Lord. Josh was a junior player with the Camden Men's Bowling Club who then moved on to St John's Park to improve his skills. He was able to return to the club this year, winning the major singles against an impressive field of over 50 bowlers from the club. This Year's Ted Salmon Challenge Pairs is a blind drawn event and was won by Jim McGuinness and Michael Everingham. Congratulations to the winners, Josh, Jim, and Michael and to all the participants for a fantastic round of competitions.

90.1 NBC FM RADIO STATION VOLUNTEERS

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)—I would like to acknowledge and celebrate the amazing work of the volunteers at the 90.1 NBC FM radio station. As a vibrant and community orientated station NBC FM has been broadcasting for more than 40 years. Throughout this time, it has established itself as an essential service for information about local events, news and stories. NBC FM has continuously embraced Kogarah's rich culturally diversity by featuring a wide array of multicultural programs. These include broadcasts in Mandarin, Cantonese, Macedonian, Nepalese, Spanish, French, Greek, Arabic and Indian. To this day, it continues to be a cherished and integral part of the lives of its listeners. NBC FM's volunteers selflessly sacrifice their time and energy to help produce, research, write and present the station's programs. The radio station would not be able to run so successfully without the tireless work of its volunteers. I wish to sincerely thank everyone who has volunteered their time to Kogarah's community radio station over the years and express my deepest appreciation for being a positive voice in our daily lives.

RURAL FIRE SERVICE RECOGNITION

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—Recently I had the pleasure of attending the official opening of the Boorowa Combined Fire Station on 7 October. The Combined Fire Station is made up of four local brigades including Boorowa Hughstonia, Boorowa North, Boorowa Support and Gunnary. In addition to the new five bay station, Gunnary Brigade were also presented with a new Category 1 Rural Fire Service Tanker. I would like to make special mention of several individuals who received long service medals. The twenty-eight brigade members have given a combined 1,220 years of service to the RFS and the broader community. Remarkably, Patricia Croker, Michael Corkhill Snr and Paul Crowe all received sixty-year medal clasps for sixty-three, sixty-four and sixty-five years of service respectively. I would also like to recognise three more members who were recognised for their long service, Guy Evans, Robert Corcoran, and Alan Banks all received forty-year medal clasps for forty-two, forty-three and forty-eight years of service respectively. These are simply incredible achievements, and I am proud of each of these individuals for their continued commitment to their local brigades and for keeping their communities safe.

JUNEE SENIORS MOVING WITH THE TIMES

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—I would like to congratulate the members of the Junee Senior Citizens Club on their recent official opening to the improvements made at the Hall. The Junee Senior Citizens Hall has been transformed to bring today's technology to this much loved and utilised community space. The facility now provides a space for several user groups such as Junee and Illabo Red Cross, the Junee Ukulele Group, Live Better, Junee Community Centre, Junee Book Club, Junee Landcare and of course our lovely Senior Citizens. These upgrades mean the community now has a place to come together to hold events and meetings with access to a new presentation system including Wi-Fi, Smart TV with Web Cam, CCTV and an EFTPOS terminal. As part of the upgrade, the Hall has seen solar panels installed by a local company which shows these projects also support the local economy. The Junee Senior Citizens Hall is critical to the broader community as a shared space to support the health and wellbeing of our senior citizens. Congratulations to everyone involved, it's wonderful to see this facility given a new lease on life.

PATRICK DAWSON

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—I congratulate Narrandera solicitor, Patrick Dawson on taking out the title of Young Business Leader at the 2023 Murray Riverina Business Awards. Having relocated to his hometown of Narrandera four years ago to open his own business, Patrick is making his legal mark in the Riverina community. Patrick's office assists clients in Narrandera, Griffith, Leeton, Temora, Lockhart and throughout the whole Riverina, offering family, property, and commercial law services as well as dispute resolution and estate planning. Patrick received the Young Business Leader award for his continued accessibility and proficiency in assisting his clients in an efficient and effective way, whilst demystifying difficult concepts and legal processes

for them. Patrick filled a gap in the country legal world that has raised the bar on how matters are dealt with and the oration, at the awards, described Patrick as "a credit to his community and the Riverina". I congratulate Patrick once again on receiving this prestigious award and wish him every success for his business. I also wish to thank Patrick for bringing his legal skills to Regional NSW.

MOSMAN ART PRIZE WINNER

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—Every year, the Mosman Art prize bestows a \$50,000 acquisitive award to one artist that has showcased incredible talent and thought provoking art work. This year the prize was awarded to eight-time Archibald prize finalist David Griggs, rising above 1,295 other entries. His winning artwork, 'The Stiches and the Melanoma', has been described as an "emotional process, examining an experience with skin cancer." I congratulate David on this wonderful achievement. The competition was judged at the Mosman Art Gallery by artist Fiona Lowry, well-known for her contemporary takes on landscape and portraiture. Other prizes include the Margaret Olley Commendation Award to Huseyin Sami, the Allan Gamble Award to Lewis Ihnatko and the Guy Warren emerging Artist Award to Heath Nock. The 91 finalist paintings are currently on display at the Mosman Art Gallery, each piece a phenomenal work of art. I congratulate David on a well deserved prize and I recognize his emotive and awe-inspiring art. Once again, congratulations to everyone who contributed to this competition and I look forward to the incredible art works that next year will bring.

INTER SCHOOL EQUESTRIAN CHAMPIONSHIPS

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—I congratulate Storm W who represented Beauty Point Public School at the Interschool Equestrian Championships during the September school holidays. Competing against many other riders from schools all over the south coast and highlands of NSW, Storm was able to achieve two 4th place ribbons and a blue rosette for the Best Fancy Dress category. Over the long weekend, Storm competed in Show Jumping, Dressage, Sporting and Arena events. Her success at such a young age is clearly attributed to the dedication and hard work that Storm has given in preparation for this competition, as well as her training with her horse. Being an equestrian rider is extremely challenging, requiring extensive conditioning, muscle strength, and flexibility. I congratulate Storm for demonstrating such commitment, bravery, and integrity during this competition. Well done Storm on such a wonderful achievement, and I wish her all the best for future competitions such as these.

KEIRA GRUNDY YOUNG ACHIEVER'S AWARD

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—I would like to congratulate Keira Grundy who is a trainee at Mosman Art Gallery, for being recognised in the Minister's Awards for Women in Local Government. Keira has received the metropolitan young achiever's award, which goes to an outstanding apprentice or trainee under the age of 25. Announced in early October here at the Parliament of New South Wales, Keira accepted her award with family and friends, along with Mosman Mayor Carolyn Corrigan. These awards are an opportunity to acknowledge the exceptionally valuable contributions that women in local government make towards their communities. The success of Keira can be attributed to Mosman Council's invaluable cadetship and traineeship program, playing a vital role in the development of practical workplace skills of many students. Keira is recognised by her community for bringing joy and motivation into her work at the gallery. I congratulate Keira for her dedication and hardwork as well as the Mosman Art Gallery team who have nurtured and fostered such incredible growth. Once again, congratulations and I wish Keira all the best for her future endeavours.

OLIVIA HIGGINS

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)—On October 1st many of us tuned into watch the NRLW Final between the Newcastle Knights and the Gold Coast Titans. A member of the victorious Knights side was hooker, Olivia Higgins. Originally, a local junior player for the Aberglasslyn Ants, Olivia Higgins is now a NRL Women's three-time Premiership winning player. Olivia won her first premiership with the Sydney Roosters before returning to the Hunter and joining the Newcastle Knights to score her second premiership and the Ron Griffiths' Coach Award in 2022. This year she has had yet another successful season with The Knights beating The Gold Coast Titans 24 to 18 in the Grand Final. Olivia comes from a proud rugby family. Her sister Sophie, and brothers Liam and Luke all have highly respectable rugby careers. Congratulations Olivia for an amazing 2023 rugby season and your 3rd straight NRLW Premiership win.

TARNISHA WINSOR

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)—I would like to congratulate Tarnisha Winsor, for winning 'Trainee of the Year' in the 2023 Apprentice Employment Network Awards, for her outstanding work in The Hedweld Group. While still at school Tarnisha completed a Cert II in Business Services, where she achieved the honour of being named the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Trainee of the year for Training Services NSW in 2018. She went on to study a Cert IV in Sales Admin and Marketing and

Tarnisha, a proud Kamilaroi businesswoman, joined the Hedweld Group in February 2022. A proven quick learner and dedicated to her position, Tarnisha soon became a true asset to her whole team. Her excellence was recognised at the HunterNet Chairman's awards where she was named Trainee of the Year 2022. Tarnisha is now a VET Ambassador through NSW Education's NSW Training Awards. As an Ambassador, Tarnisha promotes VET training as a career pathway for students. Tarnisha is particularly passionate about participating in programs aimed at Rural and Indigenous youth and has recently travelled to Lightning Ridge as well as other rural communities to promote VET training to school students. Congratulations Tarnisha for your incredible achievement.

LEETON HIGH SCHOOL SRC

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—Madam/Mister Speaker, I would like to recognise the generosity, compassion, and commitment of Leeton High School students on the Leeton student representative council. Students on their committee pledged to help make a difference and offer their support during homelessness week. These students were motivated on their own accords to lead initiatives within their own communities, bringing awareness to issues relating to the homelessness epidemic displaying their unwavering dedication. They encouraged their peers to help and contribute to the cause, whilst they engaged in conversations with the Salvation Army regarding how their donations will be able to help. It's through the selfless ambitions of individuals and communities such as Leeton High School, that our community will continue to strengthen and support each other. With every step such as the one they have taken in the right direction we get one step closer to securing a safe future for everyone. These students should be incredibly proud of their efforts as what they have achieved is beyond impressive. Congratulations.

DEAN WHITEHEAD-HAY

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—Today, we would like to recognise and thank Mr. Dean Whitehead of Hay. Dean's unwavering commitment to the Hay community and his many contributions to the Australian agricultural industry through his 30-year tenure with the Department of Primary Industries has been outstanding. Dean's dedication to his role as the Inspector of Animal Health has been instrumental in safeguarding the Australian livestock industry. He has been at the forefront of the prevention and management of numerous deadly diseases that have posed significant threats to our agricultural sector, including footrot, Avian Influenza, Newcastle disease, Banana Freckle, Citrus Canker, and many more. His expertise and tireless efforts have played a pivotal role in protecting our nation's agricultural interests. Dean has also been involved in the National Biosecurity Response team, managing the prevention of invasive species like Fire Ants, which can be devastating. I would again like to express to Dean Whitehead for his outstanding work in protecting the Australian agricultural industry.

FINLEY REGIONAL CARE

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—Today I would like to recognise Finley Regional Care who were recently presented with an Outstanding Regional Community Care Provider award at the prestigious Enablement Awards ceremony in Melbourne. The Enablement Awards were created to celebrate and reward excellence, innovation, and exemplary achievements in the disability care sector in Australasia. The Award recognises Finley Regional Care's shining example of an organisation that goes above and beyond to enrich the lives of the Aged and wider community. The hard-working team of nurses, caregivers and administrative staff provide an array of services including residential care within its Alumuna lifestyle village and the delivery of home care packages. Regional Care's, Finley Medical Centre provides a vital service for residents of Finley and many local towns in the region. This is a fantastic resource with visiting specialists and other allied healthcare workers visiting regularly. I express my admiration and appreciation to the staff and board members of this wonderful organisation and wish them continued success into the future. Congratulations!

LEGACY PUBLIC SPEAKING FINAL

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Abby P-H from Terrigal High School who made it through to the Legacy Public Speaking final held at the Art Gallery of NSW recently. Abby's selection as one of eight finalists is a fantastic achievement and recognition of the high standard required to reach this level. Each finalist was required to present a prepared speech followed by a shorter speech with a topic assigned by the adjudicator panels with only 5 minutes to prepare. Abby's teachers proudly reported that Abby spoke brilliantly, showcasing her intelligence and articulating a passionate speech delivery. Congratulations Abby on this fantastic achievement and wonderful experience.

TRIBUTE TO MATTHEW FRANCIS

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—Our community has been shocked and saddened with the recent sudden passing of Matthew Francis a much-loved husband, devoted father to four daughters and active community member. A cherished member of the Copacabana Brigade, Deputy Captain Matthew Francis was an immense

presence, always eager to assist anyone in need and a friend to all. He wouldn't hesitate to go to great lengths to help, even if it meant giving up his own shirt. His dedication and commitment to the greater community was evident in his roles as Secretary of the Copacabana Community Association, organiser of Copacabana Carols, Treasurer of the Kincumber Neighbourhood Centre, former president of the Copacabana Tennis Club, and his involvement in Copacabana Bushcare, The Rotary Club of Kincumber and Care4Coast. Even if you didn't know him personally, his generosity touched the lives of many in our community and his community spirit is an incredible legacy. Matt was a true gentleman and he will be greatly missed. On behalf of our grateful community, our thoughts are with his family and I thank him for his contribution. May he rest in peace.

ROTARY POLICE OFFICER OF THE YEAR AWARDS 2023

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—Today, Mister Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the incredible work of our police force. I was very grateful to recently attend Rotary Clubs of NSW Police Officer of the Year Awards held in Sydney. This awards night is the most prestigious event in the NSW Police Force calendar recognising policing excellence over several categories. I want to congratulate Detective Inspector Hassan El-Khansa from the incident and Emergency Management Command who took out the prestigious title of Rotary NSW Police Officer of the Year Award and to all the nominees for this year. It goes without saying—police do an exceptional job keeping the people of New South Wales safe. I had the honour of attending this event with my constituent and good friend Irene Jurgens APM, a veteran policewoman with a career spanning 44 years of contribution to policing that led to the introduction of the IJ Fellowship Award in 2014. This award recognises outstanding individual contributions to community-based policing. Once again, I wish to recognise and thank all the nominated officers at the Police Officer of the Year awards for your dedication and service to our community.

MARCO TZORTZATOS 2ND PLACE SICLE LANGUAGE COMPETITION

Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse)—I would like to congratulate Marco Tzortzatos from St George Church, Rose Bay for being awarded 2nd place in the 2023 SICLE Language Competition of Sydney University. Marco's topic "My family and Me" placed in the Junior Primary Category. On the day, students were judged by the Secretariat General for Greece Abroad and Public Diplomacy, and the Consulate General of Greece in Sydney for all the schools in NSW. Marco is an excellent reader and I'm glad his progress in the Greek language has been publicly recognised. Congratulations Marco.

NEIL PERRY AND MARGARET WIN NSW RESTAURANT OF THE YEAR

Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse)—I would like to congratulate Neil Perry and his team at Margaret in Double Bay who have taken out the 2024 NSW Restaurant of the Year Award. Since opening in 2021 Margaret has had an uncompromising focus on wild caught and sustainable seafood. Alongside his wife Samantha and his daughters Josephine, Indy and Macy, Neil has fused together his extensive experience and culinary skills to bring the best to our community. From 'Bens Coral Trout' to 'Bruce's Rock Flathead' and the 'Spencer Gulf King Prawns', Margaret has redefined the modern fish restaurant. I'm glad that Neil and his team have been publicly recognised. The community is very fortunate to have a restaurant of this quality at our doorstep.

WAVERLY COMMUNITY MEN'S SHED

Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse)—I would like to shine a light on the great work undertaken by the Waverly Community Men's Shed. As the only Shed in the Eastern Suburbs, this organisation provides a vital service in prioritising the mental health and wellbeing of men in our community. Across Australia there are more than 1200 Mens Sheds. They welcome people of all ages, skillsets, and backgrounds. Their common purpose is to reduce social isolation, provide information and facilitate social interaction. Their motto is - "Men don't talk face to face, they talk shoulder to shoulder". This means when you look inside a Shed you might see them making furniture, perhaps repairing an old honour board from the local surf lifesaving club or helping an HSC Student with their toolbox. I acknowledge President Peter Charlton, Peter Black and all the members of the Waverly Community Men's Shed. Their contribution to the community cannot be understated and I am deeply grateful for the role they play.

YASMYN ALEXANDER

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Yasmyn Alexander for being awarded the Hunter Academy of Sport Rising Star of the Year Award in the category of Netball Umpiring. The Hunter Academy of Sport Awards are an annual award ceremony that brings together guests across 17 different sports programs, celebrating the incredible achievements of the Hunter Academy of Sport's athletes, as well as recognising the hard work and effort of coaches, trainers, and managers. Umpiring and referring often goes underappreciated in sports, however it is through the efforts of umpires like Yasmyn that allow our local competitions to function on a weekly basis. Yasmyn displays the importance of sporting officials, as well as the commitment necessary to consistently develop

and improve one's craft. Congratulations Yasmyn on your fantastic effort and dedication, you are a credit to your community.

ALEKSANDER GILLION

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Aleksander Gillion for being awarded the Hunter Academy of Sport Rising Star of the Year Award in the category of Swimming. The Hunter Academy of Sport Awards are an annual award ceremony that brings together guests across 17 different sports programs, celebrating the incredible achievements of the Hunter Academy of Sport's athletes, as well as recognising the hard work and effort of coaches, trainers, and managers. Aleksander is a committed member of the Hunter Academy of Sport, who has shown enthusiastic dedication to both his individual sport of swimming and the collective spirit of the organisation. Aleksander is always looking to develop new and fine tune existing skills, ultimately enhancing the sailing community. Congratulations Aleksander on your fantastic effort and dedication, you are a credit to your community.

PHOEBE WARD

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Phoebe Ward for being awarded the Hunter Academy of Sport Rising Star of the Year Award in the category of Athletics. The Hunter Academy of Sport Awards are an annual award ceremony that brings together guests across 17 different sports programs, celebrating the incredible achievements of the Hunter Academy of Sport's athletes, as well as recognising the hard work and effort of coaches, trainers, and managers. Phoebe is a committed member of the Central Coast Academy of Sport, who has shown enthusiastic dedication to both her individual sport of athletics and the collective spirit of the organisation. Phoebe is always looking to develop new and fine tune existing skills, ultimately enhancing the sailing community. Congratulations Phoebe on your fantastic effort and dedication, you are a credit to your community.

REMEMBRANCE DAY AT ROSEVILLE CLUB

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)—On Saturday 11 November 2023 I attended the Remembrance Day Ceremony at Roseville Memorial Park. Thank you to John Whitworth, the President of the Roseville Returned Servicemen's Memorial Club, for a moving and reverent ceremony, attended by many veterans and their families, representatives from local schools and Mayor Sam Ngai and others representing Ku-ring-gai Council. The Commemorative Address given by Lieutenant Xavier Phillips of the 2/17th Battalion, the Royal New South Wales Regiment acknowledged the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War Peace Accords, which were signed in 1973. I recognise all the students that attended - in particular Pymble Ladies College and their Cadet Unit who gave the Remembrance Address, and trumpeter Will Shaw from Killara High School, who gave moving renditions of The Last Post and The Rouse. Many servicemen and women from past conflicts, together with those who still serve our nation, live throughout the Davidson electorate community. I am proud to represent them all in the Parliament of NSW.

COUNCIL OF INDIAN AUSTRALIANS INC DIWALI FESTIVAL

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)—On Sunday 29 October 2023 I attended the Diwali Festival 2023 at the Castle Hill Showground, Castle Hill at the invitation of the Council of Indian Australians Inc (CIA), to celebrate Deepavali, the Festival of Light. CIA is now in its thirteenth year, is a not-for-profit community organisation founded to promote Indian cultural heritage, friendship and the Indian community's integration within multicultural Australia and I recognise its President Shail Wadwa for his strong vision, and that of the Council, in introducing important Indian cultural events such as Diwali, to the broader community. Diwali is a festival celebrating light over darkness, good over evil and knowledge over ignorance. In the complex world of today, Mahatma Gandhi 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.

TURRAMURRA LIONS ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY FORUM

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)—On Saturday 4 November 2023 I attended the Environment and Sustainability Forum at the Blair Wark VC Community Centre in Lindfield. The forum was arranged by the Turramurra Lions Club and brought together an inspiring group of speakers who provided valuable insights into the many things that we, as citizens and influencers, can do to both sustain and improve our environment. I recognize Tamara and Roshan Wickremanayake of Turramurra Lions for their initiative in presenting this forum, guest speakers Paul McInnes of Lions and Environment, Jenny Geddes CEO of Clean up Australia, Lindy Williams, Bush Care at Ku-ring-gai Council and Dilhan Wickremanayake and Andrew Blandford, whose companies are making great inroads into environmental sustainability. I also acknowledge the diverse group of

local and state politicians who spoke of the initiatives they are taking. The Davidson electorate comprises much of what is colloquially described as "the leafy North Shore". Our community values our parks and green spaces and acts with great vigour and responsibility to ensure that our environment remains sustainable into the future.

YOUNG AGGIES MOREE

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise the Young Aggies Moree for hosting their 2023 Gold Rush Ball in Moree and raising \$70,297. Funds raised will assist in providing an annual scholarship to support and encourage students to take on an agricultural discipline at a tertiary level and to gain work experience in the Moree area. Additional benefactors include: Country Education Foundation of Moree, Gwydir Industries, Gwydir Mobile Children's Services, Moree & District Historical Society, Moree Show Society and Rural Aid. I congratulate recipients of this year's Young Aggies Scholarship, including Millie Creagh, Lachlan Day, Chloe Frank and Jack Wiseman. I commend each of the committee members: Sophie Hemsley-Hackett (President), Angie Molyneaux (Secretary), Emm Bambling (Treasurer), Felicity Taylor (Major Events Coordinator), Sarah Hunt (Social Media Coordinator) and Munro Underwood (Membership and Industry Liaison) on their innovation, motivation, enthusiasm and support of agriculture and their region. I commend all involved, including sponsors, entertainment by Nicole Long, Moree Town and Country Club, JM Styling and Photography and Relish of Narrabri for their catering. Your community thanks you for your support to this wonderful local event.

GLEN INNES BREAKFAST CLUB

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise the Glen Innes Public School on its Breakfast Club, which provides a healthy breakfast to students, one of which I had the pleasure of attending and seeing how thoroughly enjoyable it is to many. Through this valuable program the school has seen both an increase in student attendance and engagement in learning, which is a terrific result. I congratulate the Walcha community, especially the Glen Innes Masonic Lodge, Rose Croix and the Royal Freemason's Benevolent Institution, all of whom have conducted many raffles, raising \$6,000 recently and gifting to the club. I commend all involved in the Breakfast Club, including Principal Christine Dorward and staff at the Glen Innes Public School and the long-term community supporters: The Super Strawberry, Brett Wilson, Gus and Lisa Macrae, Seagrave Apiaries, the Michell family, Chris and Jane Alt, Leo Club, Mich and Mel Ward, Coles and Woolworths Glen Innes, along with Peter and Bec Davis of The Shop in Glen. The generosity of time and effort to support the children of Glen Innes is very appreciated.

WARIALDA HONEY FESTIVAL

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise the Gwydir Shire Council, in conjunction with the Warialda Tourist Information Centre and volunteers for staging the Warialda Bee Festival, which I had the pleasure to attend. It was great to see locals Mark Coulton MP and Mayor John Coulton supporting the festival. The event celebrates the town's origins, with the word Warialda meaning the Aboriginal name for 'place of wild honey.' It also celebrates its produce, talents and community spirit. I congratulate Courtney Loosemore from the Gwydir Shire Council for coordinating the festival, along with all those who assisted throughout the day of festivities, including stall holders, caterers, entrants in the talent quest, as well as entertainers - the Rock City Rock Band. Special thanks to Matthew Middleton from Beezotted, for sharing his knowledge about the stingless species of bees and the honey they produce. I commend all involved including the many volunteers, as events such as this in regional towns cannot function without the ongoing support and commitment they give.

NEWBRIDGE HEIGHTS PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL'S LEADERSHIP TEAM

Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)—I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the remarkable student leadership team at Newbridge Heights Public School on their tenure. Securing the trust and support of their peers through a democratic election is a truly commendable accomplishment, and these students should take great pride in this achievement. It is my privilege, in this session of the NSW Parliament, to recognize and commend the outstanding student leadership team for the year 2023, comprising the dedicated Captains Abbie Te and Michael Ross, Vice Captains Zarina Shaymieva and Ethan Nguyen, as well as Prefects Mayce Amir, Sum Yu Arina Lai, Zakariya El Jamal, and Noah Salter. I have every confidence that these committed students have skilfully led their peers through what has been a pivotal year in their educational journey, setting an inspiring example for the entire school community. As they continue to embody the values of Newbridge Heights Public's motto, "Providing Excellence in Primary Education," I extend my warmest wishes to these student leaders.

ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL PREFECTS AND RE LEADERS

Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)—I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the remarkable prefect and RE student leadership team at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Moorebank on their well-deserved appointments. Securing the trust and support of their peers through a democratic election is a truly commendable

accomplishment, and these students should take great pride in this achievement. I urge them to seize this incredible opportunity to make meaningful contributions to their school community and to cultivate the skills that will mould them into future community and professional leaders. It is my privilege, in this session of the NSW Parliament, to recognize and commend the outstanding team for 2024, comprising of prefects Liam Shapter, Jacob Dundovic, Jacob Lail, Rachel Jones, Anastazia Hadid, and Heneli Faulua, as well as RE Leaders Cristiana Saur, Annabelle Coorey, Chad McDonald, and Jacob Boutros. I have every confidence that these committed students will skilfully lead their peers through what will undoubtedly be a pivotal year in their educational journey, setting an inspiring example for the entire school community. As they continue to embody the values of St Joseph's motto, "Charity and Love," I extend my warmest wishes to these student leaders.

FIJI DAY AUSTRALIA CELEBRATIONS

Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)—On Saturday 14 October 2023 I had the privilege to attend the Fiji Day Australia celebrations at Woodward Park in Liverpool. It was a day of pride and celebration for all Fijians, Fijian Australians, and the Pacific island diaspora. The occasion served as a strong reminder of the strength and resilience of Fijians, as well as their rich contribution to our multicultural society. There were thousands that celebrated at Woodward Park and across South-West Sydney, one of the largest Fijian diasporas in the world. There was plenty of food, children's rides, live performances, and stalls for everyone to enjoy. I was even lucky enough to get a shoutout for my birthday, where we cut and ate cake on the stage together! This event could not have happened without the behind the scenes works of the Multicultural Association of Asia & Pacific for hosting this event. I would like to also shoutout Sashi Lal for his work, and I look forward to next year's event!

CONVOY FOR KIDS

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)—I rise today to recognise Convoy for Kids (C4K). Convoy for Kids Goulburn started in 1999. It is a registered charity organisation, which is run by local volunteers. C4K aims to provide support for local children with cancer, terminal illness, and those with permanent disabilities by raising funds, which can then be distributed to provide financial assistance to their families. A convoy of decoratively outfitted trucks and other vehicles, set forth from the Gateway Service Station, travelling down Auburn Street, providing a wonderful spectacle of colour for those attending the annual street parade. Completing their run at the Goulburn Recreation Area to join in the festivities, which saw carnival rides, amusements, and to the delight of the children an appearance by Bluey and Bingo. The event has always received enormous support from the community and continues to grow. This is such an important event whose focus is all about kids, who undoubtedly have the opportunity to smile, laugh and have fun. I sincerely thank and congratulate all the Volunteers, and everyone involved in the Convoy for Kids and their ongoing efforts to raise funds for families and the organisation of the convoy and carnival.

MURRUMBATAMAN FIELD DAYS

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)—I rise today to recognise the Murrumbateman Field Days. The Murrumbateman Field Days continue to be the premier farming event of the Yass Valley. Held annually, over two days on the third weekend of October, with the number of exhibitors continuing to grow. Incorporating lifestyle and home improvements and the latest farming equipment and methods, and the ability to experience the local produce and taste the wine, which is never disappointing. The event provides the opportunity for local producers to feature their products and fill visitor shopping bags. With demonstrations featuring industrial-style drones, earth moving, animals displays and the operation and education about the "jaws-of-life" from VRA Rescue NSW. Another top attraction was the Camel Rides courtesy of Bushfield Farm Camels and Farmer Dave and the Muttley Crew from Rufftracks, with his high-performance dogs I sincerely and admirably congratulate the Murrumbateman Community Association on the event, particularly Promotions Manager Jo Shipley and the many volunteers, who have worked tirelessly to again welcome exhibitors, entertainers, organisations, and visitors from near and far. Simply, the Murrumbateman Field Days are a wonderful and premium event.

GOULBURN'S COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS SUPPORT GROUP

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)—I rise today to recognise Goulburn's Compassionate Friends Support Group. The Compassionate Friends NSW is a not-for-profit organisation that provides peer support to bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents who have lost a child. Compassionate Friends is a registered charity with chapters across NSW. Their mission is to assist families in the positive resolution of grief, following the death of a child, providing information and support. Compassionate Friends offer understanding, friendship and hope through support groups. Goulburn's Compassionate Friends held their annual Walk to Remember on 22 October, which coincided with walks in Sydney and other chapters across NSW. The walk is held to remember children who have died of any cause at any age. A remembrance service was also held providing members with opportunity to speak about their loved one. I take this time to recognise Jo Cunningham and Sandra Martin who formed the Goulburn group in 2017, following the loss of their sons. I sincerely pay my heartfelt respects to all

those who have experienced the loss of a child. I thank Goulburn Compassionate Friends Support Group for their friendship and understanding, which they provide to bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents within our community.

SIXTY YEARS OF LOVE AND LAUGHTER - DEK AND SYLVIA PABIAN

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)—Congratulations to South Grafton couple Dek and Sylvia Pabian (nee Cooper) who recently celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary. Married on October 20, 1963, in a church in Kingswood NSW, Mr and Mrs Pabian's marriage remains as strong as ever after all these years. After emigrating to Australia from Germany and England with their families following the end of World War II, they settled in Sydney and grew up in and around the suburbs of Penrith and Kingswood. Their first home together was in Penrith, and as a qualified electrician, Mr Pabian ran his own business for around 40 years in the Penrith area with the support of his loving wife while they raised their four children. The couple also now have nine grandchildren. In search of a change, the Pabians moved to Pillar Valley and then to South Grafton where they now reside. Mr and Mrs Pabian enjoy breeding Cavalier King Charles Champion dogs. Mr Pabian enjoys a weekly round or two of golf at the Grafton Golf Club. 60 years is a long time and I wish them both all the best for many more years to come.

CLARENCE VALLEY WINDOW TINTING

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)—I would like to recognise the achievements of Mr Bede Madden of Clarence Valley Window Tinting in Yamba who is celebrating 25 years in the business. Mr Madden started out in 1998 and has grown his successful family business alongside his two sons, Shannon and Bradley. Clarence Valley Window Tinting is a member of the Window Film Association of Australia and New Zealand and an accredited Window Energy Rating Scheme, WERS, member. Mr Madden's business offers glass tinting for all Commercial and Residential buildings, Automotive and Marine including decorative and frosted, safety, security, and privacy films. In fact, they can tint any glass. Over the last 25 years the team at Clarence Valley Window Tinting has been servicing the local area and now find themselves with a reputation for exceptional quality work. Congratulations to Bede and his family on their success and all the best for the future!

OUR HEALTHY CLARENCE - PUTTING ONE FOOT FORWARD FOR MENTAL HEALTH

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)—I would like to acknowledge the wonderful work of our local Rural Adversity and Mental Health program, RAMHP, coordinator, Samantha Osbourne. Sam recently organised a walk to support Mental Health Month which is held in October each year. In recognition of Mental Health Month and this year's theme 'we all have a role to play', local services united to support the Black Dog Institute 'One Foot Forward' campaign. It was an opportunity for staff to take some time out to connect and look after their own mental wellbeing. They enjoyed a beautiful walk and talk along the new river front pathway along the mighty Clarence River in Grafton. Good mental health is vital to our overall health and wellbeing and this month Our Healthy Clarence are encouraging everyone to think about ways they can improve their own mental wellbeing. That could mean enjoying a walk, getting a bit more sleep, or spending some quality time connecting with family and friends. Well done to all those who participated in the walk and to those helping themselves and others through each and every day.

PADDINGTON MARKETS

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)—On behalf of the Sydney electorate, I'd like to acknowledge the 50 years of the Paddington Markets on 28 October. The market hosts over 150 unique stalls from local artists, craftspeople, bakers and chefs who sell their goods directly to the community on Paddington's well-known Oxford Street. The stalls have just about everything: international foods, handmade chocolates, plants and flowers, to creative fashion and accessories, beautiful smelling soaps and candles and pictures. Since 1973 the Paddington Uniting Church has hosted this non-profit community event as part of their contribution to community and inclusion. Paddington Markets is Sydney's oldest continuous weekly community and artisan market. It's become quite an institution, attracting local residents and visitors to the Paddington precinct and Oxford Street shops and services. I congratulate the Paddington Uniting Church for this long term commitment to the community that helps sustain local creatives, craftspeople and makers, and which helps build a strong sense of place in Oxford Street Paddington. Best wishes to the Paddington Markets for many more years.

PAUL MCMORROW

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)—On behalf of the Sydney electorate, I'd like to commend Paul McMorro for his many years of dedicated work with Australia Post and his contribution to the community. Paul has been a walking delivery officer for Australia Post in Sydney electorate for over 14 years. Paul's route, which includes my electorate office on Oxford Street remains unchanged and he's a community stalwart. Paul is well known for his jovial warmth and friendly greetings. Local residents and business operators tell me they look

forward to seeing Paul and that his cheerful conversations are regularly a highlight in people's days. During the pandemic when many people felt more alone and struggled with uncertainty, Paul provided a sense of continued community connection through his daily interactions and made a positive difference in people's lives. It is evident that Paul is well-loved and appreciated by those who know him, both for his consistent, reliable work and for the joy he brings. As Member for Sydney, I congratulate and thank Paul for his ongoing efforts to make the community a great place and for his service with Australia Post and to our community.

FORTY YEARS OF THE GENDER CENTRE

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)—Congratulations to the Gender Centre for 40 years of service to the state's trans and gender diverse communities. The Gender Centre works with and promotes inclusivity and transgender rights while providing essential frontline health and welfare services. The centre has expertise in the issues that trans and gender diverse people face and works directly with affected people and the services they access. A focus of the centre's work is keeping families together while a child commences the journey of affirming their gender. Dedicated online peer support for parents, counselling, case work, and rural family and youth support services are unique and have a proven track record in improving outcomes for transgender people experiencing trauma and distress and their families. The Gender Centre has moved into new premises in Marrickville where I hope it will continue to do its fantastic work for as long as it is needed. Forty years of service is a significant milestone that staff and board members past and present should be very proud of. I pay special tribute to Eloise Brooks who has worked to ensure members of this house understand the important job the Gender Centre does.

ALAN BARRELL

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)—Congratulations Alan Barrell on retirement after 45 years of firefighting service to NSW. Alan joined the NSW Fire Brigades on 25 August 1978, and officially retired on 17 November 2023. A highly commendable period of service of 45 years and two months. Alan served NSW at the following locations: Pyrmont, City of Sydney, Kogarah, Parramatta, Fairfield, Liverpool, Bowral, Campbelltown, and St Andrews – where he retired. During Alan's career, he was awarded Commendation for Meritorious Service – Speed Street, Liverpool; National Media with 2 Clasps; Fire and Rescue Long Service and Good Conduct medal with 3 Clasps; Premier's Bushfire Citation; National Emergency Medal 2019/2020 Bushfires. Alan will miss the camaraderie amongst the firefighters he worked with, which sustained him through many challenges. During his long career, Alan attended thousands of emergencies and provided invaluable service to the Macarthur community. Alan's commitment to service and community are to be commended. I join Metropolitan South 3 in extending my gratitude on behalf of our community for Alan's dedicated service. I wish Alan a long and prosperous retirement. Thank you, Alan, for your loyal service to the people of NSW.

THE FORMAL PROJECT

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)—Change starts small. Sam Oakes' idea to provide formal dress options at little or no cost proved so popular it needed a space of its own. Step in Minto Mall and a band of community-minded volunteers. There is now a dedicated space at Minto Mall where students can shop for their school formals run by Sam and a team of generous supporters. The only difference in this shop is that there are no price tags. The venture is needed more than ever given the cost-of-living crisis. The Formal Project helps young people from year 6 to university and TAFE find an outfit for their big night. It all started with just one child who needed a dress. Sam says: "That was one kid too many for me." Nearly 900 students are booked in for a fitting - double the number of students dressed last year. The Formal Project has plans to expand and provide clothing for other events, such as job interviews. I commend Sam's outstanding efforts and thank everyone involved. What started as a small act of kindness is now making a huge difference.

BALGOWLAH ROTARY CLUB

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)—Mr Speaker, I rise today to recognise Balgowlah Rotary Club and their dedication to those less fortunate in the electorate of Manly. Balgowlah Rotary has been working hard for our community for nearly 50 years, resourcing local charities with funds to carry out projects, providing volunteers for their activities, assisting with fun runs, supporting local students with funds to attend Rotary programs – to name a few activities. Balgowlah Rotary Club volunteers recently packed ninety gift bags for women in crisis. The packs were then despatched to local shelters to be distributed to the most needy. I would like to congratulate Balgowlah Rotary Club who yet again inspire all of us with the wonderful work they do serving our community.

COLORMAKER INDUSTRIES

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)—I rise to congratulate Colormaker Industries on being announced as winner of the 2023 Business NSW Sydney Metro Region Award for Excellence in Sustainability. This award recognises businesses demonstrating a commitment to sustainable business practices and working towards reducing the impact of their operations on the environment. Colormaker is one of the most ground-breaking businesses in my community and an exemplar helping to inspire other local businesses. Not only is Colormaker a producer of eco-friendly house paints, but it is also at the forefront of the renewable energy revolution in business. In October, an innovative ReVolve battery – created by using recycled electric vehicle batteries – was switched on at Colormaker's Brookvale factory and connected to the grid. This system enables Colormaker to use its solar array during the day, whilst feeding excess stored energy back into the grid overnight. Once again, congratulations to Managing Director David Stuart and the team at Colormaker Industries on these fantastic achievements.

MARYLYNNE HEFFERNAN

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)—Mr Speaker, I rise today to recognise Mrs Marylynne Heffernan who is retiring from being a primary school educator at St John the Baptist Freshwater at the end of 2023. Mrs Heffernan has diligently served in Catholic education for 52 years, an exemplary achievement which should be admired by teachers everywhere. Mrs Heffernan has educated and inspired countless primary school-aged children in Catholic Schools in the Broken Bay Diocese, nurturing and supporting families throughout their children's educational journey. Her dedication to a career as an Acting Principal, Deputy Principal and Religious Education Coordinator has been balanced with bringing up six children with her husband Michael. I would like to wish Mrs Heffernan a well-deserved retirement and thank her again for her service to Education.

2023 WORLD TEACHERS DAY CELEBRATION

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)—In October, The Teachers' Guild of New South Wales held its 2023 Annual Dinner and Presentations of Awards, and several local, hardworking and dedicated teachers were acknowledged for their contribution to education at their respective schools. I wish to congratulate the following teachers who received their World Teacher's Recognition Awards. From Rosebank College Five Dock: Iris Nastasi; Belinda Clark, Danielle Deguara, Marcel El Hachem, Greg Georgiou, Amanda Hill, Cheryl McArthur, Colm McCaughan, Claire Moran, Jason Smith. From Marist Sisters' College Woolwich: Rachael Colreavy, Andrew D'Archy and Shedona Pamintuan. I would like to thank the abovementioned teachers for their leadership, their work is appreciated and does not go unnoticed. I congratulate all award recipients on this well-deserved recognition of their passion and dedication to educating our future leaders. I wish you all the very best.

BREAKFAST POINT MEN'S SHED

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)—In October, I welcomed members of the Breakfast Point Men's Shed to NSW Parliament House to watch Question Time. It was a great opportunity to meet members of the Shed and to show them around Parliament. I hope that the members had a lovely time. I gained greater insight into the fundraising efforts that members of the Men's Shed have been involved in. In 2023 alone, most of the fundraising has gone to three worthy recipients, The Australian and New Zealand Urogenital and Prostate Cancer Trail Group, Giant Steps, and The Foundation for a Bloody Great Cause. The Men's Shed has already raised over \$10, 000 for The Australian and New Zealand Urogenital and Prostate Cancer Trail group, and will soon participate in the Pedalthon, raising awareness and funds for this important cause. The funds raised will go towards research into urogenital cancers. I wish to acknowledge and thank the members of the Breakfast Point Men's Shed for their dedication to our local community. It is a truly wonderful group and I enjoyed meeting and hosting them at Parliament. I would like to wish the Breakfast Point Men's Shed and its members all the very best.

MOLLY ROBINSON

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)—I would like to acknowledge a young rising athlete, Molly Robinson for her wonderful achievements in hockey. Molly has represented NSW, as part of the NSW u15 State Team in 2022, as well as the NSW u16 All Schools Hockey Team in 2023. Molly was also selected to be part of the NSW u18 Hockey Futures Academy Identified Athlete program, earlier this year where she has been able to develop her sporting talents further. Molly has been recognised for her sporting achievements and was recently awarded the Sydney University Hockey Club: Rising Star Award for 2023. With dreams of playing for the Hockeyroos, I want to extend my very best wishes to Molly. She is currently training under the expert guidance of Kaitlyn Nobbs, current Hockeyroos captain, and her father Michael Nobbs who represented Australia at the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles. On behalf of the Drummoyne electorate, I would like to sincerely congratulate Molly on her recent achievements and commend her for her hard work and determination. We are

very proud of all she has accomplished so far. I wish Molly all the very best for her future. Keep up the great work!

SUTHERLAND SHIRE BUSINESS CHAMBER

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I acknowledge the Sutherland Shire Business Chamber on being named a finalist in the Outstanding Local Chamber category at Business NSW's 2023 Business Awards. The Sutherland Shire Business Chamber is a dynamic not-for-profit organisation that seeks to boost economic growth, represent the voice of local businesses and help its members succeed. The Chamber does this through advocacy and using its platform on the Sutherland Shire Council Economic Development and Tourism Committee, the Sutherland Shire Local Area Command Community Safety Precinct Committee and the NSW Business Chamber Sydney East Regional Advisory Committee. In addition the Chamber organises events to bring together local businesses such as their After 5 Networking Drinks and business breakfasts to encourage collaboration amongst members. None of this is possible without the hardworking Executive Committee members, many of whom own small businesses themselves, who strive to maximise the economic potential in the Sutherland Shire. I recognise President Jeanne Zweck, Vice President Terry Likidis, Treasurer Nathan Rigney, Secretary Joanne Costanzo and Board Directors Sophie Brown, Damien Vella, Rob Stanley-Jones, Pamela Wood and Olivia Brown. I commend the Sutherland Shire Business Chamber on their advocacy for local businesses.

2023 SUTHERLAND SHIRE LITERARY COMPETITION

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I acknowledge the incredibly talented winners of the 2023 Sutherland Shire Literary Competition from the Miranda Electorate. The Sutherland Shire Literary Awards are a biennial competition open to individuals from across the state and Australia, that encourages writers to contribute original works that inspire, offering writers the opportunity to showcase their talents to a panel of esteemed judges including award-winning poet, writer and editor Tricia Dearborn and award-winning novelist Mandy Sayer. The power to inspire, educate and transform lives through the written word is a great gift. I recognise the winners from the Miranda electorate, Traditional Verse Shire Resident's Prize winner Michelle Garbutt of Oyster Bay for her piece titled The Moment, Short Stories Shire Resident's Prize winner KT Major of Jannali for her entry titled Out of the Woodwork and Short Stories Shire Resident's Prize Highly Commended recipient Jacinta Frawley Werger for her short story titled Muses of the Council Pickup. I congratulate Michelle, KT and Jacinta on their success in the Sutherland Shire Literary Competition and wish them every success as they continue to inspire others through the written word.

GYMEA TECHNOLOGY HIGH SCHOOL'S STUDENT LEADERSHIP TEAM

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I congratulate the incoming student leadership team of GyMEA Technology High School on their appointment. Being democratically elected by your peers is an incredible achievement of which these students should be proud. I encourage them to make the most of this fantastic opportunity to contribute to their school community and to develop the skills that shape the community and professional leaders of the future. I use this occasion in NSW Parliament to acknowledge the student leadership team for 2024, namely School Captains Bailey Peters and Mitchell Vergos, Vice Captains Zachary Beiswenger and Coralie Price and Prefects Iyla Clark, Orla Davies, Kaylee Donaldson, Genevieve Dumas, Alexandra Hendry, Andrew Hennessey-Clark, Charlotte Mai, Sam Mitchell, Rohan Shan, Scarlett Taylor and Jack Watts. With guidance from principal, Peter Marsh I have every confidence that these dedicated young adults will capably lead their peers through what will be their most important year of schooling thus far and be role models to their entire school community. I extend my best wishes to these student leaders as they continue to exemplify GyMEA Technology High School's motto of 'Inspire, Learn, Succeed'.

KATE HURST - EMPOWERING RURAL HEALTH CARE

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—It gives me great pleasure to congratulate Wagga Wagga final year medical student Kate Hurst on receiving the Rural Doctors' Association of Australia's 2023 Medical Student of the Year Award for her outstanding commitment to rural medicine. Having first-hand experience of the challenges faced by rural and regional high school students considering studying medicine, Kate decided to make a difference for other students and established a program called Rural Medicine Pathways, an amazing initiative that gives healthcare students the help they need to study and ultimately work in the regions. The community of Wagga Wagga and other regional and rural areas will be the ultimate winners from Kate's remarkable efforts in making it easier for new generations of young doctors to live and practice in their hometowns. Kate has studied at Notre Dame University in Wagga Wagga and has been offered an internship at Wagga Wagga Base Hospital in 2024. Congratulations, Kate, and thank you for leading the way in delivering improved medical services to country communities. Your community is very proud of you.

STURT PUBLIC SCHOOL - FIFTY YEARS OF LEARNING

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—I would like to congratulate Wagga Wagga's Sturt Public School on its fiftieth anniversary of educating generations of local children. Former students and staff recently attended an event at the school to celebrate its half-century milestone, with principal Terri Inglis telling the Daily Advertiser that some of the visitors remembered marching into the school on its first day. Among those celebrating were current teachers Linda Wood and Brian Kirton, former teacher Geoff Amos, school captains Houston Zhang and Aisha Forrell, and vice-captains Evelyn Killeen and Xavier Harper. A highlight was an announcement of an award in honour of the school's first principal, the late Noel Collison, to offer a financial prize to a student who displays initiative to support their education. A time capsule buried by long-serving staff member Heather Collins will be unearthed for the school's 75th anniversary, adding another layer of memories to the school's educational journey.

MURRUMBIDGEE PRIMARY HEALTH NETWORK WINNERS

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—I would like to express the gratitude of the people of Wagga Wagga and Tumut to the recipients of the Murrumbidgee Primary Health Network's 2023 Healthcare awards. Among the "Healthcare Heroes" recognised in the awards were the Community Foundation for Tumut Region's Fireshed Fridays and High Teas, formed to foster community connections after the 2019-2020 bushfires. Congratulations to Louise Halsey, Debbie Sturt, Sarah Pentland and Cooryna Ackroyd. Special mention also to those who seeded the idea of holding High Teas - Janet Anderson, Karen Daniel, Ingrid Becke, Rose Jervoise and Mary Hoodless. Awards also went to podiatrist Evan Feather for outstanding healthcare leadership in the Snowy Valleys and the Gidget Foundation Australia for recruiting physicians to provide psychological treatment to local families at Gidget House, Wagga Wagga. Congratulations to all for doing so much to create healthier, happier communities.

ILLAWARRA LIGHT RAIL MUSEUM SOCIETY

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Illawarra Light Rail Museum Society in Albion Park Rail. On Sunday 12th November 2023, I was extremely pleased to attend a special community event at the Illawarra Light Rail Museum Society to celebrate 100 years of its BURRA locomotive. It was a terrific occasion to officially help cut the ribbon and to help with the presentation of a few awards to some incredibly deserving volunteers at the museum. It was also encouraging to see so many local residents in attendance to take a look around at the BURRA locomotive as it did a few laps of the vicinity, grabbed a sausage sandwich for lunch, checked out the miniature railway trains and the amazing classic and vintage cars display. I would like to acknowledge and thank the Chairperson Carolyn Dumont for organising such a terrific community event, Treasurer Brad Johns who showed me around some of the very impressive locomotive restoration projects in the big shed including the Perry and others which date back to 1949 and 1972 from all across various parts of Australia which are now being restored at the Illawarra Light Rail Museum Society.

KIAMA LIONS DISTRICT CONVENTION

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises the Kiama Lions Club Inc. On Saturday 28th October 2023, I was extremely pleased to attend Lions District 201N2 2023 Convention which was held at The Kiama Pavilion and hosted by Kiama Lions. It was a terrific occasion to celebrate the important work which the Kiama Lions Club has done with dedication, pride and a strong commitment to community for many decades now. I would like to acknowledge and thank the Convention Chair Ray Redgrave, Secretary Cheryl Moses, Treasurer/Registrar Peter Scifleet, the MC Gordon Matthews, District Governor Danny Richardson, the Mayor of Kiama Neil Reilly who gave an excellent welcome address, Kiama Councillor and Lion Warren Steel, Kiama Councillor Stuart Larkins, Lion Gerry McInerney, Lion Hilton Bloomfield, Lion Lorraine Barker, Lion Jeff Thomas, Lion Dot Kersten, Lion Rochelle Borton, Lion Chris Howard, Lion Ken McLeish, Lion Lorna Gordon, Lion Lorraine Mairinger, Lion Vin Pang, Lion Norm Fountain for their efforts and important contributions during the District Convention. I also acknowledge Lion David McKenna, Lion Ann Reed, and guest speakers Duncan Wallace and Sam Bloom and Doux Ame Music the Wollongong duo who provided the entertainment.

ILLAWARRA ROSE SOCIETY

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises the Illawarra Rose Society put on a fragrant and colourful weekend at the Festival of Roses at the Jamberoo School of Arts Halls on 28th-29th October 2023. Enthusiasts were invited to showcase their roses for judging, and I also attended to 'smell the roses'. I acknowledge Kristin Dawson and Colin Hollis from the Illawarra Rose Society and Intan Kallus from Kangaroo Valley who specialises in heritage roses. The Illawarra speciality is 'Roses in a Seashell' or 'Roses in a Teacup'. The society did something different by inviting the public from the Illawarra and Shoalhaven who grow roses in their gardens to participate. Rose gardeners could bring along roses from their garden. There were two sections, for children under 8 and under 12 to decorate a hat and or a basket with roses,

as well as a floral art display named 'Out of the Kitchen.' Notable winner was Helen Henry who impressed judges with her floral design of stunning yellow and pink roses. Congratulations Helen! The Junior prize winner was Ava Hernandez who won the Junior 'Out of the Kitchen Cupboard' award for her charming rose display. Congratulations Ava!

ROYAL NEWCASTLE AERO CLUB

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)—Congratulations to the Royal Newcastle Aero Club who recently celebrated their 95-year anniversary at the annual wings' presentation dinner. The night of nights saw long-time friend of the club, Matt Hall, reflecting on his early love of aviation, and his progression to service in the RAAF and his Red Bull Air Race World Championship journey. Young and graduating pilots excitedly received their wings from Matt. The night saw Doug Brooks named club champion, Daniel Hespie won the Graham Neal Memorial Trophy, Bruce Robertson received the Club Captains award, and Keith Lobb the President's award. The Newcastle Aero Club began in Broadmeadow on October 11th 1928. In recognition of their services to the RAAF training pilots for service during the war the Queen granted the title Royal to the club in 1953, a first for a non-capital city club. The club moved to their Rutherford site in 1960 and now play a vital role in the community of Maitland. Congratulations to the board, employees, members and volunteers on their 95th birthday.

WANIORA BUTCHERY - STATE AWARD HONOURS

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—I am excited to inform the House that Port Macquarie's very own local butcher at Waniora Shopping Village has taken out second and third place honours at the Australian Meat Industry Council's (AMIC) NSW Sausage King Competition. Waniora Village Butchery has yet again won a swag of accolades at the AMIC Awards Night held on 21st October in Paramatta for their scrumptious Continental and Banh Mi sausages. Owner Greg Bisaro, daughter Gabby Bisaro and apprentice James Creighton were thrilled to be recognised at the gala event where the best of the best meat connoisseurs gathered together to compete for a prestigious State title. Greg and Gabby discovered the crowd-pleasing Banh Mi recipe while working at a smokehouse food truck and it has been an absolute favourite on the barbie ever since. The AMIC Retail Competition is held annually to promote and raise the profile of local businesses while encouraging members to explore unique combinations of flavour and creativity. Categories comprise of beef, pork chicken, lamb, gourmet, continental and burger with successful entrants progressing to the national sausage sizzle showdown. A wonderful achievement again by our much-loved Waniora Village Butchery. Congratulations!
