

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday 29 November 2023

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

The Speaker read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

Announcements

LATE NIGHT SITTING

The SPEAKER (10:01): Welcome, members. I hope everybody is feeling chipper this morning; I know it was a late night or early morning for many, including our staff. I acknowledge the staff and pass on our thanks to Hansard, support staff and the Clerks. It was a long haul, and we thank them for how they helped us get through a busy agenda.

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I welcome Steve Dillon and Craig Mear to the gallery, guests of the member for Heathcote. I said hello to them briefly outside the Chamber. I also welcome the three students in the gallery. It is lovely to see people visiting the first Parliament in Australia—the beating heart of representative democracy.

Announcements

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY PHOTOGRAPHS

The SPEAKER: I advise members that media photographers are approved to cover question time today.
[Notices of motions given.]

Bills

INSTITUTIONS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2023

First Reading

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

Second Reading Speech

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (10:20): On behalf of Mr Michael Daley: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The New South Wales Government is pleased to introduce the Institutions Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. Across New South Wales there are a number of statutory bodies constituted by legislation that perform a range of functions. As those organisations develop and adapt over time, it is imperative for government to update the establishing Acts to accurately reflect the functions of those organisations, as well as their operations and structures. Specifically, the bill provides updates to the legislation governing the Legal Aid Commission of NSW, the Legal Profession Admission Board, the Personal Injury Commission and the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children, now known as NextSense. Each of those bodies plays an important role in the New South Wales community and this bill will make improvements to support their continued operation and functions.

I now turn to the detail of the bill. Schedule 1 to the bill amends the Legal Aid Commission Act 1979 to enable Legal Aid NSW to modernise and streamline the process for managing appeals against refusals to grant legal aid. Item [5] replaces the administratively burdensome process for establishing Legal Aid Review Committees. In their place, the bill provides for transparently appointed panels of legal professionals, known as Legal Aid Review Panels, that will be available to hear appeals individually or as a panel of two or more, depending on the matter. The amendments will deliver faster outcomes for applicants seeking an appeal by allowing Legal Aid NSW to draw from a pool of approved legal professionals to efficiently establish review panels when required.

The amendments also aim to create flow-on reductions to the delays in courts and tribunals, where matters may currently be adjourned pending the outcome of appeals of Legal Aid NSW decisions. The amendments also provide greater flexibility for Legal Aid NSW to establish the policies and guidelines that will inform the establishment of review panels. Currently, Legal Aid NSW has broad discretion to determine which refusals of aid are not able to be appealed. Item [6] of schedule 1 to the bill will narrow the scope of the discretionary power by amending section 56 of the Legal Aid Commission Act 1979 to clearly prescribe the decisions against which an applicant may or may not seek an appeal and the way in which an appeal must be lodged with Legal Aid NSW. The remaining items in schedule 1 make consequential amendments, update language and make savings and transitional arrangements.

I now turn to schedule 2 to the bill, which makes amendments to the Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Act 2014 in relation to the NSW Legal Profession Admission Board. The amendments confirm the board's express legislative authority to continue to conduct its current operations and clarify and streamline elements of the board's composition and function. Item [1] of schedule 2 expands the board's categories of potential delegates to include a member of the staff of the board and a person or class of persons prescribed by the regulations. The board's existing power to delegate to a committee of the board is also expanded to allow a committee exercising delegated functions to sub-delegate the functions to a subcommittee. That will avoid the operational burden of the board needing to make a separate delegation to a sub-committee to assist its parent committee. Item [1] also places parameters on how the board can establish committees and clarifies that public sector employees can service the board.

Item [3] of schedule 2 clarifies the board's power to make rules in relation to the discipline of students-at-law by changing the current general reference to rules regarding discipline to a bespoke and express subsection that includes the investigation and discipline of misconduct by students-at-law. Item [3] also clarifies that the board may make rules in relation to the internal review of decisions made by the board and committees of the board. Item [2] makes a consequential amendment. Item [4] of schedule 2 makes it clear that the board may make rules about fees in relation to the exercise of the board's functions other than a function for which a fee is already prescribed under the Act, the Legal Profession Uniform Law or the Legal Profession Uniform Rules. Consequentially, the board may also make rules about the waiver, postponement, reduction or refund, in whole or in part, of fees payable to the board.

Item [5] of schedule 2 makes it clear that a provision of a regulation or the Legal Profession Uniform Law or the Legal Profession Uniform Rules that prescribes a fee prevails over a board rule that specifies a fee to the extent of an inconsistency. Currently, under section 21A of the Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Act 2014, the board may make the NSW Admissions Board Rules. Item [6] of schedule 2 to the bill inserts new section 21A (3) (d) into the Act to allow the rules to apply, adopt or incorporate a document as in force at a particular time or as in force from time to time. Item [7] of schedule 2 requires the rules to be published in the gazette and on a website maintained by the board. Those amendments will decrease the operational burden for the board to remake the rules.

Item [8] of schedule 2 enables the board to approve forms for use in connection with the board's functions. Item [9] of schedule 2 amends the Act to transfer from the regulations into the Act a requirement for the Crown Solicitor to maintain a trust account with an authorised deposit-taking institution and provides that the Attorney General may, by order, give directions to the Crown Solicitor about keeping records and procedures to be followed in maintaining the trust account. The proposed amendment also contains savings and transitional provisions. Lastly, item [10] of schedule 2 amends section 59 of the Act, which currently enables local regulations to "fix" certain costs. The amendments in the bill clarify that certain costs can be set by more than one method, including authorising a registrar to determine costs subject to the maximum costs prescribed in the regulation, or by adopting costs set out in an instrument made under another Act.

I now turn to the parts of the bill relating to the Personal Injury Commission. Schedule 3 to the bill amends the Personal Injury Commission Act 2020. Item [1] of schedule 3 will extend the maximum term of an acting deputy president of the Personal Injury Commission from 12 months to three years. The longer appointment term will allow acting deputy presidents to perform their duties for a sufficient period and alleviate the administrative burden associated with yearly reappointments. The Personal Injury Commission Act currently does not allow for the appointment of an acting division head. Item [2] of schedule 3 will enable the Attorney General to appoint the president, a deputy president or a principal member of the Personal Injury Commission to be an acting division head during the absence of a division head or a vacancy in the office of a division head. That will avoid the existing administrative burden involved in ensuring that the person acting to fill the role of a division head on extended leave has the appropriate power to carry out the division head's functions.

I now turn to the proposed amendments to the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children Act 1998 at schedule 4 to the bill. The Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children Act establishes the Royal Institute for Deaf

and Blind Children. On 22 March 2021 the institute changed its name to NextSense and registered the name as a trademark. NextSense provides a wide range of health, disability and educational services for people who are deaf, have hearing loss, are blind or have low vision, and for their families. NextSense also engages in research and offers both initial and continuing programs for the professionals who provide those services, including educators, therapists and health professionals. The proposed amendments will provide a strong framework to support NextSense in delivering its important services into the future.

The proposed amendments will achieve this by better reflecting NextSense's work and the services it provides to people with hearing and visual loss, and to their families, and by modernising the administrative arrangements for the institute's board of directors. Item [2] of schedule 4 amends the Act to change the title of the legislation to the NextSense Act 1998 to reflect the renaming of the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children. NextSense has advised that the new name has broader appeal, better reflects the services it offers and avoids confusion with other organisations with similar names that provide similar services. Item [3] of schedule 4 to the bill amends the definition of "institute" in the Act to refer to NextSense. Currently, section 3 of the Act defines "institute" as the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children. The Act will continue to use the term "institute" and refer to it in the body of the legislation. However, "institute" will be taken to refer to NextSense.

Item [9] of schedule 4 amends the objects of NextSense in section 6 of the Act to more accurately reflect the current scope of the work and services provided by NextSense. Currently, section 6 of the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children Act provides that the principal object of the institute is the advancement in life, to the greatest extent practicable, of deaf and blind children. The specific reference to "children" fails to recognise that NextSense, for most of its history, has assisted both adults and children with hearing and visual loss, as well as their families and carers. The bill amends the Act to broaden the scope of NextSense's object beyond children, to include all persons living with hearing or vision loss as well as their families and support structure.

Relatedly, schedule 4 [10] provides that NextSense has all the functions necessary or convenient to enable it to achieve its objects. This will provide greater legal clarity as to the functions and powers of NextSense and puts beyond doubt that NextSense has all the powers of a statutory corporation. The bill also makes amendments relating to the administration of the board of NextSense. Schedule 4 [11] amends clause 4 of schedule 1 to the Act to make changes to the administrative arrangements for the election of directors to the board of NextSense. Currently, one-third of appointed directors must retire by rotation next year. Directors must also retire no later than three years after being elected. This rotational system has created a high turnover rate for the board and has numerous potentially confusing outcomes, especially if more than one-third of the directors commenced in the same year. The bill will remove the requirement for one-third of directors to retire by rotation each year.

Directors will continue to be elected for a maximum three-year term. However, the bill amends the Act to provide that a director may only serve three terms, with an option for a further one-term extension with the approval of the board. This amendment will encourage new directors to be appointed to the board periodically without the administrative difficulty of the current rotational system. Item [12] of schedule 4 sets out the transitional arrangements for the election of directors following the commencement of the amendments in the bill. The remaining items in schedule 4 make minor consequential amendments.

In conclusion, the four institutions whose enabling legislation are amended by this bill play distinct and important roles in New South Wales. Updating these statutes will enable the effective functioning of these organisations and will ensure that the legislation underpinning their operation is fit for purpose, reflecting current needs and practices. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

DETENTION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (PROHIBITION ON SPIT HOODS) BILL 2023

First Reading

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

Second Reading Speech

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (10:35): On behalf of Mr Michael Daley: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Government is pleased to introduce the Detention Legislation Amendment (Prohibition on Spit Hoods) Bill 2023. The bill will amend legislation governing places of detention in New South Wales to prohibit the use of spit hoods by officers exercising functions under those Acts. A spit hood is a hood that covers the face or mouth of the wearer and can typically be secured at the base, around the wearer's neck. Spit hoods prevent the wearer from spitting on or biting other persons, but can cause trauma, injury or death to the wearer. The New South Wales

Government considers that the use of spit hoods in places of detention is an outdated practice that does not align with community expectations about the treatment of persons in places of detention. Spit hoods are not used in New South Wales, but that does not mean that they cannot be used in the future. Without the bill, there is nothing preventing spit hoods from being authorised for future use.

The bill will enshrine the current operational decision by agencies administering places of detention in New South Wales to not use spit hoods and ensure that only Parliament can authorise the use of spit hoods in the future. Given the risks posed to persons as a result of the use of spit hoods, the human rights implications and, in particular, the negative impacts on children, the New South Wales Government is of the view that if any attempts are made in the future to authorise their use in this State, that should be subject to parliamentary scrutiny.

Places of detention in New South Wales are governed by multiple Acts across a number of ministerial portfolios. This bill will introduce a statutory prohibition on the use of spit hoods in all of these Acts. The statutory prohibition on the use of spit hoods will not be limited to within places of detention. It will also apply when officers exercising functions under the respective Acts are exercising those functions outside of the place of detention—for example, if a correctional officer is escorting an inmate to hospital.

To protect against the risk of spitting, law enforcement and health officers may continue to use alternative methods of protection, including staff-worn personal protective equipment such as face shields, masks and gloves, or other appropriate risk-mitigation strategies. The bill does not include a specific criminal offence for breaching the prohibition on the use of spit hoods. However, if an officer were to place a spit hood on a person in contravention of the statutory prohibition, this would likely constitute an unauthorised or unreasonable use of force, which may trigger criminal and disciplinary action, and may also form the basis for a complaint to the NSW Ombudsman or the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission.

The bill has arisen following consideration by the Standing Council of Attorneys-General of the feasibility of a nationally coordinated approach to prohibit the use of spit hoods. All jurisdictions ultimately agreed to individually review any residual authorities allowing the use of spit hoods in their respective jurisdictions. The bill gives effect to the Standing Council of Attorneys-General recommendations.

I thank the Minister for Health, the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, the Minister for Corrections and the Minister for Youth Justice for their endorsement of, and support for, the introduction of a statutory prohibition on the use of spit hoods. I also acknowledge that various bodies have recommended the prohibition of spit hoods, including Amnesty International, the Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory, the Australian Human Rights Commission and the South Australian Ombudsman.

I now turn to the detail of the bill. The bill inserts provisions that prohibit the use of spit hoods into the following Acts that govern places of detention in New South Wales: the Children (Detention Centres) Act 1987, which will capture youth detention centres; the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999, which will capture correctional centres and court cells; the Drug and Alcohol Treatment Act 2007, which will capture treatment centres; the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002, which will capture police cells and the NSW Police Force generally; and the Mental Health Act 2007 and Mental Health and Cognitive Impairment Forensic Provisions Act 2020, which will capture mental health facilities.

Schedule 1 to the bill will introduce new section 22A into the Children (Detention Centres) Act 1987 to define spit hood and provide that a juvenile justice officer, a correctional officer or a police officer exercising functions under this Act must not use a spit hood in the exercise of those functions. Schedule 2 to the bill will introduce new section 236R into the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999 to define spit hood and provide that a correctional officer, police officer or person employed in a private correctional centre exercising functions under this Act must not use a spit hood in the exercise of those functions.

Schedule 3 to the bill will introduce new section 49A into the Drug and Alcohol Treatment Act 2007 to define spit hood and provide that a person exercising a function under this Act must not use a spit hood in the exercise of that function. Schedule 4 to the bill will introduce new section 231A into the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002 to define spit hood and provide that a police officer or other detention officer exercising functions under this Act must not use a spit hood in the exercise of those functions. For avoidance of doubt, the new section also clarifies that the terms "authorised place of detention" and "detention officer" have the same meanings as in part 16 of the Act.

Schedule 5 to the bill will introduce new section 69A into the Mental Health Act 2007 to define spit hood and provide that an authorised medical officer or another person exercising functions under this Act must not use a spit hood in the exercise of those functions. Schedule 6 to the bill will make a consequential amendment to section 71 of the Mental Health and Cognitive Impairment Forensic Provisions Act 2020 to ensure that new section 69A of the Mental Health Act 2007 applies to the treatment of forensic patients and correctional patients.

Each amending schedule to the bill defines a spit hood as "a covering, however described, intended to be placed over a person's head to prevent the person from spitting on, or biting, another person". The bill also clarifies that the definition of spit hood does not include a helmet designed to prevent self-harm, even if the helmet incorporates a part designed to stop spittle. This clarification has been included out of an abundance of caution as the padded self-harm helmets that are used by Corrective Services NSW are placed over a person's head and incorporate a removable piece of perspex that is designed to stop the wearer from spitting on another person.

However, unlike spit hoods, self-harm helmets do not pose a risk to the wearer as they do not restrict airflow and are primarily designed to stop the wearer from potentially very serious injury resulting from an act of self-harm. It should also be noted that it is not the intention of the bill for face masks, such as surgical masks used to mitigate the risk of transmission of COVID-19, to be captured by the definition of spit hood. Each amending schedule to the bill also includes a drafting note that a contravention of the statutory prohibition on the use of spit hoods may constitute an unauthorised or unreasonable use of force.

The bill will commence on assent. As the statutory prohibition on the use of spit hoods legislates existing operational practice, there will be no operational impact on affected agencies and those agencies do not need to take steps to implement the statutory prohibition. The bill makes it clear that spit hoods will never have a place in detention settings in New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

AGEING AND DISABILITY COMMISSIONER AMENDMENT BILL 2023

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Ms Kate Washington, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion) (10:46): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Government is pleased to introduce the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Amendment Bill 2023. The bill amends the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Act 2019. The Act commenced on 1 July 2019, establishing an independent agency of the New South Wales Government to promote the rights of adults with disability and older people, and to protect them from abuse, neglect and exploitation. The Ageing and Disability Commission performs a range of critical functions, including responding to reports about abuse, neglect and exploitation of adults with disability and older adults; raising public awareness about abuse, neglect and exploitation of adults with disability and older adults; coordinating the Official Community Visitors scheme in settings where adults with disability and older adults are in the full-time care of service providers as well as assisted boarding houses; and monitoring, assessing and reporting on the implementation of Australia's Disability Strategy in New South Wales.

Section 36 of the Act requires the Minister to commission an independent review of the Act to determine whether the policy objectives of the Act remain valid and whether the terms of the Act remain appropriate for securing those objectives. An independent review was conducted by Mr Alan Cameron, AO, and was tabled in Parliament on 25 May 2023. I thank Mr Cameron for his excellent work on the review. The Government broadly supports the recommendations he has made, and the bill implements almost all of those recommendations. In doing so, it will make changes that strengthen the ability of the Ageing and Disability Commission to protect and promote the rights of adults with disability and older adults.

There are only two recommendations the Government is not implementing in the bill. Those are recommendation 3 (b), which would have expanded the circumstances in which the commissioner can investigate without the adult's consent, potentially undermining the right to privacy, and recommendation 11, which was to appoint a parliamentary committee to monitor and review the functions of the commissioner. The Government is not implementing recommendation 11 as the commissioner is already subject to parliamentary oversight through existing provisions in the Act and the committee process. The bill implements all the other recommendations made in the statutory review.

The bill makes the following key changes. It allows the Ageing and Disability Commissioner discretion to refer relevant reports to other bodies, and to not refer reports if the adult does not wish the information to be reported. It extends the circumstances in which the commissioner may investigate allegations without the consent of the relevant adult to cover situations where the commissioner cannot obtain access to the person. It broadens information sharing with organisations and individuals that provide supports to adults with disability or older people. It permits Official Community Visitors to provide advice to the Department of Communities and Justice and the NDIS commissioner, in addition to myself as Minister, and to the Ageing and Disability Commissioner.

It requires service providers to notify the Ageing and Disability Commission about contact details. Finally, it requires that the Ageing and Disability Advisory Board include two or more older adults.

I now turn to the detail of the bill. The bill gives the Ageing and Disability Commissioner discretion to refer reports to other complaint bodies. Currently, section 13 (8) provides that if the commissioner is of the opinion that a report constitutes a complaint that may be made to certain other bodies, including the Health Care Complaints Commission and the Children's Guardian, the commissioner must refer the report to them. Schedule 1 [3] gives the Ageing and Disability Commissioner discretion to refer reports to other complaint bodies. This will provide flexibility for the commission to not refer matters, for example, where the reporter indicates they would rather separately contact another complaint body directly. In the statutory review report, Mr Cameron noted:

... I am confident the Commissioner will continue to report serious matters of which the relevant agencies should be aware and with respect to which they may need to take action.

I share that confidence and consider it appropriate that the commissioner have this discretion. Similarly, schedule 1 [5] gives the Ageing and Disability Commissioner discretion to not refer reports to the police if the commissioner believes on reasonable grounds that the adult does not wish the information to be reported. This amendment, via new subsection 13 (9A), aligns with one of the principles in section 4 of the Act that adults with disability and older adults have the right to privacy and confidentiality. Notably, section 316 of the Crimes Act requires all persons to report serious indictable offences to appropriate law enforcement agencies, and the commissioner remains subject to this requirement irrespective of proposed new subsection 13 (9A). Together, items [3] and [5] will implement recommendation 2 of the statutory review and bring New South Wales into line with other Australian jurisdictions, none of which have mandated referral requirements.

The bill extends the circumstances in which the commissioner may investigate allegations without the consent of the relevant adult to cover situations where the commissioner cannot obtain access to the adult. This implements recommendation 3 (a) of the statutory review and can be found in schedule 1 [6] to the bill. This amendment is intended to cover situations such as where the relevant adult cannot be contacted because an alleged perpetrator is blocking access, and where the adult cannot be spoken to in a safe and confidential setting to seek consent. Stakeholders considered that the commission's inability to gain access to some adults in abusive situations in order to seek consent was a significant issue affecting its ability to investigate.

The bill expands the Act's information-sharing provisions to implement recommendation 4 of the statutory review. New section 14A has been carefully drafted to balance the right to privacy with the practical need to facilitate service provision and enable the Ageing and Disability Commission to perform its protective functions. Section 14 of the Act currently permits information sharing, but this is limited to sharing with "relevant agencies", which is defined to include government bodies and some health organisations. Section 14 does not apply to other entities that the Ageing and Disability Commission relies on in its day-to-day work of responding to reports and addressing abuse. This includes aged care and disability service providers, private health practitioners and private providers of financial and legal services.

New section 14A, found in the bill at schedule 1 [8], will permit the sharing of relevant information with organisations and individuals that engage with or provide supports to adults with disability or older people. Consistent with section 14 of the Act, the commissioner may share "relevant information" with an entity for the purpose of enabling the entity to provide a service in relation to the safety of an adult with disability or older adult; to make an assessment in relation to the safety of an adult with disability or older adult; or to take action in respect of the safety of adults with disability or older adults generally. New section 14A will also allow entities to disclose relevant information to the commissioner for the purposes of enabling or assisting the commissioner's handling of a report under the Act. Ordinarily, privacy law only permits the disclosure of personal information with consent unless an exception applies. Sections 14 and 14A are both exceptions to this general rule, to the extent that they potentially allow the disclosure of some personal information without the consent of the relevant person.

Although new section 14A allows disclosure of personal information without consent, it is subject to reasonable and proportionate limitations. First, it only allows the commission to disclose information to non-government entities in relation to the safety of adults with disability or older adults. This reflects Mr Cameron's comments in the statutory review that the expansion of information-sharing powers—with limits—is consistent with facilitating the Act's objectives, but that information sharing should only be expanded in relation to safety issues.

Similarly, new section 14A only allows non-government entities to provide relevant information to the Ageing and Disability Commission for the purposes of enabling or assisting the commissioner's handling of a report under the Act. Section 13 provides that to make a report there must be reasonable grounds to believe the adult is subject to, or at risk of, abuse, neglect or exploitation. The new range of people and organisations with

whom information may be shared under new section 14A are reminded via a note to the section that unauthorised disclosure of information obtained under the Act is an offence under section 31.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): Members will enter the Chamber quietly and allow the Minister to continue her speech.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: This offence protects the privacy of the older adults and adults with disability whose information is being shared. The bill also expands the operation of the Official Community Visitors scheme. This change will allow Official Community Visitors to provide advice or information to the NDIS Commission and to the Secretary of the Department of Communities and Justice. This is in addition to their important function of providing advice or information to me, as Minister, and to the Ageing and Disability Commissioner, which is already permitted under section 22 of the Act. This change, made by schedule 1 [10] and [11] to the bill, will ensure that the NDIS Commission and the Secretary of the Department of Communities and Justice can also be given information about providers of concern, or trend and pattern information about providers and visitable services. The change implements recommendation 5 of the statutory review.

The bill requires disability service providers to notify the Ageing and Disability Commission of their contact details, any new visitable services, or location changes to existing visitable services they operate. This sensible, practical change is achieved through new section 24A, which is inserted by schedule 1 [12] to the bill. This change ensures that the Official Community Visitor scheme is kept apprised of new services or changes to the addresses of services so that they may be visited. It implements recommendation 6 of the statutory review.

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

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I welcome to the Chamber students and staff of Westfields Sports High School in Fairfield West, guests of the member for Fairfield. I welcome Miss Eunice Markham and Mr John Shape, guests of the member for Drummoyne. I acknowledge Jayne Sharpe, Stephen Heusz and Robynne Curnow, guests of the member for Wallsend. I acknowledge Dom Mangles, founder and CEO of Solarpave, guest of the member for Hawkesbury. I welcome Levi Christoforidis, guest of the member for Oatley. I acknowledge Ella Resnik, Tamar Resnik, Mia Chapman and Eliana Chapman, guests of the member for Vacluse. I acknowledge Jean Bucca, guest of the member for Leppington. I welcome Craig Mear and Steve Dillon, whom I met earlier, guests of the member for Heathcote. I welcome my guests, John Paul Young and his wife Lynette. I recognise Luke Brailey, Back to Belmore Chair. I love his work. I also acknowledge students and teachers from Kellyville Public School in the gallery, guests of the member for Kellyville.

Members

REPRESENTATION OF MINISTERS ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS

Mr RON HOENIG: On behalf of Mr Chris Minns: I inform the House that the Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney will answer questions today in the absence of the Premier.

Question Time

SYDNEY METRO WEST

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (11:06): My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. It has been 230 days since the Minister commissioned a Sydney Metro review, putting a core Labor election promise to complete Sydney Metro West in doubt. When will the Government finally come clean with the people of New South Wales about the future of Sydney Metro West?

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (11:07): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question and for his interest in what is a critical project for our city and our State. We need not only to improve the reliability and resilience of our current public transport network but also to keep building for the future. Because of our responsible and methodical approach, we have been able to provide a delivery strategy for the city section of Sydney Metro—which will open next year, delivering a world-class service every four minutes from the north-west, under Sydney Harbour, all the way to Sydenham—but also by the year following the Bankstown line will be converted, given our strategy of a \$21.6 billion investment, to provide to those communities the service that they were promised. Let us remember the conversion of the Sydenham to Bankstown line was in doubt with those opposite. In fact, we know that those opposite were considering cancelling it.

Mr Mark Speakman: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, direct relevance. I was not asking the Minister about Sydney Southwest Metro, which she has previously opposed. I was asking about the future of Sydney Metro West. It was a specific question and a directly relevant answer needs to include Sydney Metro West.

The SPEAKER: I am sympathetic to the Leader of the Opposition's point of order. However, I do not uphold it.

Ms JO HAYLEN: Members opposite asked about our independent review. It is a responsible and methodical approach to an investment worth \$60 billion, which any responsible business or government would do on inheriting a series of challenges. As I was saying, the first part of that review allowed us to rescue the south-west project and to ensure that the communities of the inner west and the south-west, places like Campsie, Wiley Park and Punchbowl, now finally have lifts at their train stations so that parents with prams, people with disability and the elderly can access the public transport services they need. By mid-2025 they will have the world-class metro service that they were promised. Yes, the second part of the independent Sydney Metro Review will be released soon, and I am sure members opposite will love reading it.

STUDENT HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (11:10): My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Education and Early Learning. Will the Deputy Prime Minister—

[Interruption]

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order. I suspect that will not be the first mistake a member makes in question time today. It was a late sitting yesterday. The member for Prospect will ask his question of the Deputy Premier.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT: Will the Deputy Premier update the House on the action that the Minns Labor Government is taking to support the health and wellbeing of students to deliver better educational outcomes for our children?

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (11:11): We are off to a great start. I am happy to answer the question asked by the member for Prospect. It is an important question regarding the health and wellbeing of all of our students. I acknowledge our wonderful kids from Westfields Sports High School in the gallery, led by a wonderful leader in Mr Andrew Rogers. I thank them for being here today. Great educational outcomes for school students is one of the biggest priorities of the Minns Labor Government. Students in our schools, particularly teenagers at our high schools, are facing more complex challenges than ever before. One of those is the scourge of vaping.

Recently, the Minns Labor Government held the first ever vaping roundtable, with both health and education experts in the room, to talk about how much of a challenge vaping is for our young people, how many of them are addicted to those terrible things and how challenging that is for our teachers, our leaders and our principals to deal with. This is a community-wide issue, but it is having a serious impact on children, and we must act. We heard some really shocking things two weeks ago.

Recently, high school students told me—and it was reiterated two weeks ago at the roundtable—that children as young as eight are vaping in our schools. I do not think any of us can say, hand on heart, that we should not do everything possible to stop that from happening. It is clear that it requires both a health and an education response. Across all areas of government, we will listen to the experts, and we showed that a few weeks ago with vaping. We will involve young people. The Commonwealth Government is working with State and Territory governments to stop the supply of vapes, but we have to work seriously on education campaigns to ensure that young people understand that what they are sucking in is sometimes extremely dangerous.

Another issue we are tackling when it comes to the health and wellbeing of our young people in our schools and our young people generally is excessive screen time. I hope that is not much of an issue for those at Westfields Sports. Parents across New South Wales and the country are struggling with excessive screen time. They are constantly going to their schools for advice and asking, "What can we do about this?" *[Extension of time]*

Anyone who has young children knows that gaming, computers and mobile phones are all part of daily life for our young people. But we must make sure they do not impact on their wellbeing, their mental health and, importantly, their ability to learn and take in important information from their world-class teachers. That has particularly been an issue since COVID-19; I am sure we all agree with that. Research is surprisingly quite limited in this area. We made a significant election commitment to invest in that research. We have recently announced money for research grants to look at problematic screen time to ensure we make decisions on what happens in our schools based on the best expert advice about how to use technology to harness educational opportunities but not

damage the mental health and wellbeing of our young people. That is an increasing challenge that we must deal with inside and outside the school gates.

That is on top of the Minns Labor Government's commitment to invest in school counsellors and psychologists to ensure our young people are physically and mentally well at school, ready to learn and prosper and take in the lessons from our teachers, who we are now valuing and paying properly for the first time in a generation. Technology can be a distraction and we are investing in the research around that. We need to be doing everything we can for health and wellbeing so our young people are ready to learn and to achieve the outcomes this Government so dearly wants them to achieve.

The SPEAKER: It was remiss of me not to recognise former member for Miranda Barry Collier in the gallery. Welcome, Barry. It is good to see you back.

STUDENT SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (11:16): My question is directed to the Minister for Women, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. There are around 1,000 confirmed reports of problematic or harmful sexual behaviour in New South Wales each year, including in our State schools. What will the Minister do to ensure that our State's young girls are as legally protected in the classroom from sexual harassment as women are in the workplace?

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (11:17): I thank the member for her question. I know that she is as passionate as I and everybody in this place about the safety of women and girls in our society. I take the sexual safety of girls in our schools very seriously, and I am working on that with my department. My department is talking and working with the Department of Education. I am continuing to work with the Minister for Education and Early Learning on the issue. Girls in our schools deserve safety—there is no doubt about that—particularly during these 16 days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence. We have heard some terrible stories about the experiences that girls have been through in our schools. It is at the top of the agenda for the Minister for Education and Early Learning, and it is one of my top priorities as Minister for Women.

RURAL, REGIONAL AND REMOTE HEALTH SERVICES

Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (11:19): My question is addressed to the Minister for Health, and Minister for Regional Health. Will the Minister please update the House on how the Minns Labor Government is improving access to health care for people living in regional and remote communities?

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (11:19): I thank my fantastic Parliamentary Secretary. He is a terrific advocate, who is already saving lives in this place—incredible. He continues to work very hard, particularly in the regional, rural and remote portfolio. I also give a shout-out to all those participating in Movember, including the member for Barwon. It would take me about 5½ years to grow that facial hair. I am starting now for next year's Movember. Well done to this absolute champion, the member for Riverstone, but that needs to be taken off real quick, I reckon.

Regional, rural and remote health is near and dear to my heart. I know it is also near and dear to this Government's heart. To be fair, it is near and dear to many members' hearts, including the member for Bega and the member for Barwon. Recently, I once again had the opportunity to be in the member for Barwon's community, visiting places like Wilcannia, Broken Hill and Menindee. I met with a number of people who gave me a real insight into health services in regional, rural and remote New South Wales. The first was a woman by the name of Chelsea, who operates in Broken Hill hospital as a midwife. She won best midwife of the year for that district. She is an incredibly talented and passionate person. I met Gill, who is a health services manager at Wilcannia. I had a good chat with her about the challenges but also the opportunities that small hospitals can deliver. I also met with a lady, whose name I think was Michelle, who talked to me about challenging issues around getting specialist services in Menindee.

I also spoke to the mayor of Broken Hill. He and the member for Barwon have talked to me and others about how important it is that the Government solves the housing issue for key workers like healthcare workers to ensure that we not only attract them but also retain them in our system. People may think it is just about building new health services or hospitals; it actually is not. Part of the formula the Government has to get right is making sure that we are investing in key worker accommodation, which is exactly what this Government is prioritising and doing. We are investing in places like Balranald, Broken Hill, West Wyalong and Leeton—which the member for Murray and I recently visited—Narrandera and Cooma. [*Extension of time*]

We are visiting those places to ensure that we not only get the health infrastructure right but also recognise that an important part of the formula to attract and retain healthcare workers is making sure that they are provided

with housing. When I spoke to the Broken Hill mayor, he said to me that the benefit of investing in a community like his is it will free up other houses across his community for other workers. That is a very important part of what this Government is doing. It is not just about building new hospitals or health services per se; it is also about the accommodation that is needed for our healthcare professionals who work in regional, rural and remote areas.

In Hunter New England, around 44 new units of accommodation have been put in, which I visited with the member for Northern Tablelands and also the member for Tamworth in his community. The Government is investing in infrastructure to make a real difference to ensure that we attract and retain healthcare workers, because we know that attracting and retaining healthcare workers in the bush is a challenge that we need to address. We will not do that just by putting in new health infrastructure. We have to step back and ask, "What accommodation do families and professional healthcare workers need when they go to these areas?" I had an opportunity to speak to Angela, a young trainee nurse at Broken Hill who wants to stay in Broken Hill but needs accommodation.

The Government is giving people in those communities like Angela the opportunity to stay. I thank the member for Bega, the member for Barwon and all other members who have been strong advocates for rural and regional health. The Government will continue to invest to make sure that people across New South Wales get the health services they need and deserve.

REGIONAL MANUFACTURING

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (11:24): My question is directed to the Deputy Premier, representing the Premier. For six months the Government has been unable to resolve local content issues for renewable energy zones. The risk is that investors who want to create hundreds of jobs and invest significant amounts in regional manufacturing will walk away without a clear market signal that the Government supports their investment. Deputy Premier, how much longer will it take to give the market confidence to invest and create jobs in regional manufacturing by mandating local content for those projects?

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (11:25): I acknowledge the member for Barwon's strong support of local manufacturing. He is fighting for local jobs and local businesses, which is especially important as we take advantage of the economic opportunities from the State's transition to renewable energy. I know the member wants to see the benefit of those opportunities in his community, so I say from the outset that I acknowledge that the Government has more work to do. We remain committed, as we made very clear leading up to the election, to building things again in New South Wales. We promised to end the obsession of members opposite with offshoring manufacturing, and that is what we are doing.

Ms Felicity Wilson: Seriously?

Ms PRUE CAR: Yes, seriously. New South Wales has fallen behind other States and it should not have. We should be creating good, well-paid, secure jobs throughout this State. I do not know who would argue with that. It is crucial to laying the foundation for economic growth in New South Wales. This applies to the transformation of our electricity system. Renewable energy zones in this State will provide reliable, clean and affordable electricity to households and businesses that will support the green jobs of the future. They will also support the establishment of new clean industries and more jobs for our regions, including, of course, the member for Barwon's electorate.

The Renewable Energy Sector Board is working to update its plan. The board includes representatives from unions, the manufacturing sector, the clean energy sector and other employer groups. The plan outlines economic opportunities for New South Wales as part of the transition. It also recommends minimum requirements for local content as part of the delivery of new renewable generation, storage and network infrastructure in New South Wales. I acknowledge the member for Barwon's strong advocacy for higher local content targets as part of the board's plan, which is why I am happy to report to the House that the Government will support a referral to the Legislative Assembly Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development.

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order.

Ms PRUE CAR: The Government will ask the committee to consider options to further support domestic manufacturing relating to renewable energy zones as we deliver the energy transition. We share the member for Barwon's desire to see a thriving domestic manufacturing sector in New South Wales, which is why we committed \$480 million in the budget for net-zero manufacturing. [*Extension of time*]

Labor has been in government for just over eight months but already we have clearly demonstrated a greater commitment to domestic manufacturing than the entirety of the former Liberal-Nationals Government. To start with, New South Wales now has a Minister for Domestic Manufacturing and Government Procurement. We

have made changes to government procurement and we are establishing a New South Wales jobs first commission—

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

Ms PRUE CAR: —an independent, expert body to oversee, support and advocate for local firms bidding for government tenders, like they do in Victoria.

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

Ms PRUE CAR: The member for Hornsby has amnesia. He is constantly forgetting that his Government had more than a decade to address those issues. The people of New South Wales had their say. They delivered their verdict and gave this Government the job of trying to fix New South Wales after it was left in a mess by the former Government, and that includes local manufacturing.

The SPEAKER: I remind the member for Hornsby that he is on two calls to order. I warn the member for Port Macquarie that she is close to being called to order.

Ms PRUE CAR: I thank the member for Barwon for his fierce advocacy for local manufacturing. We will continue to work with him, and all members, to support New South Wales jobs.

HOUSING SUPPLY

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (11:29): My question is addressed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. Will the Minister outline what steps the Minns Labor Government has taken to address time frames for development applications and report on the reception of the Government's low- and mid-rise housing reforms?

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (11:30): I thank the member for Cabramatta for his question. He has a strong interest in making sure there are more houses available for young families, for renters, for the students in the public gallery and for older people trying to downsize. Confronting the housing crisis is a shared responsibility—shared with communities, shared with industry and shared particularly with local government. We have been clear that we want to work with councils to help them deliver the additional housing that we need.

I am pleased to report that in October this year, average development application times had fallen again for the fourth month in a row, down a further eight days from September to 104 days. That is still too long, but it is heading in the right direction. There is more to do, but it is heading in the right direction. Complying development applications are also down from an average of 27 days to 22 days in October.

Planners are in short supply, and that is leading to delays. That is why the Government has stepped in to help councils deliver. We have provided \$1.85 million to 74 councils to help with the cost of training. We are taking practical steps to reduce low-value but time-consuming developments. For example, it can take up to three months to get a development application through for a columbarium to store ashes in a cemetery. The neighbours do not complain, but we will make that a complying development to reduce time and resources in considering those applications. A further \$5.6 million has been committed to bring artificial intelligence into the planning system to help increase efficiency in the system for councils.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. It is difficult to hear the Minister.

Mr PAUL SCULLY: I have asked the department to further review how we can improve concurrences and referrals, even though that is working quite well. Last quarter, 92 per cent of concurrences and referrals were within legislative time frames, compared with 76 per cent the year before. But it is important that we be transparent about our progress, and that is why the Premier announced at the Daily Telegraph's Bradfield Oration that we will publish housing approval times, or delays, for State-significant development. We will publish completions to compare with other States.

The SPEAKER: The member for Dubbo and the member for Hornsby will cease their conversation or take it outside the Chamber.

Mr PAUL SCULLY: We will publish the average number of days that it takes a council to turn around a development application. We will also develop a pattern book of terraces, semis, manor houses and up to six-storey residential flat buildings to get housing through the system faster. All of this is tied to the reforms and the approvals of low- and mid-rise housing that I announced yesterday that will allow these housing types to come back into areas zoned for them in the first place to deliver the density of that zoning. [*Extension of time*]

The extension of time gives me an opportunity to report to the House some of the reaction to yesterday's announcement of the bold reforms to low-rise and mid-rise housing. The Housing Industry Association said the

proposals would "streamline the approval process and reduce costs for families". Housing Now! said, "This is a bold announcement from the New South Wales Government to build more houses where it makes the most sense." The Committee for Sydney said, "This will allow many more people to access jobs, parks and education while maintaining the low-rise nature of these suburbs—a win for new residents and a win for existing residents." The Property Council of Australia said, "This change will bring much-needed consistency across council boundaries and ensure housing for young families does not become a political football in the upcoming local government elections."

[An Opposition member interjected.]

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

Mr PAUL SCULLY: The member for Hawkesbury has a notice of motion condemning the Government for trying to get more houses. She is a typical Liberal member wanting to keep people out of housing. Urban Taskforce Australia said that it has been calling for this reform to the missing middle exactly along the lines of the announcement. As I said yesterday, and I will say again today, at its conference on the weekend even the Liberal Party voted for a range of changes to mirror our announcement. Where is the Leader of the Opposition? As John Paul Young in the gallery would say, he is not going to keep on smilin' today, is he? Did he back the changes? No. Even when his own conference wanted to confront the housing crisis and it voted for many of the reforms I announced yesterday, where he was he? He was outside the room. He was somewhere else. During the most important debate going on in communities right now he was outside the room.

Mr Alister Henskens: Point of order—

Mr PAUL SCULLY: We will get on with the job.

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

SOLAR FARMS AND PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (11:35): My question is directed to the Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading. Farmers with properties adjacent to solar farms across the State, including those in Glanmire recently, have been refused public liability insurance due to the potential damage from fire. As the Minister with responsibility for insurance, what steps has he taken to address the issue?

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) (11:35): I thank the Leader of The Nationals for his question. This Government will always look at ways to support all consumers, including farmers, when they are in need of insurance protection. As members know, there are three components to what the State Insurance Regulatory Authority [SIRA] does, and that is home building insurance, motor accident insurance and workers compensation. In terms of the specifics of the member's question, we will always find ways to ensure that households in New South Wales are looked after. We will always find ways to ensure that SIRA and the insurance companies work on ways to make sure we support our consumers.

Mr Dugald Saunders: Point of order—

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: The member for Dubbo wants to take a point of order. Please do.

Mr Dugald Saunders: It is under Standing Order 129. I will provide a bit more specificity for clarification if the Minister is not quite sure of where to go. As Minister with responsibility for insurance and regulation, it falls under his portfolio.

Mr Ron Hoenig: To the point of order—

The SPEAKER: The member for Dubbo has made his point, but I will hear from the Leader of the House on the point of order. I think I know where it is going.

Mr Ron Hoenig: The member should either take a point of order and draw your attention to a standing order, or he should resume his seat. He should not ask for clarification. He cannot make statements like that to the Minister.

The SPEAKER: I thank the Leader of the House. The member for Dubbo was adding to the question rather than providing clarification. There is no point of order. I acknowledge that the Minister anticipated the point of order; I will give him a point for that. The Minister has the call.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: If we want to talk about insurance and reform, how about the Opposition back the Government's reform on the emergency services levy?

Mr Dugald Saunders: Point of order—

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: If we want to talk about insurance, how about we talk about that?

The SPEAKER: The Minister will resume his seat while I hear the highly anticipated point of order from the member for Dubbo.

Mr Dugald Saunders: Clearly, my point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. He has been coached about something that is completely irrelevant. I will seek an extension of time for the Minister while I am here.

Mr Paul Scully: It's not irrelevant to people who want the cost of living brought down. You're irrelevant.

Mr Dugald Saunders: If you want to answer the question, have a crack.

The SPEAKER: The member for Dubbo will get part of his wish. I grant an additional two minutes. I advise the Minister that I am likely to uphold a point of order on relevance. The Minister will continue his answer.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: If stakeholders have issues with insurance, I am always happy to meet with them to ensure that we continue to find ways to reintegrate. When it comes to insurance, we have a number of reforms on the agenda. I am happy to receive any stakeholders that have issues. I also highlight our insurance coverage reform, including the emergency services levy, which the previous Government did not do.

Mr Alister Henskens: Point of order: My point of order has several parts. The Minister is not directing his answer through you, Mr Speaker. He is screaming across the Chamber. More importantly, the question was what steps has the Minister taken. The closest he has come to answering that is saying, "If I've got to meet with people, I'll meet with them in the future." The question asked what he is doing about a serious issue for people in regional areas.

The SPEAKER: The Minister is being directly relevant. Opposition members may not like it, but that is my ruling. The Minister has the call. I call the member for Wahrenga to order for the first time.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: If members opposite want to talk about what we are doing, what did they do for so long? They did nothing. They come into the Chamber and beat their chests about what we are doing while they sat around and did nothing. We have a significant insurance reform agenda. Those opposite having to ask us what we have done goes to show that they have done nothing in this space. We have plenty on.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Dubbo to order for the first time. That answer was better than Red Bull; it got members going so I let it run a little. That will not happen again. I hope members have got it out of their systems.

Ms Felicity Wilson: No!

The SPEAKER: I call the member for North Shore to order for the first time. It was a rhetorical question.

SYDNEY TRAINS NETWORK

Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (11:42): My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport. Will the Minister update the House on what the Minns Labor Government is doing to improve and restore reliability and resilience to the Sydney Trains network?

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (11:42): I thank the member for Auburn for her question and for her continued advocacy for quality public transport services, particularly for Western Sydney. I address this question by starting with signallers. Signallers are critical to the operation of our Sydney Trains network. They are highly specialised transport workers and we cannot run our train network without them. They are kind of like air traffic controllers for our trains. They make sure that the trains do not run into each other and that they travel safely. It is such a specialised role that it can take from eight months to one year to train them. Imagine my shock and my response when I found out how many signallers the former Liberal Government hired between 2012 and 2017. What do members think? Maybe 100? Maybe 50? Maybe 20?

The SPEAKER: Government members will come to order. I call the member for Canterbury to order for the first time.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: I want to know!

The SPEAKER: I know.

Ms JO HAYLEN: I will tell you, Speaker. I will tell the member for Canterbury and all the members in this place how many signallers they hired—zero. Absolutely none. Not a single signaller was hired by the former Liberal Government for five years. I will tell members what happens when we have a shortage of signallers. Our

train network becomes less reliable and less resilient. In fact, on 6 July this year one signaller fell ill and the consequences of that were felt by passengers across our train network. There are dire consequences from the former Government's neglect of our train network. The former Liberal Government failed to do the necessary work to maintain the reliability and resilience of our rail network. We will not let that continue to happen. I report to the House the action that we are taking to deal with our signaller shortage. Signaller vacancy rates have improved since the middle of this year. We currently have 36 signallers in training at various stations.

Mr Paul Scully: That's a lot more than zero, for those opposite who can't do the maths.

Ms JO HAYLEN: That is right. It is a lot more.

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

Ms JO HAYLEN: Another 60 signallers are being recruited next year. We are dealing with the mess that the former Government left.

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

Ms JO HAYLEN: We have also set up a signaller taskforce with Sydney Trains to better manage the signalling workforce, and we are identifying measures to lower the risk of that incident occurring again. [*Extension of time*]

We are also looking at better ways to attract and retain signallers because they are such critical workers to the reliability and resilience of our rail network. The mess left in Transport by the former Government is simply staggering. Our independent review into Sydney Trains has provided us with some of the solutions to fix the problems left by the former Government, including signallers. But it also left us with a five-year maintenance backlog. We are getting on with the work of dealing with that maintenance backlog through our rail repair plan. I am pleased to report to the House the progress that we have been making. As of this week, we have removed 80 per cent of the high-priority defects that were identified. Do not forget the comparison here. In a normal year only 600 defects are removed but so far, in just six months, we have removed 1,536 defects. We are already starting to see the improvement across our rail network.

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

Ms JO HAYLEN: We have completed 166 electrical inspections, which has surpassed our target of 144. We are getting ahead of our track grinding, with 553 kilometres completed, and we have removed 86 speed restrictions like potholes in our railways, meaning our trains can run faster. I assure the House that we are getting to the root causes of the problems that members opposite left us. Whether it is recruiting and training the signallers and staff that we need or acting to remove the five-year maintenance backlog, our Government is committed to delivering the public transport system that the people of New South Wales need.

The SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Oatley, on behalf of the member for Heathcote, I acknowledge Bryce Hunter, who is doing work experience in her office.

MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (11:48): I sense that love is in the air today.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Oatley to order for the first time. That was a shocker.

Mr MARK COURE: Could I have John Paul Young's autograph later? My question is directed to the Minister for Industry and Trade. This week the Modern Manufacturing Commissioner concludes her role as a result of his Government's budget cuts. One of her key tasks was the delivery of the modern manufacturing strategy. Will the Minister's Government deliver a modern manufacturing strategy and, if so, when?

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) (11:48): I am certainly feeling the love today. I thank the shadow innovation Minister, who would I say is really the shadow assisting the shadow, shadow for the Hon. Jacqui Munro because he has been so innovative that he has delegated all the work to her. I have never seen innovation like that at all.

[*Government members interjected.*]

Outsourcing, offshoring and innovation at the same time. That is innovation-plus. Good on the member for Oatley. The question was about manufacturing. This Government is serious about manufacturing. We have elevated the position to Cabinet level.

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

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: That is a strong voice in the Cabinet room for all the workers, for all industries and for all the companies in the decision-making. On top of that, we understand that manufacturing and the role that procurement plays is so important, ensuring that the public purse is used for the public good—delivering jobs and giving opportunities for businesses to increase their access to government contracts. Recently we increased the threshold from \$150,000 to \$250,000 to ensure that small businesses across New South Wales have access to government contracts so that they can actually grow their business.

Mr Mark Coure: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129, relevance. The question was whether the Government will deliver a modern manufacturing strategy and, if so, when we will see it.

The SPEAKER: I thank the member for Oatley. I uphold the point of order.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: Our modern manufacturing strategy is to elevate this important topic at the Cabinet table. She is already in the Cabinet! We hit our manufacturing strategy by having a voice in Cabinet. Via a media release, we let the public know and we let the world know what our strategy about modern manufacturing actually is: a strong voice for industry, a strong voice for employees and a strong voice for regional communities to ensure that they have better access to government contracts, and to ensure that their important voices are actually heard so that they can have great economic prosperity in New South Wales.

Mr Mark Coure: We are still waiting for the Minister's answer. I ask for an extension of time for two minutes.

The SPEAKER: No, I will not grant an extension of time. I remind the member for Oatley that that is not the appropriate way to approach the lectern to take a point of order or to seek the attention of the Speaker. The member will rise in his place and seek the call. The member for Oatley will resume his seat. The Minister will also resume his seat.

PUBLIC SECTOR APPRENTICES AND TRAINEES

Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (11:52): My question is addressed to the Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Oatley to order for the second time. The member for Fairfield will begin his question again.

Dr DAVID SALIBA: My question is addressed to the Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education. Will the Minister update the House on the Minns Labor Government's commitment to hiring an additional 1,000 apprentices and trainees?

Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (11:52): I thank the member for Fairfield for his important question. The Government made an election commitment to hire an additional 1,000 apprentices and trainees across the New South Wales government agencies by 2026. I am pleased to say that, having allocated \$94 million in the budget nine weeks ago, we have got on with that job very quickly.

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

Mr STEVE WHAN: On 1 November applications opened across State government agencies. Our target for the first half of the year of the program was to get 200 positions. In just one month, 22 agencies have said that they want to have 334 positions. I am pleased to see that level of interest and enthusiasm. Everyone knows how important apprenticeships and traineeships are to our State. We have a large range of skills shortages across the State, and the apprenticeships and traineeships provide a unique mix of on-the-job training with formal study. They will be across our New South Wales government departments and State-owned corporations that currently employ apprentices and trainees, as well as many that have not traditionally employed those apprentices and trainees.

The commitment will also target priority industries with skills shortages, such as transport, electricity, water, information technology and cybersecurity. It will also provide opportunities in metro and regional New South Wales, including incentivising uptake in regional locations where trainees and apprentices have not previously been employed. Government agencies can provide opportunities to establish careers for young people and for mature-age people returning to the workforce to support the State's skill needs.

It will ensure that New South Wales government agencies are playing their part by providing jobs and training opportunities for young people. Our agencies that are involved include Sydney Water, Essential Energy, the National Parks and Wildlife Service, and the soon-to-be-established Homes NSW. We know that government support for apprentices and trainees went backwards under the former Government. The percentage of the

approved number of apprentices and trainees employed by the former Government declined from 2.82 per cent in 2019 to 1.7 per cent in 2022.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Shame!

Mr STEVE WHAN: What is worse, though, is that since 2011 apprenticeships and traineeship commencements have dropped by 33 per cent. That is a fundamental reason that we are suffering some of the skills shortages, and it is why we need to work in those areas to ensure that we have the skills, for instance, to transition to a net-zero economy. We have seen a steady decline in the number of trade-related roles available in the New South Wales public sector.

Dr David Saliba: Mr Speaker, I kindly seek an extension of time.

The SPEAKER: That was a very nice request. I thank the member for Fairfield. On that basis, I will grant an additional two minutes.

Mr STEVE WHAN: That is why the Minns Government is so keen to reverse that trend and position itself as a leader in the employment of apprentices and trainees.

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

Mr STEVE WHAN: I acknowledge guests of the member for Heathcote in the gallery today. Craig Mear and Steve Dillon were talking to me this morning about a vision that they have for apprenticeships and traineeships in the Illawarra. They are great teachers. There are many enthusiastic people out there who want to see us addressing the shortages of skills that were left by—

Mrs Wendy Tuckerman: Yes, what are you doing?

Mr STEVE WHAN: I hear members opposite saying, "What are you doing?" It would be good if they actually listened to the answer. Perhaps a special traineeship could be put in place for Opposition members on how to get used to being on that side of the House.

Mr Jihad Dib: There is a minimum standard.

Mr STEVE WHAN: As one of their colleagues used to say to me when I was in the other place—on the losers' lounge.

Mr Alister Henskens: Point of order: My point of order has two parts. The Minister is not directing his comments through the Speaker. He is also being deliberately quarrelsome, which is adding to the noise in the Chamber.

The SPEAKER: That is absolutely correct. I uphold the point of order.

Mr STEVE WHAN: Of course, if there were not so many interjections, it would be easy to be non-quarrelsome. I conclude by congratulating two fantastic trainees and apprentices from New South Wales who won awards at the Australian Training Awards a week or so ago: Molly Smith, who was the runner-up in the School-Based Apprentice and Trainee of the Year, and Bridie Searle, who won the national Trainee of the Year. Congratulations.

STATE BUDGET AND PALLIATIVE CARE

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (11:58): My question is directed to the Minister for Health, and Minister for Regional Health. Yesterday the Hon. Penny Sharpe, MLC, admitted to the upper House that "... there were difficult decisions made in the budget. There has been an impact on palliative care; I do not think anyone has hidden from that." If the Premier and the energy Minister can admit that the Minister has cut \$150 million out of the palliative care budget, why can't the Minister?

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (11:59): I am going to use the word "interesting" to describe that question, and I will explain why. The question relates to the palliative care budget and the challenge that we had when we took over. The member for Hornsby—people will remember—was the former Treasurer. I am going to make an assumption that he understands the budget process. I will walk members through it.

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

Mr RYAN PARK: It is very interesting. When I came into this role, one of the first things the secretary and the officials told me, where I thought, "That's unusual. I've never heard this"—

Mr Alister Henskens: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Minister will resume his seat. The Manager of Opposition Business rises on a point of order.

Mr Alister Henskens: I take a point of order under Standing Order 129. The question has nothing to do with the member for Hornsby. It was quite clear: Why will the Minister not admit that he has cut \$150 million from palliative care?

The SPEAKER: The nature of the question gives the Minister wideranging remit in his answer. He is being directly relevant and has made some interesting introductory remarks, which I know the Manager of Opposition Business has enjoyed.

Mr RYAN PARK: So I come into the role and the first thing they say to me is, "We have a problem with the budget." That is funny; health is a big budget. I said, "What's that?" They said, "Well, Minister, we know you've talked a lot about having adequate staff in our hospitals. We know that's where we've got the most significant shortage."

The SPEAKER: I remind the member for Hornsby that he is on two calls to order. I do not want to call him to order for the third time.

Mr RYAN PARK: They said, "Minister, unfortunately, from 1 July 2024 some 1,112 nurses will go."

Mr Mark Coure: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr RYAN PARK: That includes palliative care nurses.

The SPEAKER: The Minister will resume his seat. The member for Oatley rises on a point of order.

Mr Mark Coure: My point of order is on relevance under Standing Order 129. The Minister has not mentioned palliative care.

The SPEAKER: I have advised members that I will allow the Minister some latitude in answering because of the nature of the question. The Minister has the call.

Mr RYAN PARK: Some 1,112 nurses would have gone out of the system. I note to the member for Hornsby that I will need an extension of time. He should stand up and seek an extension. Mr Speaker, I request an extension of time. Can I ask for it myself?

The SPEAKER: No. I call the member for Hornsby to order for the third time. He and the member for North Shore are on the brink of being removed from the Chamber.

STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (12:03): My question is addressed to the Minister for Emergency Services. Will the Minister update the House on the investment the Minns Labor Government has made to help equip our SES volunteers to respond to flooding and other emergencies?

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (12:03): I thank the member for Lismore, and Parliamentary Secretary for Disaster Recovery. Just before I got up, she said, "Please, can you tell John Paul Young that my favourite song is *Love is in the Air*?" There are a whole heap of yesterday's heroes in the Chamber.

[Interruption]

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr JIHAD DIB: The members do not like that. Last year there was record flooding. It started in northern New South Wales and continued everywhere else.

The SPEAKER: Government members will come to order.

Mr JIHAD DIB: It was the busiest year on record, particularly for SES.

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

Mr JIHAD DIB: There were 80,000 calls for help. Over one million volunteer hours were logged. That is the SES. The other day I spoke about the RFS. I would stand up in the Chamber every day if I could to talk about our amazing volunteers in the emergency services. We have also moved from a La Niña to an El Niño pattern, which makes us think a little more about bushfires. We have been dealing with those. But, given what we have seen today and yesterday, let us not forget that this is also a storm season. After long and intense periods of

heat, more often than not come the storms, the damaging winds, the flooding and all those dangers. In the past 24 hours the SES has responded to 200 incidents in different parts of New South Wales but most heavily focused around the South Coast. There have been two flood rescues.

Thunderstorm activity will continue to escalate across the State, with a lot of heavy rain, particularly around the South Coast area, which could result in damage and some flash flooding along the rivers. The fact is that there has been a great focus on what we can do to support our emergency services. A few weeks ago I was very proud to stand with the Premier and the member for East Hills to celebrate a \$25 million investment into our SES to ensure that we do everything we can to give it what is required to assist communities. Some \$15 million of that was specifically for new equipment, including ark angel boats, boats whose fronts come down and flat-bottomed boats, as well as high clearance vehicles. *[Extension of time]*

There has been a lot of discussion about domestic manufacturing. The nearly 100 vessels that are being delivered are being built in New South Wales. We believe in local domestic manufacturing. It is really great. We have made it clear that we back it. I thank Commissioner Carlene York and the over 11,000 volunteers who don those uniforms and get out there when we need support, shelter and their help. It is a really amazing thing that people want to give up their time and put themselves at risk to protect communities. That is one of the ways we are helping make sure that all of our emergency services have what they need and that our communities are supported in as many ways as possible. I also acknowledge the mayor of Lismore, who is in the gallery. He knows very well the impact of flood. We have seen over the past year and a half just how much that community has rebuilt itself and it is no mean feat.

It has been a great effort by the member for Lismore and the mayor, as well as everyone in the local community, to get the resilient Lismore back up and running. As I said to the mayor previously, we will continue standing strong as much as we can. In addition to the boats and high-clearance vehicles, we are also working closely on interoperability with different agencies. Right now on the South Coast, different agencies are supporting the SES as it supports its communities. I have also talked about the flood symposium that happened at Penrith—not at Penrith beach but at Whitewater park, where I was joined by the incredibly hardworking member for Penrith. It brought together people from different agencies and international visitors and replicated a flood scenario. We will work on a State mitigation plan and we will do all that we can to support communities. I again thank all the volunteers of SES.

ROZELLE INTERCHANGE

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (12:08): Mr Speaker—

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order and allow the member for Balmain to ask her question. I remind members that the clock is ticking.

Ms KOBI SHETTY: My question is directed to the Deputy Premier, in the absence of the Premier. It has been four years since work began on the Rozelle interchange. With construction taking place around the clock, the impact on my community has been tremendous. This week the tunnels have opened and we have seen chaos on the roads, with no end in sight. What steps is the Government taking to bring this untenable situation under control?

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (12:09): I thank the member for Balmain for her question and acknowledge her frustration on behalf of her community. Of course, this has impacted her community. I understand that she has also experienced firsthand some of the challenges in the first couple of days of operation of the interchange. I understand the member for Balmain was at the opening on Saturday, along with the Minister for Roads. She has received regular updates from the Minister and transport officials. They appreciate the member's engagement on behalf of her community and her advocacy on behalf of her constituents.

In August this year the Government flagged that the opening of the last stage of WestConnex would be complex and that there would likely be traffic delays for drivers upon opening. To put this in context, the former Government was not up-front with the people of New South Wales about the project. Former Government members raised expectations as late as 3 March, only 20 days before the election. The former Minister's promises about the situation along Victoria Road did not match reality. The former infrastructure Minister promised that commute times would be slashed, while Victoria Road would become a vibrant boulevard.

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

Ms PRUE CAR: That contradicted Transport modelling, and former Government members knew it. The modelling actually suggested that traffic delays would increase by an additional five to 10 minutes for journeys through Drummoyne and over the Iron Cove Bridge in the morning peak.

The SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Miranda to order for the first time.

Ms PRUE CAR: Notwithstanding that, the Government acknowledges that there are delays. Motorists have been inconvenienced through the inner west and on the City West Link and Victoria Road. The Government expects congestion on Victoria Road as well as queueing on the M4 exit ramp in the morning peak while road users adapt and get comfortable with the changes. The advice from the experts is that it will take around six months until the network settles and motorists adapt to the new conditions. Former Government members would have received that same advice. Today, queues have been observed on the City West Link back to Leichhardt. The advice is that that is consistent with the Wednesday morning peak. Ultimately, that part of the network will not be completely integrated until the Western Harbour Tunnel opens in 2028. In the meantime, a range of short- and long-term mitigation measures will ensure that traffic flow can continue. An additional bus lane on Victoria Road will improve bus reliability and efficiency. [*Extension of time*]

It will ease interference caused by buses stopping at bus zones and vehicles turning left along that route, and provide continuous bus priority, allowing buses to bypass general traffic congestion. That is a permanent arrangement on Victoria Road. There is also the new flyover from the Crescent to the Anzac Bridge. I assure the member that Transport for NSW continues to monitor and manage traffic movements, including by making changes to the operation of traffic lights between Gladesville and Darling Harbour. At times, that can result in longer journey times. However, it will improve traffic efficiency across the broader network. I stress also that we want people to continue to use the toll-free Iron Cove Link towards the CBD to bypass Victoria Road. I thank the member for Balmain for her advocacy. The Government appreciates everyone's patience. We know it has been frustrating. I remind the Chamber that time and time again, when former Government members opened infrastructure, they said almost exactly the same things that we have said, including at the opening of the M8.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Miranda will come to order. I call the member for Dubbo to order for the third time.

Ms PRUE CAR: They said exactly the same things that the transport Minister said yesterday about teething problems in infrastructure.

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

Ms PRUE CAR: Opposition members can act holier than thou, but the truth is that this Government will engage with the member for Balmain, all other members and motorists to ensure that they get to know the new infrastructure they are driving on. Things will improve as motorists adapt to the new road. Please, plan ahead and do not panic.

ICARE

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (12:14): My question is addressed to the Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety. Will the Minister update the House on how the next phase of the Minns Labor Government's reform of icare will improve outcomes for injured workers and businesses in New South Wales?

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (12:14): I thank the superstar hardworking member for Wallsend for advocating for injured workers. Just as the Government has been busy fixing the State's industrial relations system, it is also on the path to restoring and repairing icare after years of mismanagement by those opposite. Under the former Government, icare became a Liberal Party think tank, which is a contradiction in terms. Fortunately, icare is now on the path to reform. Given the scale of the challenges the Government has inherited, that will not happen quickly, but steady progress is being made. In the first six months since coming to government, Labor has passed two bills to improve the functioning of icare.

The first bill will diversify the icare board by mandating that a worker and employee representative will sit on the board. That change will ensure that there are more diverse voices on the icare board, making it more responsive to the people of New South Wales. The second bill establishes statutory objectives for icare for the first time, which members opposite left out when they created icare. The bill will also improve Treasury oversight, which the Treasurer is very happy about, and the ability of the Minister to make a ministerial direction, which he was also happy about. I have begun work on implementing a consultative committee of injured workers, which will speak directly to the icare board and executive, to ensure there are direct voices to the board and executive. I have also directed icare to increase its small business outreach.

Just a few weeks ago I visited Blacktown with the member for Blacktown, the member for Riverstone and the member for Mount Druitt. Over 100 businesses attended face-to-face consultations with icare. Last week icare and SIRA came to Parliament for an MPs' drop-in, which was fantastic. As part of our further reform, at the start

of the month I announced that Treasury would undertake an operational review of icare, with a mandate to examine excessive spending, waste and cost. We on this side will scrutinise every cent, unlike those opposite, who allowed a whole lot of razzle-dazzle, like trips to Las Vegas. That has been cut; that has stopped. There will be no frills. We will ensure that we are held accountable to those businesses. [*Time expired.*]

Documents

PARLIAMENTARY ETHICS ADVISER

The SPEAKER: I announce receipt of a copy of correspondence from the Parliamentary Ethics Adviser enclosing advice provided in respect of the post-separation employment of the Hon. Victor Dominello, former Minister, dated 29 September 2023 and received 28 November 2023. I order that the correspondence be printed.

Business of the House

BUSINESS LAPSED

The SPEAKER: I advise the House that in accordance with Standing Order 105 (3) general business orders of the day (for bills) No. 9, [Environmental Planning and Assessment Legislation Amendment (Agritourism) Bill 2023], has lapsed.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: COMMITTEES

Mr RON HOENIG: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to permit the moving of a motion, copies of which have been circulated to members, regarding the appointment of a Joint Select Committee on the NSW Reconstruction Authority.

Motion agreed to.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (12:20): I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended on Thursday 30 November 2023 to:

- (1) Provide for the following routine of business:
 - (a) at 10.00 a.m., the Speaker takes the chair;
 - (b) general business notices of motions (general notices) for up to 15 minutes;
 - (c) general business notices of motions for bills for up to 20 minutes;
 - (d) general business orders of the day for bills for up to 90 minutes;
 - (e) at 11.00 a.m., question time and its associated routine of business;
 - (f) the moving and consideration of the motion "That the House take note of Christmas felicitations";
 - (g) at 1.30 p.m., the Speaker leaves the chair;
 - (h) at 2.30 p.m., the Speaker resumes the chair;
 - (i) further consideration of the motion "That the House take note of Christmas felicitations" (if not concluded);
 - (j) at the conclusion of Christmas felicitations, resumption of general business orders of the day for bills (for up to 90 minutes);
 - (k) general business notices of motions or orders of the day (not being bills) (for up to 70 minutes);
 - (l) Government business (for up to 20 minutes, if required);
 - (m) at 4.00 p.m., business to be interrupted for the petition debate;
 - (n) community recognition statements;
 - (o) private members' statements; and
 - (p) the House will adjourn without motion until the next sitting day.
- (2) Notwithstanding any of the above, permit the interruption of business for the consideration of any Legislative Council messages, including the option for the Speaker to leave and resume the chair on the ringing of one long bell (if required).
- (3) Provide for the following speaking time limits on Christmas felicitations:
 - (a) Premier—10 minutes;
 - (b) Leader of the Opposition—10 minutes;
 - (c) Deputy Premier—10 minutes;
 - (d) Leader of The Nationals—10 minutes;

- (e) Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly—10 minutes;
- (f) Leader of the House—10 minutes;
- (g) Member for Wahroonga—10 minutes;
- (h) Member for Leppington—5 minutes;
- (i) Member for Terrigal—5 minutes; and
- (j) any other members—5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER: Before I put the question, I will speak to the motion. I point out that there is no provision for the Speaker to contribute to Christmas felicitations. I think that is an oversight.

Mr RON HOENIG: I am not sure it is an oversight. The Speaker has traditionally given their Christmas felicitations from the chair, but if the Speaker wishes to leave the chair and give them from the floor of the House, I can add to the motion.

The SPEAKER: I accept the explanation by the Leader of the House. I am very excited about the opportunity to felicitate.

Mr RON HOENIG: I am sure the Manager of Opposition Business is excited about it as well, now that he has to write his felicitations himself.

Mr Alister Henskens: I know, Mr Speaker, you are a serial felicitator. Certainly we expect that you would be giving felicitations. If we need to facilitate that, we will of course consent.

The SPEAKER: The Manager of Opposition Business is a serial facilitator. I appreciate that.

The question is that the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Committees

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE NSW RECONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY

Establishment and Membership

Mr RON HOENIG: I move:

That, notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the standing orders:

- (1) In accordance with section 93 of the NSW Reconstruction Authority Act 2022, a joint select committee, to be known as the Joint Select Committee on the NSW Reconstruction Authority, be established.
- (2) The committee is to review:
 - (a) the NSW Reconstruction Authority Act 2022 to determine whether—
 - (i) the policy objectives of the Act remain valid; and
 - (ii) the terms of the Act remain appropriate for securing the objectives.
 - (b) the operations of the authority regarding any disaster in relation to which the authority exercises functions.
- (3) A review under (2) is to be undertaken as soon as practicable—
 - (a) for a review under (2) (a)—after the period of 12 months from the date of assent to the Act; and
 - (b) for a review under (2) (b)—after the disaster to which the review relates.
- (4) A report on the outcome of a review under subsection (2) is to be tabled in each House of Parliament within—
 - (a) for a review under subsection (2) (a)—two years after the date of assent to this Act; and
 - (b) for a review under subsection (2) (b)—12 months after the disaster to which the review relates.
- (5) The committee is to consist of 10 members, as follows:
 - (a) six Legislative Assembly members; and
 - (b) four Legislative Council members.
- (6) Mr Clayton Barr shall be the chair of the committee.
- (7) Mr Philip Donato, Ms Liza Butler, Mr Warren Kirby, Ms Tamara Smith and Mr Richie Williamson be appointed to serve on such committee as members of the Legislative Assembly.
- (8) The committee has leave to make visits of inspection within the State of New South Wales, and other States and Territories of Australia.
- (9) The committee will have leave to sit during the sitting or any adjournment of the House.

- (10) That at any meeting of the committee four members shall constitute a quorum, but the committee must meet as a joint committee at all times.
- (11) A message be sent acquainting the Legislative Council of the resolution and requesting that it appoint four of its members to serve on the committee.

Motion agreed to.

Bills

AGEING AND DISABILITY COMMISSIONER AMENDMENT BILL 2023

Second Reading Speech

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion) (12:28): I continue where I left off prior to question time. The bill also adds an additional requirement about the diversity of members of the Ageing and Disability Advisory Board. This is an important board that advises the commissioner on any matter that the board considers appropriate or that is referred to the board by the commissioner. The composition of the board must reflect the diversity of the community. The Act already specifies that its members must include two or more people with disability, representatives from relevant advocacy organisations, and at least one representative of the disability or aged care service sector. Schedule 1 [17] amends section 29 to require that the board also includes two or more older adults. This implements recommendation 9 of the statutory review and reflects the commission's important functions in safeguarding both adults with disability and older adults.

Relatedly, the bill addresses internal inconsistencies within section 29 between the responsibilities of the Minister and the commissioner regarding membership of the Ageing and Disability Advisory Board. Currently, the responsibility under section 29 (4) to ensure the diversity of the membership of the board sits with me as Minister, whereas the commissioner is responsible for a range of other matters under section 29, including determining appointments, removals, fees and allowances.

The statutory review noted the internal inconsistencies in these allocations of responsibility, as it is illogical for one person to be responsible for appointments and removals for the board while another is responsible for diversity of the board, where these functions are inherently interlinked. Recommendation 10 of the statutory review was for these inconsistencies to be resolved. The bill does this in schedule 1 [15] by allocating responsibility for ensuring diversity of the board to the commissioner instead of me as Minister. Although these functions for other statutory boards often fall to the Minister, that is also because most statutory boards advise the Minister. In this case, the board advises the commissioner, and the commissioner is the most appropriate person to hold the appointment, removal and diversity responsibilities under the Act.

There are also some minor amendments made by the bill, responsive to statutory review recommendations. Schedule 1 [2] updates section 12 of the Act to reflect the fact that the National Disability Strategy has been replaced with *Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031*. This implements recommendation 1 of the statutory review. Schedule 1 [13] repeals section 26 as a spent provision. This implements recommendation 8 of the statutory review.

The bill will strengthen the ability of the Ageing and Disability Commission to perform its important functions, including in relation to safeguarding adults with disability and older adults who are subject to, or at risk of, abuse, neglect or exploitation. The final report of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability recognised what an important function the Ageing and Disability Commission performs in safeguarding adults, particularly in responding to violence and abuse in the community. The royal commission went so far as to recommend that other States and Territories introduce similar bodies.

I recognise and thank Commissioner Fitzgerald for his commitment to protecting adults with disability and older adults from abuse, neglect and exploitation. I also thank all the stakeholders who made submissions to the statutory review or the targeted consultation on the draft bill. Their recommendations were carefully considered, and many have been implemented in this bill. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

24-HOUR ECONOMY COMMISSIONER BILL 2023**24-HOUR ECONOMY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (VIBRANCY REFORMS) BILL 2023****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) (12:33): I move:

That these bills be now read a second time.

The Government is pleased to introduce the omnibus 24-Hour Economy Legislation Amendment (Vibrancy Reforms) Bill 2023 and 24-Hour Economy Commissioner Bill 2023. I recognise that these bills include matters of interest to all members. They have often been debated in this House and have received the support of members across parties. Particularly, I acknowledge the collaborative engagement of the Opposition and crossbench members in relation to these bills. I am pleased that this cooperation has meant that we have been able to agree on amendments in both Houses to strengthen the bill.

Over the past 12 years, New South Wales had forgotten what it was like to be a State with a vibrant, diverse range of venues open at all hours of the day and night. Laws such as the "last drinks" or "lockout laws" introduced in Kings Cross and the Sydney CBD might have been trying to address one particular type of problem. However, in taking this approach the Government at the time created other problems: closure of venues, especially smaller, independent venues, and the movement of artists and musicians and performers out of Sydney and New South Wales. It also failed to resolve broader issues across multiple systems, such as planning, liquor licensing and transport.

During this time, the industry did not give up. Our music, hospitality and festival sectors in particular all argued the case to defend their industries. As a result, the lockout laws have been lifted. In this post-COVID moment, the hospitality sector has bounced back. The music and entertainment sectors are now beginning to flourish once again. Recently the city has rallied for bigger events. The Government believes it is the right time to drive this change. The issue is now bipartisan. All sides of politics agree on the need for a safe, vibrant night-life.

The philosophy of the change before Parliament is to support venues and events, make entertainment economically viable and give venues in particular an alternative to relying simply on income from poker machines and alcohol sales. The demand for a safe, vibrant and inclusive night-life is there. However, the availability of venues and trading conditions to support live entertainment has not kept pace with that demand. Some parts of the State are desperately lacking access to a safe and vibrant night-life. Outside the Sydney CBD, just 23 per cent of respondents to a Department of Customer Service survey felt they had good-quality night-time entertainment options in their area. That figure was as low as 18 per cent when people were asked about good-quality arts and cultural events in their area outside the CBD after dark. It is clear that we need to change the rules.

The Government accepts that planning and liquor laws need to be changed to save the venues we have and to make it easier to build more. In my role as Minister for Gaming and Racing, I have the privilege of spending time in a wide variety of venues. From clubs that have theatres that host everything from bingo and trivia to live performances, and hotels with incredible food and live bands to innovative small bars and restaurants, the desire is there from industry to ensure our licensed venues are as vibrant as they can be.

The Government wants to help that happen and encourage even more people and venues to join this incredible industry. We accept that we need to change the rules around outdoor and street activation so that music, culture and entertainment can extend outdoors. We especially need to change the rules for sound and noise complaints that allow a single neighbour to make serial complaints to close a long-running venue they have just moved in next door to. With these bills, we will bring to an end the age of a single-neighbour serial complaint closing down a venue.

We accept that these changes need to be undertaken in a safe manner. We cannot go back to lockout laws, but nor can we return to the days of drunken violence on our streets. We do not shy away from the fact that alcohol can cause harm in our communities when it is poorly regulated and there is no other offering available. That is why we have developed reforms that are all about balance. They provide incentives for venues to trade longer where they offer live music or performance. We want to encourage venues to diversify their offerings beyond alcohol.

We want to cut red tape to encourage venues to open up. We want to encourage vibrant precincts and outdoor dining to reflect contemporary going-out practices. We want to balance all this with new tools to encourage compliance with our liquor laws. Gone are the days of a blanket, one-size-fits-all approach. These reforms ensure Liquor and Gaming NSW has enough tools to target noncompliant venues, with an emphasis on

tools that encourage compliance rather than penalising noncompliance. This sort of approach will ensure that vibrancy does not come at the expense of safety.

The Government has developed a package of reforms and policy initiatives to deliver vibrancy for the people of New South Wales. They include sensible venue sound management and incentives for live entertainment; coordinated precincts; activating the outdoors, including dining and street festivals; empowering the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner to deliver a sustainable, thriving night-time economy; modern planning and liquor licensing with commonsense approaches to risk; and improving the night-time for workers. The two bills the Government is introducing today form an important part of that package.

I turn first to the 24-Hour Economy Legislation Amendment (Vibrancy Reforms) Bill 2023. The bill seeks to amend the Gaming and Liquor Administration Act 2007, the Liquor Act 2007 and the Liquor Regulation 2018, and to make consequential amendments to other legislation to increase the vibrancy of the night-time economy, to reward the live performance sector and to allow the use of outdoor public spaces for recreation. It does that by encouraging venue operators to launch, grow, adapt and expand their businesses by removing unnecessary and outdated regulation, streamlining approval processes and putting in place a commonsense approach to entertainment sound.

The first range of amendments seek to streamline sound management and provide further incentives for live entertainment. Sound from licensed venues is regulated under multiple and duplicative legislative frameworks, including development applications enforced by local councils, offensive noise provisions enforced by the Environment Protection Authority and New South Wales police, and disturbance complaints enforced by Liquor and Gaming NSW. We have too many regulators, and that system does not work for anyone. The current overlapping regulatory remits and multiple complaint mechanisms cause increased costs, extend complaint resolution time frames and exacerbate friction between industry and the community. Most alarmingly, we have watched on as it has led to venues ceasing to provide live music resulting from single neighbour complaints.

The bill and associated regulatory change will designate Liquor and Gaming NSW as the primary regulator for formal disturbance complaints relating to entertainment noise at licensed venues—in other words, venues that have a liquor licence under the Liquor Act 2007. Importantly, these reforms are aimed at formal complaints and not those who respond to urgent complaints. This will be supported by changes to the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 and Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021, which will provide a framework to allow the Liquor Act to prevail over conditions of development consent for noise and trading hours, and through amendments to the Local Government Act 1993.

To give effect to this, the bill amends clause 97A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021 to prescribe that "a condition of a development consent that regulates noise generated from licensed premises ceases to have effect to the extent the condition relates to noise arising from the matters set out in the Liquor Act 2007, section 79B (1) (a) or (b)". Section 79B (1) (a) of the Liquor Act applies to "the manner in which the business of the licensed premises is conducted". The intention is for this definition to include examples like conditions that related to the volume to which the live music must be played, or the genre of music that must be played. Conversely, it is also the intention for other types of noise, such as construction noise or garbage disposal, to fall out of the scope of these provisions. Section 79B (1) (b), the other limb to section 79, relates to "the behaviour of persons after they leave the licensed premises (including, but not limited to, the incidence of antisocial behaviour or alcohol-related violence)".

Amendments to the Protection of the Environment Operations (General) Regulation 2022 will provide exemption from "offensive noise" pollution provisions for liquor-licensed premises where the activity is carried out in accordance with the liquor licence for the premises or the Liquor Act 2007, or for premises in a special entertainment precinct where the venue is complying with the council's plan for noise in that precinct. The bill adds section 79B to the Liquor Act 2007, which increases the thresholds for disturbance complaints to be considered, including the number of complainants from three to five, and requires complainants to attempt to resolve disputes before lodging complaints. Changes made in the upper House and accepted by the Government also clarify that this relates to five people from different residences.

The bill also ensures that noise complaints do not fall through the cracks. In exceptional circumstances Liquor and Gaming NSW may accept complaints made by fewer people, depending on the nature or gravity of the complaint. It may give reasonable consideration to proximity. Once Liquor and Gaming NSW accepts a formal disturbance complaint, it will undertake investigations into the complaint and make the relevant enquiries required to make a determination on the matter. The bill also adds section 80A to the Liquor Act 2007, which strengthens the test for disturbance complaints where the order of occupancy is in favour of the licensed premises, or the venue is within a special entertainment precinct. Order of occupancy will still be in favour of a venue if a longstanding licensed premises modifies their business plan to incorporate live music during certain hours of the day. This recognises the fact that live music should be considered an integral part of the offerings of licensed venues.

Section 75 of the Liquor Act 2007 will be amended to ensure that police can continue to do their important work and issue notices to cease noise in urgent situations where they believe a venue is breaching the Act or a licence condition and cannot be addressed more appropriately by the formal disturbance complaint process under the Liquor Act 2007. The Government strongly believes that Liquor and Gaming NSW is the most appropriate agency to take this work on, as it already has the expertise and is uniquely positioned to be able to balance the interests of venues and the concerns of local communities, as well as a strong compliance and enforcement division. In addition, the bill makes an amendment to section 81 (3) to require the secretary to publish guidelines regarding matters, which the secretary will consider when making a decision under this section about a complaint. These guidelines will be developed in consultation with relevant stakeholders and will allow the regulator to work with stakeholders to resolve any issues associated with the new framework.

The bill makes ongoing measures for live music and performance venues to receive reduced annual liquor licensing fees and extra trading hours if they meet certain eligibility requirements. These incentives aim to encourage more live music, performance and other arts and cultural events, as well as provide more employment opportunities for musicians and performances, particularly in smaller, independent venues. To help further encourage the creation of live music and performance venues, the bill expands and extends some of the incentives. The bill amends section 12A of the Liquor Act to increase the current additional 60 minutes of extended trading for live music and performance venues to two hours. This extended trading incentive will only be available on nights where venues are hosting live music.

The bill also amends section 13 of the Liquor Act 2007, which provides for extended trading for special events by expanding the eligible list of venues that can participate. Importantly, the updates in the bill make it clear that special event extended trading under section 13 does not permit the use of gaming machines if they were not already able to be operated without the extended trading. These reforms are about vibrancy, not gaming. When we think about the city we live in and want to evolve into, Enmore Road is a wonderful example. Council and government have declared that this is a place to go for a night out, and we are setting rules to make that even easier. Since being established as our State's first special entertainment precinct, it has been voted one of the best going-out districts in the world. The current precinct frameworks can be improved, though. They are currently fragmented and do not support ready coordination between various levels of government and businesses.

The bill will put new structures and incentives in place to build and protect vibrant special entertainment precinct destinations by improving frameworks and including additional incentives to improve operation and take-up. The outcome will be the creation of more night-life precincts around the State. Importantly, these changes encourage councils, in consultation with their communities, to foster diverse environments that reflect the culture of local areas. A special entertainment precinct on Enmore Road will look different to a potential precinct in Tamworth, Lakemba or Wagga Wagga. This is a pro-council change. They have the powers to designate the areas where rules change as they are best positioned to balance the needs of their communities, businesses and night-time economies.

Section 202 of the Local Government Act will be amended to increase trading hours to become more consistent for eligible venues in special entertainment precincts which schedule live music or performances on short notice. Section 12A in the Liquor Act will extend incentives to special entertainment precincts to activate extended trading and fee discounts for venues in those precincts. New guidelines will also be issued under the Local Government Act to ensure that these precincts are established with strong foundations, and, as mentioned earlier, the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner will provide advice and recommendations on how they are operating.

The bill will permanently relax certain rules for outdoor dining that were introduced during COVID and have proven incredibly popular with both venues and the community. These provisions improve slow and complex application processes, allowing venues to make the most of space outside their venues with a quicker, light-touch application process and providing New South Wales with access to enjoy outdoor spaces for social connection and cultural performances. The bill makes amendments to part 12 of the Liquor Act permanent, which allows councils to temporarily approve outdoor dining and performance on roads and footpaths without requiring approval from the New South Wales Government. Licensed venues, particularly live music venues in New South Wales, are struggling after years of complex, overlapping licensing and planning regulation. By taking steps to streamline liquor licensing through this bill, New South Wales can facilitate the growth of venues and live entertainment while simplifying the engagement process for local communities.

The most significant change is in regard to changes to the current community impact statement process that applicants must undertake for certain licence applications, namely medium- and high-risk applications. This community impact statement process will be replaced with a new streamlined approach that reduces duplication and makes consultation more meaningful for the community and decision-makers. At the moment, there is an entirely duplicative two-stage consultation process. There is a mandatory pre-application consultation period and

then another consultation period after an application is lodged, all for the liquor licence. Community groups, neighbours and stakeholder organisations are required to provide the same feedback multiple times, often after a consultation has already occurred, separately on the development application.

For residents and community members, it is not only confusing but also feels very ineffective because the feedback they provide is often filtered through legal firms or consultants hired by the applicant rather than seen directly by the decision-maker, which in most cases is the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority [ILGA]. The bill proposes to fold this all into a single-stage consultation. Under changes to section 48 of the Liquor Act and the regulations, applicants will now be required to prepare a statement of risks and potential effects as part of their liquor licence application. I note the changes made in the upper House to the name of this statement. The change in name of the statement to be a "statement of risks and potential effects" better reflects the nature of the statement without constraining the type of risks and harms that will be addressed.

Under the new process, all mandatory consultation will now take place after the application is lodged and is listed on a public New South Wales government website for consultation. This means that the relevant decision-maker will be able to review all stakeholder submissions relating to the application directly. The intention of this reform is to retain the community's ability to have their say on liquor licence applications where relevant, but remove duplicative and unnecessary processes. The proposed changes were included in the liquor licence discussion paper released for public consultation in late 2022. That feedback has informed the design. One key piece of feedback was that the consultation process should be more transparent and the community should be heard by licensing decision-makers. That is the direction we have now headed in. To ensure that this is the case, the bill sets out that anyone who would currently be consulted, whether pre-application or after the application is lodged, will still be consulted.

Administrative changes have also been made to ease the burden on applicants and improve the quality of consultation, including expanding the area around a venue that must be notified of any application and having Liquor and Gaming NSW notify health, police and other stakeholders of relevant applications. Amendments to section 44 and 53 of the Liquor Act will allow for any natural person to make a submission or complaint under the Liquor Act regarding a liquor licence application or an application to vary or revoke a liquor licence condition. This amendment is intended to make it clear that an individual's ability to make a submission to ILGA cannot be prohibited by any contract or agreement made. There has been big social and behavioural change in Kings Cross' night-time culture since the O'Farrell Government introduced the lockdown laws over 10 years ago. But unfortunately those laws converged with the decline in the vibrancy of the Sydney CBD.

The bill proposes to remove precinct-based venue fees in the Kings Cross and Sydney CBD entertainment precincts so that venues in those areas will be subject to the same fees as the rest of New South Wales—in other words, so those areas are not artificially depressed. The bill removes the requirement for ID scanners to be used for venues in prescribed precincts under the Liquor Act 2007. This reform builds on the improvements made in safety in these areas in the past 10 years and also reduces the high cost and burden to businesses in operating the ID scanners. Importantly, if businesses still wish to use ID scanners, there is nothing stopping them from doing it voluntarily, and we know many venues across New South Wales already do so.

The bill also proposes to streamline trading hours and get rid of historical anomalies in the legislation by adopting one standard trading period for liquor sales from 5.00 a.m. to midnight on all days of the week, meaning Sunday is not treated differently to other days of the week, allowing hotels to apply for extended trading between midnight on Sunday and 5.00 a.m. on Monday morning like other venues and other nights of the week. Enabling small bars to commence trading at 10.00 a.m. rather than 12.00 p.m. will create avenues for small bars to offer a brunch or lunch service and would be a fair approach to the regulation of licensed premises where the risk is proportionately low. This is particularly so given other venues can commence trading from 5.00 a.m.

However, it is important to note that these new trading hours will not override their existing liquor trading times on individual liquor licences or their development consent, and the standard six-hour closure period would still be in effect. Any venue seeking to trade during the extended standard trading period will need to apply to have their hours extended through a change of conditions application to ILGA, which will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The bill also formalises a commonsense provision that allows restaurants and similar on-premise businesses to apply for an authorisation to sell takeaway liquor under certain circumstances. This measure has been in place since 2020. It was introduced in an informal manner during the COVID lockdowns and has remained since. No significant compliance or alcohol-related harms have arisen as a result of this measure.

The bill also amends sections 33 of the Liquor Act to ensure that producers and wholesaler licensees can grow and diversify their offerings where historically they have been restricted to do so by the Act. The bill achieves this by allowing wholesalers to sell products at a broader range of events, such as regional or Sunday markets that offer a mix of produce, crafts and artisanal products, or festivals that promote products from New South Wales and elsewhere; sell products even if they are brewed or distilled by the producer offsite, such

as a hop farmer who uses offsite third-party production facilities to brew its beer; and sell products that are uniquely their own, such as a truffle manufacturer who uses their own product to blend with a spirit that has been distilled.

While wineries currently have the flexibility to operate multiple premises under one licence, the same does not apply for breweries and distilleries. The bill amends section 35 of the Liquor Act to allow all New South Wales liquor producers to run multiple premises, provided the sites are in reasonable proximity and within 20 kilometres of each other in a non-metropolitan area or 10 kilometres of each other in a metropolitan area. The additional premises could be a production, retail or wholesale outlet, or a mix of those. That would allow a microbrewery or a brewpub to use one licence, with one set of fees and conditions, to open a bar up the road from the production facility where they do walk-throughs, provide tastings and sell takeaways or run premises near to each other to expand floor space while marketing both under a single brand, established separately from the wholesale site.

The aim of the bill is to encourage a vibrant economy, particularly at night, but it does not do this at the expense of safety. The Government is removing blanket approaches to risk in favour of more targeted approaches towards licensed venues, including compliance rather than just penalising noncompliance. We want venues to succeed in a safe, proportionate and balanced manner.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich): It being 1.00 p.m., debate is interrupted for orders of the day (committee reports). I set down resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a later hour.

Committees

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING

Reports

Debate resumed from 22 November 2023.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich): The question is that the House take note of the report entitled *Minerals Legislation Amendment (Offshore Drilling and Associated Infrastructure Prohibition) Bill 2023*.

Report noted.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Reports

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich): The question is that the House take note of the report.

Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (13:01): As Chair: I take note of the *Interim report on the Sydney Metro West project*. This is the committee's first report in the Fifty-Eighth Parliament. On 1 August 2023 the committee received a referral from the Minister for Transport. The Minister requested that the committee inquire into and report on the Sydney Metro West project. The committee then adopted the inquiry on 15 August 2023. The inquiry's terms of reference required the committee to examine the original business case of the Sydney Metro West project, as well as the establishment of the route and selection of stations, the cause of blowouts in project costs and time lines, whether the Minister at the time considered any other consequential benefits that could be achieved from the project, and other matters relevant to the Sydney Metro West project. The committee heard from a range of submission makers and witnesses, including members of the public, non-profit organisations, local councils, government agencies, industry bodies and advocacy groups. In total, we received 34 submissions and heard from 28 witnesses at the public hearing on 13 October 2023.

I draw the attention of members to the key issue highlighted in the interim report. The Committee on Transport and Infrastructure has been unable to fulfill one of the essential terms of reference of this inquiry. We faced repeated challenges in obtaining a copy of the original business case for the Sydney Metro West project. The interim report outlines our attempts to fulfil the terms of reference, including writing to Infrastructure NSW and Sydney Metro to request a copy of the original business case. Both agencies denied this request on the basis that the information is Cabinet-in-confidence. The committee attempted to obtain a copy of the original business case by requesting this information from government agencies at the public hearing. Again, our requests were denied.

The committee is unable to fulfil its role in relation to paragraph (a) of the terms of reference without access to the original business case for the Sydney Metro West project. To address the issue, we recommend that the House considers making an order for papers to enable the committee to complete its inquiry. We are committed to fulfilling the terms of reference for this inquiry and will keep the House updated on our progress. I thank my fellow committee members, Deputy Chair Nathan Hagarty, Judy Hannan, Warren Kirby and Ray Williams, for

their collaboration and assistance on this committee. I also thank the secretariat for its support to the committee. We extend our thanks to all the stakeholders who have participated in the inquiry so far. Their passion for improving the Sydney Metro West project was apparent and they made an enormous contribution to the inquiry. Their valuable contributions will also be considered in the final report. I commend the interim report to the House.

Report noted.

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Reports

Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (13:05): As Chair: Yesterday, the Legislation Review Committee tabled *Legislation Review Digest No. 8/58*, which reported on 13 bills and reviewed 13 regulations that did not raise issues for report. The committee's digest is intended to inform members of both Houses about the potential impact of bills and delegated legislation on personal rights and liberties, and whether they allow for the inappropriate use of government or legislative power. I draw the attention of members to some of the key issues raised in the digest and to the committee's function of reviewing subordinate legislation. The High Risk Offenders Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 seeks to amend the Crimes (High Risk Offenders) Act 2006 and the Terrorism (High Risk Offenders) Act 2017 regarding high-risk offenders and their detention and supervision. The amendments would allow people convicted of serious strangulation offences to be subject to continuing detention or extended supervision after their imprisonment term.

The committee considered the proposed amendments that may expose more offenders to the potential for indefinite detention. The bill seeks to clarify that aggregate and cumulative sentences, where at least one offence is an eligible or relevant offence, are valid terms of imprisonment that would be eligible for a continuing detention order application. In reporting on the matter, the committee acknowledged the intention to protect public safety, as well as the safety of victims of crime and domestic violence offences. However, the committee noted the risk of additional punishment, along with the fact that continuing detention orders may be made on the grounds of unacceptable risk of further offending. That decision is made on the balance of probabilities, which is lower than the standard of proof usually guaranteed in criminal proceedings. Therefore, the committee referred the matter to Parliament for its consideration.

The Human Tissue Amendment (Ante-mortem Interventions) Bill 2023 seeks to insert part 4A into the Human Tissue Act 1983 to create a process for authorising ante-mortem procedures on potential human tissue donors. The committee noted that the proposed amendments provide for authorisation of those medical procedures on a person without their personal consent. Where a person cannot consent, a senior available next of kin of the donor can consent or, if they cannot be located, a designated officer can authorise the procedure if a person lacks capacity. However, the committee noted that the procedures would only be undertaken in circumstances where a person has consented to tissue donation. It was also recognised that there are already processes for next of kin to consent to other medical procedures for individuals who are unable to give consent. The committee therefore did not make any further comment on this matter.

I turn to the functions of the committee regarding regulations. Along with reviewing every bill introduced in Parliament, the committee is also required by the Legislation Review Act 1987 to review all disallowable regulations and statutory instruments that are tabled in Parliament. The committee reviews that delegated legislation against a technical set of issues under section 9 (1) (b). While the committee reviews every regulation, it only produces a substantive report when a regulation engages with the issues provided for under section 9. The committee also publishes a summary of that delegated legislation that, after careful scrutiny, it considers does not warrant further comment. It does so as an appendix to the digest. Across eight digests this year, the committee has reviewed a total of 278 regulations and instruments tabled since November last year, 13 of which have been reported on.

I encourage everyone to read the full digest, which is available on the committee's webpage. I thank my fellow committee members for their valuable contributions: the member for Heathcote and deputy chair, the member for Parramatta, the member for Leppington, the member for Upper Hunter, as well as the Hon. Cameron Murphy, the Hon. Jacqui Munro and Ms Sue Higginson from the other place. I also thank the secretariat for their hard work and support throughout the year. I hope that Sam, Anna, Alex, Ashley, Kate, Kayeneh, Menyuan, Nicolle and Caitlin all have a wonderful break and a happy Christmas. I commend the digest to the House.

Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (13:09): I make a contribution in relation to the work of the Legislation Review Committee and its report entitled *Legislation Review Digest No. 8/58*. In this report some work was done on 13 of bills in total. Of those, five had no issues, three had no comment and five had issues and were referred to Parliament. I will go through those in finer detail. The first one I refer to is the Casino Control Amendment Bill 2023. The issues that were identified related to the Treasurer's powers in relation to the job

guarantee agreements and the retrospective exclusion of right to compensation. The second bill is the Crimes Amendment (Prosecution of Certain Offences) Bill 2023. The issue identified related to expanding criminal prosecutions and retrospectivity. Both of those were referred to Parliament.

Regarding the Energy Legislation Amendment Bill 2023, the issue identified was the wide delegation of powers to unspecified persons. The issue identified in the High Risk Offenders Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 had to do with the broad extension of the Act for freedom from arbitrary detention and the right to liberty, which was noted. The continuing detention orders, additional punishment and a right to freedom from arbitrary detention and the presumption of innocence has been referred. Further, regarding the Industrial Relations Amendment Bill 2023, the report identified two issues: one regarding contempt of court and the other on the separation of powers doctrine and the independence of judicial members. That is one that needs further review. The report states:

... the Committee is concerned that by having judicial members preside over proceedings in the Industrial Court who also exercise non-judicial functions of the Commission, including resolving industrial disputes, it may undermine the perception of independence of the Industrial Court to a lay person. While it recognises that there are already specialised courts and tribunals in NSW which exercise judicial functions, the Committee notes that the concerns relating to judicial independence may arise from the non-judicial official functions of the Industrial Court's members. For these reasons, the Committee refers this matter to Parliament for its consideration.

On the Greater Cities Commission Repeal Bill 2023 the committee made no further comment, but I always enjoy speaking about this particular issue, the Henry VIII clause. As a great lover of history, I enjoy the opportunity to stand in Parliament and note a link to the past with Henry VIII. The report states:

The Committee notes that the provision amounts to a Henry VIII clause, allowing the Executive to amend the provisions of an Act by adding or removing cities that constitute the Six Cities Region. The Committee generally considers Henry VIII clauses in bills to be inappropriate delegation of legislative powers, as regulations do not receive the same level of parliamentary scrutiny as primary legislation.

I thank the committee and the chair for her leadership. Most importantly, I thank the secretariat, who worked so hard to deliver the great information in the report. I commend the report to the House.

Report noted.

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

Condolences

ALISON MEGARRITY

The SPEAKER (14:32): I welcome to the gallery the family and friends of the late Alison Megarrity, including her husband, Robert Megarrity; sons, Glyn and Liam; sister, Jan, and her husband, Kevin; cousin, Meg Collins; and great niece, Piper Watson. I also acknowledge in the gallery former Minister and former member for Mount Druitt Richard Amery; former member for Miranda Barry Collier; former member for Camden Geoff Corrigan—it is lovely to see you again, Geoff; it has been a long time—and former member for Holsworthy Mel Gibbons. Thank you for being here. Only a few current members would have served with Alison Megarrity, like I had the privilege of serving with her. I express my condolences to all. I also acknowledge former member for Kogarah Cherie Burton. Welcome.

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (14:34): I move:

That this House extends deep sympathy to the family and friends of Ms Alison Megarrity, MP, former member for Menai, who passed away on 15 November 2022.

On behalf of the New South Wales Government, the Premier, the parliamentary Labor Party and the Australian Labor Party, I acknowledge the service of the former member for Menai Ms Alison Megarrity, who sadly passed away on 15 November 2022 following a battle with cancer. One year on from her passing, this must be a difficult time for her husband, Robert, and her two sons, Liam and Glyn. To them I extend my sincerest condolences. Alison served the former electorate of Menai for 12 years from 1999 to 2011. During her time in this place, Alison never took her constituents for granted. She understood that representing her community was a great responsibility, and it was a challenge she undertook with vigour.

In her inaugural speech before the House, she promised to represent her constituents without fear or favour. Over a decade of serving the Menai community, this was evident to all who knew her. It is no secret that the former electorate of Menai, now Holsworthy, was a marginal electorate. Alison had no hesitation speaking truth to power to make sure that her electorate received its fair share from the New South Wales Government. She was passionate about ensuring that the growing south-west Sydney area received the infrastructure that it needed. Her advocacy is reflected in the many New South Wales Government projects delivered for her electorate during her time in this place, including the first two stages of the Bangor Bypass, the Alford's Point Bridge duplication, the

magnificent Woronora Bridge and the Moorebank Avenue overpass. Those projects immensely improve the safety and connectivity of south-west Sydney's road network, while also help to remove traffic from smaller residential streets.

Alison was also a tireless advocate for the betterment of the health and educational facilities that served her electorate. She appreciated how important it was that these facilities were ready to cater for the area's growing population. It was during her tenure in Parliament that Liverpool Hospital, one of the largest hospitals in New South Wales, was upgraded to modern standards. She was also a strong advocate for improving education facilities, successfully lobbying for upgrades to local schools.

As a parliamentarian, Alison served in a variety of roles throughout her career, including as Parliamentary Secretary Assisting the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning, and Natural Resources; and Parliamentary Secretary Assisting the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment and for the Arts. She was a member of the Legislative Assembly Standing Ethics Committee, a member of the Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption, a member of the Standing Orders and Procedure Committee, and a member of the Committee on the Office of the Valuer-General. She also served ably in her role as Assistant Speaker from 2007 until her retirement from Parliament in 2011. Alison was respected across the political divide. Following her time in Parliament, she earned the nonpartisan roles of secretary and president of the Parliament of NSW Former Members Association. For those who are not aware, this organisation makes significant donations to various New South Wales children's charities every year.

Following her time in State Parliament, in 2013 Alison stood as Labor's candidate in Hughes. As the Minister for Local Government, I also highlight the contributions she made to her community when she served on council before entering State politics. Alison served as councillor on Liverpool City Council from 1994 to 1999 and held the position of chair of the environment portfolio. Serving on the Liverpool environment committee was a large part of Alison's motivation to run for State Parliament. Alison saw the protection of the environment—a core Labor value—as an issue of stewardship and implored all voters to care about how important environmental issues would impact generations to come.

Alison was always seeking outcomes for her community, and I have come to learn of Alison's many contributions outside the political sphere, including as chair of the Chipping Norton Community Centre management committee; deputy convenor of the Georges River Environment Alliance; and board member of the Whitlam Leisure Centre. Alison also made contributions to local sport, including as assistant manager of the West Sydney Slix wheelchair basketball team. Alison's contributions to her community have left a lasting and positive impact on the south-west Sydney region. Her dedication to public service is a shining example of how one person can make a profound difference to the lives of many.

In her final speech to this House, Alison reflected on the promise she made when elected to this place to always put her constituents first. She said, "In my heart I know that I could not have worked any harder." This could not have been more true. Alison was taken from us at only 61—months before the election of the Minns Labor Government. Had she been with us today, she would be a source of great wisdom and guidance for younger members, as she was for many of us over the years. Alison will be sorely missed by her family, her friends, her colleagues and former colleagues, and her community. May she rest in peace.

Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy) (14:42): On behalf of the Opposition, I make a contribution to debate on the condolence motion for the former member and first member for Menai, Alison Megarrity. Ms Megarrity served in this place for three terms between 1999 to 2011. The former seat of Menai overlaps significantly with my electorate of Holsworthy. I should note that it is the only seat in New South Wales to have always been represented by a woman. Whilst I did not know Ms Megarrity personally, I recognised her enduring legacy as a State parliamentarian in my first few days in the electorate office. Soon after moving into the office in April, I had a constituent call up requesting Alison's assistance. Unfortunately, we had to break the news to that person that Ms Megarrity had passed away late last year. This encounter made me realise that, despite not being in elected office for more than a decade, constituents still remembered her and her service to the community was not forgotten.

Ms Megarrity's career was not too dissimilar to mine. We both served as a councillor on Liverpool City Council for a single term before jumping to State politics. During her term on council, Ms Megarrity was also part of the Chipping Norton Lakes Authority and Georges River Combined Councils group. She also served as a board member of the Whitlam Leisure Centre, deputy convenor of the Georges River Environment Alliance, and chair of the Chipping Norton Community management committee. Ms Megarrity also served as a secretary and president of the Former Members Association. The Former Members Association is a voluntary nonpartisan organisation that brings together former and current members and annually donates to a New South Wales children's charity.

Her ongoing legacy remains an inspiration to me as a fellow woman in politics. She has been labelled as the epitome of the very best local MP by former member for Miranda Barry Collier. Although we are from different parties, it is clear that her passion for the community was unwavering. In her valedictory speech in 2010, Ms Megarrity said:

I began my 1999 inaugural speech by saying that it was with a deep sense of honour and privilege that I stood in the Chamber of the oldest Parliament in Australia as the first ever member for Menai. Almost 12 years later, I still feel exactly the same.

Alison delivered much-needed infrastructure during her time in Parliament, including the construction of the Woronora Bridge; stages one and two of the Bangor Bypass—which I must note I use quite often—and the Alford's Point Bridge duplication. We still benefit from those vital upgrades today. However, none of her advocacy would have been possible without a supportive family. We extend our deepest sympathies to the Megarrity family. To her husband, Robert, and her two sons, Liam and Glyn, Alison's contributions to our community will forever be cherished. As we remember Ms Megarrity's service, let us also acknowledge the sacrifices and support given by her family throughout her public service journey. On behalf of the Opposition, I extend my condolences to her family and everyone who knew and loved Alison. Vale, Alison Patricia Megarrity. May she rest in eternal peace. I commend the motion to the House.

Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (14:45): I support the motion. I begin my contribution by passing on my condolences to Robert, Liam, Glyn and family and friends. I also note my former colleagues in the gallery. I think I am one of seven Labor MPs in this Parliament now who were in this place when Alison was here. I was also a member of the Former Members Association with her and the Feather Dusters as well. Those are a few things, as political careers go. I remember a number of things about Alison, but one that really struck me was that whenever I met her after politics she did not seem to have slowed down. She was working on all sorts of things in the community, whipping people along to the Former Members, reminding them of upcoming events, making sure they participated wherever possible and, as far as I could tell, continuing to be very active in local branches and the Labor Party in pursuing her passion for change in the community and for the progressive ideals that she came into Parliament with.

Alison was elected to this Parliament in 1999—four years before I was—and retired in 2011. In her valedictory speech she mentioned that Bob Carr had once said to her, "I can't look at you without thinking of the Bangor Bypass." She was associated with many such projects. For my part, when I fly from Canberra to Sydney to come to Parliament I often fly over the Woronora Bridge. It is quite an impressive structure, and I always think of Alison. To be brutally honest, when I came to this place as a young country member—I was the only country Labor member of Parliament at the time—I did not have a clue where Woronora was. But I learned about it through Alison's lobbying and talking constantly in the caucus and to Ministers about her electorate and the things that needed to happen there. That is my association with the things Alison delivered for the electorate.

I know Alison had many passions that she pursued, including social justice, Indigenous people and the environment. She had many networks and friends in the Labor Party who have moved on from politics. The fact that she was able to maintain all those contacts and remain active even when she retired from Parliament I think marks Alison as somebody very special. I spoke to the convenor of the Feather Dusters, Gerard Martin, and asked him what he might want to say about Alison. His comments were that Alison was as honest as they come and she did not suck up to anybody. Gerard, being from Bathurst, was also very proud of the fact that Alison grew up in the Central West. Country members always take those associations very seriously. Alison's father was a stationmaster, as I understand it. That gave her a strong association with Bathurst and the Central West region, which seems to have a lot of Labor roots with all those railway employees.

I was a bit astounded to read—because it seems a bit odd now—that in 2007, when Alison was elected Assistant Speaker, she was actually the first female Assistant Speaker. That was after more than a century of this Parliament's existence, so that is quite an achievement in itself. I acknowledge the former members who are seated in the gallery today. Barry Collier, who was the member for a neighbouring electorate and a representative of the Sutherland area, worked very closely with Alison over many years and they developed a fantastic relationship. The comments he made to the House when Alison left the Parliament included many wonderful tributes to the work that Alison did in her local area and to the person she was. Corro is also in the gallery. Geoff Corrigan sat next to Alison in the Parliament for a long time. They built an incredible friendship that endured long after Parliament, and right to the end. It seemed very special from everything I saw.

Richard Amery is also in the gallery. He has assumed the mantle of the Former Members Association really well, of course, but he was probably whipped into it by Alison before she passed that mantle on. That is great. I do not know Mel Gibbons well, but it is great to see her in the gallery. Cherie Burton would probably be able to tell some terrific stories if she was still a member of this place. I am sure she would like to share them. I join every member in the Chamber in expressing my deepest sympathy to all of Alison's loved ones. My memory of Alison

is this amazingly energetic person who fought for everything, who always spoke up and who always worked really hard. That is the memory I will keep in my head. My condolences to all her loved ones.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery) (14:51): Before calling the member for Wyong, I also give my condolences. It is lovely to see in the gallery some of my former colleagues who I worked with from 2007 to 2011. I have not seen Geoff Corrigan for a long time. It is also lovely to see Richard Amery, Barry Collier, Mel Gibbons and Cherie Burton, as well as Alison's family. I totally agree with the comment by the member for Monaro that Alison was honest as they come, and she did not suck up to anybody. That was so true. I really admired her for that.

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) (14:52): I honour and pay tribute to my dear colleague and fellow Feather Duster Alison Megarrity. I acknowledge Alison's family—Robert, Liam and Glyn—and Alison's sister and her family. Alison's sister is a member of my constituency, and on numerous occasions Alison would phone me to make sure that the welfare of her whole family was looked after. I thought that was pretty special. She loved people. She particularly loved her family, but she also loved her community. I think that is coming through the words being spoken in the Chamber today.

I acknowledge my former colleagues in the gallery, including the Hon. Richard Amery, the typewriter king, who we all looked up to. Barry Collier is also in the gallery. I have a few of Barry's books and I follow his advice. My good friend Geoff Corrigan is in the gallery. I will talk a little more about Geoff. I also acknowledge Mel Gibbons and Cherie Burton, who was just in the gallery. I think it speaks highly of Alison that Melanie is in the gallery, as well as a friend from the Central Coast, former Liberal member for The Entrance, Bob Graham. Bob developed quite a good friendship with Alison through the Former Members Association and speaks of her often.

Those members who were not here between 2007 and 2011 would not understand but that was a pretty tumultuous time for the Labor Party. One of the things I knew about Alison was that you could trust her. The people who are part of the Feather Dusters have now formed a pretty tight group. We were friends and we trusted each other. When times were tough, we supported each other. I still remember the day I walked out of a restaurant in Sydney, and I heard this voice say, "Hello, David." There was Alison; she was wearing a scarf. Geoff was driving her, I think, to the hospital for her treatment. She had just randomly come down the road, stopped and said hello. I really look forward to catching up with everyone at each of our Feather Duster get-togethers, where we tell war stories. But most of all we are just happy in each other's company again, because we formed a pretty tight group.

As people have said, Alison won the electorate of Menai in 1999. She held onto it in 2003 and again in 2007. She said in her inaugural speech—I think this really summed her up—that she would serve her constituency without fear or favour. And she certainly did that. She also said that she was in the Labor Party because she wanted to be part of a government that would have the courage and commitment to take on the too-hard baskets, particularly social justice issues. She was passionate about her community. In fact, she described working for her community as a sheer joy. Alison was a fabulous local MP and a first-class advocate for her community. She was an example for all of us to follow. In this place that is pretty high praise, because it can be a pretty tough place. In life you look for those people who actually live what they say, Alison was one of those people.

Others have mentioned the infrastructure Alison got for her community. Those massive projects will have a lasting effect on her community. There is no greater feeling for an MP than to be able to look at things in their community and say, "I did that." Excuse the French, but Alison did some bloody big things. They were not small things. It was not moving a road sign or filling a pothole; it was building bloody big bridges and bypasses and all sorts of things. She was proud, as the member for Monaro said, that Bob Carr paid tribute to her work on the Bangor Bypass. That became a bit legendary in this place. She was proud of those achievements, but it was never enough. She always wanted to do more. She did not rest on her laurels. Many of us might have said, "Those are some pretty good projects; we can sit back and relax now." That was never Alison. She looked at the next project.

As was mentioned, there were upgrades to local schools and the redevelopment of Liverpool Hospital at the western end of her electorate. They are lasting tributes to her efforts. Anyone who knew Alison or worked with her, as I did, can confirm her first-class care, compassion, tenacity and commitment when it came to looking after not just her community but also her family and her friends. She organised the caucus that was known as the south-west caucus in the Feather Dusters. Some key members of that were Geoff; Phil Costa, who now lives at Nabitac; and Alan Ashton. If you got in a conversation with Alan, you would have to put two hours aside because Alan loved to talk, so I can imagine those trips from that area. I hope the others had earmuffs and some headphones.

We all love Alan dearly. Alison always made sure they attended our dinners. They would catch the 5.08 train from Campbelltown and then take the train home again to their families. She took prodigious care of those around her and went to great lengths to make sure they were okay. Geoff said he had the honour and privilege of sitting next to Alison in question time and during his whole time in Parliament he said he never saw anyone work harder than Alison. While others—and there were a few—enjoyed the antics of question time or caught up on sleep—sometimes Alison would elbow Geoff to keep him awake—Alison would be working, reviewing correspondence or media releases and anything else that meant she could continue to deliver for her community. Geoff described her as the loveliest workhorse he has ever had the honour to know and work with. She was simply fabulous. She was also caring, always checking in on her treasured friends and asking after their families. She always made sure that everyone was okay.

Geoff said also that if there was a fast-walking contest, Alison would win, hands down, every time. She loved to move from point A to point B. Alison was well liked and well respected by colleagues on both sides of the House. Looking back, she was one of our dearest colleagues. Alison was still involved in Parliament after her time as an MP, unlike others who leave this place. I remember talking to her after she was talked into becoming the president and secretary of the Former Members Association. She tried to revive the association and get everyone to events because she thought it was important that people who left politics could still get together and share their experiences, no matter what side of politics they came from. Alison epitomised service and selflessness. She always put her constituents and her party ahead of her personal ambition. In fact, she did not have personal ambition; she was here to make a difference, and she did. In her final speech to the House in 2011 she said:

I know in my own heart, I could not have worked any harder.

How true those words are. Alison left Parliament at the 2011 election to care for her husband, Robert. Not many of us live on our own terms, and she made the decision to look after her family. I was quite surprised that she was talked into making a tilt for the Federal electorate of Hughes. She could not say no because she always wanted to do the right thing by the party. When she did leave Parliament to care for her husband, Robert, the sad irony is that she herself became unwell. But she was tenacious. She even went to Japan for specialised treatment. She never gave up. She fought every day until the end. No-one could say more than that about her.

Even in her final year, Alison was always looking out for others, checking on her fellow feather dusters to ensure they were okay. She was one of a kind and will be sorely missed by all who knew her. I extend my deepest sympathy to Alison's family: her husband, Robert; her sons, Liam and Glyn; and her sister and her family. Rest in peace, Alison. You will never be forgotten. You have made a mark on this world that will never be removed.

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (15:03): I make a contribution to the condolence motion for Alison Megarrity. In my seven or eight short months here, I have earned a reputation as someone who can be tapped on the shoulder to speak for as long as possible on any topic if needed, much like Alison. It has been difficult to write this contribution. It was a struggle, so I apologise in advance if my contribution is all over the shop, but I think it will go okay. As we have heard, Alison was born in Central West New South Wales. Despite that, she was educated at Our Lady of Mercy College, Parramatta, so I claim her as a proud westie, like me. She completed a Bachelor of Arts at Macquarie University and then joined the Labor Party in 1989. She served on the Liverpool council from 1994 until 1999, and I also served on Liverpool council.

In its long history, Liverpool council has had a lot of characters, some of whom have served in this Chamber. Some of them were infamous and some of them were not so infamous. I am right in saying that Alison was a member of the latter category. She was respected by all sides of politics. When I get around the traps I look at the plaques at council facilities such as parks or pools and think, "I wonder when this was opened and who was on the council." I always love to see Alison's name on those plaques. I note the contribution she made to the City of Liverpool in her five years as a councillor. But we are here because of Alison's contribution as the member for Menai from 1999 until 2011.

We have heard previously about the measures she fought very hard to deliver, including the Moorebank Avenue overpass, the redevelopment of Alford's Point Public School and Chipping Norton Public School, a new school at Wattle Grove and the Woronora Bridge. My best high school mate moved down to the shire in the late nineties and I remember driving down that way. It was ridiculous. We would have to drive down the hill, go across the little bridge and then go back up the hill, and all the while there were pylons sitting in the river. Those pylons sat that way for a very long time. It was Alison Megarrity who finally turned those pylons into a bridge, and it is one of her great legacies. I thank Alison for that. Those projects made an immense difference to her community and the surrounding area, and I was a beneficiary. The former member for Bankstown Tony Stewart said:

The new Wattle Grove school was a strong achievement for the Carr Government, but was underlined by the commitment, tenacity and diligence of the honourable member for Menai, who has not left any stone unturned to ensure and insist that her electorate receives the best public education outcomes.

That quote struck me. I have spoken in this House about the task in front of me as the member for Leppington. Keen followers of my speeches, which I am sure all members are—the member for Davidson is—would know that one of the measures at the top of my list is a new high school in Leppington. Funds were provided in the budget to upgrade five of the existing public schools as well as the main road that goes through the area, Fifteenth Avenue. As I looked over my speech, I noticed the many ways in which Alison's legacy has influenced me and the way in which I behave as a public representative and new MP. As both a friend and mentor, through her values and friendship, Alison has been a major influence on me.

As others have said in their contributions, she was the archetypal local MP. She was a representative who knew every side street, school, sporting organisation and faith group on her patch. She fought doggedly to ensure that her community got its fair share. Once again, I do my best to live in her immense shadow. Even after her retirement from this place, Alison remained a very active member of the Labor Party. Most recently she served as the president of the Chipping Norton Wattle Grove branch. She was passionate about the rank-and-file membership of the Labor Party. I have no doubt she would have been proud to have seen me win a rank-and-file preselection for the electorate of Leppington a little over a year ago.

Her commitment did not waver through her long illness. One of her final acts was to pass a motion at her local branch calling for rank-and-file preselection in the seat of Holsworthy, which largely replaced her seat of Menai after the 2015 election. I have been interested to hear in some of the previous contributions of her ability to pull people together across different personalities, ages and persuasions. The former members' club has been mentioned. I will need to do a little bit of research on the south-west caucus and get more information because, again, it is one of those seeds that perhaps she subtly planted in my brain which has borne fruit some 10 to 15 years later. In a few weeks I have pulled together some south-west Sydney MPs for Christmas lunch at my new office, so her legacy continues to live on in interesting ways.

The other thing that I was most involved with in terms of Alison and her legacy was a little thing called Liverpool Labor. That came about after the 2016 local government elections. We all sat around and had a chat, and we decided to keep what was effectively the council campaign going, but to turn it into something that kept the local branches engaged across all three levels of government. Sometimes in political life you get a bit tired of going to branch meetings every month and having to get together for procedural things, but this was something that Alison continued to drive, month in, month out. It was very difficult to give an apology. She would make sure that everyone was there and active, and that we were continuing to work together as the Liverpool Labor group for many years afterwards. In fact, she kept it going right into the next council election in 2021.

I think the two biggest legacies of that group sit in this Chamber, and that is me and the member for Liverpool. I think in many ways we would not be here if it was not for Alison and the Liverpool Labor machine, which she pulled together and kept going for so long. Alison was actually the campaign manager for my first tilt at elected office at the 2016 local government elections. Her commitment and drive throughout that campaign, even though she was not 100 per cent, was endless and infectious. One thing that she taught me was that there is nothing more effective than doorknocking. I admit I have caught that addiction. I probably need to seek help. I remember during the election campaign in March this year, I become ultra-competitive. We would look at the stats about who was doorknocking the most and how we were all going. At one point even my campaign manager had to sit me down and say, "Calm down, mate." But she was right: It is the most effective way of campaigning.

It is also the best way to get to know your electorate. Like I said earlier, I got to know every side street, every community group and every faith organisation by knocking on doors and having those one-on-one conversations with people. I turned what was notionally a margin of 1.5 per cent in my electorate into an 8.9 per cent margin, so again I thank Alison. As the member for Liverpool said in her inaugural speech, both she and I went from Moore Street to Macquarie Street. Alison was instrumental in that first step at Moore Street, but she was also there in person and then in spirit on our way to Macquarie Street, so we thank her. She was a fighter, and she bucked many people's expectations in her fight. She was an absolute inspiration.

Alison and her husband, Robert, were active members of the local community, and were heavily involved in the parish of St Joseph's Catholic Church in Moorebank. In my preparation for this speech I decided I would type the words "Alison Megarrrity" into my Gmail and see what came up. I thought I would trawl through some of our old email exchanges, because she loved to write extremely long and detailed emails. One of the last exchanges was in relation to traffic issues out the front of St Joseph's. As part of her work to resolve that issue, she organised a meeting with me, Robert, the clergy and staff from the Liverpool council traffic team. I think that reflects the fact that, despite not being 100 per cent and no longer being a member of Parliament, she was forever the community advocate, the councillor, the local representative and the loyal parishioner.

My thoughts are with her family and friends, and especially Robert and her two sons, Liam and Glyn. Those who attended Alison's funeral would have seen both Liam and Glyn speak with tenderness, humour and passion at the service. I think everyone was blown away by how amazing those two young men are. In political

life we sacrifice a lot for our family. I know she would be immensely proud of how they conducted themselves and how they spoke at her funeral. In her valedictory speech Alison said, "The nicest thing that anyone has ever said to me is that I am a good mum." I would go further and say she was a great mum and great champion for her community. Vale, Alison Megarrity.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (15:15): When I was elected to this place in 2007, Alison was here. I always found her a very warm, compassionate person. I offer my condolences to her family, her two sons and her friends. We were on Chamber duty together a number of times. We used to talk because—and it may come as a surprise to members—I actually grew up in the shire. I had a bit of a bond with Alison because of that. We come into this place and we try to do our best to look after our local people. I can honestly say from sitting on the other side that Alison was one of those true people who was 100 per cent committed for her local people. She was a rare individual indeed, and I witnessed that on a number of occasions. It is very hard when you are in a political party to push the politics aside and deal with the real issues for people, but Alison was someone who could do that.

I feel very privileged that I had a short association with her for over four years, when I first came into this place. It was nice to have someone I called a friend in the Government in those days. Some of us have been here for a lengthy period of time. I feel very honoured that I could call her a friend and an associate. We could talk about the shire and the different issues. Bushfires unfortunately played a very big part in the shire, as members know. It is very sad loss, but mellowing that sadness is the fact that it was a pleasure to know Alison and to talk to her as a person. I am always touched when I see another member of Parliament take their role very seriously and show compassion and understanding to their constituents.

All members on both sides of the House know how difficult it can be at times trying to live up to everyone's expectations. I often say we are the office of last call. People who walk through our office doors never walk in and say, "We are having a really good day and just thought we would pop in and say hello." All of a sudden their problems become our problems, and often they believe that their problems are more important than anyone else's problems. It is a balancing act. As I said, Alison always showed warmth, compassion and—at times—respect. In the gallery I see some of my former colleagues. Respect came a bit like water in sand. I am sure Alison has left a legacy. I find politicians touch so many people's lives that they may not be fully aware of all they have done for their local communities and all they have achieved, and I am sure that is true of Alison. That legacy will live on. Her family should be extraordinarily proud of what Alison achieved.

As previous speakers on this motion have said, this is a pretty hard gig at the best of times. All members in this Chamber sacrifice a lot of their own personal life. That is the nature of the horse we ride. Alison managed to balance that, which I think is a really important lesson to learn for all of us. Alison, you are always in my memories. You were friendly to me when I walked through the door of this place. I remember one little incident in this Chamber. I was sitting to the rear of where I now stand, on the Opposition back bench. I had my first question without notice to ask. I was a bit shaky and a bit nervous. At that time I was sitting next to Wayne Merton.

Mr Matt Cross: Merto.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: Yes, Merto. Richard Torbay was Speaker at the time. I rose to my feet to seek the call and Merto decided to give me a bit of a hand and gave me a little shove. I nearly fell over the front bench! I dropped my notes on the ground; I nearly ended up on the shadow Minister's lap. I was a bit of a mess. I remember walking down the passageway outside the Chamber and Alison tapped me on the shoulder and said, "Don't worry about it; it'll be right." I always remember that, and I will always have a deep respect for that woman. I hope she rests in peace. I thank the House.

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (15:20): This afternoon it is an honour to speak on this condolence motion for the wonderful and dearly missed Alison Megarrity, but it is also a very difficult thing to do. I warmly acknowledge and offer my deepest condolences to those in the gallery: Alison's husband, Robert, and sons Liam and Glyn; her sister Janelle and Kevin Whittard; as well as Meg Collins and Piper Watson. I also acknowledge her friends and former colleagues Richard Amery, the former member for Mount Druitt; Barry Collier, the former member for Miranda; Melanie Gibbons, her successor in the seat of Holsworthy; and Geoff Corrigan, the former member for Camden.

In the words of Anna Taylor, some people arrive and make such a beautiful impact on your life that you can barely remember what life was like without them. One of those people was Alison Patricia Megarrity. I also know that Alison had this impact on many people around her, both in this place and in our community. Alison exemplified the kind of decent, committed and hardworking local member who achieves extraordinary outcomes for their local community. We have heard from other members who served with her in this place about how she delivered what she did for the Menai community. I was privileged enough to see firsthand the impact she had on the people whose lives were improved by the work she did in this place and the outcomes she delivered. During

the 2015 election campaign I spoke with residents in Barden Ridge and Lucas Heights who called the delivery of the Bangor Bypass a game changer. It was promised by many but delivered by Alison.

The first time I met Alison, I had just been preselected as candidate for the seat of Holsworthy in that 2015 election. The electorate was similar in composition to the seat of Menai, which Alison held with ease for 12 years. What struck me about Alison were two things: firstly, how humble she was, and secondly, how genuine she was in her desire to help and provide support to those around her. She took me under her wing. She introduced me to community members, whom she still assisted even though she was no longer the member. She guided me on the issues to be aware of and she was there on the ground providing help. With Alison's guidance and support, we pushed the upgrade of Heathcote Road on the agenda of that election campaign. I am pleased that this upgrade is almost complete. It is an upgrade that will save lives and improve people's quality of living. In particular, I will remember Alison every time I pass Harris Creek Bridge, thanks to an infamous photo shoot to try to get some angry-looking photos for the local paper.

Alison was passionate about the environment. During her time on Liverpool council in the late nineties, she worked closely with the South West Sydney Community Alliance and was a vocal opponent of the Holsworthy airport proposal floated by the Howard Government. There are still members of the Liverpool Environmental Advisory Committee—which, in a lovely twist of fate, I now chair—who remember her tenacity and care with great warmth and fondness. Not only was Alison an exemplary local member who put her commitment to our community at the centre of everything she did, but she and Robert were also shining examples of everything that is good and decent about the Labor Party. As president of the Chipping Norton-Wattle Grove branch of the Labor Party, Alison created a space that encouraged genuine, thought-provoking debates and discussions. I always knew to allow plenty of time to deliver my branch reports and have wideranging conversations when I attended that branch. There were also the many inclusive, wonderfully warm Christmas parties that Alison ensured branch members got to.

She and Robert as a team helped encourage and mentor many of us who are now Labor members of this place, as the member for Leppington stated in his contribution, or on Liverpool council. We could have no greater role model than Alison. She was an organiser and activist wherever she went. Whether it was as secretary and then president of the Former Members Association or in any other role, she was a force that blazed for good in everything she did. I am proud and grateful that I was on the same team as Alison. She truly understood that politics is a human business. After the 2015 election, she recognised that defeat can be tough and dropped a personal, heartfelt letter into my letterbox—because she did not want to give it to me directly—with a gift of a Frida Kahlo pillow cushion because she knew that I loved Frida Kahlo. I still have that pillow cushion and I treasure it. Alison was well regarded and respected by those on all sides of politics. To that end, I share with the House a message from the former member for Holsworthy, Melanie Gibbons, who wanted to put her thoughts and sentiments on record. She states:

Although from different political parties, I always admired the love she showed for our community and her strong advocacy for it.

I was one of the thousands of people who walked across the Woronora Bridge when it opened and who joined in the celebrations at the Bangor Bypass ribbon cutting. Alison's passion for those projects was acknowledged by then Premier Bob Carr and I can only imagine how hard she pushed to get them out of the long talked about stage, and to completion - particularly the Woronora Bridge that the Premier had publicly opposed. You only have to look at Menai now, and the ease of access to the rest of the Sutherland Shire to see the difference her efforts and those projects made.

Alison kept involved in the community and so I had the opportunity to see her on occasion - she always glowed when I asked about her boys - and her love for Robert showed on her face when she told me she wouldn't be contesting the 2011 election due to his health. I'm glad they were able to have some better years together.

Interestingly, even though the redistribution occurred in 2015, four years after her retirement, the NSW Electoral Commission notes Alison as the first Member for Holsworthy. My research leads me to believe that her and I must therefore be the only two members to serve in two seats that have only been held by women. I think Alison's love of history and her promotion of women would like that fact.

Alison's term in Parliament finished over a decade ago and yet people still mention her to me regularly and with so much warmth. The time she gave, and the effort she put in, set a high standard for me to follow. I hope she was happy with how the area she loved so much continued to be represented.

Thank you, Melanie. In my inaugural speech to Parliament, I put on record my deep respect and admiration for Alison and the game-changing impact she had on my life. Alison's legacy reminds us that we are measured by the quality of our relationships rather than individual success. The contributions by members today show why she was such a wonderful person, first and foremost, and an effective and authentic member of Parliament. In the words of the former member for Macquarie Fields, she played hard and done good. Vale, Alison. We will never remember what our lives were like before you. I am grateful; we are grateful. Thank you.

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (15:29): It is a privilege to reflect on the life of Alison Megarrity today. I particularly acknowledge and offer my condolences to Robert, Glyn and Liam, sister Jan and her husband,

Kevin, Meg Collins and Piper Watson. I also acknowledge former members of this place who were dear to Alison at different times of her life; Richard Amery, Barry Collier, Geoff Corrigan, Cherie Burton and Melanie Gibbons. Good government is all about trust, and trust comes when good representatives build trust with their communities over time. Alison Megarrity, who ably represented Menai from 1991 to 2011, was one such representative. It is fitting that we are here today paying tribute to her life in the place where she represented her electorate, because she would have given her life for her community.

I am not the only one in the Chamber who misses Alison, and I know people on both sides of the Chamber, past and present, valued her friendship. Alison was an exemplary member for Menai. She listened carefully and fought for what was right for her community. She was a realist and she could never be pigeonholed. Alison fought hard for infrastructure for her community and achieved it. She fought hard for people, particularly the disenfranchised. She fought against overdevelopment in areas with extraordinary biodiversity value. She was incredibly committed to the Labor cause and did way more than pay lip-service to our Labor values of equality and justice for all. She lived and breathed it, and demonstrated it in practical ways throughout her life.

Alison Megarrity was a mentor and a friend, one whose life has left an indelible imprint on me. With her background as a Liverpool City Councillor, and then State member, she was a significant influence on me and one of the key people to encourage me to stand for local government, Lord Mayor and then as a State MP. I first met Alison when she was doing some consultancy work after she had left State politics. For a short time we also job shared and Alison's valuable experience made her the Yin to my Yang. It did not take long for us to realise how much we had in common. Alison grew up at 5 Figtree Avenue in Telopea right next door to Dundas Valley, where I moved to live in 1995. We would often exchange memories about attending an all-girls school. Alison attended St Bernadette's Primary School in Dundas Valley and then Our Lady of Mercy College, Parramatta, and grew up attending her local parish church, St Bernadette's, where both of my sons were baptised and took their First Holy Communion.

Alison and I were both blessed with two sons, and curiously her sons, Glyn and Liam, both studied the same course at the University of Wollongong as our eldest son, Byron—a Bachelor of Performing Arts. If it was not for Alison's feedback on the rigour and quality of that degree, Byron would never have enrolled. We have that to thank Alison for as well. As a mum, I could never ever match the dedication and support Alison gave to Glyn and Liam while they were at university, driving to Wollongong regularly, searching for costumes and props and assisting in any way required. Of course, that was just the part of their lives that I saw. I am sure that it was the same throughout their entire youth. We had a shared love for the arts and for supporting our sons with their creativity and providing them with opportunities to express themselves, tell stories and entertain. I know, having spoken to Robert just last week, that this passion for the arts remains strong in the Megarrity family.

Two things struck me about Alison: one was her work ethic and the other was the ethical framework she lived by. I worked closely with Alison on many issues as we supported our member, Barbara Perry, in the electorate of Auburn and in this place. It was with regard to this issue, in particular, that I saw those characteristics of ethics and an ethical framework shine through. While Alison stood by her faction, she also stood up for what was right and fair, and her belief in Labor values was central to the decisions she made and people she supported. Alison and Robert were so committed to righting wrongs that, even with Robert struggling with his health issues at the time, they pulled at least one—if not two—all-nighters to stand up for Barbara and the Labor values that they believed in.

Alison's commitment was to anyone and everyone, particularly if they were in need. She had a massive heart and was a strong woman of faith. While battling breast cancer she continued to assist others—whether they be her family, members of her church parish, Labor Party members, elected officials, candidates or friends. If she had skills that could be put to use to make the lives of others better, she would use them. I recall, when she was sick with breast cancer, Alison dropped into the electoral office with Robert on their way across to the eastern suburbs to assist a relative with a personal issue. That was an ongoing issue for a relative that took much time, energy and empathy and, even with Alison and Robert's shared health issues, their care, concern and support for others continued. They did not miss a beat.

As many here today know, Alison's connection to this place continued for years through her involvement as a member and secretary of the Former Members Association—what she always affectionately called the Feather Dusters. Alison's friendships were above politics and her anecdotes are safe with me, but they certainly provided some informative and fun conversations that I will always hold close. Rightly or wrongly, Alison even wore the title of matchmaker with pride, telling the story of how Anthony D'Adam and his future wife, Kelly, became romantically entwined while working on her election campaign. Alison was a fighter for what was right, no matter what. She would never give up. When her father passed away with questions around his hospital admission, Alison pushed and prodded the system for answers—and she did not let it go.

Alison fought cancer with all her might but at the same time was still completely open to others. I remember calling her one evening when I was in need of wise counsel. Despite the fact that she and Robert were moving house in the middle of struggling with such an insidious disease, she dropped everything to listen to me. Her advice, as always, was thoughtful and solid. Again, I acknowledge Robert, Glyn and Liam, Jan and other family members and friends here today. I miss you, Alison, and I am so grateful to have shared time with you. May your legacy live on in this place, especially in the way you established trust in politics. May we follow in your footsteps. Vale, Alison Megarrity.

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (15:37): It is with sadness but delight that I make a brief contribution to this condolence motion and share a couple of experiences that I had with Alison. I did not serve in this place with her, but I acknowledge those who did; Barry, Geoff, Cherie Burton and the former member for Mount Druitt, Richard Amery. I particularly mention my good mate Geoff Corrigan, who is the former Mayor of Camden and member for Camden. I first met Alison here, along with the Hon. Peter Primrose, who worked very closely with Alison on her campaigns over the years. I took an instant liking to Alison and her passion for what she did.

I remember when I had my preselection, Geoff was with me. Alison gave me a call and offered some really good advice. No preselection is ever easy, and I was in a three-way preselection vote. She said to me, "You just go and, if you believe in it, they will believe in you." That carried me through my preselection. After I was preselected she got my number from Peter Primrose, gave me a call and said, "Greg, are you out doorknocking?" I said, "Yes, I am. I'm doing a number of things." She said, "Oh, good. I want to come out because I want to talk to you about Claymore." Those familiar with Claymore—Geoff is because it came into his electorate in his second term—know that it is a beautiful community. It is a grassroots community, a close community, but a community that needs a lot of love and attention and that has its challenges.

Alison spent the whole day doorknocking with me. I was a councillor or a deputy mayor when I came to Parliament and Geoff was the Chair of the Staysafe committee. We were talking about all sorts of things when I was in the city and Geoff said, "Come in and meet some of my colleagues. We can have lunch and talk about it," and that is when I first met Alison. I took a liking to Alison, seeing her doorknocking with me in the early stages of my campaign in 2014 for the 2015 election. The issues and challenges of the people of Claymore were very clear. Anyone who knows Claymore knows it is a beautiful suburb and how important it is. It was going through change and redevelopment and that compounded the other challenges that it had. As I got to know Alison better, I knew why she wanted to go to Claymore. The reason was those challenges.

I love everyone in my electorate and each suburb is as important to me as the other but, as any member of this place knows, different areas of an electorate need different kinds of attention. Claymore's redevelopment was begun by the previous Labor Government and then had continued changes and challenges. Cherie Burton was in the gallery before. She was the Minister who began that change at Minto, and she did a wonderful job. But then it began through Claymore. It is still ongoing today and now it is on the edge. I knew then how much of a special person Alison was.

I remember looking at her as we were doorknocking and leapfrogging down the streets. She would say, "Come over here, Greg. Come and meet them. I've got the candidate here with me." That was pretty much what I used to do with Geoff when we were out doorknocking in Harrington Park in the 2000s. But seeing Alison have conversations with people inspired me to know the importance about not just hearing what people were saying but also listening to what they were telling me. When I came into this place I ultimately learnt that as shiny and wonderful and majestic as this place is, it is merely an instrument for something far more important, and that is those who we are privileged to serve. The reason I say that is because I saw that in Alison when I first met her. I have seen it in other people like Geoff and other colleagues, but it was my first experience with Alison.

I was very fortunate to win the election in 2015. A number of people rang me, as they usually do, and said, "Congratulations. We look forward to working with you." David Harris was one of them as well as Geoff, who was with me the whole time. But Alison rang me with some good advice, and she was right. She also came to my electorate office and helped me set up all the systems, processes and template letters. For a new member in opposition, it was very challenging. I was also fortunate to have a staff member called Stefi Jones, who worked for Barry as well. Stefi and Alison did a lot of work and set up the templates. I am very humbled and honoured to still have wonderful staff around me. My electorate office staff focus on doing what they can to serve the people of Campbelltown so they can make their lives tomorrow a bit better than they are today. It is only that way today because Alison came to my office and gave me that guidance and support, along with Stefi and other people.

I also well remember when she came to Campbelltown about two years into my first term for no other reason than to check in and see how I was going. She asked me about Claymore, Airds and Geoff. I will come back to Geoff and the Feather Dusters. Geoff was very close to her, and he was helping and supporting her, as many other people were. But I know it was Geoff who was specifically helping her because we are close mates

and we talk a lot. He would tell me things and I would confide in him. Geoff and Alison sat together for four years in this place and made a very special friendship that lasted forever.

When Geoff and I were talking earlier, I asked, "What do you remember most?" He said, "Mate, if there was a gold medal for walking fast, she'd win it every time," which I know was mentioned before. Alison said that when they had the Feather Dusters meetings, she would make sure people were on the correct train so they could get home in time to see their families. Even if they had been out for lunch and might have had a couple of ales and a bit of a laugh and good time with their mates, she always wanted to make sure that they were organised and got home to see their families.

I offer my sincere condolences to Robert; the Megarrity family; the two boys, Liam and Glyn; Jan and her husband, Kevin; as well as Piper and everyone else who loved and adored Alison. She was one of those people you would meet and instantly like. The longer you got to know her, the more you got to adore her. She was a sincere human being and a compassionate politician. I maintain to this day that if I can be half as good a person and member in this place as Alison, then when I am finished I reckon I probably would have done alright.

Everyone has noted the hard work that Alison did, particularly around Liverpool Hospital and Wattle Grove School. I used to live in Wattle Grove when I served at Holsworthy Barracks. But that is representative of when I reflect back, because when I came to Parliament with Geoff I would watch Alison running around and, as I got to know Alison more, I came to understand why. She did not stop, but she always had time for a chat. Alison's politics were serious because they were about people—trying to help them and making their lives better.

I believe she considered her position in this place a privilege, like many of us do, but she left in 2011 to care for Robert and to make sure that her family was okay, which is to be truly admired. That was a big thing for Alison because I know how much she loved what she did. Her politics were her people, but her people were her politics as well. It was always the people of her community and her family who came first. She loved them and she loved her community. She loved being around people and she loved her family. I know that they loved her too. Vale, Alison Megarrity.

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (15:47): With honour I make a short contribution to the condolence motion for Alison Megarrity. As Labor women, we stand on the shoulders of giants. While I did not know Alison personally, the stories I have heard today really inspire me to continue to work for social justice and the environment with a passion for every single member of my community. I want to speak about the challenges of being an MP and having a partner who is also an incredible person in the community. I thank Robert Megarrity for his contribution to wheelchair basketball. They were two great people who were generous in their spirit and in giving to the community.

As a young wheelchair basketball player, after I first broke my back, Rob gave so much to me. He had Alison by his side before the kids were born. Alison was a fan of wheelchair basketball before anyone else ever was. Members spend so much of their lives away from their families, but Alison also allowed Rob to spend so much time with the Sydney Slicks and the women of wheelchair basketball. We know in our hearts they were a great couple, and we say thank you for their contributions to the New South Wales society. I thank Liam, Glyn and the family. I struggle calling them the Feather Dusters, but I reflect on the deep friendships that continue beyond the time spent in the Chamber. Mel, it is wonderful to see you today. It really is a great joy to join Rob in the Chamber to say, "Vale, Alison Megarrity."

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (15:49): I make a contribution to the condolence motion for the wonderful person and former member for Menai, Alison Megarrity. She always struck me as a country girl, and in this place that never left her, no matter what she did. She was smart, she was sassy—a word we do not hear a lot—she was funny and she was active. She was a hard worker who loved life, her family and her community, and she loved politics. As previous speakers have said, her politics were about people—her family and her community. I always remember Alison strongly when the word "catholic" in the social justice tradition comes up. Alison lived that tradition and it was reflected in everything she did. Alison lit up the place with her optimism. No matter what she was doing—no matter how hard things were or what the struggle was—her enthusiastic approach to life really shone through. When I was a member of the other place and Alison was a member in this place, sometimes members in this place had the attitude that members in the other place did not work.

Mr Greg Warren: Surely not.

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN: I am quite familiar with that attitude problem. Alison did not have that attitude because she embraced everybody. I had meetings with Alison. The State parliamentary Labor Party had various working groups, one of which was a budget committee. The Hon. Peter Primrose in the other place and a few other members decided to put forward a budget submission every year. I think we frightened Michael Egan, the

then Treasurer. He got a bit worried about what all these lefties were going to do and what they were getting up to. But we did it every year very responsibly.

We accepted the framework that had been set by the Carr Government and we worked on it really well. We interviewed people and did all sorts of other things and then we put in this budget submission. That is just one example. We know a lot about what Alison did outside and what a terrific local member she was, but she did lots inside as well. I have heard today about how she mentored and worked with people. I knew she did that, but I did not know about it in the level of detail that was spoken about. Alison lived in Sydney and I live in Lismore, which is more in the country, so we did not have that sort of interaction, but I had those years in Parliament with her.

Alison always spoke in Parliament about Robert, Glyn, Liam and the rest of her family. They were never far from her thoughts. I acknowledge her sister, Jan, in the gallery. When I spoke to Jan before this condolence motion, I said to her that I almost feel like I am talking to Alison because of her look, her voice—everything. It was really lovely. It is also great to have present in the gallery Alison's cousin Meg and her great-niece Piper, as well as my former parliamentary colleagues Richard Amery, Barry Collier, Geoff Corrigan, Cherie Burton and Melanie Gibbons, who also worked with Alison in Parliament. People often ask me how long I have been in politics, meaning in Parliament. They think that when you are out of Parliament, you are out of politics. It is not like that, which is what we have heard in this condolence motion about Alison. If I am in Parliament, I am in politics. If I am out of Parliament, I am in politics. I know Alison was exactly the same. For us the politics never goes away because of our commitment to people and the community.

Alison always went hard with everything she wanted. Some members, even former Premiers, would think, "Oh, no! Here comes Alison. What does she want? What is she after?" She never gave up. It was an absolute delight to serve with her. She was also a great mediator and negotiator. As all my parliamentary colleagues would know, there are factions in politics, there are factions in Parliament, there are sub-factions and there are even factions we do not know about—all sorts of things. Alison was always great at working around, through and over that, maintaining her sense of perspective all the way through.

In 2013 we both ran in an election and we both lost. She ran in Hughes and I ran in Page. I spoke to her at that time because I had been in Federal Parliament, and I thought it would have been fantastic to have had her there if she was able to make it. I remember talking to her at that time and it was great to have her as a candidate. I am really happy to make an all-too-brief contribution about someone who was larger than life in so many ways. She was one of those people who was able to touch the lives of everybody who had something to do with her, in the best possible way. After I met with Alison in this place I always felt like a better person, which is a really good thing to be able to say about someone to her family and friends. Rest in peace, Alison. I know you are in God's hands.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr): I thank all members for their contributions. I appreciate having the company of Rob, Liam, Glyn and other family and friends of Alison in the gallery for what was a lovely reflection on Alison's time.

The question is that the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

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

Senate

SENATE VACANCY

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr): I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council notifying that it agrees to meet the Legislative Assembly for the purpose of sitting and voting together to choose a person to hold the place in the Senate rendered vacant by the resignation of Senator the Hon. Marise Payne, in the Legislative Council Chamber, on Thursday 30 November 2023 at 5.00 p.m. I set down the joint sitting as an order of the day for 5.00 p.m. tomorrow.

Bills

CLIMATE CHANGE (NET ZERO FUTURE) BILL 2023

First Reading

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

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr): I set down consideration of the bill as an order of the day for a later hour.

24-HOUR ECONOMY COMMISSIONER BILL 2023**24-HOUR ECONOMY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (VIBRANCY REFORMS) BILL 2023****Second Reading Speech**

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

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) (15:59): I continue my second reading speech on the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner Bill 2023 and the 24-Hour Economy Legislation Amendment (Vibrancy Reforms) Bill 2023. As I said, we want venues to succeed and to do so in a safe, proportionate and balanced manner. The 24-Hour Economy Legislation Amendment (Vibrancy Reforms) Bill 2023 does this by introducing new harm minimisation and compliance tools that will allow police and Liquor and Gaming inspectors to respond appropriately to wrongdoing. With that in mind, I want to detail some of the more significant harm minimisation and enforcement tools in the bill.

At present, minors can legally enter bottle shops in New South Wales without a responsible adult. The bill will rectify this by amending the Liquor Act sections 123 and 124 to provide that unaccompanied minors are prohibited from entering or remaining in bottle shops, the liquor sales areas of supermarkets—which is as defined by section 30 of the Liquor Act—or an area dedicated to the sale of liquor by retail in sealed containers on the licensed premises for consumption away from the licensed premises. The restriction will not capture situations when liquor is sold for takeaway or home delivery from a packaged liquor business that cannot do walk-up sales—for example, where the licensed premises is a home office.

I note changes made by the upper House in relation to this new prohibition. The bill now includes an exemption and defences to the offences, for minors at section 123 and for licensees at section 124. The bill provides the following in relation to the new offence in section 123 of the Liquor Act, new subsection (1) (d): A minor does not commit an offence under section 123, subsection (1) (d) if the minor leaves the licensed premises within a reasonable period after being informed by a responsible person that the minor must not be within the area; and it is a defence to a prosecution for an offence under section 123 subsection (1) (d) if it is proved that at the time of the alleged offence the minor did not know, and could not reasonably be expected to have known, that the alleged offence had been committed—for example, if a minor is unaccompanied in a bottle shop but is unaware that an unaccompanied minor must not be within the area.

The bill also provides the following in relation to the offence in section 124 of the Liquor Act new subsection (2) (d): It is a defence to a prosecution for an offence under section 124 subsection (2) (d) if it is proved that, at the time of the alleged offence, the licensee had taken all reasonable precautions to avoid commission of the alleged offence—for example, where the licensee has issued training to staff and published signage in the store in relation to the new offence and has asked a young person to leave. The bill updates the enforcement powers available under the Liquor Act by providing new improvement notice and enforceable undertaking frameworks. In practice, Liquor and Gaming NSW or the NSW Police Force currently issue warnings or compliance notices for relatively minor breaches.

However, these have no statutory standing and there is no offence provision for failing to comply with these warnings. Improvement notices will give licensees the opportunity to rectify conduct where the liquor laws are breached. They require a licensee to fix compliance issues before escalated action is taken. Venues can continue trading during the period given to satisfy the improvement notice, thereby providing a cooperative and continuous improvement approach to compliance. Enforceable undertakings are another alternative to taking disciplinary action, and disciplinary action may not be taken in relation to the breach or alleged breach while the enforceable undertaking is in force. However, a licensee's breach of an enforceable undertaking would be grounds for taking disciplinary action against the licensee. Updating the enforcement powers available to Liquor and Gaming NSW inspectors provides proportionate, consistent and reasonable ways to address misconduct, and are aimed at encouraging compliance with the law rather than just penalising noncompliance.

Importantly, penalty notices can and will still be issued for breaches of the liquor laws, including for serious offences such as selling liquor to intoxicated people or minors. Currently, the Liquor Act does not specify a time frame for entering incidents into an incident register, which has resulted in operational challenges, particularly for police. The bill adds section 56 (3A) into the Liquor Act to allow timely investigation of incidents and take into account reasonable efforts made by licensees to record incidents in the incident register as soon as is practicable or within 24 hours.

The bill makes several other important updates to the Gaming and Liquor Administration Act 2007. Taking photos and videos is a standard part of operational practice so that evidence can be collected in relation to potential compliance actions for breaches under liquor and gaming legislation. The bill amends section 26 in the Gaming

and Liquor Administration Act 2007, which clarifies the legislative framework around the ability of Liquor and Gaming NSW to inspect and seize evidence. Currently, section 30 of the Gaming and Liquor Administration Act 2007 gives inspectors and police officers the power to require answers to gaming and liquor legislation related questions. However, this power does not include the requirement to attend at a certain time or place to answer questions. The bill amends section 30 to clarify that inspectors and police officers may, by notice given to a person, require the person to attend at a specified place and time to answer questions under the authority of section 30 of that Act.

I now turn to the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner Bill 2023. This bill seeks to establish the appointment of a 24-Hour Economy Commissioner under the Government Sector Employment Act 2013 to help revitalise the New South Wales entertainment, hospitality and cultural sectors and to support a vibrant 24-hour economy and music sector. I thank the Commissioner, Mike Rodrigues, who has made great gains across government and with industry to make New South Wales nightlife more vibrant, diverse, accessible and safe. It will be further bolstered by putting this role in legislation. The statutory appointment of the commissioner recognises the importance of the role and solidifies the standing of the night-time economy within the Government.

This is important because the commissioner needs to work with multiple and sizeable government departments to ensure that reforms are considered and that implementation is successful. It also recognises the expansion of the program remit to include Newcastle, Wollongong and the Central Coast. Crucially, the amendments in the upper House also recognise the role of the commissioner in advocating for the 24-hour economy statewide, including across regional New South Wales. The bill seeks to ensure a single, coherent approach with an appropriate level of authority to resolve cross-government challenges. The bill will accomplish this by providing the commissioner the authority to have oversight, be able to coordinate and enable an evidence-based perspective on the function of the night-time economy across public and private agencies.

The bill provides that a 24-Hour Economy Commissioner must be appointed. While the commissioner will be employed under the provisions of the Government Sector Employment Act 2013, the commissioner is not subject to the control and direction of the Minister or any other person in relation to the contents of advice, a report or recommendations given to the Minister. This is important to ensure that the commissioner can provide independent advice when required. The bill outlines the functions of the commissioner, which include advocacy for and promotion of the interests of the night-time economy in New South Wales, and for relevant improvements to its operation. The commissioner will also provide advice and recommendations to the Minister on matters relating to the night-time economy.

The 24-Hour Economy Advisory Group—comprising leaders from industry, the creative and tourism sectors, councils and government—provides valuable insights. Its ongoing role will be confirmed in the bill with the establishment of a 24-Hour Economy Advisory Council. As with other commissioners who have advisory, advocacy and coordinating roles, the commissioner and other government agencies that provide or deal with services or issues affecting the night-time economy in the State will be required to work cooperatively in the exercise of their functions.

The Minister for Music and the Night-time Economy will be empowered to work with other Ministers for government agencies to share information. The commissioner may provide reports about the night-time economy to the Minister, and these may be provided to each House of Parliament so that members can consider the impacts of policy. The Minister may also direct the commissioner to conduct an inquiry into an issue affecting the night-time economy. The commissioner's inquiry and reporting power will include a requirement to provide advice on how special entertainment precincts are operating, whether and where new precincts might be established, and any changes that might be needed to improve outcomes from existing precincts.

The first task for the commissioner will be to refresh the 24-Hour Economy Strategy, including delivering on a much broader agenda to improve the night-time for workers in our cities, towns and suburbs. The bill strikes a balance between public safety and vibrant activity across the State. At its core is a mission to make it easier to bring people together to connect within our unique districts, our extraordinary creative community and the great outdoors. This is a carefully considered package, which represents a first step to cut the rules and regulations that hold back music and live performance venues, and a commitment to improve the nightlife for everyone across the State. At this point, it is an important signal to industry and the community that this is an issue the Parliament is united on, and it makes material changes in time for summer. I commend the bills to the House.

Second Reading Debate

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (16:11): On behalf of the Opposition I contribute to debate on the 24-Hour Economy Legislation Amendment (Vibrancy Reforms) Bill 2023 and the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner Bill 2023. The Opposition does not oppose the bills but has moved amendments in the upper House. We were grateful for the cooperation of the Ministers' offices in both Houses while working our way through

those amendments. We thank them for their cooperation. The 24-Hour Economy Legislation Amendment (Vibrancy Reforms) Bill 2023 and the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner Bill 2023 are cognate bills, and we will address them both on this occasion.

We will deal with the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner Bill first. The bill aims to provide for the establishment and appointment of a 24-Hour Economy Commissioner, prescribe the functions and powers of the commissioner and set out the employment conditions of the commissioner. The functions of the commissioner include advocating for and furthering the interests of the night-time economy in New South Wales. The commissioner is not subject to the control and direction of the Minister or any other person in relation to the contents of advice, a report or recommendations given to the Minister. The Minister may also establish a 24-Hour Economy Advisory Council to provide advice to the commissioner about the exercise of the commissioner's functions. Members of the advisory council are to be appointed by the Minister on the recommendation of the commissioner.

The commissioner and other government agencies that provide or deal with services or issues affecting the night-time economy in the State are required to work in cooperation when exercising their functions. We need to ensure regional representation on the advisory council and I am pleased that the Opposition successfully moved amendments in that regard in the other place. Even before the election, Labor was focused on picking up the coastal electorates by extending the 24-Hour Economy Strategy to cover the six cities, bringing Newcastle and the Central Coast into the plan. Unfortunately, there was no mention of regional New South Wales.

We welcome the continuation of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner, but more needs to be done. The role was established in 2019 to reignite the music scene and has been crucial after a few tough years for music and the performing arts with the COVID-19 pandemic. To kickstart and drive the performing arts economy, the previous Government introduced Great Southern Nights to give musicians and artists the opportunity to perform and get out on the road and tour at venues across the State to help promote live music and add a defibrillator to the industry to jump start it back into action.

We welcome Labor's reforms; however, the expanded role for the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner, as outlined in the original bill, did not go far enough. Labor missed the mark by only expanding the commissioner's remit to Newcastle, Wollongong and the Central Coast and not regional New South Wales. As you know, Mr Temporary Speaker Barr, the lights burn brightly in regional New South Wales. There is a vibrant regional night-time economy across New South Wales. I thank the Minister for accepting the Opposition's amendments in the other place to ensure that regional New South Wales is included. Significant entertainment venues put on large acts and performing arts events in the bush. It was essential to ensure that the commissioner's remit extended beyond our metropolitan centres. Labor's regional radar only included the Central Coast, Newcastle, Sydney and Wollongong. Unfortunately, that sounds familiar. It was important to make sure that the commissioner's remit included centres such as Broken Hill, Wagga Wagga, White Cliffs, Moree, Tamworth, Bega and even Cessnock.

In his second read speech, the Minister spoke about locations—and I appreciate the reference to and focus on these locations—including Penrith, Parramatta, Wagga Wagga and Tamworth. But that was only in relation to the special activation precincts and not the night-time commissioner. An umbrella approach to include those locations is welcomed. I will speak more about that shortly. The remit of the commissioner more generally must be expanded. It would be great to see the commissioner visit those regional centres and significant festivals, whether it be Byron Bay Bluesfest, Parkes Elvis Festival, the Trundle ABBA Festival or the Tamworth Country Music Festival. It would be great for the commissioner to visit regional New South Wales. The former Coalition Minister said that he was looking forward to working with the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner in his speech to the Parliament in 2021. He stated:

I am ... looking forward to working with him on not just what happens here in the Sydney CBD but right across metropolitan Sydney and out into regional New South Wales. The 24-hour economy issue is not just a Sydney issue.

When people think about a 24-hour economy, they think about Kings Cross and the CBD. I note the good member for Sydney in the Chamber. I highlight the vibrancy of Kings Cross. While we do not want drunken brawls and crime as a result of antisocial behaviour, we need to ensure that families can go out for a great night to enjoy a meal and the night-time entertainment and bright lights, which will attract more people and grow vibrancy. Our amendment to Labor's bill will ensure that the original intention of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner extends to regional New South Wales so that our communities are rich, dynamic and diverse and, more importantly, continue to be safe.

I turn to the 24-Hour Economy Legislation Amendment (Vibrancy Reforms) Bill 2023. The bill seeks to streamline entertainment sound management, modernise liquor licensing and increase support in the planning system for the flexible and creative use of public spaces to boost the night-time economy. The bill also includes enhanced compliance tools to allow for a more targeted approach to noncompliant venues to ensure proportionate

measures are in place to minimise alcohol-related harm. The objects of the bill are to amend the Gaming and Liquor Administration Act 2007, the Liquor Act 2007 and the Liquor Regulation 2018. The objects of the bill will make miscellaneous amendments aiming to increase the vibrancy of the night-time economy and make consequential amendments to other legislation.

The bill contains amendments to areas that impact on our everyday lives, social gatherings and the way we move around our communities—outdoor dining, noise complaints, special entertainment precincts, liquor licensing fees, extended trading hours, the removal of ID scanners, improvement notices for venues, provisions for small bars and restaurants to sell liquor, certain license approvals and harm minimisation. The creative sector contributes \$120 billion to the economy and is a significant employer in New South Wales. As the former Minister for Hospitality and Racing, I have great appreciation for and understanding of how the industry is a big part of our communities and the challenges it has moving forward.

Special entertainment precincts will provide an opportunity for local councils and the local entertainment industry to work together and set local rules to make it easier to run events. Currently, Enmore in Sydney has a special entertainment precinct, and I know that Tamworth Regional Council is keen to work toward a similar precinct. Alfresco dining, sitting outside, whether in the morning or in the evening, and enjoying the great outdoors and the surrounds of our community is such a fantastic thing to do. Once upon a time, we were ordered to sit outside. Now we want to sit outside and enjoy the beautiful great outdoors. My, how the world turns.

Section 202 of the Local Government Act will be amended to increase trading hours to make them more consistent for eligible venues in special entertainment precincts that schedule live music or performances on short notice. In his second reading speech, the Minister indicated that new section 12A in the Liquor Act will extend incentives to special entertainment precincts to activate extended trading and fee discounts. Other areas include outdoor dining, changes to liquor sales and improvement notices, where we agree that there should be more consultation with the industry and more work on compliance.

Noise complaints are a big issue that comes up time and time again. The bill adds a new section 79B to the Liquor Act 2007, which increases the threshold for disturbance and complaints to be considered, raising the number of complainants from three to five and requiring them to attempt to resolve disputes before lodging complaints. We have been working on this for some time and in consultation with the industry, particularly around history of location. We cannot have a hotel, a pub or any venue that has been operating in a particular locality for 100 years being put in jeopardy because someone moves next door and suddenly starts complaining. I am proud that the Coalition's amendments in the other place strengthened this aspect of the bill by ensuring vexatious complainants could not come from the same household.

In a changing environment, particularly with the rise of nimbyism in a wide variety of areas, not just in hospitality, new neighbours moving near a venue and then complaining about the noise causes significant concern and disrupts the operation of venues that have historically provided live entertainment. The complaints process will also be streamlined and come under the remit of Liquor and Gaming; however, those who wish to complain will still have the right to contact police if the matter is urgent.

The bill seeks to amend section 48 of the Liquor Act 2007 to ensure the authority is satisfied that the overall impact of the licence, authorisation or approval will not be detrimental to the local community. The amendments seek to replace section 48 (1), which currently requires that the authority take into account the views of the local community by way of a community impact statement. The bill proposes to expand this section, offering greater importance to the profile, impact and positive impacts on the local community and requiring that any application be accompanied by a statement of risks and potential effects. This amendment gives the authority greater oversight of the impact of any application and applicants' attempts to mitigate any negative impact. The amendments also remove the special provisions for small-bar applications.

A statement of risks and potential effects will be required, for an extended trading authorisation for a hotel licence, to include matters relating to gambling activities on the licensed premises during the period the authorisation is proposed to be in force. The statement may require that it must contain a number of factors: description of the local community, applicants' proposed controls, positive impacts, community consultation, and opportunities for the live music industry, the arts sector and tourism sector.

As I have stated, the Coalition was working on a number of these issues in consultation with the entertainment and music industry prior to the election to ensure a strong and vibrant night-time economy across New South Wales. Furthermore, the Opposition continues to work with the industry to clarify the language surrounding the amendments to ensure that the intent of the bill is to require licensees to provide clear and considered information about the full range of potential impacts and effects resulting from any proposed licences, authorisations or approvals.

In summary, the Opposition supports the legislation before the House. We thank the Minister for Gaming and Racing in the lower House and Minister Graham in the upper House—

[*Interruption*]

Speak of the great man, the Hon. John Graham, and the clouds open and thunder roars. For the *Hansard*, that thunderclap was quite dramatic. I thank both Ministers for their collaborative approach to this legislation. Our amendments have strengthened the bills. We look forward to continuing to work with the Government in relation to the night-time economy, because it is evident that this is a multipartisan issue and the industry needs our support. I commend the bills to the House.

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (16:25): I speak in debate on these important cognate bills, the 24-Hour Economy Legislation Amendment (Vibrancy Reforms) Bill 2023 and the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner Bill 2023. I thank the Ministers in this House and in the other place, Commissioner Michael Rodrigues and the staff of the department for bringing these important bills to the House. In substantive terms, these cognate bills are a long overdue shot in the arm for our night-time economy, our creative industries and the way we all enjoy our communities. The member for Tamworth spoke extensively about the importance of this space in regional communities, and I will highlight the important role that the night-time economy plays in Western Sydney.

Over the past 12 years, we have been witness to a pretty sad state of affairs. In New South Wales, we have lost over half of our licensed music venues, which fell to a low of 133 across the State before the election this March. We also had a web of confusing and inconsistent regulation that was built up over time, making it difficult for businesses to open, host live performance, experiment and adapt. We are losing our creative workers, who are some of the most passionate, hardworking and talented in the world. Unfortunately, we are losing many to our neighbours/competitors in Queensland and in Victoria.

Some of this happened as a result of deliberate government policies, such as the lockout laws; other things happened while our eyes were closed. Take, for example, the situation in Liverpool. Over the past five years, we have heard Liverpool called the third CBD in Sydney by a broad number of stakeholders on many occasions, but investment in the night-time and creative economies is inconsistent, piecemeal and, frankly, unsustainable. It is also split between different parts of government, without much regard to some of the key barriers to organic growth, which is what is necessary.

The New South Wales Government has its eyes wide open. We know that the planning, liquor and sound rules need to change so that we can support our music venues and help community groups and councils put on events, concerts, festivals and other types of activities that bring our broader communities together. We know that going-out behaviour has changed. People do not want to just spend their nights drinking, holed up in a bar in Kings Cross or other parts of the CBD. They want a range of options across entertainment precincts that showcase different neighbourhoods across the State. It is important to take the demographics and the unique features of our various communities into account.

For example, in Western Sydney we want a diversity of options that are close to home and help us present our rich communities and cultures with pride. We know red tape has to be removed so that we can create certainty for businesses and investors, particularly before summer is upon us. Finally, we know that this is what people want—outside the CBD, just 23 per cent of respondents to a Department of Customer Service survey felt that they had good-quality night-time entertainment options in their area. The people of New South Wales want to live to in a State where fun does not end with the sun going down and where food, music, entertainment and art are all accessible in a way that balances vibrancy, safety and diversity of experience.

The 24-Hour Economy Legislation Amendment (Vibrancy Reforms) Bill 2023 not only starts to address some of the problems that I have spoken broadly about but does so in a way that is appropriate for our modern contexts. Firstly, the bill will bring back the music by focusing on sensible venue sound management and incentives for live entertainment. We have too many regulators for entertainment sound—up to seven—and that system does not work for anyone.

Putting Liquor and Gaming in charge of venue noise and increasing the threshold for what constitutes a formal complaint is plain common sense. The change means that a formal complaint will require five complainants, there will be a greater emphasis on mediation and order of occupancy tests will be strengthened. The current system does not allow neighbours to easily navigate the system and have their issues considered. I have seen that occur far too often during my time on local council. Is it any wonder why young people are either addicted to gaming devices or getting up to antisocial behaviour, when venues are shut down and they have no alternative options? In the worst case, a single malicious neighbour can shop their complaints to multiple

regulators and shut down a music venue that they have moved next door to. Again, I have seen multiple examples of that. It serves nobody except for that complainant.

The change is being supplemented by financial incentives and longer trading hours for live music venues. We need to make live performance profitable, rather than having our venues rely on alcohol or gaming. Liverpool and south-west Sydney more broadly are strongly affected by gaming- and gambling-related harm and the losses associated with those. It is of vital importance for our community that venues move away from relying on alcohol and gaming so that we can better protect community members and ensure that our young people, in particular, have opportunities in creative spaces, for example, if they are talented and that is the career they want to pursue, or if they want to enjoy time with friends and others in such pursuits.

Secondly, the bills improve the special entertainment precinct framework to deliver a network of vibrant, safe, well-organised going-out destinations across New South Wales identified in agreement between State and local governments and with the right conditions for entertainment and unique local culture to thrive. As has previously been identified, areas where there are special entertainment precincts have seen positive impacts. We should expand those and ensure that other communities can benefit from them. Thirdly, the bills help communities, businesses and councils activate outdoor spaces. That includes permanently empowering councils to close public streets easily for temporary events and dining, and permanently relaxing the rules for outdoor dining, which allows venues to make the most of their outdoor space with a quicker, light-touch application process.

I cannot tell members the number of various businesses and community groups that have sought my assistance whilst I have been on local council to negotiate some of those labyrinthine—if I can call them that—regulations so that those groups can bring their flavour to our broader community. Fourthly, the bills bring a coherent approach to the night-time economy by empowering the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner. The commissioner has done some great work in Greater Sydney under the remit given by the former Government. However, we need to go further and do more. The statutory position expands the commissioner's role and gives them teeth to work alongside the big government agencies like Transport for NSW, NSW Health and police. We know and understand the risks associated with a siloing effect. The measure will help to ensure that government works as a holistic and cohesive whole rather than a "computer says no" bureaucracy.

Fifthly, the bills reduce red tape with licensing. A commonsense approach to risk will be adopted on liquor regulation, removing outdated rules and beginning work to streamline planning and licensing processes. More efficient consultation will make it easier for venues to open and diversify, and for communities to have their say. In addition, meaningful incentives for venues to feature live music and performances will drive new employment opportunities for creatives and entertainment options for audiences. I cannot stress the importance of that enough. As I mentioned previously, we are losing many of our creative talents to other States or countries because they see no pathways or opportunities to pursue their creative talents as paid ventures.

I will highlight a couple of other aspects of the bills in summary. The COVID pandemic period showed us that Sydney is a city that does alfresco well. It is also a city that is increasingly localised in terms of what we look for when we gather with community members or friends and others. The reforms will, in permanently relaxing the rules for outdoor dining, allow venues to adapt to the changing nature of our broader community and ensure that councils, which are often at the community coalface, will be better supported to ease the way for creatives and community groups to stage things like pop-up events and festivals. That also includes street closures and global pre-approvals for event sites. The importance of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner cannot be overstated. The Government is committed to coordinating across the whole of government to make sure that we have policy driven by data and evidence and that we implement changes to make a meaningful difference to our community. New South Wales is the first jurisdiction in the world to appoint a 24-Hour Economy Commissioner.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr): I bring to the attention of the Clerks that the three-minute warning bell is suppressed. I can barely hear it. I now call someone who cannot be suppressed—the member for Coffs Harbour.

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (16:35): I contribute to debate on the 24-Hour Economy Legislation Amendment (Vibrancy Reforms) Bill 2023 and the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner Bill 2023, which are cognate bills. The Coalition supports the bills and thanks the Government for the collaborative approach taken in working with the Opposition in the Legislative Council to move amendments that have strengthened the bills. I congratulate the Minister and his office on that. I also commend the Government for continuing the work initiated by the previous Government to reinvigorate the night-time economy in New South Wales. The lockdown laws, while deemed necessary by both sides of politics at that time, did have consequences. The bills seek to address those consequences.

I will first turn to the 24-Hour Economy Legislation Amendment (Vibrancy Reforms) Bill 2023. The Coalition supports this reform, as it builds on the good work done by the former Coalition Government by seeking

to streamline entertainment sound management, modernise liquor licensing and increase support in the New South Wales planning system for the use of public spaces in the night-time economy. The objects of the bill are to amend the Gaming and Liquor Administration Act 2007, the Liquor Act 2007 and the Liquor Regulation 2018. The Coalition supports the amendments made by the bill, which encompass a raft of reforms designed to bolster the night-time economy and make it easier for venues to trade. The bill includes legislative changes to outdoor dining, noise complaints, liquor licensing fees, trading hours, ID scanners, improvement notices for venues, provisions for small bars and restaurants, licence approvals and harm minimisation. The amendments are necessary to avoid the proliferation of nimbyism, particularly in relation to the historic use of venues.

Too often, we have seen venues close and regulation siding with single occupants rather than looking at the benefits for the wider community. The Opposition moved amendments in the other place designed to strengthen the bill. We thank the Government for accepting those amendments. They are important. The Opposition engaged with the industry and, through our consultation, found improvements that could be made to the bill as it was introduced. For example, the Government's bill would have allowed a disturbance complaint to be made by five members of a single household. That could give a skewed perception of a venue, impacting the regulatory authority's assessment of applications. That is clearly not the intention of the bill. The Opposition's amendment strengthened the bill, clarifying that complainants cannot reside within the same household. I thank the Government for accepting that amendment.

I also note the special entertainment precincts. The bill seeks to put new structures and incentives in place to build and protect special entertainment precincts in various locations in New South Wales. The former Coalition Government championed that concept through a successful trial in Enmore, which allowed an opportunity for the Inner West Council to work with the local entertainment industry to make it easier to run live events and protect live music venues. The trial has proved successful, and it makes good sense for the Government to expand the policy throughout New South Wales, including in the regions. I know that the shadow Minister responsible for the night-time economy is a big supporter of the special entertainment precinct concept in his home town.

I now turn to the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner Bill 2023. The bill aims to provide for the establishment and appointment of a 24-Hour Economy Commissioner, prescribe the functions and powers of the commissioner and set out their employment conditions. The bill is cognate with the 24-Hour Economy Legislation Amendment (Vibrancy Reforms) Bill 2023. It legislates the important reforms introduced by the former Coalition Government to assist the hospitality industry in reinvigorating Sydney's nightlife. The functions of the commissioner include advocating for and furthering the interests of the night-time economy in New South Wales.

The commissioner is not subject to the control and direction of the Minister or any other person in relation to the contents of advice, reports or recommendations given to the Minister. The Minister may also establish a 24-Hour Economy Advisory Council to provide advice to the commissioner in relation to the exercise of the commissioner's functions. Members of the advisory council are to be appointed by the Minister on the recommendation of the commissioner. The commissioner and other government agencies that provide or deal with services or issues affecting the night-time economy in the State are required to work in cooperation when exercising their functions.

I note that the expansion of the commissioner's responsibility to include Newcastle, Wollongong and the Central Coast was an election commitment of the Labor Party, which recognised the important reforms that were established under the former Government to expand the commissioner's remit. It was always the intention of the former Coalition Government to expand the role of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner. In 2021 the then Minister and former member for Penrith said:

I'm looking forward to working with the 24-hour economy commissioner not just in the Sydney CBD but right across metropolitan Sydney and out into regional New South Wales.

The Opposition moved amendments in the other place to ensure that regional New South Wales is not left behind in the work of the commissioner. We believe the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner should have oversight over all of New South Wales. The bills before the House reflect that as well as the intentions of the former Coalition Government in establishing the commissioner. In his second read speech on the bills, the Minister talked about locations including Penrith, Parramatta, Wagga Wagga and Tamworth, but only in relation to the special activation precincts. The Opposition welcomes a renewed focus on special activation precincts, but all of New South Wales needs to reap the rewards of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner.

Coalition members want to see the industry go from strength to strength in regional New South Wales because we understand the value of the night-time economy to our regions, where pubs and clubs are so much more than a venue. They are essential to the wellbeing of our communities. The Opposition moved an additional amendment in the other place to ensure that regional voices have their rightful place on the Minister's 24-Hour

Economy Advisory Council. We cannot leave regional New South Wales behind, and I am proud that the amendments moved by the Opposition in the other place will ensure that that will not happen.

In summary, the bill is the rightful continuation of the reforms that were kickstarted by the former Coalition Government. The Opposition is pleased to have contributed to strengthening the bill. Again, I acknowledge the Minister and his staff for their collaborative approach in working with the shadow Ministers and other Opposition members to strengthen these bills and ensure a positive outcome for the industry and for the people of New South Wales.

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (16:41): I contribute to debate on the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner Bill 2023 and the 24-Hour Economy Legislation Amendment (Vibrancy Reforms) Bill 2023. Those two incredibly important bills reflect the work that has been done this year and in previous years to improve the vibrancy of our communities and our nightlife throughout the State. At the last State election, New South Wales Labor made a commitment to restore vibrancy through significant regulatory reform by the end of the year. This legislation puts those reforms in place. The number, viability and growth of venues in entertainment performance spaces have been unduly reduced and restricted by planning, licensing and noise regulatory frameworks that are duplicative, outdated and complex. Half the live music venues in our State have closed in the past 12 years, falling to 133 just before the election.

I pay credit to the Special Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Music and the Night-time Economy—the State's first music Minister—for his work in addressing that issue, not just as Minister but since he was first elected to the other place. He even spoke in his inaugural speech about the problems facing live music in this State. He has been dedicated to systematically addressing those concerns. Earlier this year 23 per cent of respondents to a Department of Customer Service survey said they felt they had good night-time options in their area, which means that 77 per cent of people do not think they have good night-time options in their area. That is really disappointing.

Through extensive consultation undertaken by Create NSW to inform the New South Wales arts, culture and creative industries policy, which the Minister and I played a part in developing, we found a huge need to improve regulation so that performers and businesses can support arts and cultural activities throughout our State. Particular issues include noise and liquor and planning reform, as well as the availability of creative and performance spaces. Those issues have caused huge impediments to creativity in this State for a very long time. These reforms will enable some very sensible changes so that culture can flourish once again. The Government will implement sensible venue sound management for performance spaces. A single noise complaint will no longer shut down a venue. Liquor and Gaming NSW will become the lead regulator of noise complaints.

The Government will also strengthen the test for disturbances by giving primacy in the order of occupancy and by focusing on mediation. If someone buys a house next to a live music venue, they must take that into consideration instead of trying to shut down the venue. That has been a problem in Sydney for a very long time. I refer to the famous, long-departed Hopetoun Hotel in Surry Hills. I signed the petition to keep the Hopetoun alive, but it is still an empty shell. It was a fantastic live music venue for decades, until people who moved into the vibrant Surry Hills neighbourhood decided that it was a bit too vibrant for them and they shut down the Hopetoun. The council required a whole lot of noise abatement measures to be put in place, which made it unviable for the venue to reopen. That was a huge loss, and it has been replicated again and again across New South Wales.

That will not happen any more. People have to make a considered decision: If they move into an area with a live music venue, they must accept that people are going to make noise. The Government will do a lot of work to activate outdoor spaces. Sydneysiders and people across our State love outdoor dining, festivals and cultural experiences. We are blessed with beautiful weather for much of the year and there are wonderful places to enjoy the outdoors. But we are not blessed with an easy regulatory regime to make that happen. The Government will pilot a system by which councils can pre-approve multiple events at the same location in advance, making it easier and more affordable to put on local events over a period. We will also provide guidance to help councils support creatives and community groups that want to stage pop-up events.

We will permanently relax the rules for outdoor dining, allowing venues to make the most of their outdoor space with a quicker, light-touch application process. That cannot come soon enough for my electorate. Recently I tried to assist someone who had opened a mainly outdoor dining venue in Guildford. That person is Malaysian, and they modelled their venue on the night-time markets in Penang. It is a great, vibrant space with food trucks and outdoor dining areas. But they did not do it in the right way and were forced to close for two months. They have reopened, but they can only use half the space and they do not know why. I cannot understand why they are not allowed to use the back part of their site.

If we have a simple-to-use system, people who are great at cooking but not great at filling in forms will still be able to start a business and thrive in New South Wales. At the moment you need to be really good at filling in forms and dealing with bureaucracy, you need to have deep pockets and you need to be a good cook to start an

outdoor dining space like the one I referred to in Guildford. All the measures I outlined will be really important, and they will complement the work of the Government to establish special entertainment precincts so that councils can designate areas where the rules have changed in order to support communities, businesses and the night-time economy. Some of those have already been identified and have been trialled previously in Enmore.

We are going to improve the existing special entertainment precinct framework to deliver a network of vibrant going-out destinations across the State. It will be done in collaboration with councils, making sure that those places are safe and exciting. We are moving on from the dark days of the lockdown laws. I am someone who always thought the lockdown laws were heavy-handed and ham-fisted, particularly given that they were brought in following an awful incident where somebody died due to an assault perpetrated by somebody who was quite drunk but who had not been into a single licensed venue in Kings Cross when they carried out that assault. That was the fourth person they had punched that night.

We need to celebrate vibrancy, but do it in a good way, and live music is key to that. A lot of people do not go to the bar when they are watching live music until they get a break between acts, and they often also stay around for meals. It is a really good way to enliven spaces. If we have a focus on diverse forms of entertainment, we do not have problems. A lot of the problems we had back then were because people were preloading before they went out because drink prices are really expensive. The solution is not to make drink prices cheap. The solution is to have a diverse range of entertainment options so that we can put those days well and truly behind us and embrace the incredible creativity, spaces and communities that we have, and enjoy fantastic entertainment throughout our State every night.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (16:51): I contribute to debate on the 24-Hour Economy Legislation Amendment (Vibrancy Reforms) Bill 2023 and the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner Bill 2023. The late-night economy is fundamental to the heart and soul of our global city status. Late at night when there are people out and about, places to go and shows to watch, cities can be really exciting places. They are places where memories are made and social connections are formed. I met my husband, Vic, on a dance floor in a nightclub on Oxford Street some time in the early hours of the morning. When I first got elected to this place, *The Daily Telegraph* ran the headline "Gay party boy wins Clover's old seat", which is some rare accurate reporting for *The Daily Telegraph*.

Many of my constituents, regardless of their age, support a vibrant and dynamic night culture. A big attraction of living in the inner city is its proximity to hubs with great restaurants, cafes, bars, live performance venues and nightclubs. But, as we have heard from other speakers, Kings Cross, the CBD and Oxford Street, Darlinghurst—the inner city's major late night attractions—have suffered from six years of draconian laws that locked people out at 1.30 a.m. and forced venues to close at 3.00 a.m. We saw our bustling neighbourhoods destroyed. It was not just the late-night clubs and bars that closed, but also venues that were part of the same ecosystem, including restaurants and small bars. Venues providing nothing but poker machines of course thrived.

It was a big hit to local contemporary music, artists and performers. Sydney's reputation, culture and identity suffered. I repeatedly heard from young constituents who told me they were considering moving to Melbourne. I could not imagine anything worse. While the lockdown laws were removed and last drinks were extended in 2020, that was during the pandemic, which caused yet another blow to the industry and our night-life. Sydney's night-life is resilient and is showing signs of a major comeback, with visits to the CBD at night this year above pre-pandemic levels. People want to go out. The 24-Hour Economy Legislation Amendment (Vibrancy Reforms) Bill and the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner Bill will help provide for long-term sustainability in this vital sector.

The bills reflect a fair balance by ensuring vibrant activity at night while ensuring safety and local amenity. I welcome changes to deal with noise disturbance complaints. The bills take a reasonable approach, giving neighbours a clear, single pathway for formal noise complaints, encouraging neighbours and venues to work together when there are problems, increasing the threshold for the number of complaints needed to initiate action, and making order of occupancy a concept for determining the response to complaints. It is important to point out that Liquor and Gaming will continue to be able to investigate a noise complaint from one neighbour if circumstances are grave, or from police, retaining safeguards against rogue operators.

As details of the new approach are worked through, the Government will need to make sure legitimate noise concerns do not fall through the cracks. It is not clear how Liquor and Gaming will deal with the development application conditions around noise that are objective and deal with local circumstances, like requiring a venue to close windows at a certain time or restricting the disposal of glass bottles in a laneway late at night. Concerns have also been raised that the definition of a neighbourhood disturbance may not include disturbances that affect only one building. I ask the Government in reply to provide clarity and commit to a process to work through any concerns. I also ask that the Government ensure Liquor and Gaming have the resources to take on this additional role.

Community consultation is an important part of protecting neighbourhood amenity. However, a lengthy and involved process can favour larger establishments that have the financial backing to undertake extensive engagement. Under new provisions, licensed applicants will have community consultation streamlined into the assessment process following submission of a statement of risks of harm and other potential impacts. If we want new, civilised venues to open we need to make sure the process of getting a licence is accessible. Linking trading to live music is a proven way to encourage more performance in our city, supporting artists and the industry. Increasing the extension from one to two hours will provide an even greater incentive.

Making permanent the provisions that helped councils facilitate outdoor dining during the pandemic will help keep our streets alive. Outdoor dining is hugely popular because it creates an atmosphere of charm in the public domain and lets diners enjoy fresh air and warm weather. Councils are best placed to manage potential impacts through conditions that respond to the circumstances of each location. Another great COVID provision that is being made permanent as part of these reforms is the "quarantini", which is something I called for during COVID. In early 2020 when Sydney plunged into lockdown and small bars and restaurants were diminishing, I asked the then Government to let these venues sell small amounts of alcohol with meals ordered for takeaway or delivery, and the "quarantini", as the concept was called locally, was born. It helped many businesses stay afloat and, like many others, I took advantage of the service. It made sense, as people ordering a meal to eat at home may also want to enjoy a drink with their meal without having to go to or order from another premises.

In the past decade, Kings Cross has changed radically. While it remains a vibrant late-night precinct, the streets are much quieter. Coming to Kings Cross was once like attending a crowded street party. There were people everywhere, and it could be difficult to walk on the footpaths. While that could be exciting, it often caused conflict that resulted in violence and police attendance. I did not support the lockouts because they took a blanket and heavy-handed approach that sacrificed vibrancy and late-night culture, although they did act as a circuit breaker against escalating violence in inner city hot spots. With Kings Cross no longer a hotbed of late-night violence, it is now appropriate to remove other provisions that target venues in the precinct, including ID scanners and precinct-based fees, and I support these changes in the bills.

Sydney's late-night economy has a great advocate in Michael Rodrigues, the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner. I welcome moves to elevate the position and the importance of the late-night economy by making the commissioner an independent statutory role. The commissioner should investigate ways to protect Sydney's LGBTQIA+ late-night culture. Dedicated bars and clubs have long been a safe space for LGBTQIA+ people, who still suffer from stigma and discrimination. These venues were especially impacted by the lockout laws because of their concentration on Oxford Street, Darlinghurst.

Some constituents are worried that there has been a cultural shift on Oxford Street late at night away from LGBTQIA+ friendly venues, with some people saying they no longer feel safe and affirmed in what has often been referred to as our heartland. WorldPride showed us that Oxford Street remains a force in the LGBTQIA+ late-night space and remains home to Mardi Gras. Oxford Street will also soon host the first queer museum, Utopia. But it would benefit from some attention from the commissioner to look at ways to boost its standing and ensure Oxford Street remains a late night attraction.

I opposed the lockout laws when they were introduced and worked with colleagues across party lines to support a new approach that encouraged both vitality and safety. I welcome the new approach to the late-night economy reflected in these bills. However, I acknowledge that we will need to monitor the situation to ensure we continue to achieve the right balance that supports the night-time economy without harming local amenity. Otherwise, we could put the sustainability of this important sector at risk. I welcome the considered approach and words of the Minister in the other place, who recognised the need for a new approach that supports Sydney's need to be an attractive place late at night and residents' right to sleep. I believe the bill strikes a fair balance.

At a later stage I will move amendments to the 24-Hour Economy Legislation Amendment (Vibrancy Reforms) Bill to clarify that the creation of special entertainment precincts must be driven by councils. In conclusion, I thank the Government for its work. I also acknowledge the role of local government in these reforms. Particularly, I pay tribute to the City of Sydney and its policy team, and the Lord Mayor of Sydney and her policy team. I look forward to working with the Government and the 24-hour commission to once again make Sydney the best place to visit late at night.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell): 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

GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (17:01): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that the Government has had a false start to governing New South Wales.
- (2) Notes that the Government lost one Minister just 128 days into its term and two more are hanging by a thread.
- (3) Condemns the Government for:
 - (a) failing to stand up to the Federal Government's \$3.6 billion in infrastructure cuts, which have put 17 critical New South Wales infrastructure projects in doubt;
 - (b) breaking its pre-election promise to fully fund Active Kids vouchers;
 - (c) slashing funding for Creative Kids and First Lap voucher programs;
 - (d) cutting the regional seniors travel card and Regional Apprentice and University Student Travel Card;
 - (e) leaving the future of Sydney Metro West in doubt;
 - (f) bungling the opening of the Iron Cove Link that was planned, funded and built under the Coalition; and
 - (g) making real cuts to health, education, police, Fire and Rescue and TAFE.

This first year of the Minns Labor Government has been a huge disappointment to the people of New South Wales. It was elected on promises of trust and renewal, but none of that has happened. What a litany of broken promises. Those opposite promised to roll over the Active Kids vouchers, one of the most important cost-of-living measures the former Government introduced. Instead, they cut it by 85 per cent—a broken promise. On the one hand they promised the unions significant pay increases; on the other hand they promised the taxpayer, "It won't cost you a single cent. It will all come down like manna from heaven as productivity cuts." Instead, the taxpayer is now footing the bill: \$8 billion over the next four years. They promised they would complete the construction of Sydney Metro West. Instead, what happened? They still have not made up their minds.

This is a government built on broken trust, and that broken trust goes to the core of this Government. One Minister went after 128 days, and another two Ministers are hanging by a thread. Transport Minister Jo Haylen is ensconced in a jobs-for-the-boys scandal. Yasmin Catley has repeatedly misled Parliament. This is not just about Yasmin Catley and Jo Haylen. The standard you walk past is the standard you accept. It is about the Premier himself and the standards of trust, probity and integrity he adopts for his government.

Then there is the budget, which had no vision, no values and savage cuts. There were real cuts in the total health budget, real cuts in the total education budget and real cuts in the total police budget. There were cuts to TAFE and cuts to Fire and Rescue NSW. There were cruel cuts, like \$150 million to palliative care. What government with any compassion and decency would rip \$150 million out of palliative care? These were the cruellest cuts to the most vulnerable. Cuts to education, health and the police—the basic frontline services were cut by this Government. It did not tell us about this before the election, but these services have all been savagely cut now.

What have those opposite actually done? There is next to no new infrastructure. Instead, this Government is at its busiest when cutting the ribbons on Coalition projects. The Coalition left New South Wales with twice the investment in infrastructure per annum and half the projected net debt per head that Victoria had. It was twice the infrastructure spend per annum that the previous Labor Government was spending in its last year in office. The previous Coalition Government spent three times as much on health infrastructure and twice the infrastructure spend on education, all of it transforming New South Wales. Instead, this Government is cut, cut, cut.

Those opposite talk the talk on housing supply. They say we have to uplift the housing supply—and of course we should. But if you want housing supply, you need infrastructure. This Government is rolling the dice, creating uncertainty about the most important infrastructure project in this city: Sydney Metro West. We are now at the end of November and eight months into the term of this Government, yet we still do not know whether Sydney Metro West will be built. How can those opposite uplift housing supply in the Sydney-Parramatta corridor—where 60 per cent of the housing uplift for the Central River City is projected—if they will not confirm that they will build Sydney Metro West?

Then there is Sydney Metro south-west, which the transport Minister pretends she has rescued. Who has she rescued it from? She has rescued it from herself! She wanted to cut it. She opposed Sydney Metro City and Southwest. Government members opposed the Sydney Metro. They opposed WestConnex. Let us look at WestConnex. The Rozelle Interchange opened this week. It was planned by the Liberals, funded by the Liberals and largely constructed under the Liberals. All Labor had to do was cut the ribbon.

Mr Adam Crouch: They couldn't even do that!

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: They could not do that! Those opposite stuffed that up. Instead of having someone experienced in running trains, ferries, buses or light rail, or someone experienced in building those

things, who do they appoint as the head of the Transport department? They appoint a media spin doctor, a Labor mate. When they are cutting the ribbon, the Minister is there with a smile on her face trying to airbrush the Coalition from history on projects that we funded, planned and constructed. But when it all goes sour, where is Jo Haylen? She is in hiding. She puts out the spin doctor to control the situation.

Jo Haylen is about as visible as Yasmin Catley, who is still in hiding. Where is Yasmin Catley, the Minister who was asleep at the wheel when that disgraceful episode at the Opera House happened? She is the Minister who has misled Parliament repeatedly on the media handling of the tragic tasering of Clare Nowland. She is the Minister who endorses a blockade, the Minister who is meant to uphold law and order but is actually inciting protesters. What sort of Government is this? This is a government lacking transparency, accountability, vision and values. This is a government that in just eight months has badly let down the people of New South Wales.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell): I call the member for Strathfield. Members will come to order. The member will be heard in silence.

Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (17:08): I make a contribution to this myopic and narrow-minded attack on the Minns Labor Government. The proposition is that there has been a false start. I say to Opposition members that our start was their end. There was no clean slate. There was no blank sheet of paper here. Our starting point was their failure. Put another way, our agenda is grounded on a determination to fix the previous Government's failures in the most pressing areas. This is what would be known in industry as a turn-around job. As we know, the turn-around jobs are left to the most talented of executives to execute. What is the nature of this turn-around job? It is in two areas. The first is deeply ideological. The first is to remedy and fix the fundamentally flawed economic model of the previous Government. What was that economic model? What were the hallmarks of that economic model? Firstly, it was the selling off of public assets. Secondly, it was the suppression of public sector wages to keep the wages bill low. Thirdly, it was the ramping up, loading up of the State's balance sheet with debt. These are the three hallmarks of the economic model of the other side.

What does this sound like? This is the operating model of a private equity leverage buyout fund. This is the private equity leverage buyout fund model of running the New South Wales Government brought to you by the former Premier Perrottet, Kean and Associates. The problem is the people I know in private equity are quite smart and they would not think of selling off those assets that are actually the organisation's income-generating assets, such that we are not left with any income-generating assets and we have lost all our dividends.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell): Members will come to order.

Mr JASON LI: What have we done about this? We have stopped privatisation. We have reduced the projected gross debt of the Government by \$15 billion. But most importantly—this goes to the core of the matter, this goes to the long-term agenda of the Minns Labor Government—we are rebuilding the capacity and the strength of the public sector. The people of New South Wales had an epiphany during COVID. They realised that when the chips were down, when they needed people the most, the market could not deliver. What did the market deliver? It delivered people in their dinghies rescuing their neighbours from rooftops. People understood they needed a well-resourced, capable public sector; they needed frontline workers who could deliver. People understood that. That is exactly what we are doing.

What have we done? We have given teachers in New South Wales their biggest pay rise in three decades. We have given a 4.5 per cent pay rise to New South Wales nurses and midwives, and Fire and Rescue staff, and a 4 per cent pay rise for over 80,000 public sector employees. Let me finish on the private equity leverage buyout fund model. That is obviously waiting for the big payday, which in the private sector is the initial public offering [IPO]. Those opposites were waiting. There is no IPO here. It is called the PPO, the political public offering, and the people of New South Wales did not buy it.

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (17:13): I feel a little sorry for the member for Strathfield. The Government has called in reinforcements. The member for Mount Druitt and the member for Fairfield have come in to rescue the team. They are sitting at the back of the Chamber. They do not want to be near the other Government members. Why are they over there? Where is the ministry? Where is all the firepower? Why don't you care? That is the point.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell): The member for Dubbo will direct his comments through the Chair.

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS: What we see here is another sham effort from a sham Government. Tomorrow marks 250 days since this Labor Government came to power. It is fair to say that they have been very dark, disappointing days, especially if you live in regional New South Wales. This is not just a false start. It is a complete falsehood—false promises, real failures and a budget campaign based on cut, cut, cut. Shame, shame, shame. Talking about 250, seniors in regional New South Wales have lost their \$250 transport card that the

Coalition created in government to help with the cost of living. Guess what? Cost of living is important for everybody, including seniors. So why does the Government not care?

Over the course of the trial 1.4 million cards were rolled out to eligible seniors. Members know the statistics—\$347 million into the pockets of seniors to help with fuel and other transport costs, medical appointments, shopping and family visits. But, alas, the white knights opposite came up with a new scheme, a shopper docket scheme—4¢ a litre off fuel, but only if you live near a United service station. Under this scheme an average-size car that takes 60 litres of fuel would have to be filled up twice a week every week for a year to get anywhere near the \$250 saving that we were already providing.

We have done the seniors so let us move on to school-age kids. We heard about them from the Leader of the Opposition. Families with children have had Active Kids, Creative Kids and First Lap swim vouchers axed. Guess what? There will be no Back to School vouchers. Come January and February, there will be no help. There will be nothing to help get the schoolkids organised. Those vouchers encouraged families and kids to play sport, get involved in creative activities, learn how to swim and save lives, and stock up for school. The vouchers were created by the Coalition and cut, cut, cut by the Government.

For people who live in a local government area impacted by mining—like the member for Cessnock—their communities have recently been kicked in the guts as well. The Coalition invested in those communities through the Resources for Regions program. The electorate of Cessnock was one of the big beneficiaries. The program helped improve liveability all round, fixing roads, building playgrounds, upgrading recreational facilities—you name it. The Coalition invested more than half a billion dollars in the program. I reckon a fair bit of that went to the electorate of Cessnock. It is gone, gone, gone. Speaking of gone, so is every program incorporated in the Coalition's Regional Growth Fund.

Since 2017 the Stronger Country Communities Fund has provided more than \$660 million for more than 2½ thousand projects—cut, cut, cut. The Regional Events Acceleration Fund to attract tourism, regional events and opportunities has been cut, cut, cut. The Regional Job Creation Fund helped regional businesses expand and attract more people to the regions and support jobs. Guess what? It has been cut, cut, cut. It is almost unbelievable. The same thing happened with the Regional Investment Activation Fund. The same thing happened with all of them. A Minister has entered the Chamber.

[Interruption]

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell): Members will come to order.

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS: The Minister for Small Business is one of the Government's great performers. He clearly cares. The problem we have is the Government's constant cuts, and unfortunately there are only 1,214 days to go until the next election. We will be back and we will help out regional New South Wales.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell): Order! Opposition members will come to order.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (17:19): I have tissues in case Opposition members make me cry, because they are being really mean today. I do not know why they need to be so mean. Why do they hate me so much? Why do they hate the people of New South Wales so much? Why do they hate being in opposition so much? They should enjoy themselves. It is going to be a long time; they should get used to it and get comfortable. They need to find their groove. It is okay, and if they need a tissue, I have one for them.

Mr Tim James: You probably cut them too.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: They are single ply. To try to launch an economic argument, of all the arguments members opposite could have launched—

Mr Dugald Saunders: Cut, cut, cut, cut. It is pretty simple.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: What does that mean? Cut?

Mr Dugald Saunders: It means you have cut everything.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: Okay. Do you know what I think about people who need to hunt in big packs and gangs like this?

Ms Felicity Wilson: Point of order—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell): The member for Cessnock will resume his seat. What is the member's point of order?

Ms Felicity Wilson: In this Parliament we have gone through the process with the Broderick review, which we all participated in in good faith. I do not think it is parliamentary to make the type of gesture in this

Chamber that the member for Cessnock just made. I ask the member for Cessnock to withdraw that and show the respect this Chamber and the people in it deserve.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: To the point of order: The gesture I used was in a public advertising campaign funded by the former Government.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell): That is not relevant to the point of order. The standards in this House are far higher than what is acceptable in public.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: I can see that.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell): I will rule on the point of order, unless the member for Cessnock offers to apologise.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: If anyone is offended by something that I have done in this House that reflects something that is very much in the public domain, I apologise sincerely.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell): I thank the member for Cessnock. The member will continue.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: I make a point about the economics because the Opposition is talking about cuts.

Mr Dugald Saunders: I am upset that you don't care about regional New South Wales.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: You are talking about cuts.

Mr Dugald Saunders: Resources for Regions.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: Are you talking about cuts, Dugald?

Mr Dugald Saunders: I am talking about lots of cuts.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell): The member for Cessnock will direct his comments through the Chair.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: The Government has explained to the people of New South Wales the unsustainable debt that the Coalition racked up in the time it was in government.

Mr Dugald Saunders: It's a lie!

Mr CLAYTON BARR: It is in the budget papers. If you want to come to my office, I can show you where to find it. It is in *Budget Paper No. 01*. I will explain to Opposition members what a borrowing is. Most people understand a borrowing to be money that is borrowed and that needs to be paid back. Whatever Opposition members want to talk about, my fundamental question to them is this: Where is the money coming from to continue to recklessly abuse the New South Wales budget and rack up a debt that threatens the triple-A credit rating, is unsustainable and needs to be paid down? When is the Opposition going to find other forms of revenue? It is unclear to me.

If Opposition members want to have that conversation, I am happy to have it. In fact, I have tried to have that conversation in this Chamber many times, but Opposition members will not engage. I have offered to give them a lesson on the budget books but they have never taken me up. Not one of them has ever contested or challenged a single financial point I have made. Opposition members should not try to debate the budget because they are on very shaky ground.

Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy) (17:25): I support the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition. After just nine months, communities in south-west Sydney are already feeling the pain of the Minns Labor Government. Its big promised fresh start is nothing more than a false start. In fact, this false start could have catastrophic consequences for people in my electorate of Holsworthy unless those opposite get their act together. Unfortunately, I do not hold out too much hope that things will get better anytime soon. This Government has wasted no time breaking its pre-election promises to fully fund Active Kids, Creative Kids and First Lap vouchers. The list goes on—cut, cut, cut, cut.

Those vouchers were a resounding success. They saved families more than \$481 million, and more than 4.85 million vouchers were redeemed across the State. However, funding for Active Kids has been cut in half and those on the other side have slashed funding for the Creative Kids and First Lap vouchers. That was all done in the middle of a cost-of-living crisis and an endless barrage of interest rate rises. Now 750,000 kids will miss out. Every child deserves the opportunity to take part in creative and physical activities to learn and grow, no matter their parents' income. Vouchers like this get children off devices, which so many parents, including me, struggle

with every day. I am sure my colleague the member for Leppington has the same issue. That is the struggle of every parent in New South Wales. I vouch for that.

The Active Kids and Creative Kids vouchers ensured that every child, no matter their background, had the opportunity to explore a new talent, find joy in staying active and make friends and have new experiences. It is an absolute disgrace that this Labor Government has let this happen while purporting to be a party of compassion. Who cares about the people of New South Wales? Who cares about the children of New South Wales? Those vouchers not only supported families but also supported local sporting and community groups to grow.

The lost hip-pocket relief is only part of the pain that the Minns Labor Government has inflicted on south-western Sydney families. The Minns Labor Government failed to stand up to the Albanese Labor Government, which has gutted \$3.6 billion out of infrastructure funding for our State and has put 17 critical New South Wales infrastructure projects in doubt. That includes the M7-M12 motorway interchange, connecting the Westlink M7 to the new Western Sydney airport—shame. The Treasurer in the other place claimed that this Government was "disappointed with a capital D". The great people of western and south-western Sydney are also disappointed with a capital D.

To add a cherry on top, during the campaign the Minns Government claimed that motorists would see more toll relief under Labor, but the Treasurer will not commit to ruling out a toll on the M12. We could not trust this mob with the vouchers so how can we trust them now? The former Coalition Government in New South Wales had a strong track record of delivering the infrastructure projects that our communities needed. However, the Minns Labor Government has already jettisoned the proposed metro line running between Bankstown and Glenfield via Liverpool and has still not committed to the future of Sydney Metro West. I find this extremely troubling. I commend the motion to the House.

Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (17:30): Of all the places I thought the Opposition would start, I did not think it would be south-west Sydney. God bless the Leader of the Opposition. I love him dearly, but why would Opposition members start their argument with, "If you're going to build houses, you've got to put in infrastructure," and then start talking about south-west Sydney? The member for Leppington might be able to point out to them at length the lack of schools in his area. There is one school in his whole electorate in south-west Sydney, which has been overcrowded from day one. If members go to the new housing estate in Leppington, they cannot walk to the station because there are no footpaths and no roads. That happened under the previous Government. Opposition members cannot make up their minds. They whinge about cuts, as they call them, but their big complaint is that Labor wants to pay nurses and teachers what they are worth.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell): The member for Dubbo will come to order.

Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ: The Leader of the Opposition said in this Chamber that he was worried about an \$8 billion wages bill. Where have I heard "\$8 billion" before? That is right. I went to have a look and the Sydney Metro City and Southwest project alone has run over by \$8 billion—from \$13 billion to \$21 billion. Members opposite complain about paying nurses and teachers, but one of their projects had an \$8 billion overrun that would have paid the whole bill. By the way, in case members missed it, farmers, like nurses and teachers, want to be paid as well. That is why in our first six months in government we undid what the previous Government did in its first six months after walking in the door, which was to bring in a wages cap, get rid of the Industrial Relations Commission and gut the wages bill.

Even worse than that, members opposite spoke about cuts. When the Coalition first came to office, Barry O'Farrell cut \$1.7 billion from education. Do not worry about getting kids off their iPads, as the member for Holsworthy spoke about; the former Government cut \$1.7 billion out of education. In its first two budgets, 15,000 people were cut out of the public service. From education, 292 staff were cut in the previous Government's first six months. It also cut 120 workers from the Rural Fire Service, 300 from Sydney Water and 400 from Roads and Maritime Services, all within its first six months in the job. Do not talk to us about cuts. All the previous Government ever did was cut every single thing. After 12 years, if the previous Government really cared about children in this State, it would have had a good, hard look at how many children it had sitting in hotels without proper caseworkers and proper people looking after them, like foster carers, because of what it did to the Department of Family and Community Services. It is an absolute disgrace. Members opposite spoke about the Active Kids rebate, which has been part of three motions now. Is this the best the Opposition has? Three motions have been moved about the Active Kids rebate but not one has mentioned the peer-reviewed data the former Government commissioned.

Mr Kevin Anderson: You're running out of gas, Lynda.

Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ: Running out of gas? The problem is there is so much. I could also talk about the trains that did not fit on the platforms or the ferries whose windows smashed.

Ms Karen McKeown: What about the ferries that wouldn't go backwards or under bridges?

Ms LYNDA VOLTZ: There were the ferries that would not go backwards.

Ms Karen McKeown: You couldn't drive them at night.

Ms LYNDA VOLTZ: You could not get a ferry home at night under the previous Government. The Opposition also spoke about roads and the project that has just opened, but its original plan was to dig up Parramatta Road and have a big Paris-style boulevard. It took them two years to work out that the \$2 billion project would not work.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell): Order! Members will come to order.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (17:35): Growing up, my family had a labrador called Sandy. Tragically, towards the end of Sandy's life the veterinarian declared her clinically brain dead while her heart was still beating. At that point, I knew what it was like to have a Labor voter in the family. I know low vision when I see it. When I look at members opposite, I see—

Ms Charishma Kaliyanda: Point of order: An exception has already been taken to unparliamentary language. The member for Kiama's reference is exceptionally disgusting and I urge him to withdraw it.

Mr GARETH WARD: For the benefit of any labradors that were offended, I withdraw my comments. I know a government with low vision when I see it, and this is a government with no vision. We had a bit of a history lesson from the previous speaker. She can talk about Barry O'Farrell and John Fahey and Henry, or even Henry Parkes and the prophet Moses, but nothing will absolve this Government of the responsibility it holds. It sounds as if Government members are still in opposition when they talk about the past. Well, the more you talk about the past, the more you proclaim your embarrassment about the present and show you have nothing to say about the future of this State. The previous Government built things and took tough decisions in government.

Mr Stephen Kamper: They sacked you.

Mr GARETH WARD: You can interject as much as you like. The king of cuts himself, Stephen Kamper, there. It was your leader who went to the election—

Ms Lynda Voltz: Point of order: The member for Kiama should address his comments through the Chair.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell): I uphold the point of order.

Mr GARETH WARD: I am mortally wounded! I have been stabbed! How am I going to persist?

Mr Kevin Anderson: Defibrillator, aisle eight.

Mr GARETH WARD: Yes, that's right, but they cut those as well. This is a government with no vision that is not prepared to take the hard decisions. Members opposite talk about cuts, but when they were in government they closed 93 schools, closed hospitals and cut staff. At the moment they are getting RSI from running around the State and cutting the ribbons for things that were built with money that they opposed. They stood in Parliament and opposed the lease of poles and wires bill because their union masters instructed them to vote against it. Was that voting for the people of New South Wales? New roads, new schools and new hospitals—the Labor Party said no to all the things it is now taking credit for.

Mr Stephen Kamper: There's no housing for our community. They just sat on their hands and did nothing.

Mr GARETH WARD: Big mouth over there preens himself in the plaques that he opens as he enjoys the benefits of the spoils of the hard work of a Coalition government that he voted against at every opportunity—better roads, better hospitals and better schools. We know the record of this Government. It is one that shut down the Parliament to stop a debate on the sale of assets. Government members talk about privatisation; they were the kings of privatisation. This is Bob Carr 2.0—a government that does not do anything, upset anybody or make any tough decisions, so much so that it has turned the Parliament into Toastmasters, with a litany of motions but no real legislative agenda.

Government members talk about housing affordability. What legislation has actually come into the Parliament to address planning reforms and do the things that they said they would do? Where are the investments in infrastructure? They promised a lot but delivered little. This is a photo-op government with no policy, no intestinal fortitude, no spine and no delivery. If it was not for the 12 years of hard work of the Coalition Government, those opposite would have nothing to deliver because they have no capital expenditure, no budget backbone and no integrity.

This Government will be a very short-term government because the people of New South Wales are waking up to it. Members opposite went to the last election and said they would keep the Active Kids rebate, the Creative

Kids rebate and the regional seniors travel card. What did the Premier say when he was asked about those things in opposition? He said he would roll it all over. Come the next election, the people of New South Wales are going to roll those members over. The people have seen enough of them already. They do not deliver infrastructure and they are not committed to the people of New South Wales.

This is a government run by the public service for the public sector unions. In fact, those opposite cannot even deliver for the public sector unions. Gerard Hayes hates their guts because they have not come good on the promises they made to the ambos. At every opportunity he is telling us in our offices that he would prefer to have us back in government because members opposite have not delivered even for the trade unions. This is a government that is out of time. At the next election, it will be out of government.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (17:41): In reply: I thank the member for Dubbo, the member for Holsworthy and the member for Kiama for their terrific contributions.

Ms Karen McKeown: What about the Labor members?

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: I am coming to you. I acknowledge the Labor members who clearly drew the short straw. They were sent out to do a job that not a single Cabinet member was willing to do. The member for Rockdale is here; he was not willing to get up. I thank the lambs to the slaughter—otherwise known as the member for Strathfield, the member for Cessnock and the member for Auburn—for their contributions. In all those speeches from the Labor members, was there a single piece of new infrastructure they could cite? There was not one. Did they mention NorthConnex?

Opposition members: No.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: Did they mention WestConnex?

Opposition members: No.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: The M6?

Opposition members: No.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: Sydney Metro West or the south-west metro?

Opposition members: No.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: The north-west metro?

Opposition members: No.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: Did they mention the Pacific Highway duplication?

Opposition members: No.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: The Newell Highway?

Opposition members: No.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: The Great Western Highway?

Opposition members: No.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: Did Labor members mention all the hospitals that we redeveloped? We redeveloped just about every hospital in New South Wales or made major upgrades. Did they acknowledge that we were spending three times as much in our last year as they are on health infrastructure? Did they acknowledge that we were investing twice as much in education infrastructure and schools as they are? There was not one acknowledgement. This is a government bereft of vision and bereft of imagination.

This Government was big on debt because it is big on debt. In four years' time, notwithstanding the lack of infrastructure, the cuts to frontline services and the cruelty of cuts to palliative care, the debt will be the same. Their budget projections show debt at the same level in four years' time as it is now. So they will do nothing to rein in debt. They projected that expenditure will increase at 0.8 per cent to 1 per cent every year for the next four years. What does that mean when inflation is at 4 per cent or 5 per cent? It means real and savage cuts to health, to education, to police, to Fire and Rescue and to TAFE. Why? Because they have overpromised and underdelivered to their union mates. They have told the Health Services Union and the paramedics one thing, and they tell the taxpayer something else. It is a two-faced government. This Government has been a massive shock and a massive disappointment to the people of New South Wales. We are all looking to the day when those opposite will be booted out in 2027.

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

The House divided.

Ayes35
 Noes51
 Majority.....16

AYES

Amon, R
 Anderson, K
 Ayyad, T
 Clancy, J
 Cooke, S
 Coure, M
 Cross, M
 Crouch, A (teller)
 Davies, T
 Di Pasqua, S
 Griffin, J
 Henskens, A

Hodges, M
 James, T
 Kean, M
 Kemp, M
 Lane, J
 Marshall, A
 Perrottet, D
 Petinos, E
 Preston, R
 Provest, G
 Roberts, A
 Saunders, D

Singh, G (teller)
 Sloane, K
 Speakman, M
 Taylor, M
 Thompson, T
 Tuckerman, W
 Ward, G
 Williams, L
 Williams, R
 Williamson, R
 Wilson, F

NOES

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

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

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

PAIRS

Toole, P

Minns, C

Motion negatived.*Bills***24-HOUR ECONOMY COMMISSIONER BILL 2023****24-HOUR ECONOMY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (VIBRANCY REFORMS) BILL 2023****Second Reading Debate****Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (17:52): I support the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner Bill 2023 and the 24-Hour Economy Legislation Amendment (Vibrancy Reforms) Bill 2023. I thank Minister Graham for introducing the bills and I commend his dedication to live music and night-life in New South Wales. For 12 years the New South Wales night-time economy has been neglected to the point of embarrassment. It is embarrassing that our live music venues have halved over the past 10 years and it is embarrassing that a single new neighbour can move next door to a historic pub or bar and have it closed down by making noise complaints.

Newcastle has a rich and unique live music scene that has endured for decades. It has produced some of the greatest Australian musical artists, from the Screaming Jets to Silverchair. Performing in Newcastle has nurtured not only local artists but also artists from across the country. That was made clear during our iconic Cambridge Hotel Farewell Festival in June this year. Grinspoon, originally hailing from Lismore, were on stage for the Cambo's final performance ever. Frontman Phil Jamieson took a moment to acknowledge what the venue meant to him, reminiscing about sneaking into an over-18s show as a teenager and about Grinspoon's early days playing the Cambo stage. I know that many people in Newcastle, and many people in wider New South Wales, are still mourning the loss of the Cambridge Hotel.

For the past five years I have been the chairman of the Newcastle Live Music Taskforce. In that time, we have done some great things to revitalise the scene. The taskforce hosted the epic concert Sound Station, with a great line-up, and drove the Save the Cambo campaign. Unfortunately we lost the battle on that campaign but we put up a good fight. I advocated for the relaxed licensing trial for small bars in 2021, which allowed small bars to operate outside the time constraints of the Newcastle Solution. The Newcastle Solution, while initially a success, went on for too long. It came to be a scourge on night-life in New South Wales and it silenced our live music scene.

The small-bar trial demonstrated that our bars, pubs and clubs can keep patrons safe with a later lockout and extended liquor trading. It showed that Newcastle's attitude towards alcohol had matured. With the Newcastle Solution restrictions permanently lifted earlier this year, it is time to turn up the volume. We have a Labor Government for the first time in 12 years and it is fantastic to finally be in a position to make positive change. Our up-and-coming bands should be given every opportunity to thrive, and our venues should be protected and supported. We want Newcastle's rich live music legacy to continue well into the future. This legislation is going to protect that history and breathe new life into Newcastle's 24-hour economy.

I turn first to the 24-Hour Economy Legislation Amendment (Vibrancy Reforms) Bill 2023. The proposed amendments will streamline the process by making Liquor and Gaming NSW the sole regulator of noise complaints and disturbances. The amendments will also require complainants to make an attempt at mediation and protect venues from a sole complaint shutting down a venue, instead calling on at least five complainants before such drastic measures are taken, following mediation.

Noise complaints are a huge issue faced by Newcastle venues. In the past six months, I have heard from the teams at Adamstown Bowling Club, the Hamilton Station Hotel and Stockton Bowling Club about the issue of noise complaints. With complainants able to shop around to seven different noise regulators and no mediation requirements, all of these venues have faced untested noise complaints and, at times, abusive behaviour from neighbours, despite having acted responsibly and legally. Newcastle venue owners, publicans and hospitality workers have reviewed the amendment bill with a sigh of relief, knowing that we are going to protect their venue from being closed down overnight and support them to keep the show running.

Order of occupancy reforms will likewise offer venue owners a sense of security and ensure that new neighbours and residents cannot shut down heritage venues. Our city is growing rapidly, but unfortunately the outdated licensing and lockout laws have fostered a nimby culture in our CBD. The venues were there first. They have the right to operate, and we are going to protect that right. The reforms also set out to establish special entertainment precincts offering extended trading hours and reducing licensing fees, and allow live music and performances to be scheduled on shorter notice.

I will be inviting the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner and the Minister to Newcastle again because I have a few ideas for special entertainment precincts in my electorate. The October long weekend brought together 100 local artists across eight venues for the West Best Bloc Fest on just one block in Newcastle West. The event was a great success for the venues, artists and punters. As a special entertainment precinct, this block and all the venues on it would be better supported to host live performances and band together for great events like West Best Bloc Fest. And that is only one example. Darby Street, Beaumont Street, Watt Street and King Street would all make great special entertainment precincts that could match the success of Sydney's Enmore Road.

While the bill aims to restore vibrancy to our night-life, it also introduces measures to maintain safety. We have learnt that condemning noncompliance alone does not work. We also need to incentivise compliance. In my role as the chairman of the Newcastle Live Music Taskforce and as a champion for my city's night-life, I have developed close relationships with many of the publicans and licensees at venues in my electorate. Those venues do not deliberately and actively breach licensing laws and would appreciate the opportunity to rectify any misconduct with the introduced improvement notices if they did inadvertently breach those laws.

I now turn to the second bill, the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner Bill 2023. By making the commissioner a statutory appointment, this legislation will protect the night-life of Newcastle for years to come. The legislation will expand the commissioner's responsibilities to Newcastle. As the second largest city in New South Wales and

a city that is growing rapidly, we need the commissioner to advocate for our night-life to ensure that it is not left behind amongst all the other development. The commissioner will be able to collect data about our night-life and represent the needs of our 24-hour economy accurately and reasonably. It will give our night-life workers a voice that is so desperately needed after 12 years of neglect.

The commissioner will also work to make sure that our city is safe after dark. Punters should not have to choose between fun and safety, and the commissioner's functions will search for the balance to build a sustainable night-life for all of New South Wales. I thank the Minister and the commissioner for visiting my electorate and hearing from my local night-time economy workers directly. From the arts, culture and creative industries town hall meeting to the Night-Time Economy Forum, Newcastle has been included in every step of the process. Currently, Newcastle has some great bands representing our city on the national and international stage, like Vacations, Raave Tapes and Rum Jungle. I want both upcoming and established acts to feel supported in their hometown. This Government wants those acts to feel supported in their home State. Labor loves live music. I strongly support the bills.

Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (18:00): I speak in support of the 24-Hour Economy Legislation Amendment (Vibrancy Reforms) Bill 2023. I was considering props and reading this at an RPM speed of 33 1/3, 45 or even 78—I said I was old. During my election campaign, I made very clear my commitment to supporting live music. It is well known that I am a bit of a live music tragic and a part-time Bono and U2 stalker. I have been blessed to see them 35 times live all across the globe. In fact, I was in a globe in Vegas the other week called the Sphere, watching U2 open that venue. I was surrounded by rock royalty like Sir Paul McCartney and Dr Dre. Even Katy Perry, Bon Jovi and Snoop Dogg were there, witnessing this next level of entertainment venue and an extraordinary U2 performance. I might have done that for three nights in a row, in fact.

I have a deep appreciation for how music—particularly live music—can touch our lives. It is great to see my young adult children, James and Alex, getting into it as they hit the late-night scenes. Naturally, I will indulge in a Bono quote or two in this speech, starting with this one:

Music can change the world because it can change people.

That has certainly been my experience. What a wise man! Similarly, I think it was Cat Stevens who once said that music can change the temperature in a room. It is a bookmark in time. When we hear a particular song, it can take us back to a moment in our life in an instant, thus instantly changing our mood. It is something that we would have all experienced. Whether it is a band, a choir, a chamber music performance or a symphony that we have watched, a live musical performance can bring goosebumps, heart palpitations, tears and a real sense of connectivity with those around us. Another Bono quote that I have long held true for various reasons is that the treble clef is the international symbol of peace. Music brings people—even enemies—together; music is above politics. Time and again in history, that has been shown to be true. Who remembers Live Aid? And so it is that this bill is proving to be above politics. Well done to all members in this place.

In summary, a thriving, vibrant cultural scene is a significant definer of a functioning, inclusive and vibrant society. Dare I say that a healthy democracy needs a healthy, thriving arts culture. All Sydneysiders benefit from a thriving CBD, but I am particularly interested in what those reforms and their future tranches will mean for our metro areas like the beaches, where I am from, and particularly for places like industrial Brookvale, set to be transformed by positive redevelopment over the coming decades and where there is massive potential for a vibrant night-time economy. Just this week, the Brookvale Structure Plan has been adopted by Northern Beaches Council—so get onto it, Minister Scully. The Brookvale Structure Plan sets the vision for growth and a transformation of Brookvale for the next 15 years or so.

Supporting the growth of creative industries and the night-time economy in Brookvale is an important part of that vision. But a vibrant Brookvale is not just an abstract plan for the future. It will build on the emerging creative scene in Brookvale, being led by pioneers at the Brookvale Arts District. I give a massive shout-out to that lot; they know who they are. But do not be fooled by the creative acronym B-A-D—BAD. This initiative, which I am proud to have played my small part to help nurture and progress, is a very good thing for our community. The Brookvale Arts District is a not-for-profit organisation bringing together awesome creative people and local businesses to create a vibrant and future-ready arts, entertainment and industry precinct. Not only is it good for our local economic development but it is also great for our community.

Michael Rodrigues, the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner, has said that the Brookvale Arts District "is one of the most exciting night-time precincts to emerge in Sydney over the past few years". The Brookvale Arts District is more than just music; it is about sculptors, painters and other creatives—even poetry readings. That is as it should be. Increased vibrancy is more than just concerts; it is about supporting and encouraging the arts in all of its many forms. I was rapt that Minister Graham visited the Brookvale Arts District for the GroundSwell event at the end of October.

The Brookvale Arts District is just getting started. I am sure that these and future reforms will assist its endeavours. I thank the founders of BAD for their "vision over visibility" approach. The phrase "vision over visibility" means an insistence on seeing beyond what is to what could be. They saw the potential of those breweries and distilleries popping up in a unique industrial area that even produces widgets for NASA. But the area also had a loose collective of artists, painters and other creatives. They said, "Imagine if we could harness all of this and put it all together? What kind of a place could we create?" Internationally renowned? After all, why just be the nation's best? Let us be the world's best.

I welcome the provisions of the bill that simplify the regulation of noise complaints. The change of making Liquor and Gaming NSW the sole regulator must be communicated well to the community. It is important that local residents have a clearly understood method of raising concerns about local amenity but, importantly, that those concerns be considered consistently and in a balanced way. Embedding the order of occupancy as a central consideration for disturbance complaints is also an important principle, particularly for places like Brookvale where the future vision includes both a vibrant night-time economy and increased residential development, albeit well planned. The continuation of flexible rules for outdoor dining is sensible, and that will directly impact brewery businesses in Brookvale which made massive investments during COVID to use previously unused outdoor spaces, such as car parks, for seating and dining.

The special entertainment precinct concept is exciting and introduces meaningful incentives for more live music. I know we will see one established on the northern beaches very soon. We are planning to lodge an application for a special entertainment precinct at Brookvale on the northern beaches as soon as we can. That is "vision over visibility", and, in my opinion, that is outstanding. I am of the strong view that decisions about the location and creation of special entertainment precincts must be initiated by local councils. There should be no scope for special entertainment precincts to be unilaterally imposed by the State Government through other planning instruments. I very much welcome the Minister's comments in his second reading speech recognising that councils are best positioned to balance the needs of their communities, businesses and night-time economies. Minister Graham is to be personally commended for this.

Therefore, I wholeheartedly support the foreshadowed amendment of the member for Sydney. It will clear up any ambiguity created by the original drafting of the amendment to the Local Government Act by making it very explicit that special entertainment precincts can be made in a local environmental plan or under a State environmental plan, but only if requested by the local council. It is important that it is only the local council that can either initiate or request a special entertainment precinct. I also thank Local Government NSW and the handful of CEOs who I enlisted to work with my office and the member for Sydney's office to ensure that the changes reflected the intent of the Minister and his Government, and the councils. Ultimately, councils want the bill to succeed—make no mistake about that.

In conclusion, with this change, I fully support the bill and what it seeks to achieve. That is because we all know life can be gruelling. When we are out late—being in this place at 2.00 a.m. does not count; that is the definition of gruelling—connecting with other people in person and listening to live music that moves us, lifts us up or makes us reflect can be some of the best moments in life. When we are joyful, relaxed, playful and merry—that is for you, Ishbel—when we are experiencing those magical feelings, our cup is full, we feel re-energised and life seems full of possibilities. So I want there to be more music, more joy and more human interaction on the northern beaches and, indeed, across New South Wales.

With the right settings in place, like those proposed in the bill, we can get the balance right between public safety and amenity, while allowing the night-time economy to flourish. I welcome those reforms, and I am glad to see them pass in a bipartisan way as we embrace the festive season. I look forward to hosting all members in Brookie with my parliamentary colleague the member for Manly, James Griffin. Our electorates share a boundary in Brookie. He has also assisted me with helping BAD to fulfill its vision. I want all members to see for themselves the possibilities and the intent of this bill, and how it can come to life. It will be the member for Manly's shout. He just does not know that yet. As Paul McCarthy said, "Let it be."

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (18:10): I make a brief contribution to debate on the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner Bill 2023 and the cognate 24-Hour Economy Legislation Amendment (Vibrancy Reforms) Bill 2023. The bills modernise regulation and establish the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner to drive a vibrant 24-hour economy and to revitalise the live music, entertainment, hospitality and cultural sectors. This comes as Post Malone is getting ready for a very damp concert in The Domain tonight. I talk a lot about housing and jobs as part of the discussion around planning, but we cannot lose sight of the fact that we need to provide amenity to communities. Communities are more than just places to sleep and work; they are places where we enjoy each other's company and enjoy culture, heritage, live music and the like. These vibrancy reforms are an important part of delivering that and delivering the night-time economy that we want.

A lot of people forget the size of the hospitality sector and night-time sector, and the contribution that they make to the economy. Over many years we have failed to plan for the night-time economy in the same way that we have planned for the daytime economy, which we have done a lot of work on. That has been to our detriment. Over time we have viewed some night-time economy elements through the prism of what could go wrong and what bad things could happen. We should always have a mind to that, but we certainly also need to have a mind to how we can make things better and how we can make sure that we are enjoying ourselves—not only safely and responsibly but also in a way that is befitting of all tastes, whether they be in music, the arts or just going out to a bar or pub.

I was pleased when the Minns Government delivered on its commitment to extend the remit of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner to the Illawarra. That is important. The Illawarra and Wollongong in particular have provided inspiration for some elements of this bill in the standing development applications and the like for road closures and public events. Live music venues in New South Wales have halved over the past 10 years because of some of that overlapping and outdated licensing. I admit that planning and noise regulation have been part of that. It has also been compounded by the lockout laws and the COVID pandemic. But during that COVID pandemic we saw a group of businesses, particularly in Wollongong, keen to get on with it, making sure that people were out having a good time and enjoying themselves, and operating in a very responsible way. That is important not only for the patrons attending those pubs, clubs, arts venues and the like but also for those people employed in them. It is important for that aspect of the economy.

As I said, we have done a lot of work planning for the daytime economy but not as much work planning for the night-time economy. In saying that, I acknowledge a number of venue operators that got together in Wollongong on 18 June this year to talk about how to seize the opportunities of the night-time economy in the Illawarra. I particularly pay respect to people like Ryan and Nikki Aitchison from the Illawarra, Lachlan and Selena Stevens from His Boy Elroy, and the guys from La La La's, the Servo and other music venues. It is ironic for me to say that live music venues in New South Wales have halved over the past 10 years, because my electorate office is in one of those former live music venues. It was a great pub. Some great bands got their start there. But now it is an electorate office—somewhat more sedate than what it used to be. I spend just as much as time there but I do not seem to have the fun that I used to have when it was the Oxford Tavern.

I lend my support as planning Minister to the work that is being done by Minister Graham, police Minister Catley and other Ministers to make sure that these vibrancy reforms are part and parcel of creating good communities. The reforms of 2020 and 2021 did reduce some regulatory requirements, but now it is time to go further. For too long there has been regulator shopping when it comes to noise complaints. Seven authorities to regulate noise complaints in New South Wales is ridiculous. There is no reason for that. We are going to make Liquor and Gaming NSW the sole regulator. I am pleased that the Minister responsible is in the gallery at the moment hearing all of our concerns and hearing how important it is to have one sensible regulator in charge of noise complaints about licensed premises, giving certainty not only to residents but also to venues and venue operators about how that is going to work. One agency enforcing the noise conditions and standards set under the planning and environment protection regulations is a sensible reform and arguably a long-overdue reform.

The fact that the reforms provide great incentives for live music and live performance across the State through the strengthening of the special entertainment precinct model is an important development. We are also going to enable better use of private and public outdoor space. I am hoping we will have some more to say about those outdoor dining aspects in the coming days to make sure that we are locking in a simple path for people to enjoy outdoor dining in advance of summer. That was the funny thing about COVID. There was such resistance to using the outdoor space in so many places for a long time. Then COVID happened. We needed to do that for a good, sensible reason—to maintain the capacity of venues—and the world did not end. In fact, people started to enjoy it. It is strange that for so long we had great outdoor spaces in New South Wales but we were not taking advantage of them with outdoor dining. I am pleased that we will have more to say on that in the next little while. The bills also enhance harm minimisation and law enforcement tools. It is important not only that we have a good time but also that patrons are safe.

The reforms also standardise inconsistent liquor licence administration by standardising the trading periods across all days of the week and increasing licence flexibility for producers, and they establish a single 30-day consultation period on the liquor noticeboard, saving time and resources for applicants and communities while enabling direct feedback from interested parties. Those are not the only reforms that I have in mind in terms of where the Planning portfolio might be able to work with police, liquor and hospitality. We have to make sure that we are doing simple things. Expanding and providing the opportunity through a simple planning assessment for outdoor dining is one thing; making sure that we can expand capacity is the next phase. Wollongong is ready to take on the opportunities that the reforms will bring. We have already been setting the standard for a long time. I invite all members to come to the Gong in the future and experience the night-life.

Ms Liesl Tesch: I was there on the weekend.

Mr PAUL SCULLY: The member for Gosford was in Wollongong on the weekend getting a Legend award. Not everyone comes to the Gong and gets a Legend award, but the member for Gosford was there to do exactly that. We have been setting the standard when it comes to the integration of planning laws and the night-time economy for some time. I congratulate Councillor Ann Martin and the Wollongong City Council on the work that they have been doing on that. I commend the bills to the House.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (18:18): I speak in debate on the 24-Hour Economy Legislation Amendment (Vibrancy Reforms) Bill 2023 and the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner Bill 2023. The bills make several amendments to the Gaming and Liquor Administration Act 2007, the Liquor Act 2007 and the Liquor Regulation 2018, and they seek to increase the vibrancy of the night-time economy. I would add that ideally we would be seeking to increase the vibrancy of both the night-time economy and night-time culture, rather than just the financial gains of the night-time economy alone. The bills encourage more venues to host live music and arts and cultural events, address consequences of noise complaints for live venues and extend trading hours. The bills also establish a legislative framework for the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner as well as the commissioner's advisory council.

There is no doubt that our live music scenes and spaces have been ravaged since the implementation of Sydney's lockdown laws in 2014. Those scenes and spaces have not yet returned to what they once were due to the significant toll caused by the COVID pandemic that followed. Our City of Sydney boasts an incredible scene of creatives, hospos and restaurant staff, as well as restaurants, cafes and a vast selection of specialty small bars and character-filled live music venues both big and small, which are home to generations of musos, artists, creatives and entertainers who make our city so great, vibrant and alive, as I am sure members would agree. All of those elements attract many young people from around the country and the world to live and study in our city, if only the rents were not so damn high—but we can solve that with another piece of legislation.

It is important to deliver meaningful reforms to ensure that our cities are vibrant and our creative industries can thrive. Our electorate of Newtown does not shy away from an enthusiastic night-life. Our vibrant, diverse and creative community is what makes it so special. The Enmore Road precinct epitomises that. The State's first and only special entertainment precinct is right in the heart of my electorate. Venues within the precinct are allowed to trade 30 minutes later if they hold live musical performances and they can set up dining furniture on footpaths until 11.00 p.m. Noise complaint rules in the precinct have also changed. Voted one of the best going-out districts, the special entertainment precinct in Enmore has done wonders for many local venues.

Both Ministers with carriage of these bills spoke about how wonderful Enmore is, and I can vouch for that fact. Having lived in the Newtown area for over 20 years, I know that the area goes through phases. The north end, the middle part and the south end of King Street, as well as Enmore Road, have all had their moment to shine at different times over those two decades. At the moment Enmore Road is most definitely shining. That is clear. An overwhelming 84 per cent of respondents voted in favour in the Inner West Council's poll about whether Enmore Road should become a permanent special entertainment precinct. Initially there were challenges with ironing out the impacts and stresses on the local community, but people who live in our densely populated cities want to ensure they are lively, vibrant and full of the creative arts.

The success is clear: There has been increased patronage, more music, more local business successes and more funds thanks to so many people coming to Enmore. I give a shout-out to all of the participating local bars, restaurants and venues. They continue to do great work. We must also recognise that we are in this situation because the State engaged in what the Minister himself referred to as a "global embarrassment" with the horrific lockdown laws in Kings Cross and the CBD. The Greens welcome the New South Wales Labor Government's proposed reforms in this space, and we understand the success of Enmore's special activation precinct, but we cannot forget that the former Liberal-Nationals Government, with the support of the then Labor Opposition, introduced the 2014 lockdown laws.

The Greens were the only political party in the Parliament to oppose those lockdown laws. The member for Sydney worked closely with The Greens to do all we could to stop the laws, but it was a disaster. We have fought for Sydney to be a vibrant, 24/7 global city ever since, and we continue to fight. In 2016 I tabled a petition in this place signed by 12,000 New South Wales residents calling for the Government to keep Sydney safe and open. That petition goes to show how long we have known of the impacts of those lockdowns on our city. It is high time the Government came to the table to try to fix those issues. With that said, we need to acknowledge that those venues that were lost as a result of the lockdowns are gone forever. Those laws changed our night-life in Sydney. The history associated with many of those venues and the livelihoods of the people who owned those clubs and bars, as well as the livelihoods of the creatives who fled the city, are lost to history.

It is absolutely critical to recognise that we cannot just change planning provisions; we must also respect and support the creatives, the hospitality industry, the people who work in the small bars and clubs, and the people who put their heart and soul into creating a night-time culture and economy. They are a key element in making Sydney great. It is critical that we recognise another issue that caused tension and challenges during the introduction of both the lockout laws and the legislation before us. In trying to keep Sydney vibrant, safe and open, we must not hand the keys to the vested interests of the Australian Hotels Association or the gambling industry. It was disappointing to see the Government and the Opposition oppose amendments moved by my colleague Ms Cate Faehrmann in the other place to ensure that VIP poker machine rooms are not permitted to operate during those extended trading hours.

The Greens' position is clear: While we support the extension of trading hours, we do not support that extension for the use of pokies. I saw the incredibly vibrant music and creative scene in Adelaide, in my home State, that resulted from the massive "no pokies" reforms. It is critical that we do not bundle our improved night-time culture and economy with increased gambling. In talking about the night-time economy and the role of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner, it is crucial that we remember the place that night-time culture and night-time activities have in our communities. An essential function of the commissioner's role, which must also be reflected throughout the Government's policy and strategy, is to meaningfully impact and be guided by the vibrant and diverse culture of our city and State. The Greens will continue to push for that.

My colleagues in the other place moved amendments to expand the functions of the commissioner to promote and enhance multiculturalism as part of that night-time economy; to advocate for a mix of diverse cultural, social and business activities and experiences as part of that night-time economy; and to ensure that any advisory council includes culturally diverse organisations. These bills are not just about the economy; they are also about the creatives and other social elements that sit at the heart of a vibrant night-life. I acknowledge the tireless efforts of members of the Newtown scene who have delivered so much vibrancy to our city. I give a massive shout-out to the people who came together, stood strong and held their ground to prevent the lockouts from expanding into Newtown.

I could never have imagined taking part in a meeting with the NSW Police Force, the local council, Reclaim the Streets activists, incredible DJs, musos, support artists, hospitality workers and Liquor and Gaming NSW. At that meeting we collectively agreed that the worst possible thing that could happen was for the lockout laws to be extended to Newtown. Thanks to incredible grassroots, community-led support, we prevented that. We kept our community of Newtown safe and managed the shift of people affected by the lockout laws to our area. We welcomed those people in, provided they did not bring bigoted views and homophobic attitudes, and provided they did not try to change the culture and identity of Newtown that makes it so special.

The live music industry has a lot of rebuilding to do. It needs proper support to get there. The Greens believe that Sydney can be safe, vibrant and open 24 hours a day. But in order to do that, we must ensure that we support our creatives, musos and artists. We must provide them with support so that they can live, survive and function in our city. Without that, they cannot continue to contribute to the best city in this country.

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (18:28): I contribute to debate on the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner Bill 2023 and the 24-Hour Economy Legislation Amendment (Vibrancy Reforms) Bill 2023. The Minns Labor Government made a key election commitment to restore vibrancy to New South Wales, including through the execution of a significant regulatory reform agenda, by the end of this year. The former Liberal-Nationals Government was a government of party poopers. The number, viability and growth of venues in entertainment and performance spaces reduced dramatically under the former Government, restricted by planning, licensing and noise regulatory frameworks that are duplicative, outdated and complex. There has also been an increase in complexity for venues and entertainment spaces that were impacted by the 2014 lockout and "last drink" laws and then the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in New South Wales losing half of its music venues over the past decade and suffering significant reputational damage.

No-one ever wants to give Melbourne a free kick, but the former Liberals-Nationals Government's disregard for the New South Wales night-time economy has done exactly that. It has given Melbourne a free kick so good it could get them selected for the New South Wales Origin team. In contrast, the Minns Labor Government is introducing cognate bills with measures to encourage venue operators to launch, grow, adapt and expand their businesses, streamlining approval processes and putting in place a commonsense approach to entertainment sound. The reforming regulations will go a long way towards achieving this.

The weekend before last the Minister for Music and the Night-time Economy and the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner, Michael Rodrigues, were with me on Church Street in Parramatta. We walked down "Eat Street" and went to ALEX&Co. and Bay Vista. They were soaking up the atmosphere on a Saturday morning, seeing the outdoor dining and seeing Parramatta's potential to continue to expand and grow in this space. Church Street is a great example of what could be done if the settings were in place for precincts to be able to work effectively with

different parts of government. Unfortunately, right now that is not the case. Fixing the way noise is managed at venues across New South Wales, which has been a massive issue on "Eat Street", has been identified by the Government as a key priority.

These bills strip back the current tangle of red tape to allow just one set of laws for noise disturbance complaints against live music and performance venues, with higher hurdles imposed for complaints to progress and no avenue for a single complainant to close venues. Currently seven different authorities accept noise complaints. The bill streamlines this process by making Liquor and Gaming NSW the lead agency in managing noise complaints against licensed venues. The order of occupancy will be made a central consideration in the arbitration of disturbance complaints to address the situation in which newcomers to a neighbourhood work to shut down or wind back the entertainment offerings and/or the operating hours of established venues.

One just has to look at the success of Sydney Olympic Park in my electorate of Parramatta to see the potential to achieve more in that space. In Sydney Olympic Park there is the Accor Stadium, Sydney Showground and Qudos Bank Arena, but we have the potential to do so much more. The one element that makes that area work is that people who move into Sydney Olympic Park and people who live in Newington understand that they are living in an entertainment precinct. They came after, not before. That was the whole purpose of us ensuring that that space was protected so that it could provide that type of service not only to the broader New South Wales community but also to Australia and beyond. That is why the order of occupancy is so important in the bills.

The Government is focused on getting the balance right between the interests of communities and bringing back a thriving entertainment sector. It has baffled me for years that we have restrictions on the genre or type of music that can be played in a venue. Have members ever wondered why there is a proliferation of tribute bands in Sydney? Do not get me wrong; I do not mind covers of Bon Jovi or The Beatles, but the opportunities for young performers to be able to play in a venue are so sparse and limited. The current licensing restrictions even dictate the type of music permissible to such an extent that in Western Sydney and Parramatta, original artists in R&B, hip-hop and other popular music genres are simply unwelcome in clubs and pubs.

The current environment kills live music before bands can even play their first chord. We want more live music, more cultural performance spaces and more places to celebrate the diversity of our population. The cognate bills propose innovative reforms to incentivise more live music and live performances across the State, including as part of a strengthened special entertainment precinct model. They enable better use of private and public outdoor spaces; establish the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner as a statutory appointment under the Government Sector Employment Act 2013, with specific functions and powers; enhance harm minimisation and enforcement tools; and standardise inconsistent liquor licensing administration.

These reforms represent the first tranche of work that is intended to make a meaningful difference and send the industry a clear signal not just in metropolitan Sydney but also across the regions. The New South Wales Government is committed to improving the night-time economy for those who work in it as well as play. Its commitment to building safer precincts and supporting access to more diverse services and entertainment will make everyday life better for those who do not work nine to five. If the Government makes the night-time economy more rewarding, safe, flexible and accessible for workers, it will benefit everyone.

When I speak to businesses in Parramatta that are wanting to extend their hours into the evenings beyond 10.00 p.m. or 11.00 p.m., or even past midnight, the biggest challenge they have is not only securing staff but also ensuring safety for those staff to get home. A whole-of-government process needs to be implemented, and this is a first step towards it. It involves better transport. When we are relying on people coming from the outer western suburbs of Sydney to Parramatta to work in this industry, we need to ensure that they can get home safely at night and that they can travel to venues safely.

It is not only the Minister for Music and the Night-time Economy, the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, the Minister for Gaming and Racing, and the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces who I thank for these reforms; I also thank the Minister for Transport, who plays a role in this. Of course, it is not limited to those five. It is a whole-of-government approach. Tonight Post Malone is playing in a rain-drenched Domain, and on Saturday crowds enjoyed Paramore. I have a feeling from the photos I have seen of the lights upstairs that night that there might have been a few Nationals members enjoying that concert too.

But we want Australian musicians. We want The Domain to be filled with young people coming out to see Australian performers. I do have a bit of a conflict of interest. I have two sons in a band and I know firsthand how hard it is for them to secure a venue. Not only is it difficult securing a venue; it is also difficult to find a safe place even to rehearse. It is so hard. They live in apartments and do not have garages. Where are they supposed to go to rehearse? It is a really big predicament. We want to see The Domain filled. We want to see gritty, small venues; we want to see bigger venues.

Parramatta has young people desperate to get out and enjoy a night-time economy. I recently went to the Parramatta Lanes festival, an annual event held in October. The thing that was different about this year's festival was the young, diverse crowd, all looking for a cheap night out and something different, with entertainment and live music. Young people are hanging out for that, and we need to ensure that we have the regulations in place to allow it. Parramatta is ready to dive headfirst into the live music scene. It is ready to dive headfirst into a 24-hour economy. We need to work closely with local government to ensure we can achieve that. The bills will start the process to achieve what we need to be able to attract and keep more creatives in New South Wales and deliver diverse entertainment offerings. Labor is committed to "fix you". I commend the bills to the House.

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (18:38): I contribute to debate on the 24-Hour Economy Legislation Amendment (Vibrancy Reforms) Bill 2023 and the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner Bill 2023. Imagine Gosford as a special entertainment precinct with music in every one of its fabulous venues. Imagine it as a place where people come from Sydney and Newcastle at least once a quarter, maybe once a month, or maybe even more often, to enjoy the beautiful Central Coast and experience its night-time economy. That is a vision. I thank the teams at Drifter's Wharf, Hotel Gosford, Lyons Den, Bay Road Brewing, Central Coast Leagues Club, the Railway Hotel and Naughty Noodle Fun Haus for being part of this vision and for supporting the Minister for Music and the Night-time Economy. It is fantastic having a Minister for live music.

I also thank the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner for coming to launch Labor's commitment to live music at Drifter's Wharf on the beautiful Central Coast earlier this year. I am confident that this legislation is going to make a huge difference to our State. It comes on the back of the lockdown laws and the number of live music venues in New South Wales halving in the past 10 years. Greater Sydney is the only capital to have seen a decline in the numbers of artists, musicians, writers and performers between 2011 and 2021. It really is time for a massive change.

I also thank the Minister for Sport. I was overjoyed to see Robbie Williams at Moore Park stadium the other night. That would not have happened had we not made changes to allow that stadium to open up not just for blokes and football but for the people of New South Wales and live music. It was great to see the Matildas play there, but also amazing to see live music at a venue like that in Sydney. I went with friends whom I have seen live music with over the years. In recent years the opportunities to do that have diminished. I listened to the earlier contribution from the member for Newcastle, and as I speak I am seated next to the member for Swansea. The three of us grew up with the live music night-time economy in Newcastle. It was normal for us to wander down Hunter Street, where every single pub had live music—at least on Friday and Saturday nights. We had the love of live music in our hearts. It is super important that the Minister for Music and the Night-time Economy is making the changes we need.

I encourage having the entertainment precinct in Gosford, extending trading hours and providing additional opportunities for live music. It is also important to make Liquor and Gaming NSW the sole regulator for formal noise complaints against licensed premises because there have been incredibly weird regulations around noise complaints. Embedding the order of occupancy as a central consideration for disturbance complaints and enhancing definitions to provide greater certainty and clarity, both for businesses and residents, is really important. We see so many venues shut down because one resident moves in next door and does not like the music coming from the venue. Bring on that change. In our community the Central Coast Council has been a bit of a handbrake. However, changes to planning rules around the use of public and private outdoor space will be welcomed across the Central Coast.

I know the struggles of Bay Road Brewing and the licensing regulations it had to deal with. The business has worked hard and spent a hell of a lot of money to make its outdoor spaces available, so removing some red tape and softening the rules will make a difference. The Link and Pin is a hugely important live music venue on the peninsula. Milly and Adam are working hard to create opportunities on the peninsula for all sorts of live music genres and to involve young people. Outdoor public space is important to those guys. I hope that we see more venues with outdoor opportunities in the future. Establishing the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner outside Sydney is a crucial part of the bills. The previous Government was so Sydney-centric that investment did not extend to Newcastle and Wollongong, let alone to the Central Coast. I am happy that the night-time economy will create opportunities in our community.

The member for Wollongong emphasised the importance of hospitality. Hospitality is a great contributor to the Central Coast community, but let us focus on how we expand it and recognise the great contribution of the night-time economy. I thank the publicans and licensees who take the risk to make that possible. I thank them for the work they do to support the creatives—the musicians, producers and managers—who are the visionaries for change in our community. I also thank the Central Coast Music and Arts organisation and the Naughty Noodle Fun Haus. They are separate groups, but I am confident that we can unite them as a strong team to enhance the opportunity for live music and really give local musicians and performers a chance to grow. We have seen this

happen already. We just had the fantastic week-long Tubular Festival on the Central Coast, which lit up 10 indoor and outdoor venues across the coast.

Grove Studios, which is a fantastic recording studio that also provides vocational education and training to young people, opened its doors to experienced musicians to work and to nurture young musicians in our community as songwriters. Damien Gerard Studios has opened in West Gosford. It will attract people from Sydney, Australia and all over the world to the coast, just as they come to the Grove Studios and Ivory Lane Studios. We have great support structures in place not only for live music but also to record music and send it far and wide. Let us make a space for our creatives and celebrate what we have on the coast. The fantastic Kasey Chambers and her partner, Rod McCormack, do incredible work for the country music scene. People do not know that the country music scene in Australia is based on the Central Coast. Talent born on the coast spreads across Australia and the world. I am proud to be part of this Government. Labor loves live music. Let's grow the rock!

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) (18:45): In reply: I thank members for their contributions to debate on the 24-Hour Economy Legislation Amendment (Vibrancy Reforms) Bill 2023 and the cognate 24-Hour Economy Commissioner Bill 2023. I thank the member for Tamworth, who is a big supporter of music and entertainment up there in beautiful Tamworth. I was at the Tamworth Country Music Festival this year. It was excellent.

Mr Kevin Anderson: Come again.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: I will. I thank members representing the electorates of Liverpool, Coffs Harbour, Granville, Sydney, Newcastle, Wakehurst, Newtown, Parramatta, Wollongong and Gosford for their contributions to the debate and I will address some of the matters that were raised. The member for Tamworth and the member for Coffs Harbour noted that the original bill only expanded the commissioner's remit to Newcastle and Wollongong. This is not quite the case. The original bill did not provide a geographical limit to the commissioner's remit. The Government recognised that the commissioner would advocate for the night-time economy across the State. However, the Government had also flagged that it would take some time to slowly expand the commissioner's remit, and in the interim he would focus on Newcastle and Wollongong in addition to Sydney, which is the sole remit the former Government gave the commissioner.

As the Minister for the Central Coast, I have a particular interest in ensuring that creating a vibrant 24-hour economy also extends to the 350,000 people living and working across the Central Coast. Nevertheless, given it has always been the Government's intention for the commissioner to work on a statewide basis, we were happy to ensure that the bill reflected the Government's position. I also welcome the invitation from the member for Tamworth for the commissioner to visit vibrant night-time communities in regional New South Wales. We all support that. I also look forward to doing so. In particular, I look forward to receiving an invitation to attend the Tamworth Country Music Festival—which I have just got from the member—and the Parkes Elvis Festival.

The member for Tamworth also requested that clear guidance be given to industry regarding the requirements of the new statement of risks and potential effects. I note that the member for Sydney also asked for comfort regarding this issue. I am happy to confirm that Liquor and Gaming NSW will develop detailed guidance regarding when it will consider disturbance complaints and how it will make decisions on such complaints, as we understand this is an area that we need to get right. Liquor and Gaming NSW will consult on the guidance and ensure it is widely available before the provisions come into effect. I also confirm that new section 79B (1) (a) of the Liquor Act 2007 applies to the manner in which the business of the licensed premises is conducted. The intention is for this definition to include issues like live music or noise from patrons leaving a licensed premises. Conversely, it is also the intention for other types of noise—such as construction noise or garbage disposal—to fall out of the scope of these provisions.

Finally, I confirm to the member for Sydney that the Government is also working to ensure that Liquor and Gaming NSW is sufficiently resourced to deal with an increased number of complaints, and I hope the Treasurer will look very kindly upon our request. I thank the member for Wakehurst for his constructive comments about the bill and his commitment to a vibrant 24-hour economy. I have been around the industrial estate in Brookvale that has all the pop-up bars and breweries. It looks quite good. In closing, the Government believes these bills are a significant first step to reinvigorating our night-life and encouraging a diverse range of businesses to flourish once more. The bills will support communities to gather and make good use of public space, empower local councils to respond to their communities, make it easier for businesses to diversify, and make live music and the performing arts a central part of our hospitality sector.

I am pleased with the extensive engagement across the Parliament to strengthen the bills. The Government genuinely believes the bills are stronger for the engagement of all parties. I thank the Opposition, The Greens, the

Legalise Cannabis Party and, in particular, the member for Tamworth, the member for Coffs Harbour, the member for Wakehurst and the member for Sydney, and Jacqui Munro, Jeremy Buckingham and Cate Faehrmann in the other place for their detailed engagement and for providing feedback to help develop sensible amendments in both Houses, which the Government is pleased to support. I extend my thanks to the many Ministers and their agencies who have collaborated to make the bills possible. It has been a complex set of reforms to bring together.

I particularly thank my colleague Minister Graham for his leadership on the issue over many years. I know how passionate he is about live music, the performing arts and building a stronger, more inclusive and exciting night-life for all. As the member for Gosford said, Labor loves live music. I recognise the Department of Enterprise, Investment and Trade, including the highly capable team from the hospitality and racing unit. I thank them for their work. We have a great team. They are probably the most active in reform in the whole government with the number of things we have on the table. They are doing an amazing job.

I thank the Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner, Sound NSW, the Cabinet Office, the Department of Planning and Environment, including the Environment Protection Authority, the Office of Local Government, the NSW Police Force, NSW Health, Transport for NSW, the Department of Customer Service and the Premier's Department. I thank the many non-government bodies, including councils, health and community organisations, and others, who have provided advice and contributed to the development of the bills. I thank the industry groups and bodies representing venues, pubs, clubs and performance spaces. I am grateful for the collaborative manner in which they engaged with me on a range of issues, but I am particularly grateful for their input in relation to these reforms. The Government looks forward to a vibrant summer across all of New South Wales and remains committed to continuing this important work over the coming years. I commend the bills to the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis): The question is that these bills be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

Consideration in detail requested by Mr Alex Greenwich.

Consideration in Detail

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis): By leave: I will deal with the 24-Hour Economy Legislation Amendment (Vibrancy Reforms) Bill in one group of clauses and schedules. The question is that clauses 1 and 2 and schedules 1 to 4 be agreed to.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (18:53): I move my amendment No. 1 on sheet c2023-185C:

No. 1 **Special entertainment precinct**

Page 34, Schedule 4.4 [3], lines 5–7. Omit all words on the lines. Insert instead—

- (3) A special entertainment precinct may be established by—
 - (a) the council for the area in which the precinct will be located, by identifying the precinct in a local environmental plan that applies to the land on which the precinct will be located, or
 - (b) the Minister in a State Environmental Planning Policy, but only at the request of the council for the area in which the precinct will be located.

My amendment will clarify that the creation of special entertainment precincts must be driven by councils. Currently, councils can establish special entertainment precincts where live music is encouraged in venues through incentives. Enmore Road is the first and only precinct, but I hope that there will be more across the city and State, including my electorate. The wording for new reforms around special entertainment precincts has led to some concern that the Government could establish special entertainment precincts outside of any council process.

Though the Government has made clear that that is not its intention, with the creation of all special entertainment precincts to be led by councils, the Minister, the member for Wakehurst, local government stakeholders and I agree that providing additional clarification would be beneficial. The amendment will make explicit that a special entertainment precinct can be identified in a local environmental plan or by the Minister via a State environmental planning policy but only at the request of the council for the area in which the precinct will be located. The amendment is in line with the intention of the bill, and I thank the Minister and the member for Wakehurst for working with me to provide this useful clarification. I commend the amendment.

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) (18:54): The bill proposes to clarify and enhance the pathways to establish special entertainment precincts under the Local Government Act. Currently, section 30 of the Act specifies that a council may establish a precinct by

amending its local environmental plan [LEP] to identify the special entertainment precinct. Councils' feedback is that this can be a lengthy process, which is one of the problems we are trying to solve. In practice, it is also not the only avenue available: The current special entertainment precinct trial in the inner west was established by the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces.

To support the Inner West Council to trial a precinct, the Department of Planning and Environment requested that the Minister amend the council's LEP to map a precinct, through an amending State environmental planning policy. The bill intended to confirm this as an alternative pathway, by providing that a special entertainment precinct may be established by amending an environmental planning instrument—either a local environmental plan or a State environmental policy—and being agnostic about the actor. However, some stakeholders have noted that the current wording is ambiguous and, given it is agnostic about the actor, are concerned about a scenario where a future government may make a special entertainment precinct without the council's agreement. That is not our intent.

The Government supports this amendment as it removes the ambiguity. The proposed amendment closes any potential or perceived loophole and confirms that the Government's intent is that special entertainment precincts be established only with complete agreement and involvement by councils. Special entertainment precincts will continue to be a partnership between councils and the State Government, where there is an agreement that a district is well suited to late-night entertainment activity and that it will be supported. We look forward to more councils taking up this opportunity, and we support the amendment.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis): The question is that amendment No. 1 on sheet c2023-185C of the member for Sydney be agreed to.

Amendment agreed to.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis): The question is that clauses 1 and 2 and schedules 1 to 4 as amended be agreed to.

Clauses 1 and 2 and schedules 1 to 4 as amended agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr DAVID HARRIS: I move:

That these bills be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

BIOSECURITY AMENDMENT (INDEPENDENT BIOSECURITY COMMISSIONER) BILL 2023

Second Reading Speech

Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (18:58): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Biosecurity Amendment (Independent Biosecurity Commissioner) Bill 2023 will establish the Independent Biosecurity Commissioner to provide oversight, clarify responsibilities and strengthen accountability of our biosecurity framework and improve the management of invasive species in New South Wales. The impact of invasive species on New South Wales' economy, environment and community is profound. Each year, weeds cost our agriculture sector around \$1.8 billion and pest animals cost over \$170 million. In addition, there are cultural impacts and public amenity impacts, which are difficult to quantify but substantial. There are also significant impacts on our biodiversity and threatened species. Collectively, weeds and pest animals have been identified as a threat to approximately 70 per cent of New South Wales' listed threatened species. It is estimated that over 1,650 introduced plant species have become established in New South Wales, with at least 300 of those causing significant environmental impacts and damage, such as lantana and blackberry. Weeds can out-compete crops, resulting in lower productivity and the need for expensive and ongoing control measures.

Wild dogs, feral pigs, rabbits, foxes, cats and deer are some of the most significant widespread pest animals in New South Wales. A recent Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences survey showed that the effort required to control pests and weeds is increasing, with 89 per cent of land managers reporting problems due to feral animals in 2022, up from 85 per cent in 2019. We have all seen those pests and we know the damage they do. Once widespread, the eradication of pest animals and plants is rarely a practical option. Priorities for the control of the species must be determined and control efforts must be focused in the areas where the benefits will be the greatest.

In the lead-up to the March election, Labor made a number of commitments around biosecurity. That is because we are committed to ensuring that members of this Government are doing everything that we can to

support our farmers and communities to tackle infestations of pest animals and plants. The cornerstone of our commitments is the subject of the bill today, and that is appointing a commissioner who will oversee the biosecurity framework around pest and weed management in New South Wales and drive continuous improvement.

We know that our farmers work hard to fight invasive pests and weeds on their land. They do their best to keep pests and weeds out and we need to make sure other occupiers of land are doing the same, and that includes the Government. We know that biosecurity is a shared responsibility. We know the actions of one can have far-reaching impacts. Successful management of pest and weed threats requires a coordinated effort and that is why the bill is so important. The commissioner will have the power to drive improvements, hold public land managers to account and make recommendations to government on what more needs to be done to protect New South Wales.

Next I come to the importance of biosecurity and this Government's commitments to and investments in securing and strengthening the system in New South Wales. Australia's biosecurity threat level continues to escalate due to the increase in movement of people, products and produce globally. That is why the Government is working tirelessly across all aspects of biosecurity. In the September budget the New South Wales Government committed \$298.5 million in support of biosecurity and agricultural industries. Agriculture is one of the most significant and iconic industries in our regions. New South Wales is home to more than 39,000 agricultural businesses and 42,000 farms, and more than 66,000 people are employed in the sector alone.

Our investment includes an additional \$80 million to tackle the red imported fire ants and \$77.2 million for varroa mite emergency responses. We have committed a further \$39 million to support sheep and goat farmers to implement mandatory electronic identification across New South Wales. In relation to pests and weeds, this Government is investing \$13 million in the feral pig control program to reduce the number of feral pigs and to protect primary producers and farming communities, which will be overseen by a feral pig coordinator. It is absolutely vital for catchments and for the health of the Murray-Darling Basin that we tackle the feral pigs, which do huge damage to our riparian zones and wetlands. The Government has also committed \$10 million to tackle pest and weed infestations through the Good Neighbour Program, which the Minister will be launching in the coming months. In addition, the Government is conducting a comprehensive review of the extent and impacts of invasive species in New South Wales, which will act as a baseline for assessing the effectiveness of our management strategies into the future.

The Minister for Agriculture in the other place has been and will continue to be a fierce advocate for the importance of biosecurity and ensuring that the Government continues to do what it can to strengthen our framework in New South Wales. Those of us who live in rural and regional New South Wales know that pests and weeds do not respect borders or property boundaries. That is why effective management is so important and why we need to clarify responsibilities and improve accountability in the whole system.

In June 2023 the Minister for Agriculture appointed an interim Biosecurity Commissioner, Dr Marion Healy, to lead consultation with a range of stakeholders from industry, government, and environmental and community groups. From that consultation Dr Healy delivered a report recommending a legislative model for the role of the Independent Biosecurity Commissioner. The Government has considered the report and developed the bill, which is before the House, that gives effect to the role, functions and powers of the commissioner. In doing so we are introducing legislation which reflects and responds to the feedback we heard through consultation and to concerns relating to pest and weed management in New South Wales.

The bill is about delivering the commitment this Government took to the election this year in direct response to stakeholders reporting issues with pests and weeds coming onto their property from public lands. I am sure that is a familiar story to all of us in rural areas and those of us who are MPs from rural areas because we get the calls to our offices quite frequently. Those issues were reiterated through consultation undertaken by the interim Biosecurity Commissioner and this Government is bringing forward a bill to establish a commissioner specifically focused on pests and weeds.

Dr Healy's report noted unanimous stakeholder support for the new commissioner to provide an advisory and oversight function. Stakeholders identified specific opportunities for the commissioner to enhance the New South Wales biosecurity framework, including providing independent advice to the Government, setting strategic priorities for pest and weed management in New South Wales, and promoting accountability and clarifying responsibilities to enhance collaboration and coordination amongst key stakeholders. The New South Wales Government agrees that those are the opportunities to be captured and they will be delivered by the bill before the House today.

We propose to establish a commissioner who provides independent expert advice, makes recommendations to the Government about what action is needed and drives accountability by making their advice and the

Government's responses available for all to see. There is strong public interest in ensuring that New South Wales primary industries and environmental values are protected and the impacts of pests and weeds are minimised. The commissioner will provide the oversight necessary to comprehensively address the challenges posed by invasive species across the State. The commissioner will do so without duplicating existing functions and will do so efficiently and in a financially responsible way, aligned to the fiscal discipline demonstrated in our most recent budget.

I now turn to the detail of the bill. The bill is made up of several parts that provide for the establishment of the Independent Biosecurity Commissioner, including the functions and powers of the commissioner, reporting requirements and other administrative provisions. In the report by the interim Biosecurity Commissioner, it was clear that stakeholders saw a need for an independent voice to provide expert and impartial advice on the management of pests and weeds in New South Wales.

The bill establishes the commissioner in a way that ensures it can undertake that role effectively and independently. The bill establishes the Independent Biosecurity Commissioner as a statutory role to be appointed by the Governor on the recommendation of the Minister responsible for the Act. The commissioner reports directly to the Minister and not a head of department. The commissioner is not subject to the control and direction of the Minister in the exercise of their functions, except in limited circumstances, which I will explain shortly.

The commissioner will be required to appear before New South Wales parliamentary committees as requested, such as budget estimates, independently of the department. That will ensure that the commissioner can provide direct insights and information to parliamentary committees, further strengthening its independence, promoting accountability and clarifying responsibilities.

The bill sets out the functions of the commissioner, which include providing advice to the Minister administering the Act, other Ministers and the Government. The commissioner will undertake reviews about issues relating to pests and weeds and will also prepare and publish reports about those reviews. The commissioner can provide advice or undertake a review on its own initiative, or on the direction of the Minister. That is the only circumstance in which the Minister can direct the commissioner.

It is intended that the commissioner considers pest and weed issues as they relate to New South Wales only while acknowledging that, given the nature of biosecurity issues, it may at times require consideration of information from other jurisdictions. The bill provides that the commissioner will monitor issues relating to pests and weeds and identify opportunities for improvements, promote coordinated and collaborative responses, and engage experts and key stakeholders.

Importantly, the bill specifies that, in exercising its functions, the commissioner must act in an independent and impartial way. It is important that the commissioner is able to determine their own work plan and that the Minister and Government do not control the work, advice or recommendations of the commissioner. While the Minister has the power to direct the commissioner to provide advice or undertake a review, the Minister is not able to control the content of those reviews or direct that specific advice is provided.

As we know, pests and weeds impact public and private land alike. They are on our agricultural land, in our national parks and State forests—they are everywhere. Biosecurity is a shared responsibility and that is why the bill allows for the commissioner to make recommendations to the Minister administering the Biosecurity Act, other Ministers and the New South Wales Government generally. That is also why the bill specifies that the commissioner's functions include engaging experts and key stakeholders, and promoting coordinated and collaborative responses. The commissioner will be able to work across government and access expertise that sits within the Department of Primary Industries and in other agencies. They will also be empowered to engage with external experts, private landholders and key industry and community groups. Their perspectives and input will be essential in ensuring that the advice and recommendations of the commissioner consider all the issues.

The bill also provides parameters to ensure effective and appropriate delivery of advice, reviews and recommendations. Reviews undertaken by the commissioner must be accompanied by a report, which is published on the commissioner's website. A copy of the report will be provided to the Minister administering the Biosecurity Act 2015 and any other Minister to whom the contents of the report are relevant so that they can consider the report prior to publication. That provision is not intended to provide for changes to be made to the contents of the commissioner's report prior to its publication—as I said, the commissioner is not subject to the Minister's direction—but rather is so the Government can consider its responses.

The Government or relevant Minister will have six months to respond to the commissioner's recommendations. Importantly, responses to recommendations will be published on the commissioner's website. The commissioner will table an annual report in each House of Parliament that describes their activities and any findings or recommendations made in the previous financial year. The annual report will also include the status

of the implementation of any recommendations made by the commissioner in previous financial years. That requirement will ensure public visibility of the work of the commissioner by making it available to the Parliament and the New South Wales community. That is what the bill is about: meeting stakeholder expectations to promote accountability, clarify responsibilities and improve effectiveness in the biosecurity framework to support the management of pests and weeds.

The commissioner's powers primarily relate to allowing them to gather information to undertake their functions effectively and promote the accountability sought by occupiers of land and stakeholders in relation to pest and weed management. The commissioner may require a public service agency or State-owned corporation that has functions relating to or is otherwise involved in pest or weed management—or the care, control or management of land—to provide documents and information to the commissioner. Those significant powers are necessary to deliver on the intent and purpose of the commissioner, noting that, while the commissioner has the power to collect and use personal information, the provisions of the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 will apply to disclosure of personal information by the commissioner. The commissioner will not publish or distribute any personal information unless the disclosure is in accordance with that Act.

The bill provides for the employment conditions of the role of the commissioner. An appointed commissioner may hold office for a term of not more than five years. A person appointed to the office is eligible for reappointment. The commissioner will be employed either part-time or full-time via a contract of employment between the commissioner and the Minister. The commissioner is not a public servant, and the provisions of the Government Sector Employment Act 2013 will not apply except for those relating to their contract of employment, band of employment, remuneration, employment benefits and allowances. That ensures that the contract and remuneration of the commissioner will be appropriate and aligned to public sector salary standards.

The bill also specifies when the office of the commissioner is vacant, provides for the appointment of an acting commissioner where there is a vacancy and sets out the grounds for removal from office. Those provisions are necessary to ensure the proper functioning of the role of the commissioner as they deliver outcomes for the people of New South Wales. There are a number of other miscellaneous provisions in the bill. Staff may be employed under the Government Sector Employment Act 2013 to support the commissioner in carrying out their functions. There will be a secretariat located in the Department of Primary Industries, which is the lead agency on biosecurity policy across the New South Wales Government. The model leverages the significant policy, research and operational biosecurity expertise within the Department of Primary Industries and is consistent with the model successfully used to support the Commonwealth Inspector-General of Biosecurity.

That approach is another demonstration of the Government's fiscal discipline, evidenced in the budget. The bill does not duplicate any existing functions or roles across government. Legislating and funding an Independent Biosecurity Commissioner is the most cost-effective way to achieve our commitment to strengthen and secure the resilience of our agricultural industries. In line with that approach, the bill also provides that the commissioner be prescribed as a government officer of the department and be declared to be part of the department for the purposes of the Government Sector Finance Act 2018.

Essentially, that will mean that the requirement to produce financial reports will be covered off by the department's annual financial reports. But, in relation to their work plan and advice, the commissioner will report directly to the Minister and report annually to Parliament, as I previously mentioned. It is a commonsense approach aligned to this Government's fiscal discipline. The approach will significantly reduce the financial and administrative burden on the commissioner and will mean that the benefits of expert advice can be realised without requiring an unnecessary impost on taxpayers.

Finally, to ensure that the operation of the Independent Biosecurity Commissioner continues to be effective and appropriate, the commissioner's operations, objectives and functions will be reviewed every five years to ensure that they remain appropriate. The outcome of the review must be tabled in each House of Parliament within 12 months after the end of each five-year period. It is critical to ensure that the purpose of the commissioner is clear. Biosecurity is a broad and complex space, with every element requiring specific and detailed attention. That is why the Independent Biosecurity Commissioner will focus on pests and weeds—because the stakeholders have told us they want greater accountability, clarified responsibilities and improvement in the management of pests and weeds in New South Wales. That is what we will deliver.

I acknowledge that community members have raised concerns about pests and weeds coming onto their properties from public lands. As I said before, I am a rural MP and I get the phone calls—as does the member for Dubbo, I am sure. It is important that there are measures in place to support our farmers and other private landholders to address issues from pests and weeds and that public land managers are held to the same standards as everybody else. It is clear that the focus of the commissioner must be on strategic issues to allow for meaningful progress to be made in pest and weed management.

Dr Healy's report identified a number of high-priority areas that should be priority considerations for the commissioner. They included a review into issues that may create a perception of inconsistent enforcement approaches, including the selection of appropriate compliance tools and actions, and clarifying responsibilities around the application of those; improving communications to occupiers of land around biosecurity obligations; exploring avenues to enhance the involvement of Aboriginal communities in biosecurity, pest and weed management initiatives, fostering cultural engagement and sustainable practices; and reviewing the governance arrangements and structures of the State and regional committee system responsible for pest and weed management.

To ensure that the Government is responding to the key issues identified by stakeholders, the Minister will refer those four proposals to the commissioner upon their appointment. The commissioner's work plan will evolve over time, and the Minister has indicated that she would welcome representations about what additional strategic priorities the commissioner should consider. For the benefit of the House, I will outline aspects of biosecurity that the commissioner will not cover and why.

The Minister has indicated that we are not here to re-prosecute the effectiveness of the Biosecurity Act 2015 and the general biosecurity duty to manage the risk of invasive species. There are other avenues where that type of legislative review occurs, such as the recently published *Statutory Review of the Biosecurity Act 2015*. It concluded that the policy objectives and terms of the Act are valid, including the general biosecurity duty. The Independent Biosecurity Commissioner is about responding to the threat of invasive species and to clear feedback from landholders that they want to see meaningful change in pest and weed management.

The commissioner is also not being tacked onto an existing commission. The issue of invasive species management requires specific attention, and we have heard from stakeholders time and again that they want specific measures to support effective pest and weed management. That is what this Government is committed to, and that is what we are delivering. Establishing the commissioner with a specific scope of work will provide for a strategic focus on pest and weed issues. The Minister has spoken about the merits of establishing an independent commissioner supported by Department of Primary Industries staff rather than as a standalone entity, as I mentioned before. We are not here to reinvent the wheel by adding a new entity to the biosecurity framework. We should focus on adding value without duplication.

In terms of its scope of work, the commissioner will focus on terrestrial pest and weed matters—meaning matters on land—rather than aquatic matters. The commissioner will focus on the land management impacts of pests and weeds, not other biosecurity-related matters like animal disease, emergency response or public health impacts. There are well-established State and national processes, agreements, structures and legislation in place for addressing those other biosecurity matters. The Government's aim is to focus on stakeholder concerns about pests and weeds, and complement and enhance the existing biosecurity framework. The appointment of the commissioner is about improving accountability and the management of pests and weeds, and mitigating the significant impact they have on our economy and environment. That is why the focus of the commissioner will be on strategic pest and weed issues. I hope everyone in the House today will appreciate the value of creating fit-for-purpose policies and solutions for such complex issues, rather than trying to take a one-size-fits-all approach.

The bill before the House is one of many ways that the Government is delivering on critical issues for the people of New South Wales. It will deliver an independent voice to provide expert and impartial advice to the Government in relation to pest and weed issues in New South Wales. This is something the Government has promised and something stakeholders have asked for, and we are delivering. In her speech the Minister thanked the stakeholders and the interim Biosecurity Commissioner, Dr Marion Healy, for their important contributions to this process and the development of this vital piece of legislation. I thank the Minister, my friend Tara Moriarty—who is also from Queanbeyan—for her work on the bill on behalf of New South Wales landholders. I also commend my good friend Mick Veitch, who in opposition brought this policy to the election. I commend the bill to the House.

Second Reading Debate

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (19:20): While Opposition members do not oppose the Biosecurity Amendment (Independent Biosecurity Commissioner) Bill 2023, we do not see the need for a biosecurity commission or commissioner. I outline the reasons for that. The perfect example of why we do not see the need for a commissioner is the incursion of red imported fire ants, which was detected on Friday near Murwillumbah and announced publicly on Saturday. A commissioner would not have been able to stop the incursion and would not have helped in the response that is being managed on the ground by experts in the field from the Department of Regional NSW, the Department of Primary Industries, Local Land Services and the local council. The incursion detected last week came as a result of poor planning by the Labor Government and the agriculture Minister. They

closed their eyes and were sitting, waiting, wishing—a bit like American singer-songwriter Jack Johnson—hoping that nothing would happen. Unfortunately, it did.

The topic of red imported fire ants has been firmly on the radar since August. I acknowledge that New South Wales has contributed its share to the national Emergency Response Fund but, when presented with a looming threat, prevention is definitely better than cure and it should not have taken the detection of fire ants on our side of the border to trigger an eradication response. There was no degree of proactivity when it came to keeping fire ants out—rather, a war chest to activate once the horse had bolted. I note the Minister has outlined that the nests detected near Murwillumbah have been eradicated. That is great and well done to all those involved in that work. The fact remains that the Government sat on its hands and hoped it was an issue it would never have to deal with.

It was interesting to hear the Minister on *Country Hour* on Monday saying the Opposition, and I as the shadow Minister for Agriculture, had been all talk on the issue. What the Minister conveniently forgets is that in my time as the Minister for Agriculture I was on the record on countless occasions talking about the fact that biosecurity was my number one priority—and it is important to note that we backed it in. Without biosecurity, we do not have an agriculture industry. Agriculture is a vital industry. Last year, after more than a decade of Coalition Government, the industry achieved a record value of \$23.1 billion. That is one of the reasons I refer constantly to regional New South Wales as the engine room of the State. Given the record value of the industry and the importance of biosecurity to it, in 2022 the Coalition Government made a record investment of \$229 million in biosecurity. In fact, we tipped more into biosecurity than any jurisdiction across the country ever has.

As Minister, last August I hosted the first Biosecurity Conference in Dubbo, where we brought together a range of stakeholders from across the agriculture industry to discuss the important issues within the biosecurity space. It gave industry representatives a chance to be in the same room as Department of Primary Industries staff, Local Land Services staff, Commonwealth agency staff and others. We had world-leading experts in the biosecurity space present, including the Chief Veterinary Officer of the United Kingdom, Christine Middlemiss, who spoke about the response to the foot-and-mouth disease outbreak in 2001. I note that the conference, which was well received and informative, happened within eight months of me becoming the Minister. Sadly, but not surprisingly, nothing similar has happened in this space in the eight months since the election and the change of government. If the Minister thinks we are all talk, maybe it is because we have a good record when it comes to backing the agriculture industry and putting what needs to be done into practice. That is what we did: We knew what was needed and what worked.

In the case of biosecurity, what works is dollars in the bank but then action and boots on the ground, not having another department within a department complicating matters. We need to back the experts to do their jobs, and give them the resources to do it. I take pride in saying that the Coalition did that and the results are there to back it up. Not only did we invest a record amount into biosecurity, but we also implemented long-term programs aimed at pests and weeds, including the Hudson pear, which is an issue in western New South Wales, particularly around the Lightning Ridge and Walgett regions. In December last year I visited the cochineal-rearing facility to announce a \$2.6 million program to be rolled out over 4½ years to try to ring fence this damaging cactus and stop its spread. The funding was designed to provide an initial \$600,000 in the first year, followed by four years of about \$500,000 each. It was welcomed across the board. I was intrigued when answers to supplementary budget estimates questions were returned by the Minister last week in relation to this investment. When asked how much of the \$2.6 million has been budgeted for the current financial year, the response was that money will be allocated as and when required. As and when required?

Again, as is the case with fire ants, it seems there is no desire to roll the money out the door and get ahead of the curve. We gave the Government the tools to deal with Hudson pear. The money is in the bank and should be rolled out in accordance with how the plan was announced. I note the legislation to appoint a Biosecurity Commissioner was an election commitment made by Labor in the lead-up to the election in March. The policy document stated that a Minns Labor Government will strengthen and secure the future of our agriculture industry by legislating and funding an independent biosecurity commission. Given the record value of the agriculture industry, which I spoke of earlier, the aspiration to enable the industry to reach a value of \$30 billion and the record investment we made in biosecurity, I contend that the sector is already in a strong position and on a strong pathway.

The introduction of a commissioner leaves a lot of questions. In the event of an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease or lumpy skin disease, is it the commissioner who takes a lead role in the response? Is it the Director General of the Department of Primary Industries? Will the commissioner be involved on a day-to-day basis? There are a lot of questions to be asked and unfortunately not a lot of answers. The creation of the commission is another example of Labor adding a layer of bureaucracy when that is not the answer and is not needed. It suggests a government that does not understand the issues or does not back its departments that are already there doing the

job to identify and deal with potential problems. For 14 months, I worked closely with the Department of Regional NSW, the Department of Primary Industries, Local Land Services and the thousands of talented people who work within those departments. I also worked closely with the Agriculture Commissioner, Daryl Quinlivan, whose expertise can be and has been utilised across the entire industry.

We already have the skill sets in place to deal with incursions like we have at Murwillumbah and potential incursions of foot-and-mouth disease or lumpy skin disease. We just need a government that allows the experts to do that work, rather than burdening them with more bureaucracy and red tape. As I have indicated, despite having a number of valid questions about the role and the necessity for it, the Opposition notes this was a commitment made by Labor and does not oppose the bill. However, given this was a flagship policy of Labor, I want it placed firmly on the record that I will be watching this space. I will hold the Premier and the Minister responsible for any incursions or other issues that arise in the biosecurity space. I look forward to seeing how the commission actually works.

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (19:28): I speak in support of the Biosecurity Amendment (Independent Biosecurity Commissioner) Bill 2023. The Government took three biosecurity commitments to the election in 2023. The first was to strengthen and secure the resilience of the agriculture industry by having a legislated Biosecurity Commissioner. The commissioner will report to Parliament on an annual basis for transparency and accountability. We welcome parliamentary scrutiny. The second of the three commitments was to task the National Resources Commission with conducting reviews of our invasive species and the damage that we already know they do to the economy, the environment and the agriculture industry.

I comment now on the red imported fire ants. I listened closely to the member for Dubbo's contribution. He said enough was already in place to deal with red imported fire ants, but only \$15 million was put in place for the national eradication program. The Minns Labor Government has stumped up another \$80 million, which was missing from that program and needed to go in. Some other States have not stumped up their funding, and I hope that will happen because red imported fire ants are a real threat and they are in my electorate in Murwillumbah. The response to the red imported fire ants was really fast and everybody was there, including people from the national eradication program and the Department of Primary Industries as the lead agency. The amount of work they did was terrific. When those things arise, the local people who are impacted always have a lot of questions, like, "What happens now?" That is being worked through this week with all the local businesses.

I turn back to the three biosecurity commitments. The third one was to direct \$10 million to the Good Neighbour Program to tackle weed and pest infestations on private property and neighbouring government land. All members, particularly those in rural and regional electorates, know where neighbours are not so good, and that is not exclusive to private property. That is a good program to have. Some people ask why we are having the changes. We need to have them because we know how much invasive species cost our agricultural sector every year. It is really important to legislate the Biosecurity Commissioner. The Opposition said the Biosecurity Commissioner will be another layer of bureaucracy. Why is the Agriculture Commissioner not another layer of bureaucracy but the Biosecurity Commissioner is?

I think having a top person whose sole focus is on biosecurity is good. The Department of Primary Industries and Local Land Services do terrific work, but they work across a range of areas, and so having someone at the helm who is focused on biosecurity all the time is good. The Biosecurity Commissioner will play a central role in informing government action. It will do that in close alignment with the responsible agencies. It will do it in response to the threat and impacts of invasive pests and weeds across New South Wales. The Minister for Agriculture appointed Dr Healy as the interim Biosecurity Commissioner to lead a consultation process with a few dozen stakeholders to provide advice on the role, functions and powers of the commissioner. The commitment was given, the need was clearly identified, but the questions were how will it be operational and how it will look in legislation.

Stakeholders strongly supported greater accountability and an independent voice. That is what the Independent Biosecurity Commissioner can bring to pests and weed management issues. The community had a strong desire to have an independent voice and an independent commissioner. A whole lot of different agencies are often responsible for an issue but no one lead agency has overarching accountability. I hope the Independent Biosecurity Commissioner will have that accountability. When I had wild dogs in my area, four agencies had responsibility but neither one was the overarching lead agency. Some of the meetings that I broker in my local community is getting everybody around a table and saying, "Everybody is responsible. Let's get on and work out how this will be done." The Minister representing the Minister for Agriculture in the Legislative Assembly gave quite a detailed speech. I do not need to labour on the points he made, but having an Independent Biosecurity Commissioner is terrific. I endorse the bill.

Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (19:35): In reply: I thank members for their contributions to debate on the Biosecurity Amendment (Independent Biosecurity

Commissioner) Bill. I particularly thank the member for Lismore, who is currently dealing with red imported fire ants in her community. She has been on the ground looking at the responses and talking to people directly, as she does so often in her community. We saw in natural disaster situations that she takes a very hands-on approach and builds communication between government agencies and communities to ensure that it is working well. The member for Lismore is extremely well known for that in her community and around the State of New South Wales. I commend her for that. It is fantastic.

The bill implements one of Labor's important election commitments. I note the member for Dubbo mentioned that in his contribution. I welcome the fact that the Opposition will not oppose the bill on the basis that it was an election commitment. I will comment on a couple of things he raised. First, he said that the commissioner is not necessary and causes doubt about who is responsible for responding to biosecurity emergencies. There is absolutely no doubt about who is responsible for biosecurity emergencies.

The member for Dubbo asked, "Does the commissioner take the lead in response to an outbreak of foot and mouth or a serious animal disease?" No, they are not. The bill makes that absolutely clear. The commissioner will have a reviewing and recommendation role. The commissioner's involvement in an outbreak would be well after the incident. The commissioner would see what happened if it was referred to the commissioner or if the commissioner took it up. It is more likely that the commissioner's job will be about those day-to-day issues raised with all members about weed infestation or the spread of weeds from Crown land or neighbours. In the Monaro electorate it is often about people who are not on their properties full-time and therefore are not necessarily very good at eradicating the weeds on their properties, and those types of things. The role of the commissioner is absolutely clear and it is a bit mischievous for the member for Dubbo to suggest otherwise.

It is clear that the emergency biosecurity response resides where it is at the moment. The Department of Primary Industries acts on that, as it has with the red imported fire ant. I am a bit bemused by the claim from the member for Dubbo that his Government took the national program for the red imported fire ant and "backed it in". They did not back it in because they did not fully fund it. It has taken this Government's commitment to put in the last \$80 million to fully fund it to \$95 million. To put it politely, the claim from the member for Dubbo is a bit of outstanding rewriting of history. The member for Lismore highlighted the fact that a number of other States have not contributed at all. This week in the media the Invasive Species Council called on the other States to do the same, and I agree with the council. Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia might think this does not affect them at the moment but if we do not tackle it properly now, it will.

I was also bemused by the member for Dubbo's comment that this Government had been too slow to act on the red imported fire ants. He said, "It should not have taken the detection to trigger an eradication program." Think about that for a moment. He wants to have an eradication program when an invasive species has not been detected. There is not a lot of logic in that statement, unless he wanted us to go across the border into Queensland, where they have had red fire ants for 20 years. The question has to be asked: If that is what he thinks, why did he not do that when he was the Minister when the Coalition was in government for 12 years? This rewriting of history does not do the shadow Minister much credit. Neither does proclaiming the previous Government's credentials on biosecurity, given its record on prawn white spot and its failure to compensate people who were affected, or the varroa mite, which was out and about under the former Government.

The member for Dubbo spoke about pest weeds and the Coalition's record on Hudson pear, which is a serious invasive species that I hope we can overcome. However, I note that he did not talk about African lovegrass. The Coalition made a big deal of promising a new African lovegrass coordinator to tackle the problem in Monaro. However, after I was elected I found out that the Coalition had asked Local Land Services to reallocate existing resources for weed control and also call it something different. This was not a very acceptable way to go about things. I thank both members who contributed to the debate.

The bill is the implementation of a really important commitment by the Government to have independent oversight over biosecurity in New South Wales. It leaves anybody who reads the bill properly in no doubt as to who is in control of the immediate response to biosecurity. The bill also gives the people and landholders of New South Wales an avenue to make sure that the complaints we often hear are addressed, that recommendations are made, and that the Government and Parliament get the opportunity to listen and respond to those. I commend the bill to the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis): The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr STEVE WHAN: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

ELECTORAL FUNDING AMENDMENT BILL 2023

Second Reading Speech

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (19:42): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Government is introducing the Electoral Funding Amendment Bill 2023 to follow through on its response to the report of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters entitled *Caps on third-party campaigners' electoral expenditure in s29(11) and s35 of the Electoral Funding Act 2018*, which was tabled on 23 November 2022. Recommendation 4 of the report was that:

... the cap on electoral expenditure for a third-party campaigner for a by-election be increased to \$198 750, and indexed to CPI or other increases to spending caps for registered political parties and candidates.

After the report was tabled, on 15 February 2023 the High Court declared in the case of *Unions NSW v New South Wales* [2023] HCA 4 that the cap of \$20,000, as it was prior to adjustment for inflation, imposed by section 29 (11) of the Electoral Funding Act was invalid for impermissibly burdening the implied freedom of political communication under the Commonwealth Constitution. The outcome was largely the result of the State conceding that the cap could not be defended, following the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters' determination that the cap was "overly restrictive" and "too low for TPCs to run effective campaigns and properly participate in the electoral process during by-elections". Consequently, there is presently no effective cap on electoral expenditure for a third-party campaigner for a by-election.

The Government's response to the report was tabled on 28 June 2023. The Government accepted recommendation 4 and noted that caps on electoral expenditure are a key pillar of the State's electoral funding laws, which are amongst the strongest in Australia. The Government's response also stated that it is appropriate to reinstate a cap on electoral expenditure by third-party campaigners in by-elections, as recommended by the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters. That will ensure that campaigners are able to get their message out to electors, while ensuring that their voices are not allowed to overwhelm a campaign. The bill follows through on this response. Since the date of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters' report, the amounts in section 29 of the Act have been adjusted for inflation under schedule 1 to the bill. Consequently, the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters' recommended cap of \$198,750 was adjusted by the same percentage to \$225,900.

It is important that any new expenditure cap is consistent with the implied freedom of political communication. The Government has considered the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters' careful analysis, which formed the basis for its recommendation to increase the cap amount. That analysis establishes that a \$225,900 cap will not impermissibly burden the implied freedom because it is reasonably appropriate and adapted to serve a legitimate end in a manner that is compatible with the system of representative and responsible government established by the Constitution. Caps on electoral expenditure for State elections apply only during the capped State expenditure period. In the case of a general election, that is generally the period from 1 October in the year before the election to the end of election day. In other cases, such as a by-election, it is the period from the day of the issue of the writ, or writs, for the election to the end of the election day.

The laws regulating electoral expenditure in New South Wales since 2010 have imposed caps on electoral expenditure for different categories of political participant. Parties, for example, must incur the expenses of mounting a campaign in every electorate on all issues, so their expenditure may be greater than third-party campaigners who may target only specific issues. Given those differences, it can be appropriate for caps to differentiate between parties, candidates and third-party campaigners. A "third-party campaigner" is defined in the Act as:

for a State election—a person or another entity (not being an associated entity, party, elected member, group or candidate) who incurs electoral expenditure for a State election during a capped State expenditure period that exceeds \$2,000 in total ...

The Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters recommended a new cap of 75 per cent of the cap applicable to candidates for a Legislative Assembly by-election. Currently, that is \$301,200. Party expenditure is also counted towards an endorsed candidate's cap as a result of an expenditure aggregation provision in section 30 (3) of the Act. During its inquiry, the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters received and considered substantial evidence on the adequacy of the cap, including evidence from third-party campaigners directly affected by the cap. The evidence included actual campaign expenditure previously incurred by third-party campaigners at Legislative Assembly by-elections.

The Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters also considered estimates of the expenditure required to provide a third-party campaigner with a reasonable opportunity to present its case to voters. For example, the

New South Wales Nurses and Midwives' Association estimated that a cap of 75 per cent of the cap applicable to candidates would allow that union to compete on a level playing field and have a reasonable opportunity to present its case to voters. The Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters observed that the 75 per cent proportion "will allow third-party campaigners adequate resourcing to run campaigns in by-elections while preserving the voices of candidates". The Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters noted that it "supports the participation of a wide variety of groups and different voices in the political process". The Government also supports this. The Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters received substantial evidence that the current caps are not adequate, which is detailed in its report.

The bill also proposes a consequential amendment to section 29 (12) (b) of the Act to ensure the intent of the recommendation from the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters is given effect to. Section 29 (12) imposes additional caps on parties and third-party campaigners in relation to State general elections or by-elections in more than one electoral district, for electoral expenditure incurred substantially for the purposes of the election in a particular electoral district. This primarily captures expenditure on advertising or other communications material. For a third-party campaigner, that amount is \$30,400, adjusted for inflation, in respect of each such electoral district. This provision serves to prevent expenditure within an overall limit being disproportionately targeted towards a single electoral district. While section 29 (11) has been declared invalid, section 29 (12) (b) is still in force.

When the regime of caps now in section 29 was first introduced by the Election Funding and Disclosures Amendment Act 2010, the amounts in the sections equivalent to sections 29 (11) and 29 (12) (b) under the previous legislative framework were the same—that is, \$20,000. This meant, for example, that where multiple by-elections were conducted concurrently, a third-party campaigner was only able to spend up to its capped amount for a single by-election on expenditure directed at a particular by-election. A third-party campaigner could not aggregate the caps applicable to each by-election and use the total aggregated amount for the purposes of just one of the by-elections. Similarly, the bill proposes to amend subsection 29 (12) to provide that, in the case of multiple by-elections, a third-party campaigner is only able to incur electoral expenditure for a particular electoral district up to its capped amount for a single by-election. This is a necessary consequential amendment to ensure the intent of the recommendation from the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters is given effect to in cases of multiple by-elections.

The bill as introduced by the Government in the Legislative Council sought to amend the Electoral Funding Act 2018 by, first, putting in place a cap of \$225,900 on the electoral expenditure of third-party campaigners at by-elections in section 29 (11), as was recommended by the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters, as there is currently no valid cap and, second, increasing to \$225,900 the existing \$30,400 cap in section 29 (12) (b) on electoral expenditure incurred by third-party campaigners substantially for the purposes of the election in a particular electoral district, in the case of a general election, or by-elections in multiple districts.

The bill, as passed by the Legislative Council, incorporates the following amendments that were moved by The Greens: firstly, replace the proposed \$225,900 cap in the bill with \$180,720; secondly, limit the scope of the amendment to section 29 (12) (b) so that the cap on electoral expenditure incurred by third-party campaigners substantially for the purposes of the election in a particular electoral district in the case of a general election, or by-elections in multiple districts, will be increased to \$180,720 only for multiple by-elections and kept at \$30,400 for general elections; and, thirdly, add a new provision requiring the Electoral Commissioner to review part 3, division 4 of the Act—the part dealing with caps on electoral expenditure—to determine whether the policy objectives of the Act remain valid and the terms of the Act remain appropriate for securing the objectives. The review is to be undertaken as soon as possible one year following the 2027 general election.

The Government opposed the amendments proposed by The Greens in the Legislative Council. Given the circumstances of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters recommending a cap of \$225,900 and the absence of sufficient evidence to support the lower cap of \$180,720, the Government is concerned that the lower figure faces a real risk of constitutional challenge. The Government did not in principle oppose the retention of the existing "seat-specific" expenditure cap for general elections of \$30,400. While the Government does consider the existing cap is too low, there is time before the next general election for the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters to consider this issue as an appropriate amendment to be legislated.

On 23 November this year the Special Minister of State referred to the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters the question of whether any changes should be made to section 29 (12) of the Act insofar as it applies an additional cap to third-party campaigners in relation to State general elections. The Government also opposed the requirement for the Electoral Commissioner to carry out a review of part 3, division 4 of the Act to determine whether the policy objectives remain valid.

It is not generally the role of the Electoral Commissioner, an independent statutory officer, to consider whether the policy objectives of legislation remain valid. Electoral policy is a matter for the Government and the

Parliament—the commissioner should be consulted on any proposal to require the commissioner to consider the policy objectives of legislation. The commissioner is already required to conduct a review of the administration of each State general election and by-election. In addition, the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters routinely carries out an inquiry into the operation of electoral legislation following each State general election.

Despite opposing these amendments that were ultimately passed by the Legislative Council, the Government supports the passage of the bill in the interests of ensuring that a cap on electoral expenditure by third-party campaigners in by-elections is put in place as quickly as possible, since there is a risk of a by-election occurring at any time. Item [1] of schedule 1 to the bill does not change the cap on electoral expenditure for a third-party campaigner in the case of a general election. The cap is \$1,464,200 if the third-party campaigner is registered before the capped expenditure period and \$732,200 if not.

In the case of a single by-election, the seat-specific cap does not apply, and there is a cap on expenditure by a third-party campaigner for that by-election of \$180,720 under the bill. For parties, there is no cap, but the expenditure of the party counts towards the cap on an endorsed candidate, which is \$301,200. The cap on candidates is the same for both party candidates and Independent candidates for by-elections. When multiple by-elections occur on the same day, section 29 (12) is triggered and there are seat-specific caps imposed on both parties and third-party campaigners. These caps apply to expenditure on advertising or other material that explicitly mentions the name of a candidate in a particular electoral district or the name of the district is communicated to electors in that district and is not mainly communicated to electors outside that electoral district.

For parties, the seat-specific cap is \$75,500 per electoral district. This means that, within the total \$301,200 cap on the candidate and the party expenditure for each by-election, a maximum of \$75,500 of that can comprise seat-specific expenditure by the party, which is approximately 25 per cent. However, the remaining 75 per cent of the cap could be used by the candidate or by the party on expenditure that does not meet the seat-specific criteria—for example, on travel and travel accommodation for staff engaged in electoral campaigning. For candidates, there is obviously no seat-specific cap which applies when multiple by-elections are held on the same day. This means that an independent candidate or a party-endorsed candidate can spend 100 per cent of their overall expenditure cap of \$301,200 on the relevant seat-specific advertising and communication expenditure. However, as I noted earlier, for an endorsed candidate, the expenditure of the party counts towards the candidate's cap and is subject to the seat-specific cap.

For third party campaigners, the seat-specific cap is currently \$30,400. That means that if only item [1] is passed and not item [2] within the overall expenditure cap of \$180,720 for each by-election on the day, a third-party campaigner could use only \$30,400 of that on seat-specific expenditure, which is approximately 17 per cent. Unlike the case of a party and party candidate, there is no other entity who can utilise the remaining 83 per cent of the cap that would ordinarily apply to the third-party campaigner for each by-election, and it could only be used by the third-party campaigner on expenditure that does not meet the seat-specific criteria.

The Government understands that third-party campaigners' expenditure generally does meet the seat-specific criteria. That is why it is important that both item [1] and item [2] be passed. If item [2] is not passed, if by-elections occur in more than one electorate on the same day, it significantly undermines the benefit provided by item [1]. Without item [2], third-party campaigners will effectively be left with a similar level of cap per electorate to the one that the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters found was inadequate to allow third-party campaigners to participate in the electoral process.

I turn now to the provisions of the bill. Item [1] amends section 29 (11) of the Election Funding Act to replace the amount of \$20,000 with \$180,720 as the applicable electoral expenditure cap for a third-party campaigner for each by-election for the Legislative Assembly. Item [2] amends section 29 (12) (b) of the Act to replace the amount of \$24,700 with \$180,720 as the applicable cap for third-party campaigners in respect of each electoral district in relation to electoral expenditure incurred substantially for the purposes of an election in a particular electoral district when there are by-elections in more than one electoral district. Item [2] retains the existing cap of \$30,400 on expenditure in relation to each electoral district in the case of a State general election. The \$30,400 is the current indexed amount, which is why the bill uses that figure rather than the figure of \$24,700 that is currently in the Act. These caps will all be subject to the indexation provisions of the Act. Item [3] introduces a requirement for the Electoral Commissioner. It states:

- (1) The Electoral Commissioner must review Part 3, Division 4 to determine whether—
 - (a) the policy objectives of the Act remain valid, and
 - (b) the terms of the Act remain appropriate for securing the objectives.
- (2) This review must be undertaken as soon as possible after the period of 1 year after the first general election after the commencement of this section.
- (3) A report ... must be given to the Minister within 12 months after the end of the 1-year period.

- (4) The Minister must on the first sitting day after receiving the report cause it to be tabled in each House of Parliament.

The bill will commence on assent, and I commend it to the House.

Second Reading Debate

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (20:01): We are fortunate in this country that, unlike in the United States, generally speaking, elections cannot be bought and that they are relatively fair contest. Unfortunately, for the reasons that I will explain, the Electoral Funding Amendment Bill 2023 will substantially make the playing field uneven and unfair in New South Wales with regard to the case of by-election expenditure. The history of how we got here is slightly more complex than the Minister alluded to in her second reading speech. However, if the objective of the bill is to ensure that candidates do not have their voice overwhelmed by third-party campaigners, then the bill manifestly fails that test.

In submission No. 4 to the Inquiry into the Electoral Funding Amendment Bill 2023, received on 29 August 2023, Liberal Party State Director Chris Stone gave some important evidence that provides a significant backdrop to a number of matters that were referred to by the Minister in her second reading speech. Firstly, he explained that the 2022 report of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters that the Minister referred to was, in fact, a report written without there being any contradictor to the evidence that was put before the committee on behalf of a number of different trade union organisations, Unions NSW and the Australian Labor Party.

The reason for that is explained in Mr Stone's submission. A number of factors came together to achieve that. The Federal election in 2022 and Mr Stone suffering a degree of ill-health prevented him from giving evidence before the joint standing committee and so the 2022 report was entirely unassisted by any evidence presenting the other side of the story to the committee. These are matters that go to the heart of whether the bill offends the implied right of the freedom of political communication under the Australian Constitution, which I believe it clearly does.

The bill amends section 29 (11) of the Electoral Funding Act, which would seek to increase the applicable cap for a third-party campaigner from \$20,000, as it appears currently in the legislation, to a whopping \$180,000. That is a nine times increase in the third-party cap. In addition to that, the additional cap for multiple by-elections will be increased again by a further \$180,000. To put that in context, if there were two multiple by-elections and a third party was registered in each, the third party could spend \$2 in one electorate and \$180,000 plus, effectively, another \$180,000 in the second electorate, which would be a total of \$360,000. A political candidate under the addition of the \$301,000 cap in section 29 (9) and the now \$75,000 cap under subsection 12 (a) would be able to spend basically a similar amount of money, which means that one third-party campaigner would be able to spend the equivalent of a political candidate.

To put that in context, as we all know, the Australian Labor Party is the political wing of the trade union movement. That would mean that, lawfully, a Labor candidate in an electorate of multiple by-elections could spend about \$375,000 and the Liberal candidate could spend \$375,000, but a single trade union, if there was only one as a third-party campaigner, would be able to spend about \$360,000, which would mean that already, with only one third-party campaigner, a combined Labor candidate and one trade union could spend two-thirds more than the single Coalition candidate without any third-party campaigner.

The problem in reality is that history shows that more than one third-party campaigner, if they are trade unions, will be involved. In Mr Stone's submission to the committee, which I have already referred to, he gives a number of case studies which make good that point. Mr Stone gave a number of examples, which I will go to. Case study No. 1 in his submission refers to the 2017 by-elections in Gosford, Manly and North Shore. The by-elections were conducted under the Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Act 1981. Under that Act, registered political parties had to abide by strict campaign expenditure. In a by-election, the expenditure cap for candidates nominated by political parties during the regulated period was \$245,600 per seat. In addition, third-party campaigners could register and, at that time, spend up to \$24,700. Bear in mind, that is \$24,700 as opposed to the \$180,000 or many times that amount, which will be increased under the bill if it passes in this House.

In the case of the Gosford by-election—the only one three of by-elections contested by the Labor Party—six third-party campaigners registered, all of whom were trade unions: the Australian Education Union, NSW Teachers Federation; the New South Wales Local Government, Clerical, Administrative, Energy, Airlines and Utilities Union; the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association; Unions NSW; the New South Wales branch of the Electrical Trade Union of Australia; and the New South Wales branch of the Rail, Tram, and Bus Union.

In addition to the Labor and Liberal candidates' expenditure caps of \$245,600, each of those six trade unions were able to spend a total of up to \$148,200. Therefore, the combined lawful expenditure that could be spent by the Labor trade unions was up to \$393,800, compared with the lawful expenditure that could be spent by

the Liberal Party, which was up to \$245,600—that is, the Liberal Party's lawful expenditure was only 62.37 per cent of the combined Labor/trade union expenditure, with the applicable third-party campaign cap set at only about one-tenth of the proposal in the bill. The trade unions campaigned against the Liberal Party citing a number of public issues. Campaign materials distributed and displayed by those third-party campaigners on election day urged voters to "put the Liberals last". The Labor candidate, Liesl Tesch, won the seat, achieving a swing of about 10.9 per cent.

Ms Anna Watson: Fabulous result.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: If the member thinks that buying elections and buying democracy is a great result, then that was a great result. But that is not called democracy.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr Tim Crakanthorp: He bites every time.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): The member for Newcastle will cease interjecting. Government members will come to order. I remind members to direct their comments through the Chair. The member for Wahroonga has the call.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: Case study No. 2 cited by Mr Stone involves the 2022 by-elections in Bega, Monaro, Strathfield and Willoughby. On 1 October—I will not go through the history of who was resigning from Parliament. The Liberal Party contested the by-elections that were held in the electorates of Bega, Strathfield and Willoughby. The National Party contested the district of Monaro.

In the electorate of Bega, eight third-party campaigners registered, six of which were trade unions: the New South Wales Local Government, Clerical, Administrative, Energy, Airlines and Utilities Union; Unions NSW; the New South Wales branch of the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation; the Australian Education Union, NSW Teachers Federation; NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association; the Fire Brigade Employees Union; the Far South Coast Environment and Heritage Conservation Incorporated; and the Taxi Owners Small Business Association Incorporated. It should be noted that the two non-union third-party campaigners were not conducting campaigns that in any way supported the Liberal candidate.

In the electorate of Monaro, six third-party campaigners registered, all of which were trade unions: the New South Wales Local Government, Clerical, Administrative, Energy, Airlines and Utilities Union; Unions NSW; the New South Wales branch of the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation; the Australian Education Union, NSW Teachers Federation; the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association; and the Fire Brigade Employees Union.

In the electorate of Strathfield, six third-party campaigners registered, all of which were trade unions: New South Wales Local Government, Clerical, Administrative, Energy, Airlines and Utilities Union; Unions NSW; the New South Wales branch of the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation; the Australian Education Union, NSW Teachers Federation; the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association; and the Fire Brigade Employees Union.

In the electorate of Willoughby, five third-party campaigners registered, all of which were trade unions: the New South Wales Local Government, Clerical, Administrative, Energy, Airlines and Utilities Union; the New South Wales branch of the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation; the Australian Education Union, NSW Teachers Federation; NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association; and the Fire Brigade Employees Union.

In addition to the Labor and Liberal Party expenditure caps at \$245,600, each of the aforementioned trade unions were able to spend a combined \$129,000 in each of Bega, Monaro and Strathfield, and \$108,000 in Willoughby. Therefore, the combined lawful expenditure that could be spent by the Labor trade unions in each of Bega, Monaro and Strathfield was up to \$374,600, compared with the lawful expenditure that could be spent by the Liberal Party, which was up to \$245,600—that is, the Liberal Party's lawful expenditure was only up to 65.4 per cent of the combined Labor/trade union expenditure, with the applicable third-party cap set at only about one-tenth of the proposal in the bill.

The trade unions campaigned against the Liberal and National parties, citing a number of public issues. Campaign materials distributed and displayed by those third-party campaigners on election day urged voters to "Send him/Dom a message". Labor's tagline in the seats it contested was "Make him/Dom listen". The Labor candidate in Bega won the seat, the Labor candidate in Strathfield won the seat, the Liberal candidate in Willoughby won the seat, and the National Party candidate in Monaro won the seat.

Those figures show that with a much smaller cap for third-party campaigners than is proposed in this bill, there was a significant unfairness in the lawful expenditure that could be made for an election between a Liberal

candidate and the combined Labor/trade union expenditure in support of the Labor candidate. If the bill goes through and we redid the numbers with the capped numbers under the bill, as opposed to what was a fraction of that amount, it will magnify that inequity to the point that the Liberal candidates will be able to lawfully expend only a maximum of about 15 per cent or 20 per cent—depending on the number of trade unions that register as third-party campaigners—of the combined Labor/trade union candidates' spend. That infringes the implied right of freedom of political expression as guaranteed under the Constitution. It is manifestly unfair. There is no proportionality to that result. Critically, the bill does not provide any aggregation of caps by third-party campaigners who are in similar interest to make the outcome much fairer.

On top of that unfairness that I have just demonstrated to the House, the fact of the matter is that the inequity does not stop there. For example, trade unions are entitled to be affiliated and to make contributions to the Labor Party. Trade unions are able to spend millions of dollars for the Labor Party—or hundreds of thousands of dollars in affiliation fees per union—whereas an individual can only give a maximum of \$7,000 donation under the bill.

There is double dipping going on. Third-party campaigners—trade unions—can give massive affiliation fees to the tune of hundreds of thousands of dollars to the Australian Labor Party and, on the other hand, with these amendments, they can spend massively more amounts of money than a political candidate within any individual electorate. The cumulative unfairness in terms of finances proposed by this bill is quite staggering to our understanding of democracy and what is fair. The Opposition contends that the \$180,000 amount proposed in the bill should be reduced substantially. We will be making amendments accordingly to reduce that to the \$75,000 amount that we moved in the upper House.

We will also move amendments that will require a third party to choose whether they are going to be an affiliate to the Labor Party or a third-party campaigner. They cannot be both. That takes away that unfair double dipping under the current system with respect to the caps. Having much lower caps than those proposed in the bill would be a small way of trying to rectify the inequality under the current regime. Make no mistake about it, this bill is an absolute political rort. Our democratic system is guaranteed by the Australian Constitution and the implied right of free political communication. The bill makes a mockery of that constitutional right and the freedom of democracy within our nation.

The bill in its current form will not survive a High Court challenge. It will mean that there will be another lacuna in caps for third-party campaigners. It is incredibly ill advised of the Labor Government to move such a bill. That the Government would try to pass a political rort like this through our Parliament is a good example of how arrogant it has become within a very short time. It is an affront to anyone who believes in a fair system of elections within this State. I am incredibly disappointed that the bill got through caucus. We will seek to amend it to make it fairer. If our amendments are not agreed to, then the Coalition will oppose the bill.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (20:22): That was quite the speech by the member for Wahroonga. I speak in favour of the Electoral Funding Amendment Bill 2023 and I thank the Minister for bringing forward this important legislative change. The bill has been brought to the Parliament in response to a report of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters entitled *Caps on third-party campaigners' electoral expenditure in s29(11) and s35 of the Electoral Funding Act 2018*. The report was tabled on 23 November last year and recommended a significant increase in the cap on electoral expenditure for third-party campaigners during by-elections. Previous caps of around \$20,000 on such spending have been declared as invalid by the High Court for reducing implied freedom of political communication under our Federal Constitution—and rightly so. Such a low cap would not even allow a third-party campaigner to send a letter to each household in the electorate of Shellharbour because we have over 30,000 households.

The result of the High Court determination was that there would be no cap whatsoever on such expenditure and therefore this bill will impose a reasonable cap, keeping the system fair for everyone. Third-party campaigners such as unions are critical to our democracy. In an era of billionaire activists who use their vast wealth to crush any candidate of their choosing, we desperately need a system that is fair to all groups participating in democratic elections, including by-elections. We certainly cannot have a situation where there is no cap. The bill will ensure that third-party campaigners—including unions that represent the interests of hardworking essential workers such as nurses, paramedics, council workers, police officers and firefighters—can inform the community of issues that impact those workers during a by-election. What is wrong with that?

The cap for third-party campaigners proposed by the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters, which equates to around 75 per cent of the cap imposed on candidates themselves, is supported by the Government as it will preserve the voices of the candidates whilst allowing unions and other third parties to compete with political parties in a fair and reasonable manner. Caps for electoral expenditure are an absolutely key part of our State's electoral funding laws. This Government supports the recommendation of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters to ensure that such caps exist in New South Wales. The bill proposes a fair and reasonable cap

that will be adjusted for inflation to ensure that we do not need to review the cap in a few years, which is especially important in times of relatively high inflation, as we have experienced recently.

Third-party campaigners should be allowed to have reasonable opportunity to present their cases to potential voters. The bill allows all third-party campaigners, regardless of their politics, to compete on a level playing field. We all know that members opposite do not enjoy a fair political playing field. The cap will ensure that third-party campaigners will not be able to outspend candidates running for election in by-elections in New South Wales. As a proud trade unionist, I know just how important third-party campaigners are to the hardworking essential workers of New South Wales. The bill will allow their voices to be heard loud and clear. I absolutely commend the bill to the House.

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (20:27): As The Greens spokesperson on democracy, I indicate that The Greens will support the Electoral Funding Amendment Bill 2023. I am pleased that the bill has finally made its way to the Chamber from the other place, where some important amendments were passed on the back of the great work of my Greens colleague Ms Cate Faehrmann who, along with me, has been in discussions with the Minister to make sure we get this legislation right. The bill will amend section 29 (11) of the Electoral Funding Act 2018 to set a cap on electoral expenditure for third-party campaigners, or TPCs, for a by-election in the Legislative Assembly. The cap will be set at \$180,720. The bill will also amend section 29 (12) to ensure that the TPC cap also applies when multiple by-elections are being held at once.

The Act currently provides a TPC cap of approximately \$21,600, being the amount in place prior to the 2023 State general election, adjusted for inflation. But that cap was declared invalid after a successful High Court challenge by Unions NSW. In effect, there is no cap now in place for electoral expenditure by third-party campaigners. That means that, without the bill, there is nothing stopping third-party campaigners working for the fossil fuel industry or the gambling lobby, spending unlimited amounts to support a preferred candidate and drowning out the voices of others in a by-election. That is why the bill is so important.

When the bill was originally introduced, it was said that it would give effect to the recommendations from the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters [JSCEM] inquiry into expenditure caps in by-elections. It did that but it also went further and sought to introduce more generous caps during general elections. That had not been considered as part of the JSCEM inquiry. That was a concern of many of my Greens and crossbench colleagues, and I am pleased to see that those provisions were removed by amendment and that the issues that were raised will be referred to JSCEM for further consideration.

The bill deals with the third-party cap for by-elections. Before it was amended in the other place, the bill proposed a cap of \$225,900, which was too high. The bill was then referred to a committee for inquiry. I acknowledge the work of my colleague Ms Cate Faehrmann, who chaired that committee and who worked with me to reduce the proposed third-party cap to \$180,720. In her contribution to debate on the bill in the Legislative Council, Ms Cate Faehrmann set out a solid rationale for arriving at that amount. For members who are interested in the issue, I recommend that they read her contribution. I thank the Government for its willingness to negotiate and cooperate on the matter. I also thank Unions NSW and some of its member groups for taking the time to speak with The Greens in order to ensure that we could arrive at a sensible and workable cap. The last thing we want is another High Court challenge leading to entrenched uncertainty around electoral expenditure caps for third-party campaigners.

An important principle around electoral funding law is that wealthy voices should not drown out the voices of others. The Greens have looked into the data, and the average by-election spend by Independent candidates and parties excluding the major parties is around \$25,000. In some by-elections The Greens have spent only \$12,000. We would never spend \$180,720 on a by-election, or even on multiple by-elections. But we are convinced that within the context of the current electoral funding laws, that amount is reasonable. It will allow interested parties to run a good six-week or eight-week campaign. The cap for third-party campaigners during a general election should be lower than what was agreed for by-elections in the bill. It is important that members are aware of that significant principle in the Electoral Funding Act. The Greens think that a campaign spending cap of \$180,720 for third-party campaigners in a general election is too high; however, by-elections are different.

I also make the broader point that it is The Greens' view that current caps on electoral expenditure for registered parties and candidates are far too generous across the board. As it stands, we need to raise significant funds in order to be competitive, which gives rise to the potential corruption of the political process—if not in fact, then in appearance—and either way that erodes the public's confidence in politics. It is time to get big money out of politics. The bill, which was amended by my Greens colleagues in the other place, makes a necessary and important improvement to our electoral funding laws. The Greens are pleased to support the bill.

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (20:31): On behalf of the Opposition, I am pleased to contribute to debate on the Electoral Funding Amendment Bill 2023. When I first worked in Parliament House back in 2008, electoral

expenditure was a very big issue. I remember running between the Chamber and the office of Barry O'Farrell, the Opposition leader at that time, because as we got closer to the 2011 election we were continually talking about caps and the affiliated unions of the Australian Labor Party. Electoral funding continues to be a topic of great debate in this place. It would be great to reach a day where every single party in this place could agree on a system that ensured and promoted accountability, democracy and transparency. I agree with the member for Balmain, who said that we need to take big money out of politics. We must ensure that voters have a fair playing field.

I believe the bill represents a dark day for democracy in New South Wales. I am very disappointed in the bill. As has been discussed, parties have no cap for single by-elections, but their expenditure contributes to the \$301,200 cap on an endorsed candidate. In the case of multiple by-elections, electorate-specific caps of \$75,500 apply to party expenditure. The bill puts in place a third-party expenditure cap of \$180,720 in a by-election. So for a third-party campaigner, that is 60 per cent of what a party political candidate could spend. I never thought I would hold in my hand an Australian Labor Party membership form—and it will not be in my hand for long. When you join a political party, you fill in your personal details and your political background and you sign the document. Of course, like all parties, we want to ensure that political party members share the same values. There is also a membership fee.

There are a couple of questions on the back of the Labor Party's membership form. One of those questions is, "What is your reason for joining the Australian Labor Party?" I suspect it is big government, higher taxes, socialism, unionism et cetera. Beneath that is the list of affiliated unions, of which there are 24. The key question is are those affiliated unions independent third parties? That is a very important question. I would suggest that the 24 affiliated unions to the Australian Labor Party that are included on its own membership form will each have a cap of \$180,000 on top of the Australian Labor Party's cap—or, in fact, any political party's cap. If I times 24 by \$180,000, Labor and the unions will have a maximum \$4.3 million campaign war chest of capped expenditure. I am not talking about all of New South Wales; I am talking about just one electorate in a by-election.

As I have said, I believe this is a dark day for democracy. I have some other facts about the Government and union bosses. Fact one: For those who think that the membership form is an interesting read, with those 24 affiliated unions, in the first six months since taking office in March, the new Labor Government has officially met with union mates and bosses 353 times. That is a lot of meetings, and it does not include the informal corridor conversations with Ministers or official meetings with ministerial staff. That is an average of 13 meetings per week. Fact two: All 60 Labor MPs are required to be union members under their own rules, compared with only 12.5 per cent of Australia's workforce. Fact three: Labor received more than \$6 million in donations and affiliation fees from unions in the four years preceding the 2023 election. Fact four: Some 45 per cent of Labor's Administrative Committee, which is its internal governing body that makes decisions on preselections, is made up of union officials. I will not name those individuals; we all know who they are.

It is interesting that Labor's governing body contains the branch secretary of the Electrical Trades Union; the secretary of the Australian Services Union; the secretary-treasurer and State secretary of the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees' Association; the State secretary of the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union; the secretary of the Health Services Union; the general secretary of the United Services Union; the deputy secretary of the Australian Services Union; the secretary of Unions NSW; the national director of the United Workers Union; the national secretary of the Community and Public Sector Union; the State secretary of the Transport Workers' Union; the president of the Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union; the secretary of the Communications, Electrical and Plumbing Union of Australia; the northern New South Wales district secretary of the CFMEU Mining and Energy Union; the State secretary of the Plumbing and Pipe Trades Employees Union; the State secretary of the Australian Workers' Union; and the assistant secretary of Unions NSW.

Each of those third-party campaigners will have a cap of \$180,000 to spend in a single by-election. In an individual electorate, that adds up to \$4.3 million. All of that presents a very clear and concerning conflict of interest. There are blurred lines between Labor, its Ministers and the unions. I understand the original purpose of the Electoral Funding Act was to limit spending on elections to prevent elections from being bought. As I said, this is a dark day for democracy. The Opposition will move amendments in the consideration in detail stage, which I will support. In particular, I support amending the bill to reduce the cap that was originally proposed to \$75,000. The second amendment I support is to outline what is a third-party campaigner and to clarify that, if an organisation is affiliated with a political party, it cannot be considered a third-party campaigner. Additionally, individual entities making donations to a political party must choose whether they are a donor or a third-party campaigner, with the amendment ensuring they cannot undertake both roles. I believe this is bad legislation that is bad for democracy, and I oppose the bill.

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (20:40): In reply: I thank the members representing the electorates of Wahroonga, Shellharbour, Balmain and Davidson, who contributed to debate on

the Electoral Funding Amendment Bill 2023. I appreciate the objections of the member for Wahroonga to the bill, but I note he incorrectly stated that the cap would be aggregated if multiple by-elections were to occur. I make it clear that the cap is per by-election. As members will be aware, the bill proposes amendments to the Electoral Funding Act to implement a cap on third-party campaigners' electoral expenditure in by-elections. The existing cap has been declared invalid by the High Court and it is of no effect. The bill will implement a cap of \$180,720. *[Quorum called for.]*

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

The bill also makes a consequential amendment to the cap on the expenditure by third-party campaigners for certain kinds of electoral district specific expenditure in the case of multiple by-elections on one day. The current cap is \$30,400, adjusted for inflation. The bill will increase it to \$180,720 to bring it in line with the cap for single by-elections. The bill also requires the Electoral Commissioner to carry out a review of part 3, division 4 of the Act to determine whether the objectives of the Act remain valid and whether the terms of the Act remain appropriate for securing those objectives. The passage of the bill will ensure that a cap is put on the electoral expenditure of third-party campaigners in by-elections. It will close the significant gap caused by the High Court's decision that the previous cap was invalid, and ensure the integrity of the regime of electoral expenditure caps in New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Consideration in detail requested by Mr Alister Henskens.

Consideration in Detail

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): By leave: I will deal with the bill in groups of clauses and schedules. The question is that clauses 1 and 2 and schedule 1 be agreed to.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (20:45): By leave: I move Opposition amendments Nos 1 and 2 on sheet c2023-171 and Opposition amendments Nos 1 and 2 on sheet c2023-189 in globo:

[c2023-171]

No. 1 **Exclusion of members and affiliates of registered political parties from meaning of third-party campaigner**

Page 3, Schedule 1. Insert after line 1—

[1AA] Section 4A

Insert after section 4—

4A Members or affiliates of political parties not third-party campaigners

Despite section 4, definition of third-party campaigner, a *third-party campaigner* does not include a person or other entity that is a member or affiliate of a registered political party.

No. 2 **Exclusion of entities that have donations in previous 4 years from definition of third-party campaigner**

Page 3, Schedule 1. Insert before line 2—

[1AB] Section 4B

Insert before section 5—

4B Entities that have made donations to registered political parties within previous 4 years not third-party campaigners

Despite section 4, definition of third-party campaigner, a *third-party campaigner* does not include a person or other entity that has made a donation to a registered political party within the previous 4 years.

[c2023-189]

No. 1 **Caps on electoral expenditure for by-elections**

Page 3, Schedule 1[1], line 3. Omit "\$180,720". Insert instead "\$75,000".

No. 2 **Caps on electoral expenditure for by-elections**

Page 3, Schedule 1[2], line 9. Omit "\$180,720". Insert instead "\$75,000".

The effect of these amendments will be to reduce the amount currently in the bill from \$180,720 to \$75,000. I remind members that the current amount in respect of amendment No. 1 on sheet c2023-189 is \$20,000. The bill proposes to increase the cap under section 29 (11) of the Electoral Funding Act to a whopping \$180,000. The Opposition contends that that is a gross inflation of the amount. I have already given examples of how there will

be aggregation of that amount and how it has operated unfairly in the past as it is. This will add to that, meaning there will be gross inequity under our system.

Similarly, in respect of amendment No. 2 on sheet c2023-189, the current amount under section 29 (12) (b) of the Act is \$24,000 and that will be increased to \$180,000. I also point out that there has not previously been an accumulation of caps in multiple by-elections for third-party campaigners. This is the first time that this will be introduced into the Act. It is an absolute rort that will allow trade union third-party campaigners to register in multiple seats if there are multiple by-elections, and to then spend a small amount in one seat and focus their attention on another seat that they believe will support the Labor Party.

The cap ought to be reduced to the much more reasonable level of \$75,000. Otherwise these provisions will be unconstitutional, which is not something that any of us want to see. In addition, amendments Nos 1 and 2 on sheet c2023-171 would effectively make third-party campaigners decide either to be an affiliate of a political party or a third-party campaigner, and prevent them from being both. This will stop the double dipping that I referred to in my speech during the second reading debate. Again, this is a fairness measure that will ensure there is not multiple rorting of our current electoral laws. These amendments are all directed towards making sure that our democracy is conducted on an even playing field, which I am sure all members of this House would agree to in principle. Unfortunately, this bill does not do that. That is why I move these amendments.

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (20:49): The Government opposes amendments Nos 1 and 2 on sheet c2023-171. It appears the intention behind these amendments is to exclude party donors and party members or affiliates from the definition of "third-party campaigners" under the Act. The effect of this would be to ensure that party donors and party members or affiliates would not be subject to the applicable expenditure or donation caps or disclosure requirements applying to third-party campaigners. There does not appear to be any clear policy rationale for excluding party donors or party members from the application of the expenditure and donation caps or the disclosure requirements. The effect of this would be to create an extreme loophole in the regulation regime for members of political parties or political donors to spend uncapped amounts of money to influence an election result. As a result, the Government cannot support these amendments.

In relation to Opposition amendments Nos 1 and 2 on sheet c2023-189, the Electoral Funding Amendment Bill 2023 currently proposes a \$180,720 cap on electoral expenditure by third-party campaigners in by-elections. These amendments would replace the proposed cap with a reduced cap of \$75,000. In its 23 November 2022 report the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters [JSCEM] recommended a cap of \$225,900. The figure recommended by JSCEM was 75 per cent of the cap applicable to a candidate at a by-election.

On 22 August 2023 the bill was referred to Portfolio Committee No. 1 for inquiry and report. That report was published on 11 September this year. The committee noted that issues regarding the cap had already been covered in great detail by JSCEM. The committee was inclined to accept the recommendation to increase the cap to \$225,900 and believed that was the right balance. The cap of \$75,000 proposed by the Opposition has not been subject to detailed consideration by JSCEM.

The \$225,900 figure that was recommended was the result of much careful analysis of the evidence and submissions by a range of stakeholders. Of course, as has been discussed, the reason that members are debating this bill today is that the High Court ruled out the previous cap. Any new cap needs to satisfy the legal requirements of the implied freedom of political communication. There can be no excuse for the Parliament legislating a cap that will fail that test. We have the responsibility to make laws that operate within the bounds of the Constitution. It is incumbent upon us that the laws we make do not exceed those bounds.

One reason for referring matters such as this to the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters in the first place is to obtain and consider the evidence in order to show the court, in the event of a challenge, that a restriction or a cap has been carefully and thoroughly examined based on the evidence and will achieve this purpose in a consistent manner in relation to the limitations of the Constitution. When the Parliament essentially ignores a recommendation of JSCEM and imposes a tighter cap or restriction, obviously there is a risk that law will be ruled invalid. The Government cannot support the Opposition amendments.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (20:53): Briefly, I reply to the Minister's comments. The 2023 committee report was authored by a committee with Coalition members in a significant minority. There was a prevailing voice on that committee that was party-politically against the contentions that we are making; it was hardly an independent body. Secondly, in relation to the constitutional point the Minister raised, the fact of the matter is there was no constitutional advice before the committee that suggested a \$180,000 cap would be constitutionally valid. Given that the magnitude of increase is so significant, it is difficult to believe that the amount of increase, and the disproportion between a third-party campaigner aggregated with an affiliated political candidate, could in any way satisfy the constitutional imperative under the implied freedom of political

communication. In passing this bill, all members are doing is passing an unlawful piece of legislation that is inconsistent with the Australian Constitution.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): The question is that Opposition amendments Nos 1 and 2 on sheet c2023-171 and Opposition amendments Nos 1 and 2 on sheet c2023-189 be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes34
Noes47
Majority..... 13

AYES

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

NOES

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

PAIRS

Griffin, J	Car, P
Roberts, A	Dib, J
Toole, P	Minns, C

Amendments negatived.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): The question is that clauses 1 and 2 and schedule 1 be agreed to.

Clauses 1 and 2 and schedule 1 agreed to.

Third Reading

Ms JO HAYLEN: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

The House divided.

Ayes48
 Noes34
 Majority.....14

AYES

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

NOES

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

PAIRS

Car, P	Amon, R
Dib, J	Toole, P
Minns, C	Griffin, J

Motion agreed to.

ROAD TRANSPORT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (AUTOMATED SEATBELT ENFORCEMENT) BILL 2023

Consideration in Detail

Consideration of Legislative Council amendment.

Schedule of amendment referred to in message of 23 November 2023

No. 1 GRNS No. 1 [c2023-142D]

Page 4, Schedule 1. Insert after line 29—

[12] Schedule 4 Savings, transitional and other provisions

Insert after clause 70—

Part 12 Provision consequent on enactment of Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Automated Seatbelt Enforcement) Act 2023

71 Warning period for seatbelt offences detected by appropriate approved traffic enforcement devices

- (1) This clause applies if after the commencement of this clause a seatbelt offence is detected by an appropriate approved traffic enforcement device.
- (2) To avoid doubt, TfNSW—
 - (a) must deal with the offence in accordance with this Act or the statutory rules, including by issuing a penalty notice or court attendance notice in relation to the seatbelt offence, and
 - (b) must not deal with the offence by issuing a warning to the registered owner of the vehicle.
- (3) In this clause—

appropriate approved traffic enforcement device has the same meaning as in Part 7.3, Division 2.

seatbelt offence has the same meaning as in Part 5.3, Division 5.

warning means a notice given to a driver of a vehicle warning the registered owner that the driver of the vehicle committed a seatbelt offence but stating that no penalty notice or court attendance notice will be issued in relation to the offence.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (21:10): I move:

That the Legislative Council amendment be agreed to.

I am pleased, and not surprised, that this important safety initiative has bipartisan support. We are all very cognisant of how important it is. The plan was developed with extensive engagement from the community and stakeholders, analysis of trauma trends, consideration of best practice and safety evidence. I welcome the contributions of members of the Legislative Council, and I thank the Road Trauma Support Group. I met with that group a couple of weeks ago and its advocacy has been vital to me on the issue of automated seatbelt enforcement. The amendments passed in the Legislative Council remove the proposed nine-month period. While that was designed to give people a chance to do the right thing, I am happy to support the amendment and understand what The Greens are trying to achieve.

It has been illegal not to wear a seatbelt for the past 50 years and over the next few months the Government will get that education message back out. The plan will still improve road safety and progress key agreed upon actions in the 2026 Road Safety Action Plan, which is a bipartisan plan to bring down the road toll. It will still take about six months for the existing mobile phone detection cameras to be prepared to enforce the seatbelt laws, and during that period the Government will undertake an extensive education campaign to inform the community about the pending changes. The end result is very much of a muchness with what we were trying to achieve. I take on board the comments of some of the members in this place and in the upper House, but at the end of the day what matters most is that this legislation is passed tonight because seatbelts save lives and that is the end goal for all of us. I commend the bill to the House. Click clack, front and back. Let's get this done.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (21:12): I acknowledge the Minister's contribution and acknowledge that many Opposition members spoke on this issue in this Chamber, including me. The Opposition is very pleased that the Government has accepted the sensible amendments outlined in the bill for seatbelt cameras. It has been illegal for decades to not wear a seatbelt. The bill is a commonsense amendment. The Opposition fully supports the bill because it is the right thing to do. Wearing a seatbelt saves lives. Not putting on a seatbelt not only risks a person's safety but risks the lives of others as well. The first responders also have to face the consequences of the actions of those who do not wear seatbelts. I commend the upper House for passing the bill. I am very pleased that the Government has seen common sense to click clack, front and back. The Opposition supports the amendments.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): The question is that the Legislative Council amendment be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

CLIMATE CHANGE (NET ZERO FUTURE) BILL 2023

Second Reading Speech

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (21:14): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Climate Change (Net Zero Future) Bill 2023. Today marks an important day for New South Wales as this Government legislates effective action on climate change. I recognise and thank the members of the Legislative Council who passed this bill on 28 November 2023. Climate change is a systematic challenge that impacts all parts of New South Wales life, our communities, our economy, our environment and

our wellbeing. Over the past few years our State has experienced the devastation of extreme weather events, fires, floods, heatwaves and torrential storms. Residents of Western Sydney continue to experience significant urban heat, with temperatures often 10 degrees higher than their counterparts in eastern Sydney. Just last month our State saw frequent total fire bans and out-of-control fires which tragically led to loss of life, destroyed homes and burnt thousands of hectares of land, and summer has not even begun.

Across the country, communities are being urged to ready themselves for what will likely be the most significant bushfire season since the catastrophic 2019-2020 Black Summer bushfires. Our first responders are already working hard to prepare for the dangerous season. As Minister for Emergency Services, I thank them for their commitment to protecting our communities across the State. The choices we take now dictate our future. For years action on climate change has been discussed and debated in this place without the introduction of tangible legislative change. We know what lies down the path of continued inaction. We are already witnessing increased frequency and intensity of climate events, irreversible damage to ecosystems and our unique biodiversity, and risks to our health and wellbeing. Inaction is a threat to our economic prosperity and competitiveness as a State. Acknowledging these risks, many national and sub-national jurisdictions are now taking a new approach.

The clean energy transition is underway across the world, with clear legislation frameworks and policy providing much-needed certainty for communities, businesses and investors; shifting to a net zero economy; embracing opportunities to become a micro-renewable energy superpower; and developing comprehensive and insightful plans for resilience. That is what the path of action looks like, and that is what the bill will achieve. The bill is straightforward, ambitious and practical. It provides a clear framework for whole-of-government action with embedded flexibility that ensures future policy decisions are efficient, appropriate and consider the best available science.

The bill sets out the New South Wales Parliament's commitment to effective action on climate change to ensure a sustainable and fair future for the people, economy and the environment of New South Wales. The bill's purpose is to give effect to the international commitment established through the Paris Agreement to hold the increase in global average temperatures to well below two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to increase the ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change.

The bill establishes guiding principles for action to address climate change so our efforts are consistent and considered. It sets out New South Wales minimum net greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets, the primary targets to achieve a 50 per cent on net 2005 levels by 2030, a 70 per cent reduction on net 2005 levels by 2035 and net zero by 2050. Regulations must prescribe interim targets for 2040 and 2045, which will be informed by the independent advice of the Net Zero Commission. Further targets or updates to the primary targets through regulation must offer a greater reduction in emissions than previous targets, ensuring ambition can only ratchet up over time. This section also prescribes an additional layer of accountability, outlining that the Premier and the Minister must ensure that New South Wales achieves the net zero target. This Government acknowledges that the climate crisis necessitates urgent action. Through this clause, it is clear that we are committed not just to words, but also to real action. The bill sets out the adaptation objective for New South Wales to be more resilient to a changing climate.

I have spoken at length of our communities' experience of climate impacts across the State, which are unfortunately baked in because of our historical inaction. We are no longer in a position to just reduce emissions; we must now also adapt. Resilience and preparedness are critical to effective decarbonisation that minimises risk and harm. The bill also establishes the Net Zero Commission and outlines its membership to specific functions, including overseeing the plan to get to net zero and holding government to account. The commission will listen to workers, residents and businesses impacted by economic challenges and new renewable energy developments as we decarbonise. I know that other members of Parliament have raised this. I look forward to receiving the commission's advice on the progress towards the bill's objectives and recommendations to improve our approach over time.

The bill sets out strict frameworks to ensure accountability for both government action and the commission in achieving its aims. The commission must produce an annual report for the previous financial year, to be tabled in Parliament within 28 days, and the Government must provide its response to recommendations within four months. The commission can additionally produce ad hoc advice or reports. Those must similarly be tabled within 28 days and responded to within six months. A joint standing committee established through the Parliament after the passage of the bill, to be known as the Net Zero Future Committee, will provide additional scrutiny to interrogate the commission's findings and increase opportunities for community consultation. Together, those elements of the bill shape New South Wales' path to ambitious, genuine and evidence-based action on climate change. The bill manifests the Government's strong policy of tackling the threat of greenhouse gas emissions and ensures that we are on the path to a net zero future. The bill is clearly in the public interest.

I recognise the previous Government's role in setting aspirational targets for emissions reduction, to which NSW Labor gave bipartisan support. The Government welcomes the Opposition's support for the bill, which puts our emissions target reductions in an Act of Parliament. The bill has already benefited from its referral to Portfolio Committee No. 7 - Planning and Environment for inquiry and report. I extend thanks to the individuals, community organisations and businesses who dedicated time to preparing more than 100 submissions and sharing their knowledge and perspectives with the inquiry committee. The Government has listened carefully to the feedback received through the inquiry and my colleagues have worked closely with members in the other place to introduce a range of amendments to the proposed bill.

I thank the Coalition and the crossbench for their support and input. In particular, I acknowledge members from the electorates of Sydney, Wollondilly, Wagga Wagga, Lake Macquarie, Wakehurst and Barwon for their constructive approach in working with the Government on this bill. After proposals from the Opposition and crossbench, we have included clarifying language in the guiding principles. Those changes highlight the Government's well-established commitment to a fair transition. The amended wording stipulates that action to address climate change will consider the impact on, and knowledge of, rural, regional and remote communities and the amenity of local communities, as well as the equity and social justice impacts on socially and economically disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and regions.

The amendments also acknowledge the need to reduce the risk that climate change poses to the survival of all species. The inquiry highlighted the extensive expert and community feedback that the bill must provide a strong framework for real action on climate change, not just words. To make our commitment clear, we have agreed to clarifying language that stipulates that the primary targets are minimums. They are floors, not ceilings. We have also heard strong feedback that the existing 70 per cent by 2035 State emissions reduction target is an important indicator of our trajectory. We included that target in the bill. To safeguard our progress towards net zero, changes to existing future targets must specify greater emissions reduction than any previous targets. The legislation of those targets is not a box-ticking exercise.

As elected officials, we know we are responsible for sticking to our word and reaching these targets. To formalise this position, we have introduced a clear requirement that the Premier and the Minister must ensure that New South Wales achieves our net zero target. This will be a strong call to action across government to ensure we are all doing our part to achieve our goals. We have also introduced clarifying language on the commission's reporting requirements and its ability to advise government departments and the Independent Planning Commission. We have ensured that the statutory review of the Act will consider both its objectives and its purpose. I echo the words of the Minister for Climate Change, the Hon. Penny Sharpe, who I acknowledge for the incredibly hard work that she and her team have done in getting to this point. This is a monumental piece of legislation that will change New South Wales for the better.

I also thank my party colleagues, fellow members and the public for their deep engagement and contributions to improve the bill. I am confident the bill is now stronger and will drive lasting change in New South Wales' approach to addressing climate change. I know some amendments have been circulated, and I will speak to those in consideration in detail. The bill presents members in this place with an opportunity to shape our State's future. Legislating emissions reductions targets sends a clear signal to the domestic and international community. New South Wales is stepping up to take on the challenges presented by climate change. The bill fulfils a key election commitment of the Minns Labor Government. It manifests a clear State policy for addressing greenhouse gas emissions to ensure that we reduce the risk of dangerous climate change and meet our Paris agreement commitments, as noted in the bill's purpose. The bill is strongly in the public interest.

We are only days away from COP28. If this bill is passed, New South Wales can proudly stand alongside other sub-national governments and the Commonwealth Government and contribute to fully integrated climate action. The adaptation objective similarly demonstrates our resolve for action, ensuring that all corners of our State are prepared and resilient. I recognise in particular the regions and towns that have experienced severe climate-induced natural disasters, including Eugowra, Lismore, Mogo and, most recently, the Bega Valley. I hope this objective provides assurance that this Government is committed to supporting communities now and into the future. Lastly, the Net Zero Commission will independently advise the Government on the State's pathway to net zero. Rigorous analysis and apolitical recommendations from scientists and experts are essential for an effective, informed and just transition.

As a former educator, it has been devastating to speak with children who fear for their livelihoods and who will be affected due to the pervasive threat of climate change to our society. Without decisive legislative action, I share their fears for an uncertain future. I fear for our environment and the unique biodiversity that will suffer at the hands of human-induced climate change. I fear for our Pacific neighbours, whose homes are at risk of being washed away by rising sea levels. I also fear for the health and wellbeing of our diverse communities across New South Wales, many of which are on the front lines of climate impacts. The bill is an opportunity to turn that

fear into courage, optimism and resilience, and to provide our young people with hope for a safer climate and forge a stronger path forward for New South Wales towards a net zero future. I commend the bill to the House.

Second Reading Debate

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (21:27): I make a contribution to debate on the Climate Change (Net Zero Future) Bill 2023. In 2023, we do not really need to go into much detail about the rationale for legislation that seeks to deal with climate change. The issue is well understood, our communities expect outcomes and our children rely on us to take courageous action. New South Wales has a proud recent history of meaningful legislative reform on this issue. I recall the words of the State of the Environment during my time as environment Minister. It said:

The effects of climate change on the people and environment of NSW are expected to become more pronounced as the climate continues to change over this century. Without substantial, concerted action, climate change poses a major threat to humanity and most living systems on Earth.

The observed changes to the climate and the projected future changes described in the report are already having widespread effects on the natural and urban environments of New South Wales. The former Government set New South Wales on a trajectory to achieve significant emissions reduction and also extract maximum economic advantage from the global transition to renewable energy. The transition is a difficult one and one being felt acutely in regional and rural communities, which is why I was pleased to see comprehensive amendments put forward by my Nationals colleagues in the other place adopted by the Government in its collaborative approach to the bill.

Stakeholders and interested parties who have watched the bill proceed from its introduction to inquiry to this Chamber have all, without question, focused on one particular issue, which I will come to. But I would like to draw members' attention to the contribution of one group in particular during the inquiry. I met with that group and it drilled home the impact of climate change like no other. The Bushfire Survivors for Climate Action was formed shortly after the Tathra bushfire in March 2018. Its founding members were all impacted by bushfires, including the Black Summer fires of 2019-20, the Blue Mountains in 2013, Black Saturday in 2019 and Canberra in 2003. In their submission they say:

... our view is that while it is a good starting point, the bill needs to be strengthened and made more ambitious ... We want to limit future impacts to our families and communities across the country so we're asking that the Coalition's target be left in place and reviewed by the commission, as that target guarantees earlier emissions reductions towards net zero than having no 2035 target.

The Bushfire Survivors for Climate Action were one of many who identified the former Coalition's target missing in this bill. Indeed, Professor Penny Sackett, Australia's chief scientist from 2008 to 2011, a role in which she provided independent scientific advice to the Australian Government, said in her submission:

A little over a year ago—

when the Coalition was in government—

NSW led the nation with its objective to cut ... emissions by 70% ... by 2035. Yet this 2035 target is not mentioned or legislated in the current Bill. Indeed, Part 2, Clause 9.3 to the Bill appears to forbid *any* interim target to be regulated. This represents a large and inexplicable retrograde step for NSW and its duty to protect citizens from the current and multiplying dangers of climate disruption.

These important messages were heard by the New South Wales Coalition. For that reason we felt it of vital importance that our previous target was included in this legislation. I commend the Minister and the Government for agreeing to that position. The Hon. Scott Farlow, in his contribution last night, moved amendments to the bill on behalf of the Opposition. He said:

The amendments insert the interim target and the definition of the 2035 target and its reference in clause 9 ... those interim targets were captured previously under the Energy and Utilities Administration Regulation 2021. The Opposition seeks to have them recognised in the legislation, as was our policy in government.

I also acknowledge the great work of the Hon. Jacqui Munro in the other place, who, together with the Hon. Scott Farlow, as a member of Portfolio Committee No. 7 - Planning and Environment, ensured that the 70 per cent target was included. In the Minister's own words, "We support the Opposition's 70 per cent interim target." I also thank the Hon. Sarah Mitchell in the other place, who led for the National Party with some strong amendments, supported by the Government, that placed an important spotlight on the needs and concerns of rural and regional communities when it comes to the energy transition. In particular, one Nationals amendment read:

In preparing the report, the Commission must consult with the person employed in the Public Service as the Agriculture Commissioner.

It was accepted by the Government. The amendment is fairly straightforward and relates to the preparation of the annual report. The amendment will insert a clause that states that the commission must consult with the person employed in the public service as the agriculture commissioner in preparing the report. The Opposition wants to

make sure that the agricultural industry is part of the consultation in relation to preparation of the annual report by the Net Zero Commission. The Opposition thinks it is important that the impact on agriculture is discussed as part of the annual report and that members of Parliament have the opportunity to further interrogate those issues through the parliamentary committee process that will also be established.

All members can be proud of the continued success of New South Wales as a leader in the energy transition and responsible management of climate change. I acknowledge the many sensible and passionate voices who made contributions during the committee inquiry. They include the likes of Citizens' Climate Lobby Australia, Master Electricians Australia, the Climate Council of Australia, Business NSW, the Insurance Council of Australia, Bushfire Survivors for Climate Action, Beyond Zero Emissions, the NSW Minerals Council, Transgrid, Ausgrid, the Australian Land Conservation Alliance, Surfers for Climate, and Parents for Climate. I acknowledge Jeremy Liddle from the Manly electorate. They have all been voices of great reason and inspiration for real climate action. The diverse views and submissions provided to the inquiry, from the Minerals Council to Business NSW to Master Electricians Australia, all point to a desire for action on climate change and a smooth transition to renewable energy.

I also acknowledge Steph McKew and Anna Rose from Environmental Leadership Australia, and Josh Kirkman from Surfers for Climate. They have also been very loud voices in ensuring that real action is taken on climate. Another person known to all of us in this place who I think deserve recognition is the member for Hornsby. Members should appreciate the political context and the significant opposition that he experienced as a courageous politician to begin the journey for New South Wales as it headed towards net zero. In many respects, a lot of the vision and policies of the previous Government, led by the member for Hornsby when it came to climate change, have been implemented today. In many discussions with the Minister, I have recognised the contribution that the member for Hornsby has made, and that should not be diminished.

I do not wish to end on a sour note but it was particularly poor form on the part of the Labor Party to undertake a paid social media advertising campaign targeting Coalition MPs, saying that it was the Liberals who were blocking net zero legislation. Ultimately, this fraud of a campaign came to an embarrassing end once *The Sydney Morning Herald* revealed that it was, in fact, the Coalition that dragged Labor to include a more ambitious target. Perhaps it is a good lesson for the Labor Government that politics does have a place, but you will always get found out playing games. Nevertheless, this is a good reform and I will leave the final words to Serena Joyner, Jo Dodds and Fiona Lee, my friends at Bushfire Survivors for Climate Action, who brought their experiences to Macquarie Street with such power. They said, "The bill is an opportunity for governments to show the same courage and leadership as those of us already on the front lines of climate change, where we work to support each other, regardless of political stripes, and do whatever is necessary to protect us all." I commend the bill to the House.

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (21:36): I am pleased to speak in support of the Climate Change (Net Zero Future) Bill 2023. The bill is a significant step forward for New South Wales. Tackling the climate emergency and decarbonising our economy to ensure New South Wales remains resilient and liveable is an enormous challenge. But it is also an unparalleled and a once-in-a-generation economic opportunity. The bill provides a framework for developing and implementing clear and stable climate change policies. These policies will support New South Wales to contribute to the global effort under the Paris Agreement. It also establishes a mandate to reset our economic relationship with the planet's resource and ecosystems. The role of sub-national governments will be critical in addressing the worsening climate crisis and driving innovative solutions.

Taking action now will maximise the benefits and minimise the costs of the transition to a low emission and climate resilient economy for New South Wales. New South Wales has the largest economy in Australia. By contributing to the global movement to decarbonise and decouple economic growth from greenhouse gas emissions, New South Wales can demonstrate that strong action is necessary to foster a strong economy. It will become increasingly difficult to continue to operate a high-emissions economy in a future low-emissions world. If we waste the opportunity to innovate and decarbonise the economy ahead of the global curve, the consequences for our future economic growth and prosperity are likely to be severe.

A range of recent real-world examples have demonstrated that reducing greenhouse gas emissions and economic growth can go hand in hand. There does not need to be a trade-off between the two. We have seen numerous examples of that. From 2000 to 2014 we saw 35 countries reduce their emissions while growing their GDP. The United Kingdom, for example, cut its emissions at a greater pace than any other G7 nation in the period, reducing them by 24 per cent, while at the same time their real GDP grew by 27 per cent. From a sub-national government perspective, the State of California has seen the second highest growth in per capita GDP of all the states in America since 2010, while also reducing its emissions.

Closer to home, Victoria's emissions declined by nearly 25 per cent between 1990 and 2020, even as the population increased by 53 per cent and the economy grew by 127 per cent. It is clear that action on climate

change does not have to come at the expense of our future prosperity; it can foster it. New South Wales has the opportunity to be a leader within the low-emissions global economy. Legislating our emissions reduction targets is an important step to provide the confidence and direction needed to invest in low-emissions technology and accelerate the growth of low-emission industries.

The transition to a low-carbon economy provides extensive opportunities for jobs and economic growth, particularly in New South Wales' regions. Areas such as the Hunter, the Illawarra and the Central West are uniquely placed to capitalise on the shift to a low-carbon economy. Those regions already host major energy, port and transport infrastructure, have skilled workforces, and the potential to harness significant renewable energy resources and strong demand for future green steel production. Those regions have a key role to play in a renewable energy future, powering existing industries and supporting economic growth, including emerging technology in green hydrogen, ammonia and metal production, offshore wind, electric vehicle fleet operators and electrification of industrial processes.

The legislating of this bill, advice of the Net Zero Commission and ongoing commitment to key policies, such as the energy road map and renewable energy zones, will enable economic prosperity across New South Wales, securing a reliable supply of clean, affordable energy and opportunities for new industry growth. Industry certainty from the legislation of our targets and expert advice from the Net Zero Commission will help strengthen the State's economy and support jobs for decades. Our industries and regions are currently vulnerable to fluctuations in demand for coal exports and other fossil fuels, and that demand will continue to decrease as global efforts to reach net zero continue to rise, in line with legislation and commitments such as the Paris Agreement. The outcomes of the bill will help local industry adapt and build resilience in the regional economy.

The impacts of climate change are felt differently across the regions and communities of New South Wales, and it is undeniable that our most vulnerable communities will face the largest impacts from climate change. It is therefore the duty of this Parliament to ensure that the move to a low-emissions future for New South Wales is just and equitable. We must do this through working with and supporting communities that will be impacted. This Government acknowledges that key responsibility and has reflected the criticality of considering impacts on rural, remote and regional communities in the text of the bill. We understand that a low-carbon economy means change for communities throughout New South Wales. However, that change brings incredible opportunity to transition people to cleaner industries, putting New South Wales on the path to becoming a clean energy superpower, fuelled by strong, resilient regions.

To safeguard a fair transition for New South Wales' regions, a core function of the Net Zero Commission will be to undertake extensive engagement with local communities in the course of its monitoring, review and reporting on New South Wales' approach to addressing climate change. Local knowledge, skills and insights will be invaluable to the commission as it makes recommendations on policies, programs and actions. The transition should also take into account the benefits provided by our existing natural assets, including native ecosystems which sequester a large amount of carbon. Reducing the loss of those ecosystems and enhancing their restoration will provide benefits for both climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as for nature.

Climate change is the defining issue of our age. It is the central challenge of this century, but it is also an opportunity. Transitioning to a low-emissions economy will speed up innovation in low-emissions technologies, generate new jobs in long-lasting, cutting-edge fields across the economy, and foster new clean industries that support our State as it adapts to a changing climate. The potential co-benefits from this transition are too many to list. For a start, we could see health benefits, cleaner air, cleaner water, a sustainable and reliable food supply, and improved outcomes for nature. The latest report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, released in March of this year, warns us that the climate time bomb is ticking. According to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the report is a clarion call to massively fast-track climate action efforts by every country and every sector on every time frame. In short, our world needs climate action on all fronts—everything, everywhere, all at once.

Finally, I take a moment, not only as the Parliamentary Secretary for Climate Change and the Parliamentary Secretary for the Environment but also as the proud member for Blue Mountains, to acknowledge the good work and important initiatives of Blue Mountains City Council. My local council has swept into action in acknowledging this call via a stream of measures, including its own community net zero plan and the Blue Mountains Planetary Health Initiative, for example. I encourage members to have a look at some of those initiatives. I repeat, the opportunity is clear. Let the bill serve to reset our past track record and put us all on the right track to climate action. I urge members to support the bill.

Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (21:45): As the shadow Minister for Environment I contribute to debate on the Climate Change (Net Zero Future) Bill 2023. I am also the proud member for Vaucluse, and a parent who wants to create a better world for her children and for their children. I am someone who is concerned about protection of biodiversity and someone who cares about regional Australia, our economy, our resilience as a State

and a nation about energy security, and someone who believes in the power of collective action. That is what we are seeing tonight—namely, collective action on one of the most pressing and challenging issues of our time: climate change.

I am proud that New South Wales has bipartisan support to legislate for net zero emissions by 2050 and that Labor has agreed to support the Coalition's amendments to strengthen the bill by including a legislated interim target of a 70 per cent reduction by 2035. That was the Liberal-Nationals Coalition's target when in government—a target, by the way, that we were on track to deliver achieve. It is important that that target is maintained. It would have disappeared under the original drafting of this bill. In fact, Labor's election promise was a target of a 50 per cent reduction by 2030. Former chief scientist Professor Penny Sackett has said that that target would be "a large and inexplicable retrograde step". I note that many environmental stakeholders and experts who made submissions to the inquiry of the Committee on Environment and Planning into the bill had also called for that 70 per cent target to be included in the legislation.

In passing this new and improved bill, we are acting in the interests of our future generations. We are making a decision that will not only deliver economic dividends for our State—and that will happen—but also protect our environment. Across this Chamber, many people of goodwill have come together to support the bill. Members have worked together to ensure that New South Wales continues to be ambitious when it comes to reducing our emissions, and we can all be so very proud of that. I pay credit to the member for Hornsby for his vision and ambition to tackle this issue when he was in government. I also pay credit to the member for Manly for his work in government and for continuing that advocacy in opposition. I also pay credit to the Government and to the Minister for Climate Change for their approach in working constructively with the Opposition and crossbench to accept our amendments to the bill.

It is only right that New South Wales, as the State with the largest economy and population in Australia, be highly ambitious in tackling climate change. Let us take a moment to revisit those ambitions to date. It started with the 2016 NSW Climate Change Policy Framework that set out the New South Wales Government's long-term goal to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 and to make New South Wales more adaptable and resilient to a changing climate. When the Coalition left government, New South Wales was on track to double our economy and halve our emissions by 2030. We delivered the Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap, a 20-year plan for New South Wales' energy infrastructure, that incentivises private investment in renewable energy, while simultaneously reducing emissions and lowering electricity bills for the families and businesses across New South Wales. Not only did the road map acknowledge an ambition by the previous Government to seriously tackle climate change; it also placed great emphasis on the economic opportunity delivered by new energy technologies. By delivering the plan, New South Wales is expected to attract billions of dollars in investment over the next decade.

It is important to recognise that almost two-thirds of that investment is expected to go into regional and rural New South Wales. I mention that because, in acting on climate change, we must clearly recognise that rural and regional communities are disproportionately impacted by the effects of climate change. It is also important that we ensure they are not disproportionately impacted by how we seek to respond to climate change. Action on climate is not an inner-city issue, but too often we do not take the time to elevate the voices and clearly hear the concerns of our regional communities. The Government also needs to listen to the significant concerns raised by communities affected by transmission lines. I note that the independent commission proposed by the bill has the opportunity to investigate and report on broad areas relating to the net zero transition. It would be well advised to consider a review of how the Government is responding to the concerns of regional communities about transmission lines and the infrastructure associated with the rollouts.

The New South Wales Liberals and Nationals successfully negotiated to have the voices of the bush included in the bill through our amendments. That was really important to us and to regional communities. I sincerely thank the Minister for her openness and for supporting those amendments. I also urge the Government to further demonstrate its support for rural communities by reconsidering its decision to delay the Coalition's \$206.2 million Nature Positive Farming program, a conservation program that incentivised farmers to invest in nature-positive farming practices. We would love to see that reinstated as soon as possible. New South Wales under the Coalition also had a strong track record on renewables. In December last year the World Wildlife Fund [WWF] gave New South Wales first place in its Renewable Superpower Scorecard. The WWF said:

New South Wales secured top spot for the first time thanks to a range of new policy commitments, including expediting transmission and energy storage projects and the release of First Nations guidelines for major energy projects, which aims to ensure the benefits of the transition are felt across First Nations communities.

When the former Coalition Government introduced the New South Wales Net Zero Plan, the then Minister acknowledged that getting to net zero would not be easy but our Government was committed to delivering a plan that was grounded in science and economics. We understand that the bill seeks to establish guiding principles to

address climate change. Those principles are well established and have bipartisan support. The first principle sets out that climate change is a serious threat to the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of New South Wales. All members in this place are deeply aware of that, because we are seeing time and again communities across this State being impacted by climate change. We have experienced the heatwaves, the droughts, the devastating bushfires and the storms.

The *NSW State of the Environment 2021* report said, "The changes to climate are expected to become more severe over time." I know my colleague the member for Manly also mentioned that report, but I will quote from it again because it is important. Those changes include "more extreme weather events, increasing coastal erosion and inundation and greater impacts on infrastructure, human health and wellbeing". We also know that climate change will have a profound impact on biodiversity in New South Wales, with many endangered species at risk due to the threats posed by climate change. Failure to act on climate change will mean that the harmful impacts of those changes will become not just more frequent but also more severe. Failure to act would be an abrogation of our duties as elected representatives.

But this Parliament is acting. I will be clear. Earlier The Greens made the comment that this bill is largely ornamental. To some degree and extent that is right, because the Coalition was on track to deliver those ambitious targets without legislation. However, if the Government wants to legislate, we are very happy to support that to provide even greater certainty and to provide safeguards for our regional communities. The people of New South Wales rightly want a Parliament that is willing to tackle the big issues and representatives who are ambitious when it comes to having a vision for reducing our emissions. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (21:54): Tonight I am very proud to support the Climate Change (Net Zero Future) Bill 2023. This legislation is incredibly important. It holds in it the future of our State, our country and our planet. Last weekend thousands of climate activists rallied to block Newcastle Harbour. While I do not condone the actions of the 109 protesters who were arrested for civil disobedience, we saw thousands of New South Wales citizens turn out in droves for climate action. They could not have made it any clearer that New South Wales wants net zero emissions. This bill looks to do that in a realistic and achievable way. The main targets of a 70 per cent reduction by 2035 and net zero by 2050 have been researched carefully. To reach those goals as quickly as possible while also giving New South Wales industries the time and space they need for a smooth transition is key.

Newcastle is home to the world's largest coal port and many of my constituents' livelihoods are reliant on the port and on the non-renewable energy industry. A smooth transition is vital to my electorate. I am not afraid of the transition; I welcome it. My constituents welcome it because they have seen it done before. In April 1997 Newcastle's BHP steelworks plant announced that it would cease operation in two years' time due to its detrimental impact on the environment and on the health of workers and nearby residents, and due to the state of the economy and the demand for steel manufactured in Australia. BHP hired thousands of Novocastrians and, when the closure was announced, people said it would destroy the region's economy, drive up unemployment and leave thousands of people out of work. However, the closure was well planned and well managed. The pathways program encouraged workers to retrain in other industries. It found them new positions. It supported workers through every step. When they turned off the machines on 30 September 1999 and workers walked out of that huge factory, the world did not fall apart.

To this day, Newcastle is a thriving city that just keeps getting better. With some experience under our belt, Newcastle and the wider Hunter region are looking forward to leading the transition and continuing as New South Wales' energy industry heartland. It is important to note that, as the Minister said, those targets are floors and not ceilings. Beyond the emissions reduction targets, this legislation also establishes the Net Zero Commission. The commission will act as an independent body, ensuring that the targets are met and advising the Government on how we can continue to progress towards net zero emissions. The Government has committed \$45 million to the Hunter Valley Hydrogen Hub on Kooragang Island in my electorate. The Government is committed to getting the Hunter Transmission Project operating by 2027-28. It is committed to establishing a clean energy future for New South Wales. Newcastle is on board with this legislation. I support the bill.

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (21:58): I thank the Hon. Penny Sharpe and the Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government—particularly the Minister for the very genuine way he goes about his business in this place. I foreshadow that I will move amendments to the Climate Change (Net Zero Future) Bill 2023. Those amendments will make sure the bill includes a requirement to put in place a transition plan that takes into account the impacts of the bill and its targets on regional New South Wales, whether that is industry or agriculture. The plan will make sure that we have visibility around those and can plan for them, and will ensure that we do not get caught out by unintended consequences for industries. That message has been heard by the Hon. Penny Sharpe.

As we heard from the Parliamentary Secretary and member for Blue Mountains, and from Minister Jihad Dib, the transition plan may already be part of that. I am still not convinced that without locking in a mechanism

that brings the plan back to the Parliament for review, we will not have that level of protection and we will have to go on trust. I flag that we should have those transition plans in place to ensure that we know what the impacts will be. The Hon. Penny Sharpe said:

Action to address climate change will require a bold effort across government, community and industry.

I could not agree more. But that bold approach lacks detail about mitigating and managing the impacts of New South Wales' transition to net zero. That is crucial to bringing the community along. In my view, there is a risk to the implementation of those measures if we do not have a transition plan to manage and mitigate any intolerable impacts from the net zero pathway to reaching our net zero target.

There is a perception in the bush that the international commitment established under the 2015 Paris Agreement is being carried on the backs of farmers and rural landholders, without a great understanding of the impacts it will have on the businesses and industries they support. The Opposition also has concerns about prime agricultural land being used for renewable energy companies, whether it is for transmission lines or solar or wind factories, which cause concern in farming communities. There is no doubt that change can be a good thing, and I am sure we are going to move in a positive direction, but I want to make sure that very vulnerable communities and industries are looked after in the process. Without a defined process and a process of review of how those changes are coming along, there may be problems, and that may sow seeds of doubt and fear.

Another amendment I was going to move during the consideration in detail stage would have required the plan to keep coming back to Parliament for review, so it did not just leave Parliament and so we would not lose visibility of the strategy. I would like that to happen, if there is a mechanism to do that. I will not move those amendments, but I put my concerns on the record. Again, I thank the Hon. Penny Sharpe for attempting to address those concerns in her second reading speech. Obviously at some future date, courts and other people will refer to her second reading speech to understand the intent of the bill. While I thank the Minister, I still hold those concerns and I will take them with me.

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (22:01): On behalf of The Greens, I contribute to debate on the Climate Change (Net Zero Future) Bill 2023. Our community deserves a safe and liveable planet. We deserve a government that is willing to take ambitious action to urgently tackle the climate emergency. Disappointingly, the bill as it currently stands does not create a framework for the ambitious action that our community wants and needs to see if we are to prevent the worst outcomes from runaway climate change. I am incredibly disappointed that the Labor Government continues to push a bill that will take us backwards on climate. The targets within the legislation are no more ambitious than those set by the former Coalition Government. As my colleague Ms Sue Higginson rightly said in debate on the bill in the other place, the Coalition Government had a target of a 50 per cent reduction in emissions by 2030, 70 per cent by 2035 and net zero by 2050. That was in the regulation.

Towards the end of the Coalition's term of government, a lot of work was done to calculate how New South Wales was tracking on the road map to achieving its emissions reductions. In 2021 we calculated that we were tracking to hit a 56 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. At that time, it was clearly the Coalition's view that with the right ambition, investment and settings, we could hit a 70 per cent emissions reduction target by 2035. That was in place under the former Coalition Government, and now we are being asked to accept a bill with a target of 50 per cent by 2030. But, as my colleague articulated in the other place, New South Wales is already on track to reach a 56 per cent reduction in that time, which means the Government is effectively taking us backwards with its unambitious target.

Then there is the matter of the net zero by 2050 goal. Net zero by 2050 is too little, too late. We are in a climate emergency. The consensus from the scientific community is crystal clear on the point: We must reach net zero well before 2050 if we want to avoid being locked in to two degrees of global heating and the catastrophic consequences that will follow. We need legislation that aligns with the recommendations of climate scientists, not legislation that will allow coal and gas companies to continue wreaking havoc on our planet for decades to come. Earlier this year, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released its latest report, which brings together seven years of comprehensive research from the world's top experts on climate change. The Secretary-General of the United Nations labelled the report a "survival guide for humanity", making it clear that while it is still possible for us to limit warming to 1.5 degrees, it will take a quantum leap in climate action.

In the face of calls for a quantum leap in climate action, we have been presented a bill that, from the outset, will lock us in to two degrees of warming. Coming off the back of several months of unprecedented global temperatures, that failure to heed scientific advice is unacceptable. It is no doubt frustrating for our communities that I must remind the Government of the challenges the people of New South Wales have faced over recent years as a result of climate-induced extreme weather events. In 2019 we had the catastrophic Black Summer bushfires, which reports have found were fuelled by climate change. Some 25 people in New South Wales lost their lives in those fires, hundreds of homes were destroyed, and a devastating 5.52 million hectares of land in New South

Wales was scorched, killing an estimated one billion vertebrate animals. The trauma from those events continues to impact many of our communities to this day.

Following several years of extreme rain events, including the flooding in the north of the State, once again we face what is forecast to be a devastating fire season for New South Wales. Fires have already taken three homes on the South Coast. Earlier this month the Premier warned New South Wales residents to be prepared for a horror summer. Residents are preparing, but I have to ask: What is the Government doing to ensure that residents do not have to face a growing number of extreme weather events fuelled by climate change? The unambitious targets in the legislation suggest to me that the Government is quite comfortable with placing the burden on the people of New South Wales and with continuing to prepare for one disaster after another, without taking the necessary steps to prevent runaway climate change.

If New South Wales is to align itself with the recommendations of climate scientists, we need to ensure that we transition away from coal and gas by 2030. We must look at more sustainable alternatives and at decarbonisation from every angle. We must look at strategies that take us away from intensive animal agriculture, stop logging our native forests, and invest in low-emissions public transport instead of polluting motorways. We can and must take those concrete steps if we are serious about tackling the climate emergency. I foreshadow that The Greens intend to move an amendment to ensure that we have ambitious targets in the bill to help protect our living planet and to ensure that the people of New South Wales are not faced with an ever-increasing risk of extreme weather events.

As my colleague did in the other place, on behalf of The Greens I will move amendments that propose concrete targets and send a clear and unambiguous sign to the market that we need to urgently transition away from coal and gas. My colleague Ms Sue Higginson in the other place referred to evidence from the committee inquiry, particularly around the idea of front-loading our emissions reduction ambition. I thank all of the stakeholders who contributed to that important inquiry. Ms Sue Higginson rightly pointed out that our net zero target under the proposed legislation is 27 years away, which is far too long, especially without firm interim targets to keep us on track. That is why it is essential that we include a clear and ambitious target of a 75 per cent emissions reduction by 2030 and an overall target of net zero by 2035, not 2050.

It is abundantly clear that the people of New South Wales want to see ambitious action on climate. They do not want a bill that effectively upholds business as usual for big coal and gas. Thousands of people have signed petitions and written directly to the Government, demanding firmer action on climate. Last week thousands of people turned out across the country for the School Strike 4 Climate. Every week I hear from residents in my electorate about the need for urgent climate action, particularly from people who have children and grandchildren. Young people do not want to be left carrying that burden. I implore each and every member to recognise that we are in a climate emergency in every sense of the word. It is not an abstract concept; it is impacting our community here and now. We must act to protect our community and our living planet from the worst impacts of runaway climate change. While The Greens do not oppose the bill, we urge the Labor Government to be more ambitious.

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (22:08): I make a short contribution to debate on the Climate Change (Net Zero Future) Bill 2023. From my perspective, the bill does nothing more than what the Liberals and The Nationals achieved while we were in government without the need for any legislation. We met those aspirational targets based on our capacity to get there, and we took the community on that journey. I say from the outset that I really do not believe the bill is needed, nor is the formation of a commission. It seems to be an excuse for a Labor media release to promote something that was actually already happening. That being said, as Leader of the National Party, it is important to note that we have had input to ensure regional New South Wales is considered as the provisions in this bill come into force. We have made sure that the regional areas that are impacted by things like renewable energy and renewable energy zones [REZs] are part of the ongoing equation as we look to meet these targets.

There is certainly a lot more work to do, and I think the Government needs to look at methods of providing meaningful compensation for landholders whose properties are being impacted, both within REZs and outside them. I have had many discussions with landowners and proponents about a number of avenues, and I think there is more opportunity to explore what these look like as we head towards transition. I will certainly be involving myself in those discussions. A really strong focus for us as National Party members is local communities and the impact on amenity. Amendments in relation to these matters were included in the bill, which has strengthened it overall. We have also included mandatory consultation with the Agriculture Commissioner as part of the annual report process to make sure that this crucial industry has a seat at the table. Meaningful representation is extremely important as we move towards the goal of net zero. As we all work towards that future, we, as National Party members, will always represent regional interests, and we will always make sure the Government is aware of its responsibilities in that space.

Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (22:10): I welcome the opportunity to speak to the Climate Change (Net Zero Future) Bill 2023, and I congratulate the Government on prioritising this legislation so early in its term. It is clear there is a genuine intention to establish a robust framework as soon as possible to drive a sustained, ongoing program of policy development and oversight to ensure that New South Wales meets its emissions reduction targets. I thank the Government for its collaborative approach with the crossbench and Opposition in working to incorporate some significant and extremely important amendments. The bill before us today is considerably stronger than it was when it was introduced originally, and the Parliament should be proud of that. But it should not be too proud because anyone who has engaged, even superficially, with what the scientific community, the insurance industry and any number of other experts are telling us about the accelerating, but once avoidable, changes to our climate knows that we are not doing enough.

If people are not deeply concerned, they are not paying attention. Many of us will remember that July 2023 was the hottest month on record for planet Earth. Unfortunately, that is just the beginning. The stream of scientific analysis and research warning us about the devastating consequences of climate change is constant. In July this year, as global heat records tumbled, I remember reading a newspaper article that, instead of providing just more facts and figures, documented personal reflections from scientists who have dedicated their lives to researching our changing climate and advocating to reduce emissions at the rate and scale necessary to limit dangerous global heating. The statements from those scientists were quite moving and I share some of them now. Professor Ian Lowe, emeritus professor in the School of Science at Griffith University, said:

I still recall reading the 1985 Villach conference report, alerting the scientific community to the possible link between greenhouse gas production and climate change. In 1988, I directed the Australian Commission for the Future and worked with CSIRO's Graeme Pearman on Greenhouse '88, a program to draw public attention to what the science was showing.

Now all the projected changes are happening, so I reflect on how much needless environmental damage and human suffering will result from the work of those politicians, business leaders and public figures who have prevented concerted action. History will judge them very harshly.

Dr Joelle Gergis, senior lecturer in climate science at the Australian National University, said:

What is playing out all over the world right now is entirely consistent with what scientists expect. No one wants to be right about this. But if I'm honest, I am stunned by the ferocity of the impacts we are currently experiencing. I am really dreading the devastation I know this El Niño will bring. As the situation deteriorates, it makes me wonder how I can be most helpful at a time like this.

Professor Lesley Hughes, board member of the Climate Change Authority and an emeritus professor at Macquarie University, said:

This is what climate change looks like now. And this is what climate change looks like in the future, though it will likely continue to get worse.

I don't know how many more warnings the world needs. It's as if the human race has received a terminal medical diagnosis and knows there is a cure, but has consciously decided not to save itself.

But those of us who understand, and who care, just have to keep trying—after all, what other choice do we have?

Indeed, what choice do we have? I turn to the substance of the Climate Change (Net Zero Future) Bill 2023. There are many robust aspects of the bill. It is clear that the Government wants to create an independent statutory body in the Net Zero Commission that can give full, frank and fearless advice. It wants to create an organisation that has longevity and has rigorous parliamentary oversight. The bill gives a clear signal that this Government wants to take a long-term approach driven by evidence and the best available science. It wants to be transparent and create a system of actors and processes that hold the government of the day to account and drive ambition in a policy area that is too often riven with toxic politics. This arrangement elevates technical expertise and advice, which I absolutely welcome.

The bill before the House today is a significant improvement on the original bill introduced in the upper House, and is a shared achievement of this Parliament. The most significant improvement is the inclusion of a duty for the Premier and Minister to achieve the emissions reduction targets. That is essential. The inclusion of a legislated interim target of 70 per cent by 2035 significantly strengthens the bill, and I thank the Opposition for moving that amendment. The ability for the Net Zero Commission to provide advice to the Independent Planning Commission is extremely important. The current reality is that there is an enormous pipeline of coal expansions in our planning system, with decisions to be made in the short term. At least 12 coalmines are seeking to expand, with life cycle emissions likely to exceed two billion tonnes. That equates to more than 15 years of all emissions in New South Wales at current rates.

Policy settings under the previous Government facilitated coal expansion after coal expansion. These settings must change so that the Independent Planning Commission can do its job and meaningfully take into account climate impacts. For every unit of CO₂ emitted in our country, Australia exports over three units. While scope 3 emissions are not accounted for in our emissions, we cannot continue to turn a blind eye to this massive contribution to global emissions. Even direct scope 1 emissions from mining coal are significant, and fugitive

emissions from mining are the only sector predicted to increase in New South Wales between 2020 and 2030. The Government's net zero dashboard predicts that, by 2029, fugitive emissions from coalmining will be larger than all emissions from electricity generation in New South Wales. The inclusion of a ratchet mechanism that will allow interim targets to be increased when they are hopefully met as technology improves and New South Wales gains momentum in reducing emissions is also a fundamental improvement.

Ultimately, the Net Zero Commission is an unelected body with limited direct powers. In her second reading speech the Minister for Climate Change referenced examples from around the world of climate change legislation that set binding targets. Such legislation also typically sets the operational architecture for government action. This includes mandating climate risk and vulnerability assessments, requiring climate change strategies and plans, and implementing interim and sectoral targets. This bill does not do these things. The bill sets targets and creates a commission but, unlike comparable legislation around the country and the world, it does not set a comprehensive framework for government action. For example, there are no requirements for the State Government to adopt and report on carbon budgets. We need sector-based pathways to net zero and that means sector-based budgets and targets adopted by the Government that directly guide decision-making.

The purpose of the bill is to create an organisation that will help advise on how to reach net zero. I do not deny that decarbonising the economy is a hugely complex endeavour, but we cannot pretend that we do not already know what needs to be done. In fact, there is much low-hanging fruit to reduce emissions that should be urgently prioritised. The Government has many levers at its disposal to meaningfully reduce emissions, and I urge it to use them. These levers include protecting our public native forests, creating planning laws that prevent the approval of massive new coal expansions, and using the Government's balance sheet to help bridge the gap between the high capital costs and lower operating costs of electrification to drive household decarbonisation at scale.

The Climate Risk Group's submission to the upper House inquiry into the bill highlights just how much skin New South Wales has in the game. Its analysis found that New South Wales is one of the States in the world that is most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. We rank in the top 5 per cent of States at highest risk globally. We cannot escape the fact that we are rapidly squandering the opportunity we have to limit the devastating impacts of rising global temperatures. This is a tragedy of epic proportions—a tragedy of lost opportunities, failures in leadership, greed and short-sightedness. Too much of this story has already been written for us to avert much of the suffering that is being, and will be, wrought by increasing global temperatures.

Climate change will unfold both fast and slow. Catastrophes such as floods, bushfires and storms will throw lives into disarray with little notice. Then there are the insidious, slow-burn stresses of heat and sea level rise. Those impacts will touch all our lives, but inevitably will most affect the vulnerable and those least responsible for causing the problem. The intergenerational injustice is profound, and the kids have every right to be furious. We can only offer hope by acting boldly, at speed and at scale. This bill does not in itself guarantee bold action—I want to see more ambition—but it certainly puts us in a much better position to meet the challenges we face. I wholeheartedly welcome the bill. I look forward to following the work of the Net Zero Commission over the coming years and holding the Government to account as we strive to meet our net zero goals, deploy smart solutions at scale and keep our communities safe.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (22:20): I also contribute on behalf of The Greens to debate on the Climate Change (Net Zero Future) Bill 2023. I wholeheartedly support the comments made by my Greens colleague the member for Balmain, Kobi Shetty, and my Greens colleagues in the other place who have spoken extensively on the bill. Right now our State, like much of the world, is at a crossroads. At the tail end of the hottest year on human record, we are staring down yet another summer of extreme heat and fires. Meanwhile, our neighbours in the Pacific Islands are struggling with rising sea levels, and devastating monsoon seasons continue to batter coastal communities throughout Asia. At a recent forum in the electorate of Newtown we heard a Pacific island leader talk about supporting his community. The bodies of their dead are being washed from their burial grounds and into the sea.

The climate change catastrophe is not something of the future; we face it right now. At this critical moment in history we have a choice: We can either take meaningful climate action now and give people and our planet the best possible chance of a safe and healthy future, or we can continue down the pathway of reckless reliance on fossil fuels until we reach the point of no return. We must choose wisely; our communities of today and tomorrow depend on it. Those communities expect the members who have the privilege of representing them in this place to continue to make the radical change that is needed without fear of repercussions. From school students to the Knitting Nannas, from First Nations communities to environmental activists, people are rising up in their hundreds of thousands to demand an end to coal and gas. They demand just transitions and decarbonisation.

I give a shout-out to the thousands who last weekend took to Horseshoe Beach on beautiful, unceded Awabakal and Worimi lands and waters to peacefully blockade the entrance of a coal port. On kayaks, paddleboards, makeshift pontoons—and even a floating rainbow unicorn—activists sent a clear message that they

wanted no more coal. In a moving show of solidarity, many had Palestinian and First Nations flags streaming from the back of their vessels. They know, as The Greens know, that all struggles—for climate justice, for Indigenous justice, for workers' rights—are connected. There is no climate justice without racial justice.

This intersectional, collective movement for change—the people's movement to address the climate crisis—continues to gain momentum, yet in the face of this urgent call for action the New South Wales Labor Government has presented climate legislation that, as my upper House colleague Ms Sue Higginson recently pointed out, was nothing more than ornamental. Thankfully, and in no small part due to the work of Ms Sue Higginson and her office and the progressive crossbench in the upper House, we have managed to secure critical amendments to improve emissions targets, make those targets binding and ensure an independent Net Zero Commission with integrity.

Leading climate scientists, legal experts, economists, activists and environmental organisations agree that we need to go further, faster. We do not need symbolic gestures; we need action. The evidence is clear: If we are to keep global heating below two degrees Celsius, we must achieve net zero by 2035, or 2040 at the latest. It is obvious that the bill before us tonight lacks the ambition required for meaningful change. The urgency of the climate crisis cannot be overstated. New South Wales has the capacity and opportunity to meet ambitious targets and be a world leader in climate policy. However, we cannot do so when nothing in this bill will stop the New South Wales Labor Government from approving new coal and gas mines. Now is the moment for bold action, not half-measures. We cannot put out this fire while pouring petrol on it. We cannot afford to continue to go down this path. Our communities in the inner city, inner west and across New South Wales expect more from us.

This legislation does not reflect the demands of those in our communities who are mobilising on the streets. This past weekend's blockade at Australia's largest coal port, organised by Rising Tide, saw over 3,000 activists—the youngest, just 15 years old, and the oldest, 97 years old—participating in the biggest act of peaceful, non-violent civil disobedience for climate action in Australia's history. Disgracefully, NSW Police Force officers arrested 109 of these activists. Their commitment should be commended, not met with punishment. In a democracy, civil disobedience and non-violent direct actions are not just rights but the dynamic engines propelling progress and demanding accountability, which is crucial for a just and healthy democracy. I thank those protesters for their activism and acknowledge their demands for urgent global climate action, including calling on their Government to immediately cancel all new fossil fuel projects, tax fossil fuel export profits to fund community and industrial transition, pay for climate loss and damage, and end all coal exports from Newcastle, the world's largest coal port, by 2030.

Also demanding our attention are the recent actions of thousands of students taking to the streets. Telling them to be in school has not quashed their anger at the fact we are destroying their future; instead, it fuels their resolve. I thank the School Strike 4 Climate activists and all students who walked out of class on 17 November 2023 despite this Government telling them they should stay in school. I thank them for demanding urgent action on climate change. I acknowledge their demands for net zero by 2030, which means no new coal, oil or gas projects, including the Adani mine; 100 per cent renewable energy generation and exports by 2030; and the funding of a just transition and job creation for all fossil fuel workers and their communities. We must listen to the voices of those who will be most affected by climate change, and none will be more affected than future generations.

By the measure of these inspiring community activists, this legislation fails. It does not do all that is needed. Sure, it is better than nothing, but it does not go anywhere near far enough. Members should rest assured that my Greens colleagues and I will continue to push for further climate action. We need no new coal and gas projects in New South Wales. We need to address the extreme heat our communities in the city and across the State will face. We need adaptation plans to ensure we protect vulnerable communities from fires and floods. We will bring to this Chamber the demands of those people who are taking direct action on the streets and oceans. We will represent their demands tonight and every time we return to this place until we see the required action on climate change. The Greens cautiously commend the bill to the House, but there is a profound sense of disappointment given the emergency this State and this planet faces.

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (22:28): I contribute to debate on the Climate Change (Net Zero Future) Bill 2023. In rural New South Wales, we care deeply about the environment. We also pay close attention to the way government responds to climate change. Rural New South Wales often cops it from both sides. Those of us out in the regions feel the impacts of climate change the most—that is a given—but out in the regions we pay the biggest price and do most of the heavy lifting when it comes to government responses to climate change. Time and time again, the regions are asked to do most of the work. An obvious example is the use of productive land in the regions. A lot of productive land in rural areas is locked up and not used in order to provide offsets for city businesses who continue to pollute—and they do. Farmers in the regions are asked to agree not to clear their land for farming in order to create a carbon credit that some city polluters can then buy in order to keep polluting.

The regions are constantly being asked to pay for the pollution of others. Why is that? If we are going to try to achieve net zero, it has to be fair. I am calling on the Government to focus its efforts on stopping pollution in the first place, rather than relying on rural and regional areas to make up for the pollution created in the cities. We all want a better environment. In fact, we are all environmentalists, particularly where I live. But we need to find a better and fairer way to achieve this. The regions should not be expected to pay for the pollution that they do not create.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (22:30): There is urgent need to address the climate crisis. The world is on a dangerous path towards mass destruction of life as we know it. Extreme heat, sea level rises, more and more carbon dense oceans, drought and flood will affect every aspect of society, culture, environment and the economy. All things that sustain life, including agriculture, aquaculture, fresh water, clean air and homes will be severely impacted. The very survival of future generations is at risk.

The world experienced the warmest June, July, August season this year on record by a large margin, with the European summer the fifth warmest ever, record breaking high sea surface temperatures for the global ocean and marine heatwaves in several areas. Last year up to 10,000 emperor penguin chicks across four colonies in Antarctica's Bellingshausen Sea died due to melting and breaking ice beneath their breeding grounds. In the last three years New South Wales has seen devastating fires and floods. International finance and risk assessment body the Climate Risk Group has ranked New South Wales in the top 5 per cent of vulnerable States to climate change in the world. The impacts of climate change are accelerating at a much faster rate than anticipated and we are nearing the tipping point when action will become futile.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has clearly and repeatedly stressed that to prevent catastrophe every industry, every sector and every practice must rapidly decarbonise, with scientists warning the biggest, boldest cuts must happen this decade. There is no time for delays; we need to push forward with transition now. The Climate Change (Net Zero Future) Bill 2023 will legislate the State's 2030 and 2050 greenhouse gas emission reduction targets—and following amendments in the other place yesterday, the 2035 target. It will set guiding principles for action on climate change and create a new independent Net Zero Commission to monitor the State's progress and make recommendations to achieve the targets.

Enshrining targets in law will bind us to those targets and signal to business, industry and the global community that the State is committed to moving forward. The Net Zero Commission will ensure we have a clear road map for achieving decarbonisation. This is important legislation and I thank the Minister for working collaboratively across the Parliament, including with an alliance of crossbenchers that I was a part of that also included members representing the electorates of Lake Macquarie, Wagga Wagga, Wakehurst and Wollondilly, and Sue Higginson from The Greens. The Government also worked closely with Emma Hurst from the Animal Justice Party, and the Legalise Cannabis Party.

The bill has been improved in the other place to allow for interim targets and ensure targets do not go backwards, impose a duty on the Premier and Minister to meet the net zero target, empower the net zero commission to provide advice and make submissions to the Independent Planning Commission, and make the survival of species a guiding principle of the laws. Targets should be more ambitious, to avoid leaving the heavy lifting in greenhouse gas reduction to the next generation. The target of 50 per cent reduction by 2030 is below what the State is already set to achieve from abatement under the NSW Renewable Energy Action Plan. Adoption of the 2035 target will help shift more abatement to the next decade, but stronger targets are needed.

The big test for this legislation will be how it mitigates fossil fuel emissions in the mining sector. Fossil fuels are the key drivers of climate change and have kept global emissions astronomical. While our energy supply is transitioning, coalmining continues to expand unabated. Fugitive emissions from coalmining make that the only sector in New South Wales forecasting an increase in emissions this decade, including in methane, which is the most hazardous greenhouse gas. Although expanding coalmining is irresponsible in the face of climate change, the Independent Planning Commission has been approving projects because it is bound by explicit support for coal extraction in the strategic statement on coal and the Net Zero Plan. Those flawed policies prevent truly independent determinations.

At least 10 new coal projects are currently proposed in New South Wales through the planning system. Combined, they will produce nearly two billion tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions—more than 14 times the State's total annual emissions. If those projects go ahead, it will be disastrous for the climate and will slow the transition of coal-dependent communities, leaving other global jurisdictions to secure dominance in green industries. I hope the bill will provide the much-needed tools to override the pro-coal approach that is constraining the planning system and refocus decisions on climate change. As clear State policy, the bill's targets, purpose and guiding principles should be considered by the Independent Planning Commission, as required by the State Environmental Planning Policy (Resources and Energy). The Independent Planning Commission should consider

the bill as a State policy representing the "public interest", as required by the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.

Furthermore, amendments in the other place will see the Net Zero Commission able to make submissions on proposed fossil fuel projects. The planning system is the gateway to emissions-intensive activity driving climate change, and we will need to monitor how successfully the bill can support climate-responsible planning determinations. The bill will help move New South Wales forward in meeting our obligations in the global effort to prevent the worst of the climate crisis, but there is more work to do. We will achieve what is needed only if we work together. I thank the Minister in the other place for showing her willingness to do that, and I acknowledge the great and hard work of her staff members, who join us in the Chamber tonight. I look forward to the establishment of and recommendations from the Net Zero Commission and to this House urgently building on that work to drive our emissions down. I commend the bill.

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (22:37): I make a brief contribution to debate on the Climate Change (Net Zero Future) Bill 2023. I congratulate the Government on the bill and commend it as an important step, which builds on the work of the previous Parliament, to help this State play its role in addressing the challenge of our generation—climate change—and to make sure that our future generations do not suffer from our neglect. Many members have spoken powerfully on the bill, and it is clear that we need to do more to ameliorate the effects of climate change. It is an urgent issue.

I speak specifically, though, from a rural perspective. There are two aspects to that. As the member for Murray pointed out, we in rural locations experience the worst effects of climate change. The bushfires in my region, in the Snowy Valleys Council area, in 2019 and 2020 were absolutely catastrophic. Anyone who went through some of those devastated landscapes would have thought they were apocalyptic. If the urgency of climate change was not clear to us before, it was clear then. So there is no question in my mind about whether rural folk understand the reality of climate change and the need to act.

But it has been also clear to me for the past three years that the change we would make would involve extensive renewable energy infrastructure across rural communities that would impact rural communities, and I was the first person to raise that issue in relation to HumeLink in this House. I must say that, for three years, I have felt like a lone voice on the issue. I raised repeatedly the need to bring rural communities with us. The member for Sydney spoke very powerfully about the need for collaboration. I note that there has been great collaboration on the bill, and that heartens me. Part of that collaboration is the need to recognise and work with rural communities. Like the member for Barwon, I had an amendment to highlight that collaboration, but I am extremely encouraged by the contributions of various members.

The Minister, the member for Blue Mountains and the member for Vacluse spoke powerfully about the need to recognise the impact on rural communities. The short contribution by the member for Dubbo highlighted the role that the Opposition has played. I am a combination of gobsmacked and thrilled that the Opposition, in particular The Nationals, moved wonderful amendments to the bill in the Legislative Council. After three years of silence, it is just wonderful to have them on the team fighting for rural communities and the need to get renewable energy infrastructure right. I welcome them from the bottom of my heart. When their amendments talk about considering the impact on rural, regional and remote communities, my heart sings. After a long journey, it is great to see that has been recognised. The bill will require that knowledge of rural, regional and remote communities is taken into account and that the impact on the local amenity of communities is considered. That is music to my ears.

The bill is an important step forward. Like the member for Sydney, I acknowledge the work of the crossbench, the member for Wakehurst and the member for Wollondilly. I also acknowledge Ms Sue Higginson and The Greens for their work. I congratulate the Minister for Climate Change and her staff on their collaborative approach to passing this bill. The Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap in the previous Parliament was likewise an important collaborative effort. This bill is also an important collaborative effort. Could it be better? I have no doubt it could be better. Is it nevertheless an important step forward? Absolutely. I commend the collaborative work that has gone into the bill. As I said, I particularly commend the recognition in the bill that rural communities will be bearing a very significant load of the work to get to net zero emissions. The bill contains a commitment to consider those communities and make sure they are supported. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (22:41): I contribute to debate on the Climate Change (Net Zero Future) Bill 2023. As I did when Parliament returned after the 2019 bushfires, I quote from *The Lorax* by Dr Seuss:

At the far end of town
where the Grickle-grass grows
and the wind smells slow-and-sour when it blows
and no birds ever sing excepting old crows...
is the Street of the Lifted Lorax.

Dr Seuss tells the story of the Lorax, the trees disappearing, the factories and the greed growing, the pollution arriving and the air being depleted. It continues:

"But now," says the Once-ler,
 "Now that you're here,
 the word of the Lorax seems perfectly clear.
 Unless someone like you
 cares a whole awful lot,
 nothing is going to get better.
 It's not.
 "SO...
 Catch!" calls the Once-ler.
 He lets something fall.
 "It's a Truffula Seed.
 It's the last one of all!
 You're in charge of the last of the Truffula Seeds.
 And Truffula Trees are what everyone needs.
 Plant a new Truffula. Treat it with care.
 Give it clean water. And feed it fresh air.
 Grow a forest. Protect it from axes that hack.
 Then the Lorax
 and all of his friends
 may come back."

With this bill, the New South Wales Parliament has a very important role to play on behalf of future generations of this planet and on behalf of the Indigenous people who have cared for this country for so long. The bill implements several of the Government's key election commitments, which are based on a 2023 report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. We need to make a significant change. The bill seeks to achieve four objectives: establish guiding principles for action to address climate change in New South Wales; set targets for the reduction in net greenhouse gas emissions in New South Wales by 2030 and 2050; set an adaptation objective for New South Wales; and establish a Net Zero Commission. On the Central Coast we have a fantastic hybrid vehicle initiative called Janus Electric, which has been ignored by both the previous State and Federal Liberal governments. It is doing an amazing job and has an electric truck that can haul more than the best Volvo truck. Janus Electric has created that truck with absolutely no support.

We need to make a change to create further investment in alternative technologies that will cut our emissions. Labor is committed. Rather than giving wealthy people money to invest in private vehicles, we have electric vehicle charging stations across New South Wales. I had the privilege of living in Paris in 2006 where you could sit at a café and see someone drive up to an electric vehicle charging station, jump out of their car, plug it in, go upstairs and get changed then come out and drive off. That was in 2006. The town where I grew up in New Zealand—a tiny town of 250 people—has had three electric vehicle charging stations on the side of the road since 2008. It is time we made changes in this State, and we are committed to making those changes. I finish tonight by speaking on behalf of the three young people who visited me in the New South Wales Parliament today. I asked them how important they think the Climate Change (Net Zero Future) Bill is. Erleen from St Joeys said:

... our electorate representative has each asked us why this plan for climate change is crucial. As a student in year 12, I cannot comment on the myriad of policies, actions and statutes you need to consider daily. However, What I can comment on, first—is your role as parliamentary officials. The role of government officials, throughout history, and now, in a democratic society like ours, is to represent the people—and to take action that is best for the people. To many, what is best for the people may be a focus on economic policy, and not climate change. While I cannot dispute the need for good economic policies, as the cost of living remains fairly high, my biggest concern is this: Does economic policy matter if climate change ruins our planet? How do we worry about the cost of living, when we cannot live within our own planet?

Louise from St Joeys said:

Climate change won't affect you it will affect us. The impacts of climate change include warming temperatures, changes in precipitation, increases in the frequency or intensity of some extreme weather events, and rising sea levels. These impacts threaten our health by affecting the food we eat, the water we drink, the air we breathe and the weather we experience. Although these affects are alarming, the generation making the laws and big decisions will not be effect heavily, we will.

To me climate change isn't a problem that I'll have to worry about in the distant future. It is here and it is now. Climate change won't affect you it will affect us. This is why the net zero plan is so important, not for you but your children; your grandchildren. So be remembered as the people that made the change and didn't ignore it.

A student from Terrigal High School said:

Climate change is a set threat to the future of generation Z and especially for later generations. Therefore it is crucial that the 'Climate Change (Net Zero Future) Bill 2023' is passed through to enable these generations a chance of life, as they are already faced with disadvantages that older generations would not have even imagined. For example, COVID-19 lockdowns and increased market prices for properties. This speech emphasises, the right that is owed to future generations to ensure that there are chances given and fairness to go around. The power is in our hands and to build a promising foundation to their futures.

I commend the bill to the House.

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (22:47): In reply: At the outset, I thank all members who made a contribution to the debate. I know that many others wanted to, but it is the second very late night and there were fireworks going on. I acknowledge the member for Sydney who, while the bill was being debated, almost put it to a vote because he thought that it would be fitting to have the fireworks going off at the same time it was being voted on. Nonetheless, there were plenty of fireworks happening here—good fireworks.

I thank the member for Manly, and shadow Minister for Energy and Climate Change; the member for Blue Mountains, and Parliamentary Secretary; the member for Vacluse, and shadow Minister for Environment; the member for Newcastle; the member for Barwon; the member for Balmain; the member for Dubbo; the member for Wakehurst; the member for Newtown; the member for Murray; the member for Sydney; the member for Wagga Wagga; and the member for Gosford and Paralympic Hall of Famer. I address a couple of concerns. The member for Manly is a genuinely decent guy and we have a good friendship, but there was a bit of grandstanding about playing politics with climate change. The great thing is that many members, particularly from the Coalition, spoke about the targets, their targets and Labor targets.

I actually think we are beyond that. To say that the targets in the bill are New South Wales Parliament targets is an achievement. When the bill hopefully passes, it will be the first time in New South Wales that climate targets are enshrined in law. We will get there. These targets are not aspirational; they are not a hope or a dream. The bill represents us as a Parliament putting a stake in the ground and saying, "This is the minimum standard that we will accept." The really good sense of bipartisanship on the bill is an acknowledgment from this Parliament that this is really important. There is still a long journey to travel, and we will travel it together, but there is now a legislative requirement that we will get there that has been achieved in a collaborative way, with amendments that seek to improve the bill, which I think is a really good thing.

One of the best things about a parliament, and the way the best parliaments work, is when if there is a way a bill can be improved then it gets improved, and if something can be achieved then it is achieved in a robust way. That was a common theme with many of the members who raised different issues in the debate, including obviously the threat of natural disasters, which were spoken about today in Parliament. Today the State is dealing with issues around flash flooding, while only a couple of weeks ago we were dealing with fires and the tragic events they brought. Members spoke about the inclusion of the 70 per cent emissions reduction target. As the Minister for Climate Change, the Hon. Penny Sharpe, has acknowledged many times, it has always been the Government's intention to put this target in legislation. In keeping with that, I am happy that it has been included in the bill. It is important to acknowledge that this is a really good step.

It is important to acknowledge that the member for Manly spoke about the member for Hornsby's climate ambition in the previous Government. I also acknowledge that he spoke about where the State is in terms of road maps and so forth. I remind him that this was achieved through bipartisan support, which is really important. The member for Vacluse spoke about the inclusion of the 70 per cent emissions reduction target. Rather than go through it all again, I will say the same thing. I remind all members that the target in the bill is a floor, not a ceiling. We should be going as fast as we can. One important point in the bill is that if the target is ever revised, it can only ever be revised to go further and not backwards, and the Minister for Climate Change has acknowledged that many times. Again, the Government's intention has always been to put this target in legislation, and I am happy to confirm that it has been included in the bill.

I appreciate the kind words that the member for Barwon had to say about me and the Minister. I have spent a bit of time with the member, who had concerns about a transition plan, as do other members who also represent regional and remote areas. We agree on the need for transition plans, but these are already in train. The bill is not the right place for these plans. The Government has already announced the establishment of transition authorities, whose work is being led by the Minister for Natural Resources, the Hon. Courtney Houssos, MLC. These transition authorities, together with the Commonwealth Net Zero Authority, will support workers, industries and communities in the transition to a low-carbon economy. I acknowledge and understand the member's concern about the need for parliamentary oversight of the Net Zero Commission. Let us not forget that the bill requires that a parliamentary joint standing committee, to be known as the net zero future committee, is set up to oversee the commission.

The member for Balmain raised concerns about the ambition in the bill. She wants net zero by 2035. I acknowledge that she referred to Ms Sue Higginson's contribution in the other place and that they share the same concerns. I agree that we need to make big changes quickly, but we also need to take people along with us on the journey and explain the decisions we make to ensure that the benefits of the decarbonisation are shared with all. I will come back to the point that the bill has floors, not ceilings. If we can get there faster, we will, but the Government has set targets in the bill that we know can be pushed further. The bill is about bringing the entire community with us. Is it not about a small group. We have heard in the contributions of members from across the

breadth of New South Wales that different communities have different expectations for different parts of the journey. We wanted to bring them all together by setting targets that we know are achievable, but we also have to push ourselves. There is a much easier option, but we accepted that we need to push a little bit harder, and we will do that. I agree with the member about the community inquiry. I thank the contributors for their excellent work, which a number of members spoke about.

The member for Dubbo gave a very short contribution because I think he wanted to get back to the second round of the fireworks. He claimed the Government was not really making any difference, and I have to comment on that. Making a difference means actually putting it into legislation. It means that whoever forms the government of the day, its Minister and Premier will not change it. They can change it for the better, but they cannot rescind it quite so easily. It is now about making sure that we get there, and that is a really important point. At this time of night I will not play politics—and the House knows the way I regularly speak—other than to say that we will get there when we get there together. We need to move beyond "they said, we said" and accept that hopefully by tonight we will achieve something that we should all be very proud of. Maybe when we leave this place, whenever that time may be, we will look back and say, "You know what? We set something in train."

I appreciate the member for Wakehurst being here, because he is a music lover and there was a concert happening outside. I thank him for his really constructive contribution and appreciate his acknowledgement of the progress in the amendment process. It was really interesting to hear from an Independent member about how it all works and what a difference the amendments make. I thank him for that. The discussion that happened in the other place last night gives us a better bill tonight, and that is a really good thing. Everybody should be big enough to say that it is better.

He spoke of the need to go further with the emissions budget, addressing high-emitting development and sectoral plans. The bill is just a start, but it is a really significant start and we will build from that. It sets up the framework for future climate action. The bill makes clear that regulations will be responsible for implementing the targets and adaptation objectives. The Government will consult extensively with business, civil society and the general public on the make-up of regulations. I look forward to working with the member for Wakehurst as we continue on that path together.

The member for Newtown spoke of the community demand for climate action and the need for ambition. As I have said to colleagues before, we need to take the whole community along with us, and some of the things that the member for Newtown proposed will not bring everybody along. That is a really important thing to acknowledge. It is an ambitious bill, and we want to listen to the voices impacted by climate change. That is what the bill does. In her second reading speech the Minister in the other place talked about the particular impact that climate change is having on vulnerable people not only in our own backyard but also across the world.

The member for Murray talked about the impact on regional New South Wales and she is so passionate about that. We have spoken about that in the past, and I thank her for the passion that she brings to working for opportunities for the regions. As a person who lives and breathes the regions and runs a farm, I know that the impact of climate change is being felt everywhere. I do not need to preach that to the member for Murray; she lives it much more than I do. She sees things that I do not see, but we know that regional communities will be severely impacted by extreme weather events. That is why we have included consideration of the impact on rural, regional and remote communities in our guiding principles, to make sure that we capture their knowledge to help us shape something better.

I thank the member for Sydney for the fireworks thing; I thought it was brilliant. I thank him for his constructive contributions to enhance the bill and for his support for the bill. His concerns are similar to those of the member for Wakehurst—further climate action is needed. I acknowledge their work in amending the bill. We agree with him that the bill manifests the Government's strong policy to tackle the threat of greenhouse gas emissions and ensure that we are on the path to a net zero future. I thank the member for Wagga Wagga. I have been to his neck of the woods a few times. Was it in Adelong or in Wagga?

Dr Joe McGirr: Adelong.

Mr JIHAD DIB: We caught up for the first time in Adelong. We then joined the community debate. We met with some other people as well and listened to all their concerns. I know the impact that climate change is having in his local community, and I thank him for his tireless advocacy for his community and for making sure that he represents their views. I have to say, I have not heard that many clichés since the last State of Origin footy game. It was a festival of clichés. I acknowledge the impact of renewable energy projects. I understand the concerns of the member for Wagga Wagga. The existing formation of the guiding principles captures the need to consider the impacts of climate change on rural and regional communities. I used the second reading speech to acknowledge that.

There are two people whose contributions I have not yet acknowledged. The member for Blue Mountains, who lives in the mountains where the impact of climate change has had catastrophic effects, spoke so passionately and well about the idea that this is the biggest challenge for us this century. She said we need to act on it, but she also spoke about the opportunities. That really captures the spirit of it. I also acknowledge my dear friend the member for Gosford, who went back in time with *The Lorax*. I do not think I have met many people as passionate as she is when it comes to saving the world. I thank her very much. On behalf of Minister Sharpe and her team, I thank everyone who made a contribution to the bill. I acknowledge the work that the team in the Speaker's Gallery has done. I really do appreciate it. 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.

Consideration in detail requested by Mr Jihad Dib and Ms Kobi Shetty.

Consideration in Detail

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell): By leave: I will deal with the bill in groups of clauses and schedules. The question is that clauses 1 to 27 and schedules 1 and 2 be agreed to.

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (23:02): By leave: I move Government amendments Nos 1 and 2 on sheet c2023-192 in globo:

No. 1 **Targets for reducing net greenhouse gas emissions**

Page 5, clause 9(5)(b), line 25. Omit "subsection (2)". Insert instead "subsection (3)".

No. 2 **Members of Commission**

Page 6, clause 13(3)(h), line 31. Omit "New South Wales,". Insert instead "New South Wales.".

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell): The question is that Government amendments Nos 1 and 2 on sheet c2023-192 be agreed to.

Amendments agreed to.

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (23:04): By leave: I move The Greens amendments Nos 1 to 10 on sheet c2023-178D in globo:

No. 1 **Net zero by 2035**

Page 2, clause 4(b), line 27. Omit "2050". Insert instead "2035".

No. 2 **2030 target**

Page 5, clause 9(1)(a), line 8. Omit "50%". Insert instead "75%".

No. 3 **Net zero by 2035**

Page 5, clause 9(1)(b), line 10. Omit "by at least 70% from the net greenhouse gas emissions in 2005, and". Insert instead "to zero.".

No. 4 **Net zero by 2035**

Page 5, clause 9(1)(c), lines 11 and 12. Omit all words on the lines.

No. 5 **Interim targets**

Page 5, clause 9(3) and (4), lines 16–22. Omit all words on the lines. Insert instead—

(3) The regulations may prescribe interim targets to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions in New South Wales.

No. 6 **Interim targets**

Page 5, clause 9(5)(b), line 25. Omit all words on the line.

No. 7 **Achieving targets**

Page 5, clause 11, lines 39–41. Omit all words on the lines. Insert instead—

11 Achieving targets

The Premier and the Minister must ensure New South Wales achieves the primary targets and any interim targets.

No. 8 **Interim targets**

Page 7, clause 15(1)(a), line 5. Insert "any" after "primary targets and".

No. 9 Interim targets

Page 8, clause 16(b), line 1. Insert "any" after "primary targets and".

No. 10 Interim targets

Page 9, clause 21(1)(a), line 4. Insert "any" after "primary targets and".

On behalf of The Greens, I move these amendments to the Climate Change (Net Zero Future) Bill 2023. The amendments insert an interim emissions target of 75 per cent by 2030. They also amend the overall net zero target to change that from 2050 to 2035. Those edits have been carried across 10 separate places in the draft bill as indicated in the tabled amendments. I have already spoken at length regarding the importance of including a clear interim target to front-load our emissions reduction ambition to ensure that we stay on track. I have also outlined at length the importance of bringing our net zero target forward to 2035.

A target of net zero by 2050 is too little, too late. It does not align with the overwhelming consensus from climate scientists, and it will lock us into two degrees of warming. Our community expects and deserves more ambitious targets that align with the science. A target of net zero by 2035 aligns with the science and will help to prevent our community from bearing the brunt of runaway climate change.

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (23:06): The Government understands the importance of transparency and trust to the people of New South Wales and is committed to ensuring that the bill reflects all elements of the net zero transition—the science, as well as the impacts on our communities and industries. The Government does not support the amendments to bring forward the net zero target—which is an existing target that has bipartisan support and that remains in line with targets in many jurisdictions—15 years earlier than our communities and industries have planned for. The Government was elected on a platform of net zero by 2050. We will not break our trust with the people of New South Wales by changing that approach without warning or independent expert advice.

The Net Zero Commission will provide recommendations on any improvements to existing targets that are both required by the science and feasible for New South Wales, balancing the impact on communities across the State, our environment and technical feasibility. We have listened to members of Parliament, the community and the industry. We have amended the bill to include a ratchet mechanism to allow the targets to be improved over time and in line with community expectations in terms of percentage of emissions reductions and the date by which they should be achieved. There was a great deal of discussion about this last night as many of the amendments were considered in the other place. They were discussed. We made our position pretty clear, which is that we will not support the amendments as put forward.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell): The question is that The Greens amendments Nos 1 to 10 on sheet c2023-178D be agreed to. A division has been called for. There being only two members for the question, the question is resolved in the negative. I direct that the names of those members be recorded in the *Votes and Proceedings*.

Ayes, 2

Ms J. Leong

Ms K. Shetty

Amendments negatived.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell): The question is that clauses 1 to 27 and schedules 1 and 2 as amended be agreed to.

Clauses 1 to 27 and schedules 1 and 2 as amended agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr JIHAD DIB: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

CRIMES AMENDMENT (PROSECUTION OF CERTAIN OFFENCES) BILL 2023

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 21 November 2023.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (23:16): Section 93Z of the Crimes Act is an important provision within our State. From its inception, the provision has required either the approval of the Attorney General or the Director of Public Prosecutions to commence proceedings. Section 93Z (1) states:

A person who, by a public act, intentionally or recklessly threatens or incites violence towards another person or a group of persons on any of the following grounds is guilty of an offence ...

Subsections (a) to (f) set out the characteristics of a person or group of persons to include race, religious beliefs or affiliation, sexual orientation, gender identity, HIV or AIDS status, and so on. The section provides that the maximum penalty in the case of an individual is 100 penalty units or imprisonment for three years or both, or in the case of a corporation 500 penalty units. Section 93Z (2) states:

In determining whether an alleged offender has committed an offence against this section, it is irrelevant whether the alleged offender's assumptions or beliefs about an attribute of another person or a member of a group of persons referred to in subsection 1 (a)–(f) were correct or incorrect at the time that the offence is alleged to have been committed.

In other words, subjective belief in the truth of what has been stated is irrelevant to the commission of the offence. Section 93Z (3) states:

In determining whether an alleged offender has committed an offence against this section of intentionally or recklessly inciting violence, it is irrelevant whether or not, in response to the alleged offender's public act, any person formed a state of mind or carried out any act of violence.

Section 93Z (4) states:

A prosecution for an offence against this section is not to be commenced without the approval of the Director of Public Prosecutions.

As I have already stated, that has been a feature of this section while ever it has been on the statute books. The bill seeks to take out that provision. Subsection (5) provides a number of definitions that are relevant to understanding the rest of the Act. The other important statute provision is section 14 of the Criminal Procedure Act, which provides that:

A prosecution or proceeding in respect of any offence under an Act may be instituted by any person unless the right to institute the prosecution or proceeding is expressly conferred by that Act on a specified person or class of persons.

Subsection (4) of section 93Z of the Crimes Act precludes a private prosecution. But by taking out the requirement for the Director of Public Prosecutions to approve a prosecution, the bill will allow the police or any member of the community to commence proceedings under that section. Section 93Z is particularly complex because it strikes a balance between freedom of expression and freedom of speech, and the right that all members of our community have to feel safe and respected. That is part of the Coalition's legislative legacy, which sought to strike that delicate balance.

All members are aware of the events that occurred on 9 October on the steps of the Sydney Opera House during the protest, the words that were spoken and the actions that were taken. I do not need to remind members of the threats that were expressed at the Opera House or the threats that have been expressed against members of our community in recent times in suburbs throughout Sydney. We have all seen and heard about those, but we have not yet seen or heard about a prosecution under section 93Z that relates to them. In fact, no prosecutions have been brought under section 93Z in any circumstances. In past years, we might have thought that was a reflection on the success and harmony of our multicultural society, but in more recent times there have been concerns about why those who acted in some of those events have not been punished.

The Act currently requires the Director of Public Prosecutions to provide approval for prosecution. That requirement was included in the Act as a safeguard, given the delicate nature of the balance between freedom and security, as I have mentioned. It was thought that oversight of this type would ensure appropriate prosecutions; however, the time taken to refer matters to the DPP to obtain approval for a prosecution may act as a disincentive for laying charges under section 93Z. In his second reading speech on the bill and in public statements about the bill, the Attorney General said that the amendment would facilitate the police to authorise a prosecution rather than the Director of Public Prosecutions as is currently the case.

It has never been stated that the intention of the bill was to facilitate private members of the community, under section 14 of the Criminal Procedure Act, to commence prosecutions, but that is exactly what the bill does and that is the great problem with it. The other matter is that, given the complexity of the matters that have to be dealt with under section 93Z, it is appropriate that only police officers of a certain rank are able to authorise prosecutions on behalf of the police. That is not provided for in the bill. All the bill does is take out subsection (4) of section 93Z of the Crimes Act. It is a minimalist amendment but it causes a whole lot of consequences, as I have just explained. We are concerned that the delay in bringing charges in relation to some of the words that have been spoken in recent times, including on the steps of the Opera House, will not be cured by this amendment. It seems to be more a question of will to use the bill, rather than who ultimately authorises prosecutions.

The effective maintenance of the rule of law requires that the law is not just enforced but also seen to be enforced and, as a result, sets and maintains standards within our society. Therefore, the delay in referring matters is regrettable and, to a large extent, the horse has already bolted in terms of providing the deterrence that is so necessary to the community. The Coalition remains concerned that there have still been no public consequences for some of the actions that have been occurring within our society. We are concerned that people do not feel safe walking the streets within their communities. That is entirely unacceptable. Accordingly, we are happy to support the removal of the requirement that only the Director of Public Prosecutions can approve prosecutions under section 93Z, in order that it may help give the police the power to initiate prosecutions.

Unfortunately, the bill does more than that, because it does not specify the level of police officer that must give the authority for a prosecution, and it allows, as has never been stated publicly, individuals to weaponise the section in order to attack other members of the community who they are not enamoured of. That means that the section could be used to achieve the very opposite of what it intends. The Opposition does not and cannot support the bill as it is currently drafted, because it will have important and highly unwelcome consequences. Consequently, by simply amending the requirement for the Director of Public Prosecutions approval, the amendment will authorise prosecutions to be instituted by any person. We do not want a situation where anyone can bring prosecutions against anyone else for perceived threats or incitement to violence. That runs the risk of the provision being weaponised, and it could result in both social division and an undue extra burden on the court's time, especially where cases are brought which may have no merit from the beginning.

The prosecution of an offence of this kind should be a matter for the police or the Director of Public Prosecutions, and we propose to seek an amendment to achieve that outcome. To ensure the balance of freedom and security is maintained, we propose that a prosecution must be brought by a police officer at the level of inspector or above or by the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. That will help maintain the delicate balance between security, freedom and freedom of speech by requiring approval and oversight but also by removing any delays, which are a concern within the compulsory oversight of the Director of Public Prosecutions. Freedom of political expression is vital in our democracy and, indeed, is protected by the Australian Constitution. If the provisions are too broad and proper protections are not in place, then it could well fall foul of the implied right to freedom of political communication, so we need to ensure the safety of every citizen but recognise the constitutional and other constraints that operate. The Opposition will seek to amend the bill. If the bill proceeds in its current form, the Opposition cannot support it, because it will create more problems than it will solve.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (23:29): On behalf of The Greens, I speak in debate on the Crimes Amendment (Prosecution of Certain Offences) Bill 2023 and indicate our opposition to the legislation. The Greens know that vilification has very deep, harmful and lasting impacts on our diverse communities. We support, in principle, the strengthening of protections against vilification and believe that everyone should have the right to safety regardless of their background, their faith or anything else in respect of which people are protected from vilification in the bill. The Greens are deeply concerned that the bill does very little to address the root causes of vilification and offers very little to protect our communities from it. We also have serious concerns that by amending vilification laws, the bill will impact a broad range of marginalised communities in this State with almost zero consultation with the wideranging groups that are impacted by it.

In 2018 The Greens were very happy to support the introduction of the then Coalition Government's new section 93Z into the Crimes Act, which consolidated four vilification offences that were previously contained in the Anti-Discrimination Act and created a new criminal offence of threatening or inciting violence on the grounds of race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex or HIV-AIDS status. It also established Director of Public Prosecutions approval as a prerequisite for any prosecutions in relation to a section 93Z offence.

The bill seeks to remove the requirement of the DPP approval for prosecutions and instead give the NSW Police Force the power to prosecute offences under section 93Z. As justification for this, the Labor Government has pointed to the lack of successful prosecutions under section 93Z since it was introduced. In his second reading speech, the Attorney General, who is in the Chamber, suggested that the requirement for the DPP approval was time-consuming and may act as a disincentive for laying charges under section 93Z. To be clear, The Greens agree that vilification laws must offer an accessible, timely remedy to those who have experienced vilification, but to our knowledge no public review has been undertaken to investigate why there have been little to no prosecutions under section 93Z and to what extent, if at all, the requirement of the DPP approval factors into that.

The Greens are also not aware if any broader stakeholder consultation beyond the DPP and the NSW Police Force has been undertaken to inform that change. We know the Government has been in conversations with a number of representatives of the Jewish community, including the very loud Jewish Board of Deputies and other groups to tighten the laws that they have described as ineffective and impotent. But we do not know what the civil society groups, who were part of the development of those vilification laws, think about the current change, nor

do we believe they have been consulted. We know that lobby groups have made efforts to try to effect this change and that the Minns Labor Government is acting to amend section 93Z as a result. I ask the Attorney General to provide additional detail on who has been consulted in relation to the development of the bill. The NSW Council for Civil Liberties stated:

The NSW public deserves a government that is transparent with respect to the information and advice they receive, as well as the lobbying pressure that they are under to change important policies and laws.

I recognise that we are debating this law because of the situation that is unfolding in Gaza and because of completely unacceptable behaviour in our own community. It is clear that there is no place for antisemitism in our society. It is equally clear that there is no place for Islamophobia. Further, there is no place for people to be subjected to vilification on the grounds of race, gender identity, intersex status, HIV-AIDS status or on their religious status. The bill before us, which relates to vilification laws at section 93Z, impacts all of those groups.

I wonder what the Faith Affairs Council's position is on the bill. Has it been consulted? Does it holistically support it? I wonder what the Ethnic Communities' Council position is on this bill. I wonder what the view of the Law Society is on the bill, or the Bar Association. Given that the vilification law also relates to intersex status, gender identity, sexual orientation and HIV status, I wonder what consultation has occurred with ACON, Equality Australia, Organisation Intersex International, the Gender Centre, the Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations or the Bobby Goldsmith Foundation.

Given that the law also impacts on the consideration of vilification in relation to race, I wonder how Multicultural NSW has been consulted. I wonder which multicultural communities have been consulted. I wonder if Democracy in Colour has been consulted, or the Islamophobia Register or the Asian Australian Alliance, to name but a few. It is impossible to separate the bill from the current global situation, but we must not allow our desire to stop unacceptable behaviour here or abroad—whether that is antisemitism or genocidal attacks—to cause a kneejerk reaction to legislative change that will not have the desired effect.

It is crucial that we stamp out vilification in this State, but The Greens cannot support the removal of the current check and balance of the DPP's involvement, without broader consultation. Shifting power to prosecute section 93Z offences from the DPP to the NSW Police Force alone will not achieve that. We cannot police our way out of the disgraceful behaviour of people when it comes to vilification and hatred in our society. We do that by holistic change, education, information and support. We must ensure that we do all we can to stop vilification, rather than attempt to change laws to make it easier for the police to wave a weapon at people, whether or not they will have any chance of a successful prosecution.

The bill removes the safeguard that gave the DPP the power to assess whether cases were without merit, without reasonable prospects of success or otherwise not in the public interest. But it leaves unchanged the test of what constitutes speech that threatens or incites violence, meaning that while it may be easier for the police to bring that charge, there will not be a resulting increase in successful prosecutions, provided the police assess whether there is a reasonable chance of success. More police powers will not make our community safer. For that reason The Greens are very hopeful that time and space will be given to consider the critical issue of vilification in our laws. We are very supportive of creating a space to further investigate that issue, perhaps in the form of an upper House inquiry. It is critical that we consider how we address vilification in our society, rather than simply handing more unchecked power to the NSW Police Force at the risk of curbing people's rights to freedom of expression. We must put our minds to solving the very serious issue of vilification and ensuring that people in New South Wales are free from it.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (23:37): I contribute to debate on the Crimes Amendment (Prosecution of Certain Offences) Bill 2023. I do so with a great deal of conflict. I understand the reasons why the Government is introducing the bill and the amendments it has made. I also understand the concerns raised by the shadow Attorney General and the member for Newtown. I then have my own concerns about the current situation for a lot of LGBTIQ people, particularly within the trans and gender-diverse community, who are regularly targeted in online forums and public meetings and gatherings, and who I believe violence is incited against. However, representatives of groups opposed to hate crimes have also indicated that the current provisions, which require everything to go through the DPP, create a barrier towards action.

I also have a great deal of concern about providing police with new powers that could be weaponised. In his reply, I ask that the Attorney General address the concerns raised by the member for Wahroonga in terms of frivolous or vexatious uses of the powers, or members of the general public being able to weaponise those provisions. He should also address what provisions the DPP has in place to prevent that from occurring, or what other aspects of the associated legislation prevent that from occurring. From discussions I have had with Government members, I understand that it will be proceeding with a statutory review of this provision, which

provides the opportunity to iron out the concerns raised by the Opposition and The Greens. I also welcome any further inquiries within the Parliament.

I understand the need for the legislation from the Government's perspective. I understand the concerns of the Opposition and The Greens. I also understand the need to undertake reform in this space, because we are not seeing action in terms of the protection of vulnerable communities that need to be protected by the Act. I think it is acknowledged by the Government and others that the current process creates an unnecessary delay, which can then facilitate further hate, abuse and attacks. I have certainly seen that impact on my community and other parts of the LGBTIQ community. Knowing that there will be a statutory review, I feel comfortable in supporting the bill with that amendment. In his reply, I ask that the Attorney General address the concerns that the shadow Attorney General raised.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (23:41): In reply: I begin by thanking the shadow Attorney, and member for Wahroonga; the member for Newtown; and the member for Sydney for their contributions to debate on the Crimes Amendment (Prosecution of Certain Offences) Bill 2023. Section 93Z of the Crimes Act 1900 makes it an offence for a person by a public act to intentionally or recklessly threaten or incite violence towards another person or a group of persons because of their race, religious belief or affiliation, sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status, or because the person is living with HIV or AIDS. As with many criminal offences, the symbolic value of section 93Z is significant. It sends a clear message to the community that vilifying people based on characteristics such as race and religion will not be tolerated in New South Wales.

However, the function of a criminal offence should not be merely symbolic. Unfortunately, the low number of charges and prosecutions under section 93Z since its introduction appears to suggest that the offences function has, in fact, been exactly that—merely symbolic. That is something that needs to change. The bill seeks to change this by removing the requirement currently contained in section 93Z (4) that requires the approval of the Director of Public Prosecutions before commencing a prosecution. Concerns have been raised about the operational impacts of this requirement and the effect it is having on prosecutions under this provision.

As section 93Z provides for an offence that polices the boundary between acceptable public communication and unacceptable hate speech, it is appropriate that competing public interests, such as the freedom of expression and the protection of the community from vilification, are carefully considered before commencing proceedings. All prosecutors, whether employed by the NSW Police Force or the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, are required to weigh such public interest considerations before commencing a prosecution. The type of conduct that section 93Z addresses is not acceptable and it must be dealt with efficiently and appropriately.

If the effect of the requirement in section 93Z (4) for the DPP to give approval to the commencement of a prosecution is to act as a bottleneck, or to otherwise impact on appropriate prosecutions being brought, such an outcome does not serve the public interest in protecting members of the community from vilification, which is no less important than freedom of expression. A person's right to express themselves must not come at the expense of another's right not to be subjected to threats or incitement to violence because of who they are, or their religious beliefs, or other attributes.

I note that the Legislation Review Committee has reviewed the bill as required by section 8A of the Legislation Review Act 1987 and has referred two matters for consideration by Parliament. I will now briefly respond to these matters. First, the committee noted that the removal of the DPP approval requirement would allow a private person to bring a prosecution for an offence under section 93Z, potentially expanding the number of prosecutions under the section. As provided by section 14 of the Criminal Procedure Act 1986, the right of a private individual to commence a prosecution for an offence is the norm in New South Wales. This right applies unless the Act that creates the offence expressly confers the right to institute a prosecution or a proceedings on a specified person or class of persons.

It is important to note that, as a safeguard against baseless private prosecutions—and this goes to the issue that the member for Sydney raised—section 9 of the Director of Public Prosecutions Act 1986 confers upon the DPP the power to take over any proceedings for an offence that has been instituted by a person other than the DPP and discontinue or carry on proceedings as is appropriate. There is nothing to suggest that unfounded private prosecutions are a problem for the New South Wales criminal justice system, despite the right of private individuals to commence proceedings applying for the vast majority of offences in the Crimes Act. In fact, my inquiries have led me to believe, and I stand to be corrected, that under the current term of the present DPP there have been no applications to the DPP by private citizens to commence such proceedings—none—so I think we are worried a little bit about not very much. But we have heard the concerns raised on this and other issues. I foreshadow the Government will move an amendment to the bill to include a statutory review requirement to address this concern of the committee, which I will discuss during the course of this debate.

Second, the committee noted that, under the savings and transitional provisions contained in schedule 1 [2] to the bill, the removal of subsection 93Z (4) will apply retrospectively, which impacts on the rule of law principle that a person is entitled to have knowledge of the law that applies to them at any given time. That principle concerns laws that criminalise conduct that was not illegal in the past. A person can only comply with laws that exist at any given moment. It would clearly be unjust if a person who had engaged in a course of conduct, while taking every effort to comply with the law as it existed at the time, nevertheless found themselves prosecuted due to an offence of retrospective application introduced at a future date. That is not the case here.

The amendment proposed by this bill does not alter the elements of the offence or the evidentiary thresholds that must be met to establish the offence in any way. It does nothing to change what constitutes an offence under section 93Z. Public acts that did not constitute an offence under the section between 2018 and the commencement of the proposed amendment continue to be lawful. Conduct that did satisfy the requirements of section 93Z between 2018 and today can be prosecuted tomorrow, with or without this amendment, with the prosecution having to establish exactly the same elements to a court's satisfaction to secure a conviction.

The only difference will be the admission of the interaction currently required between the NSW Police Force and the DPP before a prosecution can be commenced. The principle against retrospective laws seeks to ensure that people can go about their lives with the confidence that, as long as they obey the laws that are in force, they cannot be punished under a future change to those laws. It does not seem reasonable to apply that principle to a hypothetical person who knowingly incited violence against a group of people in contravention of section 93Z as it had existed at the time, but might not have done so if they had been aware that the DPP's approval would no longer be required in the future before they could be prosecuted.

The aim of the bill is to ensure that section 93Z is a provision that not only signals to the community where the limits of civilised discourse lie but also is able to hold people accountable where their public communications or acts demonstrably exceed those limits and involve intentional or reckless threats of, or incitement to, violence based on people's race, religion or other characteristics. I commend the bill to the House.

The SPEAKER: The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

Consideration in detail requested by Mr Michael Daley and Mr Alister Henskens.

Consideration in Detail

The SPEAKER: By leave: I will deal with the bill in groups of clauses and schedules. The question is that clauses 1 and 2 and schedule 1 be agreed to.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (23:50): By leave: I move Government amendments Nos 1 and 2 on sheet c2023-194B in globo:

No. 1 Statutory Review

Page 3, Schedule 1[2], line 7. Omit "**Provision**". Insert instead "**Provisions**".

No. 2 Statutory Review

Page 3, Schedule 1[2]. Insert after line 15—

Review of amendment of section 93Z

- (1) The Minister must review the effect of the amendment of section 93Z made by the *Crimes Amendment (Prosecution of Certain Offences) Act 2023* to determine whether the policy objectives of the amendment remain appropriate.
- (2) A report on the outcome of the review must be tabled in each House of Parliament within 12 months after the commencement of this clause.

The Government introduced the Crimes Amendment (Prosecution of Certain Offences) Bill 2023 to improve the process for the prosecution of offences under section 93Z of the Crimes Act 1900. As I said when I introduced the bill, the offence provided for in section 93Z is an important one. It protects people from violence and makes it clear that we in New South Wales expect to live in a safe and harmonious society. The aim of the bill is to remove a possible impediment and address concerns that have been raised about the operational impacts of a requirement in section 93Z (4) for the approval of the Director of Public Prosecutions to commence prosecutions under section 93Z.

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. The Premier

said the Minns Labor Government would remove the requirement for the approval of the DPP to commence prosecutions under section 93Z, and that is exactly what we are doing.

Over the past week we have had discussions with members in this place about the bill. We always intended to keep a close eye on section 93Z if the bill was carried. In response to some of the matters raised by members, I advise that the amendments will introduce a statutory review provision that requires a review of the effect of the amendment made by this bill to be tabled in each House of Parliament within 12 months after the bill commences. The amendments will make it clear that we are keeping a close eye on the effect of the amendment made by the bill and the Parliament will be kept apprised of its effect within 12 months of commencement of the Act.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (23:53): The Opposition is content to support the amendments and the statutory review, but they are not an answer to the problems with the bill. There will still be the possibility of private criminal prosecutions in the next 12 months while the review is being conducted. It does not deal with the essential problems of the level of police officer that will authorise prosecutions, given the complexity of the legislation, and the fact that private criminal prosecutions will still be permitted by reason of the way the bill has been drafted. It is an extra activity in terms of reviewing the section over the next 12 months, but it is not a complete answer.

The point about section 9 of the Director of Public Prosecutions Act is not a complete answer either because we have seen equivalent Federal provisions that have been weaponised in the past by private prosecutions and the DPP will not be scouring every piece of criminal proceedings that have commenced in the State to decide whether they take them over under section 9. The reality is that there is significant capacity for harm to be done by reason of allowing private criminal prosecutions, which is what the bill does.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (23:54): I offer The Greens support for the amendment moved by the Government. I acknowledge the Attorney General and thank him for acting on our suggestion, and I believe the suggestion of others, to allow for a statutory review of the bill. I also thank the Attorney General and his advisers for their advice, assistance and willingness to brief us. In what is a very difficult and challenging broader political landscape, I appreciate the way we have worked together and contributed to discussion on the bill to establish the statutory review. We recognise that the impacts of the vilification laws extend beyond the current situation we are dealing with and will affect a range of people in our community. The amendment will give members of the broader community who are impacted by the vilification laws the chance to have their say when the bill is reviewed in a way that they have not been able to before.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (23:56): I thank the Government for moving the amendment, which follows the discussions we have had with it. As the member for Newtown outlined in her contribution to the second reading debate, it would have been useful to have some detailed consultation before we dealt with this legislation. Let us hope the statutory review process will enable that to happen and help to provide answers to the questions that the shadow Attorney General raised.

I have a certain level of discomfort in limiting the prosecutions to just the Director of Public Prosecutions and police. I think we will see in the coming weeks when the Special Commission of Inquiry into LGBTQ hate crimes findings come out that there are historic issues with empowering the police as one of the only entities who can look into this type of criminal activity, and there can be a lack of trust. Potentially the special commission of inquiry may help to inform the statutory review of the Act. It is an important step. Let us hope it helps to address the concerns that have been raised tonight. I thank the Attorney General for moving the amendment.

The SPEAKER: The question is that Government amendments Nos 1 and 2 on sheet c2023-194B be agreed to.

Amendments agreed to.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (23:58): I move Opposition amendment No. 1 on sheet c2023-167A:

No. 1 Who may bring prosecution

Page 3, Schedule 1[1], line 4. Omit "93Z(4)". Insert instead—

93Z(4). Insert instead—

(4) A prosecution for an offence against this section may be commenced only by—

(a) the Director of Public Prosecutions, or

(b) a police officer—

(i) of the rank of inspector or above, or

- (ii) who has been authorised by a police officer of the rank of inspector or above.

The Opposition has attempted, given the importance and the sensitivity of those matters, to act in a bipartisan way. As soon as shadow Cabinet considered this matter on Monday, I rang the Attorney General at 5.30 p.m. and sent him a copy of the draft amendments, which I now move. I invited the Government to adopt the amendments, given the problems with potential private criminal prosecutions and the importance of having police officers of a certain rank.

I offered to act in a bipartisan way. I was happy for the Attorney General to move the amendment as his own. Unfortunately, the attempt to act in a bipartisan way was not embraced by the Government, which is why I am moving this amendment. It is desirable to exclude private criminal prosecutions, as I have already said. It is desirable to have a police officer of a certain rank to be the one who makes the prosecutorial decisions. It is also desirable to have an alternative to the DPP decision-maker, in case there are actual or perceived conflicts of interest like the one raised by the member for Sydney and the member for Newtown. I understand that is the common practice now when a police officer is potentially involved in a criminal offence. It is sent outside of the Police Force to the DPP so that someone independent makes that prosecutorial decision. By the amendment I propose, all of those things are possible, but they are not necessarily possible under the bill as drafted.

I agree with both the member for Sydney and the member for Newtown, who have said that there has been an appalling lack of consultation in bringing forward the amending bill. It seemed to be more of a press announcement rather than something that was truly considered, having regard to the complexity, the necessary extreme nuances and the important sensitivities of many communities who are impacted by this section. I have suggested that there be an upper House inquiry to deal with this matter and to look more into it, to hear from those groups before this section finally passes through the Parliament. In that regard, I agree with the member for Newtown's comments. I ask the House to support the amendment we have proposed, which will enhance the bill while still keeping the integrity of the thrust of the bill, which was to allow for police prosecutions as alternative to only DPP-initiated or DPP-approved prosecutions. We have done that in a way that will exclude the potential undesirability of private criminal prosecutions, which in similar Federal legislation have been used in a frivolous way, contrary to the intended use of the section.

There are important issues of freedom of speech, which need to be taken into account. We do not want people to use the legislation in a way that is inconsistent with the freedom of expression, which is important. That freedom was recognised in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and passed by the United Nations. It has been universally recognised as an important right, and it is one we should be taking into account when we consider this amendment and the consequences of the bill. I commend the amendment to the House.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (00:03): The New South Wales Government opposes the amendment proposed by the Opposition, which would insert into section 93Z of the Crimes Act 1900 a subsection that would provide that prosecutions may be commenced under that section only by either the DPP or by a police officer either of the rank of inspector or above or by a police officer who has been authorised by a such an officer. While this amendment seems to be well meaning, it performs no useful purpose, creates unnecessary complexity and gives rise to a risk of causing confusion in the process of having charges prosecuted under this important section.

As I said in my second reading speech, concerns have been raised about the operational effect of the current requirement for DPP approval in section 93Z (4) and the time it takes to refer matters to the DPP and obtain approval to charge. Offences under section 93Z are punishable by a maximum penalty of imprisonment for three years and are Table 1 offences. This means that those offences are to be tried summarily in the Local Court unless the prosecutor or the accused person elects otherwise. As a result, section 93Z charges are typically prosecuted by the NSW Police Force in the Local Court. We want to improve the process for the prosecution of section 93Z offences and support the work of the NSW Police Force in its efforts to deal with threats or incitement of violence towards people because of their race, religious belief or affiliation, or other attributes.

What we do not want is to remove a requirement for DPP approval and replace it with a provision that has multiple pathways, including one relating to the DPP. This has the potential to cause confusion about how the approval and prosecution process for offences under section 93Z is intended to operate and unnecessarily complicates the provision. The amendment proposed by the Opposition also does not provide for how the approval of a police officer of the rank of inspector or above is to be obtained or conveyed. This gives rise to a lack of clarity about how prosecutions can be commenced for offences under section 93Z. We do not need prosecutions of those important offences to be impacted by unnecessary processes. That is the precise problem we are trying to remove.

I note the concerns, raised by the member for Wairoa, about the risk of private prosecutions being commenced under section 93Z if the Opposition amendment is not supported. This is, at best, a small risk and one that exists in relation to the overwhelming majority of offences on the New South Wales statute books, which do not require DPP approval. The DPP has the power, under section 9 of the Director of Public Prosecutions Act 1986, to take over a prosecution or proceeding in respect of an offence that has been instituted by a person other than the director. The DPP Prosecution Guidelines provide:

NSW law allows for a prosecution to be commenced by a private individual and this right has been described as "a valuable constitutional safeguard against inertia or partiality on the part of authority".

However, since the creation of the DPP in 1986, one of the principal functions of the Director has been to conduct prosecutions for indictable offences in NSW. The Director therefore has a role to play in ensuring the right to launch a private prosecution is not abused.

Consequently, the DPP has the power to take over the conduct of a prosecution initiated by another person and, having done so, to continue it or bring it to an end.

The DPP Prosecution Guidelines go on to say that, given the large range of circumstances that may give rise to a private prosecution, it is impracticable to lay down inflexible rules as to when the discretion to take over a matter will be exercised but that, in general, a private prosecution will be taken over where: first, there is no reasonable prospect of a conviction on the admissible evidence; secondly, the prosecution is not in the public interest; thirdly, there are reasons for suspecting that the decision to institute the prosecution was based on improper motives or otherwise constituted an abuse of the prosecution process; and fourthly, the private prosecution was instituted to circumvent an earlier decision of the DPP not to proceed with a prosecution for the same offence. That safeguard exists to address the member for Wairoa's raised concerns about private prosecutions.

DPP approval for a prosecution to proceed is not necessary to protect freedom of expression. The standard operating procedures for the NSW Police Force provide that, in deciding whether to prosecute a person for an offence, police and police prosecutors are to follow the principles that are set out in the DPP Prosecution Guidelines. In particular, the NSW Police Force follows guidelines that require consideration of whether or not the admissible evidence is capable of establishing each element of the offence, whether it can be said that there is no reasonable prospect of conviction and whether the prosecution is in the public interest.

The New South Wales Government's bill does not expand police powers, does not change the substantive elements of the offence and does not place any further restrictions on freedom of speech. It merely removes the requirement for approval to be obtained by the DPP before a prosecution is commenced, bringing it into line with the vast majority of criminal offences in New South Wales, with the aim of approving the prosecution process for those important offences. I appreciate the intention of the member for Wairoa in introducing the Opposition amendment, but we cannot support it.

I must say with respect that I think that some members are concerning themselves about an issue that has not, does not or probably will not arise. As I said earlier, it is my belief that since the current Director of Public Prosecutions has been in her role there have been no applications. I do not have the definitive figures and I stand to be corrected if that is wrong. I stand by the fact that the number would be absolutely negligible. The bill has safeguards built into it. We have added another one tonight, and I think that the concerns, with respect, as well-meaning as they are, are ado about not very much at all.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (00:09): The Greens appreciate the Opposition's amendment but are not in a position to support it. We believe it does not address our fundamental concern that the bill would enable the police to act without any oversight or approval from the Director of Public Prosecutions. I acknowledge the comments made by the Opposition about support for an upper House inquiry. In the context of this discussion, I think it has become very evident that the need for an inquiry is strong, particularly given the comments made by the Attorney General that members, with good intentions or not, are raising concerns that may or may not be a problem.

Part of the challenge that we are facing is that we are relying on the advice of the Attorney General from consultation with the NSW Police Force and the DPP. We have yet to be provided with any additional information about any engagement with civil society or any other organisation that has occurred. As I said in my contribution to the second reading debate on the bill, my understanding is that the New South Wales Bar Association has not had time to come to a position on the issue. We have not heard the position of The Law Society of New South Wales. We have not heard the position of any other organisations. It is incumbent upon the Parliament to consider all the unintended consequences that may occur in the absence of public discussions and debates.

One of the reasons why The Greens have serious concerns about the police doing this work without the role of or any involvement from the DPP is that we know that in many cases there are concerns about the behaviour of police towards people. I think I am probably the only member in Parliament who has been subjected to both

seriously offensive and racist remarks by current members of the NSW Police Force; maybe other members have too. Having taken the Police Force to the Human Rights Commission, resulting in them issuing an apology regarding multiple serving members of the Police Force making racist and sexist remarks on my social media pages—whether or not they were on duty at the time was unable to be ascertained—I have serious concerns that the Opposition amendment and the bill as a whole may provide police the opportunity to use this vilification provision without some kind of DPP involvement or oversight.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (00:13): I will respond very briefly to some of the arguments put forward by the Attorney General. The first seemed to be that the Opposition amendment adds complexity. The amendment could not be simpler. It is proposing that section 93Z (4) of the Crimes Act reads:

A prosecution for an offence against this section may be commenced only by—

- (a) the Director of Public Prosecutions, or
- (b) a police officer—
 - (i) of the rank of inspector or above, or
 - (ii) who has been authorised by a police officer of the rank of inspector or above.

The Attorney General seemed to suggest that having the Director of Public Prosecutions or a police officer initiating prosecutions would lead to confusion. That is actually what happens in the criminal law throughout our State. Section 8 of the Director of Public Prosecutions Act states that:

- (1) The Director may institute and conduct—
 - (a) committal proceedings for indictable offences,
 - (b) proceedings for summary offences in any court, and
 - (c) summary proceedings for indictable offences that may be dealt with summarily in the Local Court.

Under the Criminal Procedure Act the police have the power to initiate criminal prosecutions, so I do not see how that section is any different to the statutory regime that applies to all criminal proceedings throughout the State. I cannot see how any confusion of responsibility or otherwise would be created by having those two alternatives. The only reason for specifying them under the section is because, by reason of section 14 of the Criminal Procedure Act, it will exclude private criminal prosecutions. It is otherwise no different to the regime that applies with regard to every other criminal proceeding in New South Wales. I can see neither the complexity nor the confusion that the Attorney General referred to. I may be wrong, but I thought the Attorney General indicated to me that when police initiate prosecution of this kind, it is likely as a matter of practice to be at the level of inspector or above. Therefore I do not understand why that provision is any different to what actually happens in practice.

Section 9 of the Director of Public Prosecutions Act authorises the DPP to take over prosecutions, but the reality is that the DPP will not be aware of every private criminal prosecution that has commenced, nor will they necessarily be aware to take them over before damage is done and abuse may be done to the right of a private criminal prosecution in the very sensitive and complex area of section 93Z. For those reasons the arguments proffered against the amendment are not cogent. The risk of abuse by private criminal prosecutions was never announced publicly when the bill was foreshadowed by the Premier and was never part of the second reading speech of the Attorney General. He never said that this would allow private criminal prosecutions for the first time ever under section 93Z of the Crimes Act or its predecessors. That is a major change done without any consultation, without any public announcement and without any reference in the second reading speech. For those reasons, there should not be private criminal prosecutions. The amendment should be allowed, and I encourage members to support the amendment.

The SPEAKER: The question is that Opposition amendment No. 1 on sheet c2023-167A be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes34
 Noes48
 Majority..... 14

AYES

Amon, R
 Anderson, K
 Ayyad, T
 Clancy, J
 Cooke, S
 Coure, M

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

Saunders, D
 Singh, G (teller)
 Sloane, K
 Taylor, M
 Thompson, T
 Tuckerman, W

AYES

Cross, M
Crouch, A (teller)
Davies, T
Di Pasqua, S
Griffin, J
Henskens, A

Marshall, A
Petinos, E
Preston, R
Provest, G
Roberts, A

Ward, G
Williams, L
Williams, R
Williamson, R
Wilson, F

NOES

Aitchison, J
Atalla, E
Bali, S
Barr, C
Butler, L
Catley, Y
Chanthivong, A
Cotsis, S
Crakanthorp, T
Daley, M
Dalton, H
Davis, D
Doyle, T
Finn, J
Greenwich, A
Hagarty, N (teller)

Harris, D
Harrison, J
Haylen, J
Hoenig, R
Holland, M
Hornery, S
Kaliyanda, C
Kamper, S
Kirby, W
Leong, J
Li, J
McDermott, H
McGirr, J
McKeown, K
Mehan, D
O'Neill, M

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

PAIRS

Perrottet, D
Speakman, M
Toole, P

Dib, J
Minns, C
Car, P

Amendment negatived.

The SPEAKER: The question is that clauses 1 and 2 and schedule 1 as amended be agreed to.

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

Third Reading

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

The SPEAKER: The question is that this bill be now read a third time.

The House divided.

Ayes46
Noes36
Majority.....10

AYES

Aitchison, J
Atalla, E
Bali, S
Barr, C
Butler, L
Catley, Y
Chanthivong, A
Cotsis, S
Crakanthorp, T
Daley, M

Harris, D
Harrison, J
Haylen, J
Hoenig, R
Holland, M
Hornery, S
Kaliyanda, C
Kamper, S
Kirby, W
Li, J

Park, R
Quinnell, S
Regan, M
Saffin, J (teller)
Saliba, D
Scully, P
Stuart, M
Tesch, L
Vo, T
Voltz, L

AYES

Dalton, H
Davis, D
Doyle, T
Finn, J
Greenwich, A
Hagarty, N (teller)

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

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

NOES

Amon, R
Anderson, K
Ayyad, T
Clancy, J
Cooke, S
Coure, M
Cross, M
Crouch, A (teller)
Davies, T
Di Pasqua, S
Griffin, J
Henskens, A

Hodges, M
James, T
Kean, M
Kemp, M
Lane, J
Layzell, D
Leong, J
Marshall, A
Petinos, E
Preston, R
Provest, G
Roberts, A

Saunders, D
Shetty, K
Singh, G (teller)
Sloane, K
Taylor, M
Thompson, T
Tuckerman, W
Ward, G
Williams, L
Williams, R
Williamson, R
Wilson, F

PAIRS

Car, P
Dib, J
Minns, C

Toole, P
Perrottet, D
Speakman, M

Motion agreed to.

*Announcements***PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (00:31): I advise that any member who does not wish to give a private members' statement tonight can do so tomorrow night. A maximum of 75 private members' statements can be made during the week, so if a member wishes to give theirs tomorrow, it can be added to that list.

*Community Recognition Statements***REMOUNT**

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (00:32): I recognise Remount, a not-for-profit organisation which commenced operation in 2016. Located in Bowning, it delivers horsemanship programs for current and former service men and women and their families who may be experiencing stress related to their service, post-traumatic stress disorder [PTSD] or physical injury. Remount recently held an open day as an opportunity for those who may be considering attending the horsemanship and mustering two-day programs, which are provided at no cost to current and former serving members of the military. The day provided information about the power of horses to heal. The programs see reduced signs of PTSD, increased self-worth, motivation and confidence, a sense of optimism about the future, and renewed pride in service history. Participants also have a feeling of being connected and valued, and having increased social connection. I sincerely thank and acknowledge Remount and all the volunteers who work collaboratively to make this program possible and accessible to our military personnel.

TRIBUTE TO KEVIN GILLIES

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (00:33): I pay tribute to the incredible community service of Kevin Gillies, who recently passed away. Kevin was active in the community, supporting many different sports including rugby league, union and little athletics. Kevin had a diverse career, from union official and industrial relations advocate to working in health. Kevin's political involvement included his time as president of the Quakers Hill branch of NSW Labor, as well as a range of other roles, and he served as a Blacktown City councillor from 2017 to 2021. Kevin was a mentor for many people. He investigated issues and came to a considered view. He did not take a backward step and fought for the betterment of the community. Kevin's courage and

commonsense approach will be sadly missed in my area. He leaves behind his wonderful and caring wife, Robyn, son Brendon and his wife, Alison, grandchildren Georgia and Ari, and a community that is lesser for his loss. May Kevin Gillies rest in peace.

JUNEE NORTH PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (00:34): Current and former Junee North Public School students and staff came together on Saturday 4 November to open its gates and welcome the community of Junee to join in the school's 100th birthday celebrations. The weather was at its best, bringing hundreds of locals together to mark this extraordinary century. The day's events included stalls, local dance performances by So Dance, and musical entertainment from the local school band. Attendees also enjoyed a sausage sizzle provided by the parents and citizens of the school. The official ceremony included the unveiling of a time capsule, which was buried 25 years ago. This time capsule brought back some lovely memories, including old school reports, school photos, a price list and a copy of the *Junee Southern Cross* newspaper. I congratulate everyone who worked so hard to ensure this moment in history was enjoyed by all who attended. I congratulate Junee North Public School on its 100th birthday.

MICHAEL KELLEHER

Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (00:35): I acknowledge Michael Kelleher, who is the driving force behind A Walk of a Lifetime to raise awareness for those battling post-traumatic stress disorder [PTSD]. It took place at Hickeys sporting complex in Penrith over 11 and 12 November. Like life, this challenge threw up some trials over the two days. There was a relentless heatwave, facility lights failed overnight and early injuries tested Michael's determination. The walk was symbolic of the mental battles that individuals with PTSD endure. Michael's mission was to show that tough times can be managed together, with 163 registered walkers completing 1,192 laps to cover 715 kilometres. Importantly, this meant 149 hours of combined conversation, which fostered connections and understanding. Michael raised \$59,000 to be donated to TIACS, an organisation providing free counselling services to blue-collar workers. I commend Michael and all participants for caring, for walking and for sparking conversations that unite Penrith's community through strength and compassion.

GLADSTONE PARK BOWLING CLUB

Ms KOBİ SHETTY (Balmain) (00:36): I bring to the attention of members the 125th anniversary celebration of Gladstone Park Bowling Club, a family-oriented club in the heart of Balmain peninsula. The club hosts a large number of barefoot bowlers, from social to corporate, seven days a week for a variety of celebrations, from children's birthdays to christenings, weddings and engagement parties. It also hosts regular functions for organisations such as the local ukulele club and sponsors a local football and basketball club. It was an honour to recently celebrate this important anniversary with club members and supporters. I particularly thank Les Howarth, James Heeks, Sonia Bailey and everyone who was involved in making this milestone celebration happen.

LIVERPOOL ARTS SOCIETY

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (00:37): Last month I attended the launch of the twenty-fifth annual Liverpool Art Society exhibition at the Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre—a remarkable milestone, I am sure members will agree. Initially convening as an informal art group in the 1970s, the Liverpool Art Society was officially formed in 1997 and has grown into an active community organisation with over 230 members. Since 1998 the society has held an annual exhibition at the arts centre. The exhibition seeks to honour my region's creative talents across a variety of mediums, including painting, ceramics, drawing, mixed media, photography and sculpture. I congratulate winners Fangmin Wu, Shazia Fazal, John Wang, Svetlana Panov and Rashid Abuzarov. I also acknowledge Valerie Colvin, who launched her exhibition *Lotus Pond* on the day. I extend my thanks to exhibition coordinators Chris Hunter and Anne Picalovski, who generously gave up their time. I also acknowledge all those who submitted their works for entry.

ARARAT SPORTS GALA DAY

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (00:38): I bring to the attention of members the 2023 Ararat sports gala day, which was held on Sunday 26 November at ELS Hall in North Ryde. To see ELS almost booked out with hundreds of local kids, as well as some who made the trip to Ryde specially, was wonderful to see. I pay special tribute to Razmik Asatour for inviting me along and for all his work pulling the event together, as well as Todd Karamian, who worked nonstop all day coordinating the endless number of soccer and basketball games. The gala has been going for a number of years now, and it is always hosted by the local Armenian sports clubs: Ararat FC and Ararat Basketball. I have always been impressed with their strong numbers and high levels of engagement, a strong example for other sporting clubs and associations to follow. Days like the gala are all about the players, and seeing the community come together to support local sport was highly encouraging. I pay tribute

to all those who supported the event, especially the Ararat Scouts, who are always a fixture of the gala. Congratulations, one and all.

JYNAYA AND INDIANA DOS SANTOS

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (00:39): I congratulate Jynaya and Indiana Dos Santos of Shellharbour on being named in the Young Matildas squad for a two-match series against China in December. It is a huge event for the sisters. They played an important role in Sydney FC's season, which culminated in a grand final victory. Both Jynaya and Indiana played for the Shellharbour Junior Football Club, and both are great role models for the up-and-coming girls playing football in our region. I congratulate both Jynaya and Indiana on their national selection. On behalf of the Shellharbour community, I wish them both the very best of luck in their future sporting endeavours.

TRIBUTE TO CLIFFORD MAYNARD

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (00:40): Tonight the Parliament of New South Wales recognises the extraordinary life of my friend Clifford Maynard. Maynard considered himself English by birth but Australian by choice. He had a brilliant and diverse career that literally took him and his family around the globe. Reluctant to retire when the family eventually returned to Australia, Maynard and Elza set up a successful pie and cake shop in the inner west of Sydney, which they ran successfully for 10 years. Dabbling in genealogical research during that time, Maynard discovered that his grandfather had been a master baker. Clearly baking was in the genes, as he often commented. Finally, when Maynard and Elza were ready to retire properly, they followed their daughter Serena Copley—now a Shoalhaven councillor—to the South Coast of New South Wales. They developed a wonderful network of friends, spent lots of time with their grandchildren, travelled and got involved in the Liberal Party. Cliff was a big man with an even bigger heart. I will be forever grateful for his friendship, encouragement, loyalty and support. Vale, Cliff Maynard.

PORT STEPHENS TOURISM INDUSTRY AWARDS

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion) (00:41): People love Port Stephens, and for good reason. We have stunning scenery, a beautiful community and many award-winning tourism businesses. Jimmys Beach Holiday Park at Hawks Nest, operated by Reflections, won Holiday Park of the Year at the Caravan and Camping Industry Association's 2023 awards. In Hinton, Vintage Steel was named in the top 10 of the Stayz 2023 Holiday Homes of the Year. On the water, iconic local business Moonshadow TQC cruises took out gold at the NSW Tourism Awards in the Major Tour and/or Transport Operators category. Port Stephens Koala Sanctuary won gold in the Tourist Attractions category. A solid bronze went to Irukandji Shark & Ray Encounters in the Take 3 for the Sea Litter Prevention Award, whilst the awesome Aquamarine Adventures was a finalist in the Tour and/or Transport Operators category. Good luck to Moonshadow TQC cruises and Port Stephens Koala Sanctuary, which will now represent New South Wales at the Australian Tourism Awards, to be held in Darwin next year. Thanks to those impressive local businesses and so many more, Port Stephens is well and truly on the tourist map. Come and visit us at Chrissie.

TRIBUTE TO BRIAN LANGTON

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (00:42): I pay tribute to the life and legacy of St George local Brian Langton, who passed away in October. Mr Langton's passing will be felt most sharply by the community of Kogarah but also throughout the St George area. Brian was elected to Parliament as the Labor candidate for Kogarah and served his community with due diligence and commitment over 16 years. Before that, he was in small business and was the mayor of Kogarah. He served in this Chamber in the Carr Government as Minister for Transport and Minister for Tourism. In his final years he continued to fight for the community he loved most, in many sporting organisations, at the cancer care centre—where we worked together—at St Vincent de Paul and many others. More recently, he represented the Premier and member for Kogarah on the Georges River Council traffic committee, where we served together over many months. Brian Langton's commitment to public service and his contributions to the Kogarah and the broader St George community will forever be cherished. I offer my condolences to Brian's wife, Elizabeth, along with his daughters, grandchildren and extended family. Vale, Brian Langton.

EUROBODALLA MULTICULTURAL GROUP

Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (00:43): I congratulate the Eurobodalla Multicultural Group on its third highly successful Diversity Night dinner on Saturday 25 November. The dinner was held at the Greek Orthodox Church of Saint John the Baptist community hall in North Batemans Bay. We were welcomed by the traditional owners of the country, the Walbunja people of the Yuin nation. There were beautiful decorations of the national flags of the world. Guests wore their colourful national dress, and many performed national dances.

Children of many cultural backgrounds entertained the audience with a rendition of *We Are the World*. Of course, there was no shortage of wonderfully delicious international foods. We were privileged to be visited by the Hon. Stephen Kamper, Minister for Multiculturalism, who addressed the group and joined in the sirtaki dance—you had to see it. It was a great representation of our cohesive multicultural community in the Eurobodalla. I thank all the organisers for such an enjoyable evening.

TRIBUTE TO DON CLINCH, OAM

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (00:44): The Coffs Coast is saddened by the passing of Don Clinch, OAM, regarded by the Woolgoolga and northern beaches communities as a local legend. Don loved his community and made every effort to serve, wherever and whenever he was needed. He was considered a visionary who rolled up his sleeves in the name of progress. Don played a pivotal role in moving Woolgoolga's business centre from River Street to Beach Street, and he built the Surfside Plaza. Don established his pharmacy in Woolgoolga 72 years ago and later shifted careers into real estate. To the very end, he remained concerned for the health and welfare of those around him and for the health and vibrancy of the northern beaches. He was also passionate about culture and supported many cultural groups and community organisations. Don was a founder of the Woolgoolga Chamber of Commerce, the Woolgoolga arts and crafts gallery and the Woolgoolga Heritage Walk. Don Clinch will be remembered as a man of great integrity and compassion. May he rest in peace.

EAST HILLS ELECTORATE REMEMBRANCE DAY CEREMONY

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (00:45): Every year at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month, we gather to pause in silence and pay our respects to those who have died in wartime. I thank everyone who attended our local Remembrance Day ceremony at Padstow on Saturday 11 November, organised by the Padstow RSL. The occasion served not only as a moment of remembrance but also as a powerful reminder of the need for global harmony and peace. We recognise the importance of the day by coming together and acknowledging the sacrifices made by those who served. Students from Padstow Heights Public School, Padstow Park Public School, Revesby Public School and Sir Joseph Banks High School gathered to pay their respects. I extend my gratitude to all schools, RSLs and individuals who held their own Remembrance Day ceremonies, such as John Shields of Picnic Point. A special thanks to Padstow RSL for holding a very respectful service. Lest we forget.

FISHING FOR KYAN

Dr JOE MCGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (00:46): I acknowledge the family and friends of the late Wagga Wagga teenager Kyan Armstrong for their work to raise money for local charities in honour of Kyan, who died last year of a brain aneurysm at just 15. Special mention should go to Kyan's parents, Matthew Armstrong and Alysha Sheedy; his uncle and aunt, Damian and Renee Armstrong; his grandfathers, Graham Armstrong and Rod Sheedy; and Carol, Al and Lachie Wurtz. Together they worked tirelessly to create Fishing for Kyan, a community day at Wagga Wagga's Lake Albert where hundreds of people gather to catch fish and raise money in memory of Kyan's love of fishing. The funds raised went to the Brain Foundation and grant programs to help young people in the city. Fishing for Kyan, a not-for-profit activity, has become an annual event that not only supports charitable causes but also encourages local families to spend time together in a fun and healthy way. Kyan was a vibrant and much-loved young man whose life ended way too soon, but his loved ones hope his memory will live on with the support of a caring community.

TEACHERS GUILD OF NSW AWARDS

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (00:47): On 27 October 2023 I attended the Teachers Guild of NSW annual dinner and awards night. It was indeed a privilege to attend that celebration, alongside the Deputy Premier and Minister for Education and Early Learning, the Hon. Prue Car; and my parliamentary colleagues the member for Liverpool, the member for Leppington and the member for Fairfield. We collectively honoured the commendable achievements of our dedicated teachers and educators throughout the State. Their unwavering commitment to shaping young minds and contributing to the educational landscape of New South Wales deserves the highest praise. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to all the nominees and winners of this year's awards. Their passion and dedication to the noble profession of teaching are truly commendable. Their impact reverberates far beyond the classroom, shaping the future of our communities. May their inspiring efforts continue to illuminate the path of knowledge for generations to come.

BULAHDELAH SHOW SOCIETY

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes) (00:48): I recognise the Bulahdelah Show Society for organising yet another successful Bulahdelah Show, reaffirming its status as one of rural New South Wales' top 10 shows. On the fortieth anniversary of its re-formation, the Bulahdelah Show continues to hold a special place within the community. It carries on a tradition that dates back to the early 1920s, when the Agricultural Bureau's

Bulahdelah branch first organised the event. The 2023 show featured an array of attractions, from dagwood dogs to dodgem cars, cattle exhibits, yabby races, wrestling, a demolition derby and a fireworks finale. The show catered to a wide spectrum of tastes. I also acknowledge the sponsors, volunteers and the community for supporting the show and contributing to its success. I congratulate the Bulahdelah Show Society on its well-deserved recognition and thank its members for providing a unique window into the local agricultural community, offering a taste of rural life.

SPECIAL CHILDREN SERVICES CENTRE

Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (00:49): The Special Children Services Centre has done amazing work supporting children, teenagers and young adults with intellectual disabilities. Starting with just four volunteers in 2008, the centre has grown into an organisation offering diverse programs from music therapy to life and social skills, sports, art activities and much more. Today the centre has expanded its footprint to boast a dedicated team of volunteers in not only helping children but also broadening their focus on also helping seniors. I thank current president Floris Lam; vice-president Khanh Van Mack; and former and current committee members Hsui Ling Lee, Ernest Chan, Patrick Tseng and John Zhang for their commitment to promoting independent living and enhanced wellbeing.

REGENTVILLE RURAL FIRE SERVICE

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek) (00:50): I commend and welcome the 11 new members joining the Regentville Rural Fire Service, a team exemplifying courage and dedication. As we move into summer and head towards increasing risk of fires, the significance of our firefighters' bravery and their willingness to face danger to protect our community cannot be overstated. I warmly welcome Julian, Alicia, Amy, Mikayla, Kaitlyn, Josh, Anne, Ben, James, Matt and Tara to the Regentville RFS. Each of them brings new energy and commitment to a role that is both challenging and vital. Their readiness to serve and safeguard our community highlights the selfless spirit that characterises our emergency services. In recognising these new firefighters, we acknowledge the immense value and sacrifice of all our RFS volunteers, especially those who have recently passed. They stand on the front lines defending our homes and families. I thank all the new recruits for their bravery and commitment.

MR BRENDAN HALL

Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (00:51): I commend the exceptional bravery of Mr Brendan Hall, a teacher at Riverstone Primary School. In a recent incident where one of the students became trapped under a car, Mr Hall's swift and courageous response played a pivotal role in averting a potential tragedy. Upon learning of the accident, Mr Hall ran over a kilometre to reach the site, where he crawled under the car to comfort the trapped student until the ambulance arrived. His quick thinking and selfless actions in the face of such a harrowing situation are nothing short of heroic. Mr Hall's dedication to his students' wellbeing goes above and beyond the ordinary. His compassion and his immediate response exemplifies the true spirit of a community leader. Today, let us express our deepest gratitude to Mr Brendan Hall for his outstanding commitment to the safety and welfare of our students. His courage serves as an inspiring reminder of the profound impact one person's selflessness can have on the lives of others. I thank Mr Hall for his extraordinary heroism.

BORELLA BUTCHERY

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (00:52): I extend my congratulations to Jared Gerahty, the owner of Borella Butchery, and Reese Jones for their outstanding achievements at the NSW/ACT Australian Meat Industry Council Awards. Their skills were truly celebrated as they were awarded with three trophies, marking an exceptional triumph in the industry. Borella Butchery walked away with top honours in the Best Sausage and Best Butchers Burger Competition across eight categories, as well as claiming the title of Apprentice of the Year. Their remarkable success showcased their commitment to their expertise in crafting high-quality and boutique meats locally. It is noteworthy that Borella Butchery was among the best-represented butcheries on the night, as finalists in five categories. Owner Jared was recognised with a first-place trophy in the poultry section for his innovative creation, the chicken parmi sausage. This latest accomplishment adds to their track record. I say well done to Borella Butchery as it continues to serve our local families with a focus on high-quality and boutique meat, setting a standard of excellence in our community.

GRACE VILLAGE EARLY LEARNING CENTRE

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (00:53): I congratulate Grace Village Early Learning Centre in Huntingwood on its recent successful high rating under the National Quality Standard [NQS]. The NQS sets a national benchmark for the quality of children's education and care services across Australia, and services are assessed against the NQS by the NSW Department of Education's regulations. Grace Village Early Learning Centre was rated as having exceeded the NQS in the most recent review. They were commended for their careful planning, reflective practices, willingness to collaborate and overall commitment to quality services. Raymond

Grace, the centre's founder and operational director, acknowledges his team for their amazing work that achieved this incredible result. Grace Village Early Learning Centre also has Soccer Pat, gymnastics, karate and a wonderful partnership with Sydney Zoo. Early learning centres provide quality services to shape our future generations. The recognition of Grace Village Early Learning Centre is a fantastic outcome for the children and parents of Blacktown.

VAUCLUSE CHRISTMAS CARD WINNER

Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (00:54): I congratulate Isabelle Young from Double Bay Public School, who is the inaugural winner of the 2023 Vaucluse Christmas Card Competition. Under the theme of an Australian Christmas, students and schools across the electorate came up with some creative and colourful designs. Santa was depicted on the beach, in the water and even in the desert. After a tough and rigorous evaluation, Isabelle's depiction of a kookaburra overseeing a beautiful coastal landscape was the clear winner. I also congratulate the runners up, Zena Farah from Kincoppal-Rose Bay, Anouk Pluviano Goss from Ascham and Beatrix Escott from Double Bay Public School. I thank everyone who entered the competition. It was a joy to adjudicate and very difficult to make that decision. I wish everyone a Merry Christmas.

NEWCASTLE WILLIAMTOWN AIR SHOW

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion) (00:55): I take a moment to reflect on a recent wonderful couple of days with the Newcastle Williamtown Air Show. It was a spectacular two-day event, ending with an open day at the Royal Australian Air Force [RAAF] base at Williamtown on Sunday. Attendees were treated to a fantastic range of events showcasing all that is wonderful about our rich RAAF and defence history in Port Stephens, and recognising and enhancing the relationship between the air force and our local community. Children growing up in Port Stephens would have driven past the gates of Williamtown RAAF base countless times, not really knowing what happens on the inside. That all changed that weekend, with families invited on the base to check out all the exciting things that happen there. Attendees were treated to a range of ground displays, including the No. 100 Squadron heritage assets, air combat and the mobility of maritime aircraft. Kids were able to get up close to and even go on board big planes. I am so proud to have the Williamtown RAAF base call Port Stephens home. I thank everyone who made this wonderful event happen.

AUSTRALIANA PIONEER VILLAGE

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (00:56): I recognise the Australiana Pioneer Village's fifty-third birthday, which was celebrated at the village in Wilberforce on Sunday 26 November. This event welcomed everyone to join in music, games, rides, animal attractions, crafts, treats and, of course, birthday cake. Over the past 53 three years, the Australiana Pioneer Village saw many owners, until 2002 when a community group known as the Business Group formed to ensure that the Australiana Pioneer Village remained a community asset and that its heritage and environmental integrity was retained. The Australiana Pioneer Village sits on 28 acres and became a State Heritage listed open air museum in 2004. This piece of Hawkesbury history is open on Sundays and will also be open at 5.00 p.m. this Friday 1 December for its annual twilight Christmas market.

JONES PLUMBING PLUS

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (00:57): I extend my congratulations on celebrating a remarkable milestone to Jones Plumbing Plus, owner Trevor Jones and team located in Lavington, who are celebrating 72 years in the business. This momentous achievement is a testament to the dedication and commitment of Trevor and his father, Russell Jones. Jones Plumbing Plus has a rich history, tracing its roots back to the Murray River town of Corowa, and founded as a family business by his father in the aftermath of World War II in 1951. Russell and wife, Lorna, embarked on their entrepreneurial journey by establishing Corowa Plumbing Supplies. Since then the business has flourished, showcasing success in various facets of plumbing supplies. What began as a local enterprise has evolved into the Jones Family Group of companies led by Trevor and team. Currently the business employs 70 individuals in the Albury-Wodonga region and boasts over 160 staff across New South Wales and Victoria. I say well done to Trevor Jones for his enduring legacy and significant impact on the plumbing industry in our border community.

ROSLYN TOWNSEND

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence) (00:58): I congratulate Roslyn Townsend, who recently clocked up 50 years of employment at the Richmond Valley Council and the former Casino Council. Roslyn completed a secretarial course in 1973 and applied for a role as a typist with Casino Council. She has worked there ever since. During her time with the council, Roslyn held various secretarial roles, including as the executive assistant to the general manager and the mayor. In fact, Roslyn has seen out five general managers and nine

mayors in her 50 years at the council. She actually deserves a medal. I congratulate Roslyn and, more importantly, I thank her for the service that she has provided to her community of Casino.

Private Members' Statements

PORT STEPHENS ELECTORATE

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion) (00:59): It is safe to say that my electorate of Port Stephens is beautiful inside and out. With a new government in New South Wales there are a lot of exciting opportunities ahead, especially when it comes to rebuilding essential services like schools and hospitals. But we also have our fair share of challenges, like the recent declaration of an area off the Hunter coast as suitable for offshore wind projects. The declaration was made by the Commonwealth Government in July. Since then, there has been a process where wind farm proponents could express an interest in obtaining a licence to test the feasibility of a project. That process has ended and we are now awaiting the Commonwealth Government's decision as to whether it will approve any feasibility licences. To date, not a single wind farm proposal has been submitted, considered or approved. It is very far from being a done deal.

Despite the fact that it is entirely a Commonwealth Government decision and process, I have had many conversations with people who have genuine concerns about the possible impact a wind farm may have on our local environment and economy. I have met with recreational and commercial fishers, environmentalists, tourism operators and many concerned residents. I have raised all of their concerns directly with the Federal Minister for Climate Change and Energy, Chris Bowen; the Minister for the Environment and Water, Tanya Plibersek; and the New South Wales Minister for Energy, and Minister for the Environment, Penny Sharpe. As this process plays out, I will continue to raise my community's concerns with the Commonwealth Government and advocate for decisions and information that will ease those concerns.

Whilst there are many people with genuine concerns, there has also been a lot of misinformation and disinformation spread on this issue. Political actors have come to Port Stephens to express their care for our environment for the first time in their lives. Peter Dutton and One Nation have become cosy bedfellows over their sudden love of whales and our marine park. I know the good people of Port Stephens will see through the actions of those political pretenders, whose only way of operating is by spreading fear, hate and division. Whilst others seek to divide, I will stay focused on facts and getting the information and outcomes the community wants and deserves.

I am here to represent my community, and I take that role very seriously. I know that our community wants to see our environment protected, and they want to see improved frontline essential services. That is why the Minns Labor Government is investing in essential services by backing the workers that deliver them. Frontline workers—our teachers, nurses, police and child protection caseworkers—have been demoralised after a decade of being undervalued and underpaid by the former Liberal-Nationals Government. Because of the former Government's unfair wages cap on public service workers, we now have significant workforce shortages right across our schools, hospitals, police stations and child protection teams. That means we are waiting longer in the emergency department, and our kids' classes are constantly being merged or collapsed.

Frontline essential services were diminished under the former Government, so this Government has taken action to revive them. We have scrapped the wages cap so all public service workers could get their biggest pay rise in a decade. Teachers in New South Wales have gone from being the worst paid in the country to the best. We also promised to make 16,000 teachers and support staff permanent after being confined to casual status for years. Already 17,000 teachers and support staff have become permanent in just eight months. We are also delivering on our promise to build Medowie's desperately needed and long overdue public high school. There will be an update for my community on that soon. That is not all. Much-needed upgrades to Hunter River High School and Irrawang High School worth \$33 million are kicking off soon. We finally have progress on the M1 extension to Raymond Terrace after years of delay. The Port Stephens Koala Hospital will very soon be receiving a \$2 million boost to its operation, just as we on this side promised before the election. There are millions of dollars of additional funding on its way to Port Stephens Council to fix our local roads.

As members have often heard, I love Port Stephens' beautiful environment. But I always come back to the basic truth that it is the people of Port Stephens who make it so special. As I travel around the electorate, I have the benefit of seeing the organisations and individuals who quietly make our community stronger every single day, such as the volunteers in emergency services, service clubs, sporting clubs and community organisations. Our community is kinder and stronger because of their contributions, and I thank them all. Since we on this side came to government just eight months ago, we have hit the ground running: confronting the housing crisis, relieving cost-of-living pressures and investing in our frontline services and the people who deliver them. Whilst the former Government's obsession with privatising public assets has led to soaring bills and families facing

enormous financial pressures, we are working hard to build back the foundations of a fairer, healthier New South Wales.

AUSTRALIAN CITIZENSHIP

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (01:04): One of the greatest honours we have as members of Parliament is to be present and engaged at the conferral of Australian citizenship. I speak with certainty that we have all experienced the special and memorable moment of welcoming new Australian citizens at local ceremonies. It is a moment of great joy, hope and relief for the many new Australians who join us each year. I have always believed, and say constantly, that to be an Australian, whether by birth or by citizenship, is to have won the lottery of life. This is the best country in the world. From Cairns to Castle Cove, and from Steep Point in the west to St Leonards, we are so fortunate to live in the world's most successful, harmonious, stable, diverse, beautiful and welcoming nation-state.

Our nation is not perfect. No nation is perfect or has an unblemished history, but ours has been gifted, governed and developed in ways that make it the envy of the world. I love my sunburnt country. As members of Parliament it is our duty and great privilege to welcome our new citizens. Whatever their heritage, background or circumstances, it is always wonderful when people choose to seek to make Australia their home. We are fortunate that they do so, for they could choose to come to many countries around the world to make their life. Equally, as I often say at local citizenship ceremonies, new Australians are fortunate that Australia has chosen them. It is a two-way street. New citizens have chosen Australia and Australia has chosen them, and with that comes mutual opportunity and responsibility.

I always ask new citizens to ensure that they give back to their new country: to volunteer, to contribute, to join clubs and societies, to serve and to be active in their communities, both locally in Willoughby and beyond. We get what we give in this world, I believe. We want all Australians, including new Australians, to give their best to their home country, to make the best country in the world even better still. It is a privilege to be conferred citizenship and that privilege should never be taken for granted. I say that in respect of new citizens and also those who have always called Australia home. Whether we are new to these shores or long-time locals, our citizenship is not to be taken lightly, disrespected or taken for granted. We are borne of our great Indigenous heritage, our early European settler era and the waves of immigration that have shaped our national identity for years since. It is a strong, proud and rich heritage that we can be very proud of as a people.

Many thousands have fought and died for our country and we should always remember and honour them, most of all by our conduct as citizens today of the nation they have gifted us. I fear that recent events like the appalling actions of a few people at the Sydney Opera House chanting evil and antisemitic slogans suggest that some Australians are taking our country, our values and our way of life for granted. Some people in our country would be well advised to re-read and recommit themselves to their Australian citizenship pledge. The first version of the pledge reads:

From this time forward, under God,
I pledge my loyalty to Australia and its people,
whose democratic beliefs I share,
whose rights and liberties I respect, and
whose laws I will uphold and obey.

The second version of the pledge omits God and is otherwise the same. In my view, that pledge should feature more prominently in our national, State and community discourse, and in our civics and education curriculum, and should be conveyed to more Australians more often than it is at present. It means so much. I extend my gratitude to the councils of Willoughby and North Sydney for their efforts in organising citizenship ceremonies regularly. I particularly recognise Willoughby City Council for its more generous, personal and warm ceremony in which all citizens have their photos taken with dignitaries, including with their families, and all dignitaries are invited to address the audience. That is not a feature of the North Sydney Council ceremony, but I am sure the community would welcome such an approach.

I, like so many Australians, have had the opportunity to see other parts of the world—indeed, I have been overseas a few times in recent months—and coming home to Australia is always such a joy. At local citizenship ceremonies, as I look out over the rows of smiling faces, I cannot help but reflect on the words of Australia's greatest and longest serving Prime Minister, Robert Menzies, who said, "I am one of you. I stand with you. I wouldn't change my Australian citizenship for any other." May all Australian citizens, new and old, always strive to uphold our pledge of citizenship and work to make this, the best country in the world, even better still.

2MFM RADIO STATION

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (01:09): This evening I recognise an important project that recently won the Excellence in Ethnic and Multicultural Engagement award at the Community Broadcasting

Association of Australia awards ceremony, held in Adelaide. The project, entitled "Elder Abuse; We Reject, Elder Safety; We Protect", was developed by 2MFM, Australia's leading Muslim community radio station, which has a substantial and sizeable following in Liverpool. This much-needed and topical media campaign aims to support ethnic and multicultural communities to better understand, prevent and respond to various forms of elder abuse, which may be in the form of psychological, physical and financial abuse and neglect. It was delivered as a six-episode radio series, including interviews and talkback discussion, presented in both Arabic and English. The impactful audiovisual content featured an eye-opening video production and infographics on social media—translated into Arabic, Urdu and Bahasa Indonesia—to promote empathy and compassion for the elderly in various communities.

The project was launched following the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, commissioned by the Federal Government between October 2018 and March 2021. Thus, it was delivered in line with the goals identified by the Australian Law Reform Commission, including promoting community understanding of elder abuse, promoting the autonomy and agency of older people, achieving national consistency, and safeguarding at-risk adults and improving responses. Elder abuse is when harm is done to an older person by someone they know and trust. It can take many forms, including neglect, financial exploitation, physical violence, sexual abuse and psychological abuse. According to the National Elder Abuse Prevalence Study, one in six older Australians have experienced elder abuse but only one-third of victims seek help.

I particularly recognise the contribution to this project by the extraordinary Hajjah Faten El Dana, OAM, who produced and presented this campaign. She said that she felt motivated to be part of the campaign because she wanted "to instil in the hearts of listeners to love, respect, honour and protect their elderly loved ones who are in dire need to feel loved and safe in their own home or even when institutionalised". Hajjah Faten outlined engagement with the community that she witnessed through the comments made on social media and when listeners contacted her off air to discuss their issues and seek advice on how to better care for their elderly loved ones.

There were several positive outcomes that were achieved by this media campaign. Firstly, while the project canvassed a sensitive and complex issue that touches every household, the participation of youth listeners was very interesting. In addition to positive comments posted on 2MFM's social media, young listeners took the time to record audio contributions, describing their experiences assisting in the care of elderly grandparents whose family made the decision to care for them at home despite the challenges they faced due to dementia or other medical conditions. Because of the sensitivity of these issues and out of respect for people's suffering and pain, some requested to stay anonymous, while passionately sharing their stories of love and care. Other listeners sent videos telling the stories of types of care they provided for their elderly parents, one of whom had a severe heart condition, and at the same time encouraged other youths to follow suit. Furthermore, a short but heartwarming poem about rejecting elder abuse was composed by one of 2MFM's listeners, who related to the campaign as she diligently and lovingly cared for her elderly mother at home.

Hajjah Faten's contributions to this incredible project are especially significant, given that she lost her dear husband, Hajj Mohammed El Dana, himself a long-term contributor to our community, during the development and delivery of this project. It is not easy to focus on the needs of others when grieving such a great personal loss. However, Hajjah Faten is an example of someone who puts community benefit above her own. Although acknowledging that it was one of the most challenging periods of her life, she still pushed to meet the deadline and bring this important issue to the awareness and attention of our community. Finally, I take this opportunity to recognise all the special guests who participated in this important project. They include family members who shared their personal experiences and experts in aged care who provided valuable information to the community on how to access the various available services needed by the elderly. Because of their combined efforts, we now have an award-winning, highly necessary resource for our community. For that, we are grateful. I again congratulate 2MFM.

ISABELLE MILLER

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence) (01:14): Tonight I acknowledge a remarkably brave young girl from my electorate: 14-year-old Isabelle Miller from Yorklea. Last week Izzy stopped a runaway school bus full of her fellow students and avoided a collision with a petrol station in Casino. Izzy got on the bus parked outside Casino High School last Wednesday to have a chat with her friends—she was not meant to be travelling on that bus—when she noticed that the vehicle started moving towards the North Casino Mini Mart. The problem was that nobody was in the driver's seat. Izzy jumped out of her seat, which was near the front of the bus, and jumped into the driver's seat, preventing a potential catastrophe. Luckily, despite having zero bus driving experience, she found the brake pedal and the steering wheel and steered the vehicle away from the service station.

She told the *TODAY Show* this morning—yesterday morning—that everyone was freaking out on the bus, so she ran up the front of the bus and steered it away. She said it was pretty scary at the time and she did not think

too much of it. I congratulate Izzy. Because of Izzy's actions, the bus narrowly missed the service station and, of course, the customers who were blissfully unaware of the bus coming in their direction. Some amazing CCTV footage was shown on television this morning, which captured the moment the bus started moving, and, of course, it showed Izzy's very brave efforts in negotiating past cars, pedestrians and, indeed, the petrol station. I spoke with Izzy's mum, Rebecca, this afternoon, who was already full of praise for her daughter but particularly after what she did last week. I congratulate Izzy on her efforts in avoiding a potential catastrophe. Izzy has been awarded Casino High School's highest award, which I think is just terrific.

What is also terrific is that the North Casino Mini Mart has rewarded her with a certificate and a \$100 note. I saw on TV this morning that she says she is not going to spend the hundred bucks; she is going to save it for when she needs it. Izzy does not even have an L-plate, let alone a licence to steer a bus out of harm's way. I congratulate Izzy. I know that her fellow students and her principal, Trent Graham, who is a terrific educator, are very proud of her. I note that Mayor Robert Mustow also thanked Izzy for her quick actions in saving the school bus from a catastrophe last week. We are all very proud of her for her courageous bravery.

SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (01:17): My electorate of East Hills was once home to many Housing Commission homes around Bass Hill and Yagoona—typically close to the railway line—and around Padstow, Panania and Revesby. The original Housing Commission was indeed a Labor Party government initiative. It was established in 1942 to provide a pathway to home ownership for working families and returned services personnel. Earlier this month I was pleased to welcome Premier Chris Minns and housing Minister the Hon. Rose Jackson to my electorate of East Hills, where we visited a home in Padstow to announce the New South Wales Labor Government's plan to overhaul how social housing maintenance is conducted across the State's 95,000 social housing properties.

Effectively, the New South Wales Labor Government will be taking back control by establishing a new one-stop maintenance hub within Homes NSW. It will be a simpler, back-to-basics model that will streamline requests for maintenance under one roof. The previous Government's push to privatise and outsource housing maintenance to the private sector left us with an unworkable system that was unnecessarily bureaucratic. That caused extensive delays as tenants were bounced between government departments and private contractors. Often, their issues were unresolved.

Housing is a key issue in my electorate. Many constituents have contacted my office to seek assistance with basic requests, such as general repairs and maintenance. Constituents report that the system is overly complex, difficult to navigate and confusing. Constituents often say that once their issue is logged it takes far too long to be resolved. I am sure other members, including those opposite, can report similar experiences when dealing with constituent maintenance requests. One elderly resident reached out to my office in June to raise concerns about her property in Revesby. The resident, who was in her eighties, reported that there was a build-up of mould in her house and it had been an ongoing issue for more than six months. Other constituents have said that when a contractor does attend the property, they only inspect the damage. Another contractor is then sent to assess what materials are required to do the job and, finally, another contractor is sent to carry out the repairs. That results in cost blowouts that cost the taxpayer more. All of this does nothing to improve the lives of the tenants.

It is a basic human right that everyone deserves access to safe and secure shelter. Tenants requiring essential maintenance should not be lumbered with the additional burden of jumping through excessive hoops to ensure basic repairs and maintenance are undertaken. Under the previous Government we had a bureaucratic nightmare. My own staff have firsthand experience of the maintenance minefield. Often, they will receive an email from maintenance stating that a contractor has attended the property and that the works have been completed. However, when my staff follow up directly with the constituent to confirm that, they are often advised that the work has not been completed. One Panania resident reported that she witnessed a contractor getting out of his vehicle, putting a "sorry we missed you" note in her letterbox and not even bothering to knock on their door to see if anyone was home.

Those examples point to how broken the system was under the previous Government. It was not fit for purpose, and the outsourcing of maintenance contracts to private providers led to unreasonable wait times and neglect. Constituents often come to my office as a last resort. Many constituents are unable to effectively advocate for themselves in that respect. The new system will see Homes NSW become the central point to triage, assess the scope of the work needed and issue maintenance orders to local tradespeople. It will mean improved responses, with trained experts who can better address tenants' questions, coordinate work orders and deliver better outcomes for tenants. Tenants will also be able to monitor the progress of their requests through the new maintenance app. That will mean greater accountability and transparency as tenants previously had no way of knowing when repairs would be carried out. I know that my electorate of East Hills will welcome the announcement. Fixing the

maintenance system will play a vital role in rebuilding our broken housing system. It will mean better outcomes for my constituents. It puts people first, restores dignity and respect and brings hope to the many social housing tenants in my area.

INLAND RAIL

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (01:22): I speak today about the Wagga Wagga community's growing concerns about the Inland Rail project. The community has generally been supportive of Inland Rail as a nation-building project with the potential to open up opportunities for industry, agriculture and commerce. I understand that Wagga Wagga City Council lobbied hard to have the route travel via Wagga Wagga rather than via Shepparton, which was an early option. I believe our community wants to see the project succeed, but not at a cost to the amenity, safety and liveability of our city, and there are now concerns that will be that cost.

Discussions on the Melbourne to Brisbane Inland Rail have been happening since at least 2009. The Commonwealth Government started making funding commitments in 2011 and made a major commitment in 2017. However, the current Federal Government undertook a major review of the project by Kerry Schott. The report was published in April this year. It detailed significant issues in the project governance and funding estimates and, importantly, highlighted the need to reserve an easement for a future bypass of inland cities, including Wagga Wagga. Before that, as far as I can determine, there had been little discussion of a bypass for Wagga Wagga. Over the past year, the community has become increasingly concerned about the impact of the project on the city. That was the reason I insisted that the previous Government carefully review the environmental impact statement. It is why I sought an extension to the exhibition period and met with the relevant departments to raise those concerns directly.

As a result of that lobbying and community pressure, the Government required a preferred infrastructure report to be prepared. From that we have learnt some alarming new information about the way project currently stands. In the construction phase there is going to be traffic congestion and a possible high strain on key CBD intersections; and two of the four rail crossings in central Wagga Wagga will be out of action, with significant impact on access to the base hospital and the average morning peak travel time changing from six minutes to 15 minutes. After construction, delays at level crossings will increase by up to 18 per cent, noise levels will have minor to moderate increases and, importantly, the number of homes potentially in need of mitigation, called "affected receivers", will blow out from 19, which was the figure in the environmental impact statement, to the 1,285 figure in the preferred infrastructure report.

Just as alarmingly, modelling shows a major impact on Wagga Wagga's air quality. One of the joys of living in regional communities is breathing clean, untainted air. But we now learn that nitrogen dioxide emissions will increase to more than double the relevant criteria, largely because of locomotives idling at passing loops. That is a complicated way of saying pollution from burning diesel will increase to unsatisfactory levels, coupled with increased noise and ongoing traffic congestion. That is a far cry from the relatively rosy picture painted in the original environmental impact statement and presents information that might have remained unknown if we had not successfully pushed for strong and effective review. The question now is, what must be done to prevent those serious problems if the project is going to be approved? Mitigation of noise, vibration and air impacts is promised and essential. But these measures must be effective and must not be harmful to the city's amenity.

Inland Rail assert that these issues will be mitigated. They must be mitigated. We need guarantees that the mitigation of noise, pollution, congestion and vibration will be not only completely effective but completely acceptable to the community. If these guarantees cannot be delivered, then we need to plan now for a bypass of Wagga Wagga and deliver that bypass during construction, not many years into the future. If we do get the guarantees, we still need to be planning for a bypass of the city if train numbers increase. As Kerry Schott said in her review

As Inland Rail train traffic increases significantly the possibility to bypass the town should be investigated and easements protected for a new by-pass corridor.

Wagga Wagga was specifically mentioned in that advice and recommendation. At a bare minimum, bypass planning should be a condition of approval for the project. If the project is to proceed, it must only do so if it is to the benefit of communities along the route and not to their detriment. If that means a bypass, then so be it. Our community deserves no less than a clean, safe and efficient city now and into the future. That is not negotiable.

FAIRFIELD CITY POLICE AREA COMMAND OFFICERS

Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (01:27): The NSW Police Force is an institution dedicated to protecting, serving and making a difference to the people of New South Wales. The force is made of the very best of us. Those who exemplify duty, excellence and bravery. Tonight, I commend the actions of four officers from the Fairfield City Police Area Command who embody just that. They are constables Deo, Green, Porou and Toro. At

about 4.20 a.m. on 27 October, an intense fire developed in an apartment complex in Carramar. Constables Deo and Green forced entry into the burning apartment to search for and locate one of the apartment occupants laying semi-conscious near the front door. Assisted by constables Toro and Porou, the officers carried the occupant to safety, rendered first aid and evacuated another occupant nearby. The fire was later extinguished by our other heroes, firefighters from Fire and Rescue NSW. The swift and decisive action undertaken by these officers saved a life. That is even more significant given the threats posed to the officers' own safety. Constables Deo, Green, Porou and Toro are a credit to the NSW Police Force and this State. I thank them for making a difference and for protecting us.

HAWKESBURY ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (01:29): I express my deepest concern for families, self-funded retirees, single parents, primary producers, community groups and small businesses within my electorate of Hawkesbury, who are grappling with the cost-of-living crisis, the impact of State Government regulations and the continued need for protection in times of devastation. There are different triggers that remind those good people that the support they enjoyed for 12 years under a Liberal-Nationals Government has dried up. Clearly, the priorities for the Minns Labor Government focus on an ambition to fatten its union support base with pay rises whilst starving non-union members in Hawkesbury and New South Wales.

The reality kicked in when Jenny from Hawkesbury, a mother of three, had to tell her children that they cannot continue to play netball or soccer because Jenny cannot afford to pay the registration fees. Why is that? It is because the Active Kids voucher, which was embraced by families and had a redemption rate of \$4.85 million, has been cut by the Minns Labor Government, meaning that 750,000 children will lose out. Then there is another Hawkesbury family. Scott and Nicole were looking forward to having their daughter utilise the First Lap voucher so that she could learn to swim. Guess what? That opportunity will be denied because Premier Chris Minns refused to fund it in the budget, just as he removed the Creative Kids vouchers for so many families. The Premier has reneged on a pre-election promise to maintain those vouchers, but the reality has kicked in. Labor's campaign slogan was "a fresh start", but there is a stale stench creeping into the Hawkesbury landscape and the rest of New South Wales.

I also challenge the announcement this week by the planning Minister, Paul Scully, who spruiked with excitement that he had the absolute recipe for solving the housing crisis. His solution was to strip local councils of their planning instruments and rezone housing lots so that townhouses and apartments of up to six storeys can be built where homes already exist. Residents will not know what their neighbour is until the cement truck pulls up in the street to pour the slab. The Hawkesbury electorate includes the Hills shire local government area. This new planning arrangement is a move by stealth to destroy the fabric of the community.

Mr Nathan Hagarty: Point of order—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell): The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr Nathan Hagarty: I note that the member is discussing the Greater Cities Commission Repeal Bill 2023, which is currently being debated.

Ms ROBYN PRESTON: Speaker, I am talking about everything to do with Hawkesbury and the impact that has on it. That is what a private member's statement must do. It has to be Hawkesbury-centric, and I am talking about Hawkesbury.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell): The member for Hawkesbury is speaking about her electorate. She is not debating the bill currently before the House. The member for Hawkesbury has the call.

Ms ROBYN PRESTON: The Hawkesbury electorate includes the Hills shire local government area. This new planning arrangement is a move by stealth to destroy the fabric of the community. People in this part of Hawkesbury are drawn to the area because of the ambience, the large quarter-acre, one-acre and five-acre blocks and also its people, amenities and vistas. Here we have a lightbulb moment that the Minister thinks is a silver bullet for housing shortages, but we are staring down the barrel of a catastrophe. Good planning should deliver the necessary infrastructure to accommodate growth. But this formula to pump up the population will exacerbate traffic and parking; create more congestion, noise and overshadowing; and denigrate people's privacy, not to mention the character of the suburb.

Mr Nathan Hagarty: Point of order—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell): The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr Nathan Hagarty: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 77, which states:

A member shall not anticipate discussion of any matter which is on the Business Paper.

The member is talking about abolishing the Greater Cities Commission, which is currently being debated.

Ms ROBYN PRESTON: I am talking about the Hills Shire Council and Sydney Metro Northwest, which was built in 2019.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell): The Greater Cities Commission Repeal Bill 2023 has passed this House, so it is not being debated in this place. Therefore, I do not uphold the point of order. The member for Hawkesbury has the call.

Ms ROBYN PRESTON: With the investment of the Sydney Metro Northwest, built by the Liberal-Nationals Government, the Hills Shire Council had its housing targets bolstered to justify the spend. These housing targets have already been exceeded and there has been much planning by council to ensure that the integrity, look and feel of the area are maintained whilst accommodating growth. These new planning laws would undermine the heart and soul of this community and a plethora of local government areas. We cannot roll out a cookie-cutter template that will suit every council area and expect to achieve good planning outcomes. I believe there will be plenty of feedback from councils on this issue.

The other issue that concerns me is the urgent need for an upgrade to the Pitt Town evacuation route. Hawkesbury folk understand that we live on a flood plain, which means we need safe passage when fleeing the area. The current Pitt Town evacuation route is 50 years old. I was pleased that Minister Scully and Minister Dib walked the route with me to see the condition of the passage for themselves. I have seen the anxiety created by the floods we have experienced and the mental health issues that have developed thereafter. I know that improving this asset will give comfort and reassurance that when the time comes—and it will come—people will be able to leave knowing they can reach safe ground. Some \$9 million is needed to upgrade the Pitt Town evacuation route and I will continue to advocate for my community to secure this funding.

GAZA CONFLICT AND HUMANITARIAN VISAS

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (01:35): Since 7 October we have watched a humanitarian crisis unfold in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories, with thousands killed as well as 1.7 million Palestinians and 500,000 Israelis displaced. This is of great concern for many in my electorate of Leppington. Like the rest of Western Sydney, Leppington is culturally diverse, with a significant number of residents having family ties to the Middle East. I know that many Palestinian Australians in my electorate and beyond are desperately trying to sponsor their relatives from Gaza to come to safety in Australia. I have heard harrowing stories over the past two months about the great toll that this conflict is taking on the community. Many of the constituents I speak to about this issue have family or friends in the midst of the ongoing conflict and are gravely concerned for their welfare. I feel the pain of my community. As Australia has done time and again for many decades, it must act to assist those fleeing war and violence abroad, and it must do so in a way that allows fair access to support.

There is recent precedent. We were all horrified in February 2022 when Russia invaded Ukraine. This unjust and illegal invasion has displaced over five million people internally as of May this year, and more than six million Ukrainian refugees have been recorded globally as of July. The Federal Government, then the Morrison Government, recognised the unfolding humanitarian crisis by making available a temporary humanitarian stay visa, subclass 786, for those escaping this tragedy. The humanitarian visa was available to Ukrainians until 31 July 2022, and was granted for a three-year period. The visa allowed for those fleeing the war in Ukraine to work, study, enrol in Medicare, access special benefits and have full work rights. Ukrainian school students on subclass 786 are afforded Commonwealth school funding on the same basis as other Australia students.

The creation of subclass 786 visas for those affected by this conflict was an entirely appropriate step, given the magnitude and humanitarian cost of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Just like we have seen in Ukraine, we are seeing a catastrophic humanitarian crisis unfold in Gaza. The Gaza Strip is one of the most densely populated places on the planet, now grappling with heavily restricted access to food, water, electricity and medical supplies. Many of those in Gaza have no choice but to flee. Currently, those who do flee must apply for a visitor or subclass 600 visa if they wish to come to Australia. Those visas can be granted for up to 12 months. Under the visa conditions, Israelis and Palestinians fleeing the conflict cannot participate in paid work or engage in more than three months of study. Any study they complete must be entirely self-funded. They are also not entitled to any form of government assistance, such as Medicare or Centrelink.

Between 7 October and 20 November, some 860 visas have been issued to Palestinians and roughly double that for Israelis. The current arrangements for those affected by the conflict are unacceptable. Visa holders are heavily restricted from participating in work and education and from accessing essential services. The underlying assumption that they will simply be able to return home at the visa's 12-month expiry is at best unrealistic. Our TV screens and our social media feeds have shown a constant stream of flattened buildings and levelled

neighbourhoods. For many, there is simply nowhere to return. Those tenuous conditions have previously led to visa holders falling through the cracks, leading to greater demand for support such as housing and food. That, in effect, amounts to cost shifting from Federal to already strained State and local government services.

Given the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories, people fleeing their homelands should be afforded the same temporary humanitarian stay visa arrangements that were put in place for those who fled Ukraine. That will allow those who are fleeing the conflict a reasonable period of stay and the opportunity to work with full rights, seek education and access health care and government services. I call on the Prime Minister, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the immigration Minister to act on and deliver such an arrangement.

ERSKINE PARK BUSHFIRE BRIGADE

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek) (01:40): Today marks the very day that 60 years ago the Mayor of Penrith chaired a meeting to discuss the formation of a new volunteer bushfire brigade in the area. Officers were elected, and Mr Bob McKillop was chosen to be the inaugural captain of the South St Marys Bushfire Brigade, as it was then known. Last Saturday I proudly attended the formal celebration of that milestone, which was also combined to celebrate five volunteers who received long service medals and clasps. So much has changed in the bushfire brigade over the past six decades. Initially the brigade's equipment consisted of a box trailer that contained knapsacks and beaters. The trailer was stored at Bob McKillop's house and towed by his old Holden ute.

Upon notification of an incident, Bob would hook up the trailer and off he would go. The captain's wife would call other members to attend, and they would head out to the location in their own cars. In 1980 the brigade was known as the Erskine Park Bushfire Brigade. It was located at Lenore Lane; the land having been donated by Mr Frank Blackwell. In 1981 a two-bay station was built on the land and housed the new firefighting truck—an old Bedford. The two-bay station was the brigade's home for the next 25 years. During that time, improvements were made to the site, and a relocatable building was acquired as a meeting and training room. The brigade had been fundraising to add an extension to the station when in 2003 or 2004 it was announced that the brigade would be relocated as the current land was to become what is now known as the Erskine Business Park.

In 1997 the Erskine Park Bushfire Brigade became a foundation brigade during the formation of the NSW Rural Fire Service. In 1998 it celebrated its thirty-fifth anniversary, and plaques were presented to founding members Ian Leeding, Frank and Mary Blackwell, and Bob McKillop. Since its formation, members have worked tirelessly to become a recognised part of the Erskine Park and St Clair community. For example, when the annual "shave your head for cancer" fundraising event came around, members fronted up for the cause. The brigade holds annual Santa runs, which are hugely popular in the local community. Such is the brigade's commitment to the local community that a long-term volunteer, Garry Osborne, who was working in his full-time role as a navy officer, was recognised by a schoolkid when a group of children turned up at his work. The child had recognised him from his fundraising efforts and was confused by what he saw. He said to Garry, "I thought you were a fireman."

The brigade has assisted in many callouts, including to the big fires in Canberra and the Black Summer bushfire. In 2006 the brigade was relocated to the current site on the corner of Mamre Road and Luddenham Road. That is where we held a medal presentation last Saturday for Ben Woods, who received the National Emergency Medal; Jody and Simon Dollisson, who received the 10 years Long Service Medal; and Peter White and Garry Osborne, who both received the 10 years Long Service Medal and first and second clasps for 30 years' service. Congratulations to all the volunteers. We thank you for your service and dedication to our community and we acknowledge the contribution that your family members and loved ones have made by allowing you to attend emergencies in our community. Happy sixtieth birthday.

ST JOHN AMBULANCE

Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (01:44): I was honoured to attend the fiftieth anniversary of St John Ambulance in Penrith with Mayor Todd Carney, Commissioner of St John Ambulance NSW Ilan Lowbeer and CEO Dominic Teakle. It is such a significant milestone, and I acknowledge all the members, past and present, for their dedicated service to our city. I also acknowledge the member for Prospect, who hosted an event at Parliament House yesterday for St John Ambulance. The City of Penrith and our community have much to thank those people for. St John Ambulance workers are a constant presence in our schools, workplaces and across our community, equipping people with the confidence and skills they need to save lives. They are the reassuring faces at over 200 local events each and every year, where they provide medical and first-aid care. During the Sydney 2000 Olympics, when the world was watching, they kept everyone safe at Penrith's Whitewater Stadium and Regatta Centre.

In times of emergencies, floods and fires, St John Ambulance has always been there to help. We saw that during the Black Summer bushfires of 2019-20, when they provided care and support at evacuation centres in Penrith and Picton. That followed a long history of supporting our communities during all bushfire seasons. I also commend St John members for the part they played in the 2022 flood response. Working alongside other emergency services partners, their skills and support were invaluable. That level of commitment and expertise is outstanding. They dedicate many hours to training to upskill themselves in the service of community. I know our Penrith community holds them in the highest regard. There is nothing more reassuring than attending a local event and passing the St John Ambulance tent.

Over the years, many St John members have been formally recognised in Penrith for their enormous contribution. In recent times, they include: Steven Green, who was named Penrith's Citizen of the Year for 2022; Daena Madon, who was awarded 2021 Young Citizen of the Year; and Cherise Terry-Jongejans, who received the Australia Day Local Appreciation Award in 2020. I was especially excited to see so many cadets and young people at the fiftieth anniversary celebration. They are learning the ropes, building skills and volunteering through the popular cadet program. I have always had great admiration for the people who work for and volunteer their time with St John Ambulance.

Emergencies do not respect important holidays like Christmas or family birthdays. St John volunteers also have jobs and family commitments, but they are always willing to drop everything to help others. I thank their families and loved ones for supporting them in their roles. To all members of St John Ambulance in New South Wales, but especially to those in Penrith, please know your efforts are greatly appreciated. You play one of the most valuable and critical roles in our community and we thank you immensely.

TG MILLNER SPORTSGROUND

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (01:48): The first words I ever spoke in this Chamber were:

That this House:

- (1) Recognises the rich history and regional significance of the TG Millner playing fields in Marsfield, and the vital importance of large green open spaces for the local Ryde community and Greater Sydney.
- (2) Opposes any plan to develop the TG Millner site or diminish the public's access to green space.
- (3) Calls on the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces to take any and all steps necessary to secure this iconic local landmark as green open space in perpetuity.

That was on 11 May 2023. It followed a long and drawn-out fight to protect the fields from an outrageous proposal that would see the single greatest loss of recreational space in Ryde. The simple reality is that we do not have enough open space in Ryde to field all the sporting competitions, training and recreational demands of our community. It is a widespread challenge across Sydney, yet only in Ryde does there appear to be a real opportunity to make a substantial inroad in improving access—to actually make things better and invest in social and community infrastructure for the future.

Historically, TG Millner has enjoyed bipartisan support, with my predecessor in this place spearheading community campaigns to save the fields, the now Labor member for Bennelong pledging his support and the council team I led as mayor agreeing to protect the site. Liberal and Labor united behind the local community. Even the Labor candidate for Ryde in the recent State election took a commitment to the community on behalf of the now Government to save TG Millner. After my election, it was one of the first letters I wrote as a member of Parliament to the planning Minister, seeking an opportunity to meet. I wanted to discuss this specific issue and work collaboratively to ensure both Labor's election promise and my long-held advocacy could be combined to achieve a positive community result.

To date, I am still awaiting an acknowledgement of that letter. The silence on TG Millner is deafening and reeks of another broken promise that is having a real impact in Ryde. I say "another" because the Government has form when it comes to promises—take the cultural centre that was promised to Eastwood's Korean community. Before the election, the community was told that the Government would design and build a new cultural centre. After the election, the community has been told by the Premier's Department that the project is ineligible under its own rules. To be clear, the Government's commitment before the election has been taken away after the election. TG Millner cannot afford to fall into the same category. Unlike the cultural centre, TG Millner has been under threat and requires action from this Government now and as promised.

The simple reality is that the site must be bought. Ryde council has been embarking upon a process to identify capital to acquire the site. Yet it has been revealed, after a lengthy and forensic investigation, that the previous administration's mismanagement of the Ryde Civic Centre project has left the council with not just a hole in the ground but also a hole in its project budget. Without putting too fine a point on it, that was a Labor-led council, which overpromised the community, made decisions based on false financial assumptions and has now

left an important community priority at enormous risk. Surely, State Labor members must not allow their major election commitment to fall over because of the failures of their colleagues in local government.

On Tuesday night, Ryde council voted to prioritise the protection of TG Millner as open space. In light of the Government's plan to rezone the special commercial precinct of Macquarie Park to add another 8,000 apartments, locals know we will need that space now more than ever. Unbelievably, the same Labor councillors who previously fronted community meetings proclaiming their love and support for open spaces like TG Millner voted against the motion. They voted in one fell swoop to abandon TG Millner and, to add salt to the wound, voted not to retain the Ryde civic precinct in public ownership—an extraordinary backflip that reinforces why now, more than ever, we need the certainty of the Government's election commitment. Put simply, Labor cannot be trusted on local government. Just today, those councillors went so far as to try to rescind the motion to save TG Millner and retain the Ryde civic precinct in public hands.

I truly do not understand what is wrong with those councillors, but I trust that the Premier and planning Minister will see as clearly as our community that their election commitment must be honoured. Before the 2023-24 State budget was handed down, I spoke in this House specifically to request that the Government allocate funds for the acquisition of TG Millner to ensure that that election commitment was honoured. That was ignored and the budget failed to set aside even a single dollar—a highly disappointing result. The prevailing theme that is emerging is that Labor is walking away from TG Millner and public ownership of public spaces. Voters will remember those decisions if they are not corrected now. I implore the Government to listen to the community and save TG Millner, as it promised to do before the election.

ONE RACEWAY

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (01:53): Just over 12 months ago I spoke about the importance of Wakefield Park in New South Wales not only for Goulburn's economy but also for the State's motorsport industry and the importance of the sport to Australia. Today I emphasise the importance of the New South Wales Government developing a comprehensive motorsport strategy. Motorsport, in all its forms, is not just about the thrill of speed and competition; it is a powerful industry that holds tremendous potential for our State, both economically and culturally. In my electorate, the offering of motorsport is varied and popular. It includes the High View MX Track motocross facility; the State forests that are popular for trail bike riding and four-wheel driving; the Willowglen 4WD Property, which hosts annual competitions; as well as the Goulburn Speedway and the Pheasant Wood Circuit in Marulan.

The availability and accessibility of motorsport in the Goulburn region has generated opportunities for local talent, nurturing world-class riders and drivers who have brought glory to our State and nation by competing in, and winning, motorsport events around the world. Goulburn is fortunate that the owners of Pheasant Wood Circuit have purchased the property formerly known as Wakefield Park and are hard at work developing the site into what will now be known as One Raceway. The new and improved facility is being touted as the future of motorsport. Racers, enthusiasts and newcomers alike will find their pace on the dual-direction circuit. It is not just innovation; it is a revolutionary leap for Australian racing and motorsport. Owners Steve, Greg and Cameron Shelley of One Raceway have cultivated strong relationships with the community and the council through collaboration and compromise. They have created a framework that will soon allow the circuit to resume operations. The work undertaken to date is a testament to the hard work by the facility's owners in recognition of motorsport's value in our society. One Raceway's website states:

Our southern noise wall is almost across the finish line, and the northern counterpart is well underway. These aren't just barriers; they're vantage points for fans. And rest assured, we're keeping noise levels capped at 95dB.

They have consulted with Motorsport Australia and Motorcycling Australia, implementing safety features that are not just essential but also innovative. Think revamped pit exits, improved track corners, international-grade light panels and advanced timing systems that have the industry buzzing. They have bypassed quick fixes in favour of a complete circuit resurfacing and advanced drainage systems to keep the track race ready come rain or shine. One Raceway is doing more than just filling in a few potholes and a fence for the racetrack. All of that work has been done off its own back, despite a commitment made by the New South Wales Labor Party in March prior to the election to invest \$1 million in reopening the raceway.

The pledge was a promising step forward, but it was not just about reopening the racetrack; Labor also promised to revive motorsport, create jobs and attract national and international events with a New South Wales motorsport strategy. During budget estimates we heard directly from the Minister for Sport that there has been no progress on that strategy. That is incredibly disappointing for the motorsport community and was a key election commitment from Labor. The Office of Sport website provides insights into just how little support the Government has given to the existing motorsport activities across the State. While it certainly provides a comprehensive overview of the various motorsport activities operating across the State, not nearly enough weight

or consideration is given to the sport and its events. Motorsport contributes significantly to the State's economy through tourism, infrastructure development and job creation.

It is not just about the racetracks; it is about hotels, restaurants, transportation services and various other businesses that thrive thanks to motorsport. The Government needs to establish clear guidelines and objectives to ensure that this industry operates efficiently, safely and in harmony with the environment and the community. A comprehensive motorsport strategy will attract investment from both public and private sectors. The Labor Government's commitment to One Raceway could have been a great example of that investment. I still have faith that it is going to be done. I thank the One Raceway team for their hard work and investment, which demonstrate how a solid strategy, diligent planning and respect for communities can boost the economy and create opportunities locally.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell): That concludes private members' statements. Before we adjourn, I thank Hansard and everyone else who is working behind the scenes at 2.00 a.m. for the second night in a row. As parliamentarians, we very much appreciate the work that the Clerk's office and all the staff are putting in.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 01:59
on Thursday 30 November until 10:00 the same day.**

Written Community Recognition Statements

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

MCHAPPY DAY CASTLE HILL

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)—I was very pleased to attend the Dural and Castle Hill McDonald Restaurants for McHappy Day this year. I was joined by The Hills Shire Councillors, Deputy Mayor Mitchell Blue, Councillors Reena Jethi, Frank De Masi, and Jessica Brazier. It was great to see so many enthusiastic Hills Shire residents enjoying the day and supporting Ronald McDonald House Charities. I thank everyone who contributed donations to support the Charities. The great work Ronald McDonald House Charities does in the wider community to support our children can never be underestimated. When a child is diagnosed with a serious illness, it impacts the whole family. Lives can be turned upside down. Ronald McDonald House Charities provide a range of programs to help families stay together and close to the care they need. I commend the efforts and work of the Ronald McDonald House Charities and all those who provide care for children and their families in difficult situations. Lastly, I recognise, acknowledge and thank Deputy Mayor Mitchell Blue, Councillors Reena Jethi, Frank De Masi, and Jessica Brazier for giving up time on McHappy Day to support of Ronald McDonald House Charities.

ALIVE 90.5FM CHRISTMAS PARTY AND CERTIFICATE PRESENTATION

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)—I would like to recognise Alive 90.5fm, a community radio station in my electorate of Castle Hill. On 18 November, Alive 90.5fm held a Christmas Party and Awards Ceremony recognising the hard work of their team. Alive 90.5fm is staffed by a host of amazing volunteers. I was honoured to be asked to present some of the awards to recipients. I would like to congratulate the finalists and winners of each certificate. Congratulations for recipients of Long Service Awards; Mario Bekes, Anne Dewar, and Julie Parry Barwick for five years; John Brock for 10 years; and Leonie Dixon for 15 years. Congratulations to Volunteer of the Year, Julie Jordan; Lifestyle Show of the Year, Keith Till; Wellbeing Show of the Year, Pri Abayakoon; Breakfast/Drive Show of the Year, Dom Vozzo; Talk/Music Show of the Year, Pick 'N Mix; Music Show of the Year, Night Movies; Cultural Show of the Year, Un Tocco D'Italia; Family Show of the Year, Teenage Dream; Community Engagement, Rosh Vee; and Golden Mic Award, Terry Swan. Congratulation also to the winners of the Chairman's Award for Outstanding Contribution: Frank Dengate, Liam Skeates Udy, Dave Kempe, Raul Kenandez, Andsley Dennis.

150TH NOWRA SHOW BALL

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises the Nowra Show Society Inc and its 150th Year Show Ball. On Saturday 18th November 2023, I attended the Nowra Show Society's 150th Year Show Ball which was held at Coolangatta Estate. I acknowledge the President of the Nowra Show Society Mr James Thomson and the Nowra Show Society Committee Members including Senior Vice President Lindsay Parnell, Junior Vice President Imogen Clarke, Secretary Robyn Nelson and Treasurer Jessica Apperley. I also acknowledge a former President and the first female President of Nowra Show Society, Wendy Woodward OAM, for her ongoing and tireless commitment and dedication to the Nowra Show Society for many decades. Being a Berry girl, Wendy has been instrumental with her encouragement and mentorship of young women right

across the Shoalhaven region particularly those in farming and agricultural communities. The 150th Nowra Show Ball was a very special celebration, and it featured the 2024 Nowra Show Young Woman entrants, enjoying the rich and enduring history of the Nowra Show Society whilst celebrating these inspirational and talented young women. Congratulations and well done to the Nowra Show Society Inc. on the 150th anniversary of its Show Ball.

HAYDEN BUCHANAN

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises Gerringong Lions Rugby League Club player and rising star Hayden Buchanan who was recently presented with a \$500 cheque to help pay for his trip to Papua New Guinea as part of the Australian Schoolboys Rugby League team. I also acknowledge Gerringong Lions Club Secretary Jody Egan. The Gerringong Lions has one of the highest junior retention rates in NSW and Hayden is another great rugby league player following in the footsteps of Lions greats like Mick Cronin who won Premierships with the Parramatta Eels, Ashton Sims and brothers Korbin Sims and Tariq Sims who played NRL for the North Queensland Cowboys, St George Illawarra Dragons and Melbourne Storm. Last year, Hayden joined the Illawarra Steelers junior representative squad, scoring nine tries in eight Harold Matthews Cup squad games. A local Kiama High School student, Hayden also played in 2023 for the NSW CHS (Combined High School Sports team). Australian Schoolboys coach Nathan Ford described Hayden as a role model for the sport's values and noted his standard of fair play. A huge congratulations and well done to Hayden Buchanan from the Gerringong Lions.

I98FM ILLAWARRA CONVOY

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises the i98FM Illawarra Convoy. The Lead Truck Auction for i98FM's Illawarra Convoy resulted in over \$1.9 million raised. Menai Haulage donated \$300,001 making this the second year in a row that they will lead the Convoy with young Nate Deushain, who is currently battling Leukaemia. Additional donations included an amazing \$261,000 from Tiny Tins and Wollongong Crane Trucks, \$100,000 from RMK Group, plus \$84,000 from Wollongong Car Carriers and Best Sheds and \$80,000 from Murrells Freight Lines. Coles, for the third straight year, topped the Lead Motorbike bids with a massive \$252,000 raised. This was followed by Throttle Jockies with \$83,000 and Motocity with \$53,126.53. The total amount raised from the Lead Truck and Motorbike Auctions is \$1.9 million which brings the total amount raised from the i98FM Illawarra Convoy over the past nineteen years to just over \$23.5 million. The i98FM Illawarra Convoy was held on Sunday 19th November 2023. Ricki-Lee and Thirsty Merc headlined the Family Fun Day with local bands, Kye's FMX Jam and Eljay's Junkyard Action Show. To date, the Illawarra Community Foundation has provided financial assistance to over 500 families.

CAITLIN HERBERT

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—Speaker, I would like to recognise and congratulate Caitlin Herbert from Eugowra for her outstanding achievement in being selected as one of the inaugural recipients of the Future Drought Fund [FDF] Drought Resilience Scholarship. Caitlin's research focus on the role of cattle feedlots in enhancing the beef supply chain's preparedness for drought is not only commendable but also highly relevant to our agricultural sector. The FDF's investment of \$1.6 million in Nuffield scholarships, with a specific emphasis on drought resilience, is a testament to its commitment to advancing Australian agriculture. Through this scholarship program, Caitlin and her fellow scholars will have the invaluable opportunity to travel overseas, studying drought resilience and learning from international leaders in the field. This initiative not only benefits the scholars themselves but also enhances their knowledge and expertise, which they can share with their communities. I extend my warmest congratulations to Caitlin Herbert and express our collective anticipation of the positive impact she will undoubtedly make in the field of drought resilience. Her dedication and commitment are exemplary, and we are proud to have such talent within our community. Well done!

RON SPENCER

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—Speaker, I would like to recognise Mr Ron Spencer, who has devoted 46 years of his life to meaningful work. Most recently retiring from groundskeeper at Bletchington Public School after two decades, Ron has been a beacon of dedication. In 2023, Ron decided to embark on well-deserved retirement with long service leave, but the transition was challenging. He cherished the daily routine of work, describing it as a source of purpose. During his time at Bletchington Public School, Ron made significant contributions, including creating a reconciliation garden, yarnning circle, and rainbow serpent bench, leaving an enduring legacy. In a touching tribute, the school's Connections Program collaborated with artist David Sawtell to create a mosaic of Ron, which now adorns the reconciliation garden. This gesture was unveiled during the school's NAIDOC assembly, where students and staff expressed their admiration and gratitude. As Ron begins this new phase of life, we extend heartfelt congratulations and thanks for his dedicated service and positive impact on the Bletchington Public School community. Your legacy will forever be cherished.

CYCLING WITHOUT AGE ORANGE

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—Speaker, I wish to congratulate Cycling Without Age Orange on their impactful launch. This initiative, driven by over 30 volunteers, offers free, life-enhancing trishaw bike rides for the elderly and disabled across Orange. A global non-profit started in Copenhagen in 2012, Cycling Without Age now impacts lives in 42 countries. Founded by Ole Kassow, it aims to alleviate loneliness and build intergenerational connections, offering the elderly and disabled the joy of outdoor experiences and community engagement. The Orange chapter, fuelled by persistent fundraising, significant contributions from Cadia, and a NSW Government grant, has proudly acquired a top-notch trishaw e-bike. This acquisition reflects their commitment to safe, inclusive outdoor experiences for those with limited mobility. With wider training in progress and careful route planning for safety and enjoyment, the group is not only enriching lives but also reshaping our community's view on ageing and disability. Their dedication to fostering friendship and inclusion is commendable. Congratulations to the volunteers, sponsors, and all contributors to this meaningful project. Here's to Cycling Without Age Orange's continued success in spreading happiness and community connection. Well done!

GREEN VALLEY LANGUAGES AND ARTS SCHOOL

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)—I rise to acknowledge the Green Valley Languages and Arts School, which teaches Hindi language, Indian music and dance. For nearly 30 years, the school has been a pillar of the local Fiji-Indian community, with tremendous growth in the number enrolled students and in the variety of educational offerings. Through its programs, the school connects students with their cultural heritage and seeks to develop positive community values and attitudes. It was a delight to attend the school's Diwali celebration earlier this month, where I saw the culmination of everyone's learning through musical and dance performances and heard from students about the importance of the festival of lights. Events like this affirm the crucial role that Community Languages Schools play in sustaining our communities and ensuring that culture lives on through younger generations. I extend my sincere congratulations to the students, teachers and parents at Green Valley Languages and Arts School on the success of this year's Diwali Celebrations.

HINCHINBROOK PUBLIC SCHOOL FETE

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)—I acknowledge the success of Hinchinbrook Public School's mini fete held earlier this month. The fete was organised by year 6 students to raise money for their farewell event and to purchase a gift. The entire Hinchinbrook public school community was brought together for the day, with parents and relatives invited to participate. There were a variety of student run stalls, in addition to a sausage sizzle with drinks, a cake sale, slushy machine and fairy floss. There was also a jumping castle and a raffle consisting of assorted hampers and gift vouchers from local businesses. It was a delight to meet with students, parents, and teachers, including with Principal Tina McCosker and P&C Members. I extend my congratulations to the entire school community on the fete's success, and I thank all those generously sponsored the raffle. I look forward to an exceptional year 6 farewell celebration.

LEADERSHIP BY THE COWPASTURE

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)—I recognise the fabulous initiative of students from Hinchinbrook Public School, who recently attended the Leadership by the Cowpasture Conference earlier this year. The Leadership by the Cowpasture conference connects student leaders from across local schools and invites them to develop their leadership skills through a variety of engaging and collaborative activities. This year, Hinchinbrook Public School students worked together on a pitch to their principal, Mrs McCosker, asking that they permitted to organise RUOK day and Autism Awareness Day events at their school, to which she agreed. For Autism Awareness Day, the students sought to raise funds for the Autism Advisory and Support Service through the sale of 600 sensory toys and by asking their peers to wear the colour blue in exchange for a gold coin donation. I congratulate student leaders Ali, Nayesha, Oliver and Alexandra on their efforts, and I extend my appreciation to the Hinchinbrook Public School community for their tremendous generosity.

BRETT ROBERTS

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)—I would like to recognise Brett Roberts, a talented artist. With a creative journey spanning over 30-40 years, each piece of Brett's art tells a unique story. Brett is from the Bundjalung and Dunghutti people, situated north of Biripi, where he learnt his artistic skills. Over the past four years, Brett has received support from Valley Industries, a disability support agency which nurtures his talents. During a tour of his home gallery, I marvelled at the diversity of Brett's art which includes life-sized wooden goannas and turtles, didgeridoos, boomerangs, and rock paintings. Brett, your skills and artwork are captivating, a tribute to your deep cultural connection and talent. Thank you for enriching our community with Indigenous culture and artistry.

ARABELLA ROOHAN

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)—I rise to congratulate Arabella Roohan, who has been named the 2023 Taree Show Junior Showgirl. Arabella's accomplishment reflects her dedication to her local community and the agricultural sector. Currently a student at Yanco Agricultural High School, she aspires to enter Agribusiness Banking. Arabella's diverse interests include cattle preparation, cricket, and netball. Active in the Wingham Rotary Club, she supports community activities and contributes to the development of young cricket players, showing her community spirit. Arabella's ambitious goals involve owning her own Limousin and Angus stud, completing her HSC, obtaining a Bachelor's degree in Agribusiness, and progressing in Women's Cricket Pathways. Her mission is to promote the crucial roles of females in agriculture. Congratulations Arabella on your well-deserved, I look forward to your continued positive impact in our local community and the broader agricultural landscape.

SARAH BODDINGTON

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)—I would like to acknowledge Sarah Boddington for her 10th consecutive victory in the Lower North Coast District Singles, a historic accomplishment that cements her as a local legend in Lawn Bowls. Since her arrival in Tuncurry in 2013, Sarah has not faced a single defeat in district-level singles. Her continuous pursuit of perfection has led her to this exceptional milestone. Sarah's significant achievement in the Lower North Coast District Singles marks the first step toward capturing the state and Australian singles titles, a goal she is determined to attain. Her three-time victory in the NSW State Singles demonstrates her excellence. Congratulations Sarah, I wish you all the best in the regional finals.

BAULKHAM HILLS HIGH SCHOOL P&C MULTICULTURAL FOOD FAIR

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)—I would like to recognise and congratulate the Baulkham Hills High School Parents and Citizens Association on its recent success with the Multicultural Food Fair. I was honoured to join students, parents, friends, and staff to officially open the fair on Saturday 18 November. There were food stalls with cuisines from various cultures, including Chinese, Korean, Sri Lankan and Indian foods, as well as a classic Australian barbeque, and more. There were also various performances, including traditional Chinese and Indian Dances, and various musical performances. The Food Fair drew more than 3,000 people over the course of the evening, coming together in celebration of Multiculturalism. Baulkham Hills High School not only encourages its students academically, but also encourages its students to pursue extracurricular activities and interests. It is the goal of the school is to cultivate well-rounded students. Encouraging Multiculturalism and cultural engagement is just one way that they achieve this and succeed tremendously through events like their Multicultural Food Fair. I look forward to upcoming events from Baulkham Hills High School. Once again, congratulations to P&C President, Maggie Wang, and the executive committee members who made this event such a success.

CARINGBAH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT LEADERS

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)—I congratulate the 2024 student leaders at Caringbah High School. Amy Deng and Dean Skopidis were elected as school captains and Chloe Schwarzl and Ben Gilbert as the vice captains. Joining them in leadership are prefects Cassidy Benitez, Chloe Fraser, Johnson Tang, Julian Withers and Swetansh Chaudary. 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.

MORISSET LAKE MACQUARIE AGRICULTURAL SHOW

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)—After three devastating years, the Morisset Lake Macquarie Agricultural Show came back for its 69th event, bigger and better than ever. The show was established in 1954 and has become a favoured annual event for generations of not only Lake Macquarie residents, but also for visitors from afar. This event bridges the gap between the country and city culture, showcasing local arts, horticulture, food, rides and of course its famous rodeo and fireworks display. In 2020 and 2021 the show was cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic, then last year when it was due for a grand return, mother nature was not kind with the site flooding due to torrential rain. This year the show came back with a bang, attracting a record-breaking crowd of 15,500 people over two days. I was pleased to join with show president Justin Rumore to officially open the show and meet with the dedicated team of volunteers comprising the Morisset Lake Macquarie Agricultural Show Committee. The show is one of the fastest growing regional shows in New South Wales, taking six months to organise, and I congratulate all involved with its growing success.

AUNTY SELINA ARCHIBALD

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)—I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to Aunty Selena Archibald who was presented with a Lifetime Patron Award by the Itji-Marru Aboriginal Education Consultative Group at the Western Shores Learning Alliance Deadly Awards this week. Over the past 25 years Aunty Selena has nurtured over 700 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at Morisset High School through her role as the Aboriginal Education Officer, teaching them to dream big, step up as future leaders, connect with their culture and identity as First Nations People. Almost 25-per-cent of the students at Morisset High School are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, and Aunty Selena has made a real difference to their lives. Many past students credit Aunty Selena with their success post high school. It is the first time that the Itji-Marru Aboriginal Education Consultative Group has recognised a member of the Morisset community with such an honour. Once again, I would like to congratulate Aunty Selena on not only receiving this prestigious honour but also for all of the good work she is doing with our young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

SUJAN SILPAKAR

Mr JASON LI (Strathfield)—I would like to congratulate Mr Sujan Silpakar, a talented Strathfield resident who has achieved great success in natural bodybuilding competitions. It is inspiring to see how his passion, mindset, determination, and fierce focus have propelled him to overcome challenges and attain success in Australia. His achievements, especially in representing Nepal and Australia, have lifted the profile of natural bodybuilding in our community. His consistent excellence is evident in numerous gold medals, Pro Cards, and overall champion titles, bringing pride to both Nepalese and Australian communities. His drug-free approach sets a commendable example, inspiring others to prioritise health and wellbeing. His recent success at the Albury Natbod event on 4 November, earning Gold in Pro Classic Bodybuilding, Silver in Pro Physique, and the Overall title, highlights his continued excellence in natural bodybuilding. This achievement is a testament to Sujan's physical ability and mental fortitude. I look forward to his future triumphs.

ENFIELD ROVERS FOOTBALL CLUB

Mr JASON LI (Strathfield)—I congratulate the Enfield Rovers team for your remarkable victory at the 53rd Football NSW's Champion of Champions final for Boys under 16's, held on Sunday 22 October 2023 at Valentine Sports Park. The Enfield Rovers defeated Merrylands SFC 3-1. I also extend my personal congratulations to the Enfield Rovers' players who contributed to this achievement: Matthew Street, Cody Pham, James Pirri, David Silvestri, Julian Eaton, Angus Jackson, Isaiah Cham, Yianni Vallas, Theofilos Malliaros, Oscar Wegener, Thiago Pena, Joseph Stojkovic, Toby Winters, Noah Moufarrege, Angus Cirillo, Ciano Errichiello. Your dedication, teamwork and individual skills played a crucial role in this victory, and you should be immensely proud. This victory is not just a great achievement for your team, but also a source of pride for your supporters and the entire community. Your hard work, perseverance and talent have been truly inspiring. Once again, congratulations on your outstanding success, and thank you for making us all proud. Keep up the fantastic work!

RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH CABRAMATTA

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)—On the 26th of November 2023, I had the privilege of attending the Fundraising Lunch "With Music and Dancing" organised by the Russian Orthodox Church Cabramatta. The funds raised will go towards the interior fit out of the Cabramatta Church Hall. I had a chance to meet Father Boris Ignatievsky, Father Andrew Morgan, members of the Parish Council and many members of the community especially from the South Western Sydney areas. They provided me insights into the history of their organisation and the wonderful work they are involved in. I also got a chance to enjoy their music, some were traditional Russian music and others were popular Western music. This engagement with communities in my electorate brings immense joy and fulfillment. I have learnt so much and feel so lucky to represent such diverse communities in my area. Such experience reinforces our value of understanding, inclusivity and our shared values of serving our communities. I thank the organising committee for inviting me to this event and look forward to continue working with them.

WESTERN SYDNEY WANDERERS FC HEADQUARTERS

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)—During a recent visit to the Western Sydney Wanderers FC headquarters in Rooty Hill, I was captivated by the exceptional facilities that underscore the club's dedication to excellence. The comprehensive tour provided insights into their world-class grounds and state-of-the-art training setups. The meticulously maintained facilities not only spoke volumes about the club's commitment to fostering top-tier athletes but also highlighted a keen focus on creating an environment conducive to optimal performance. The atmosphere within the headquarters was nothing short of vibrant, pulsating with the energy of passionate athletes and the dedication of coaches. It was evident that this space transcended the traditional boundaries of a sports facility; it embodied a profound sense of community. The synergy between athletes and coaches, coupled with

the cutting-edge infrastructure, painted a picture of a club not just pursuing victories on the field but also nurturing a close-knit community that thrives on mutual support and shared aspirations.

ASIAN WOMEN AT WORK

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)—On the 19 November 2023, I joined the Premier of NSW the Hon Chris Minns and my Parliamentary colleague Jason Yat-Sen Li Member for Strathfield in attending the Asian Women at Work 2023 Annual General Meeting. This organisation serves the community in many ways, including providing English classes, workplace outreach, support groups, seminars, telephone information, referral, advocacy and others. Many of these women were refugees or newly arrived migrants. They have gone through a lot to get here, and many continue to bear most of the burden of work at home. I understand that next year it would be 30th year anniversary since the establishment of Asian Women at Work. I congratulate them for this achievement. I understand Bich Thuy Pham has been in this organisation as a community worker and coordinator for the past 22 years. I thank Bich Thuy Pham and Ronnie Wang for their kind invitation to this event. I also would like to congratulate all the current and past Executive Committee members for their wonderful work.

JASON CASHIN

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast)—Congratulations to Jason Cashin who will be starting the 2024 Rugby League season as Wyong Roos Under-19 coach. With Jason's long record of success with the Wyong Roos, excelling as both as a Wyong Roos player and coach, but most importantly understanding the systems and culture of the club. Some highlights of Jason's achievement in the club include, 2002 Player Wyong 1st grade premiership side, 2005 Senior Player of the Year Wyong, 2009 Coach Wyong u/16's premiership winning team, 2014 Trainer Wyong 1st grade premiership winning team, 2023 Coach Wyong u/15's premiership winning team and 2023 Assistant Coach Wyong Under 19's. I wish Jason all the best in his new role in leading the Wyong Roos to a fabulous season ahead.

GRACE TURNER

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast)—Congratulations to year 4 student from Lakes Grammar Grace Turner, who entered the Central Coast Children's Art Competition, on show at the Toukley & Districts Art Society in Toukley, organised by Irene Collings. The young talented artist displayed her acrylic painting of red Orchids on canvas and received first place for her age group 10-12 and was presented The Art Studio Sketching Drawing Art Set. Well done to all the young people who displayed their artwork in the gallery space, with vibrant and engaging pieces for the community to view.

COMMUNITY BANK WYONG

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)—Community Bank Wyong celebrated their 20th Anniversary of serving the local Wyong community with the 20th Annual General Meeting of Wyong Town Financial Services Limited. The highlight of the celebration was the "20 Grand for 20 Years Project," where junior directors of 8 year 11 students from local High Schools, took on a task with the responsibility of researching not-for-profit groups in the local area to share a \$2,500 Community Grant. The Community Bank are committed to returning profits to the local area, by aiming to develop long-term prosperity with supporting programs to help empower local individuals and community groups. Also, the Wyong Community Christmas Carols are held annually by the Community Bank, putting together a great event for the community to enjoy. Congratulations to the Board of Directors and everyone involved who volunteered their time to provide leadership and governance skills within the Community Bank of Wyong.

RONALD KISSELL

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I would like to congratulate Ronald Kissell, from Mt Warrigal, who has been appointed as the inaugural head coach for the Shellharbour Sharks side in the Group Seven open women's tackle grade. The new outfit is part of an expansion of the club's women's program, complementing their two league tag teams in the 2024 competition. Mr Kissell indicated that the girl's game has really taken off in the area so it's something that he really wanted to be involved in. A couple of years ago, the Sharks just had a division two league tag team, this year they had two division two league tag teams, so they are now stepping up next year and fielding two league tag teams as well as a tackle team. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour community, I would like to express our congratulations to Ronald and wish him and the Sharks all the best for the 2024 season.

TAVIAN MATIC

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I would like to congratulate Tavian Matic, from Dapto High School, for undertaking a HSC course which provided him a Cert III, a remote licence to fly and also an Aeronautical Radio Operator Certificate which enables him to use the radio and air bands. Tavian was one of two students at the school to embark on the unique course with classes run through distance education consisting of both theoretical and practical components. Tavian commented that it was a three-hour class a week and plenty of support through UVAIR. He had to submit assessments weekly with a couple of practical lessons and tests. The subjects that students choose to study for their HSC can shape the experience of their final years of schooling and influence the paths they choose to take after graduation, but with more flexibility and options for unique and creative courses, young people are getting the opportunity to pursue their passions and even start their careers early, all within the public education system. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour community, I would like to express our congratulations to Tavian and wish him all the best in his future endeavours.

AYLA YORK

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I would like to congratulate Ayla, from Shellharbour Public School, for being selected to represent NSW at the upcoming School Sport Australia Championships being held from the 23 to 27 November 2023 at the Northern Athletic Centre in Tasmania. Ayla has qualified to represent NSW in the Long Jump and the combined Tetrathlon (100M, 800M, Shot Put and Long Jump). On behalf of the entire Shellharbour community, I would like to express our congratulations to Ayla and wish her all the best in her future sporting endeavours.

VIVIEN JONES

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)—Charlestown electorate local Vivien Jones has been named a recipient of the City of Newcastle Drama Association's Legacy Award for 2023. Vivien is being recognised for decades of work as an arts administrator, not to mention her countless hours of volunteering and extraordinary efforts to support the drama scene in the Newcastle area. She first became involved at Young People's Theatre when her son joined in 1991. Starting in 1996, she served as their costume designer and wardrobe coordinator. She also served as theatre manager, during which time she played a major role in rebuilding the theatre after the old venue burnt down. Vivian then served as the theatre manager at Newcastle Theatre Company for ten years. She has received many CONDA nominations for her work at YPT, Opera Hunter and the Newcastle Theatre Company, winning in 2007 for her costume designs for the YPT production of *Animal Farm*. Her contribution to theatre in Newcastle is immeasurable—and the current success of the Newcastle Theatre Company wouldn't have been possible without her commitment and hard work. There can be no doubt that this award is well-earned recognition. Congratulations, Vivien.

REMEMBRANCE DAY SERVICES

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)—Every year, at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month, Australians—and people all around the world—have an opportunity to reflect on the sacrifices made by women and men during wartime. Remembrance Day, which commemorates the 1918 armistice which led to the end of armed conflict during World War I, is important for so many reasons and I want to thank all those who dedicated their time to organising services for the Charlestown community. I attended the service at the Cardiff RSL Sub-Branch. As always, it was a beautiful, solemn and respectful event, and I was honoured to be invited, to join the Sub-Branch and their guests, and to lay a tribute. Thank you to Sub-Branch president Geoff Kelly and his team for the work they put into the service. I would also like to acknowledge the service held at the war memorial in Dudley and in particular the work of Dudley War Memorial Manager Gary Clement. Lest We Forget.

DANIEL SCOTT

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)—It takes an extraordinary artist to take the grief of a sudden and unexpected loss and transform it into art—but that is what Charlestown electorate-based dramatist Daniel Scott has done with his CONDA Award-nominated play *The Rabbit*. The City of Newcastle Drama Association Awards, the CONDAs, recognise outstanding achievements in Newcastle area theatre and Daniel has been nominated in the Best New Play or Musical Written for a Newcastle Company category for his work. *The Rabbit* is based on a story my Daniel's mother told him about herself and her younger brother fighting over a pet when they were five years old. During the writing process, as Daniel grappled with the grief of losing his father in an accident, it became a comedy about grief. Daniel set about examining the ways in which grief, and refusing

to deal with it in a healthy way, can cause damage to people grieving and to those around them. The Rabbit was staged by the Newcastle Theatre Company for two performances in September 2023. I am so pleased to see local artists show their art to the world, and I am so pleased to see that art recognised. Congratulations, Daniel.

BORDER BUILDERS CLEAN UP AT AWARDS

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to extend my congratulations to the outstanding Border businesses who have been honoured in this year's Housing Industry of Australia – CSR Victorian Housing and Kitchen and Bathroom Awards. Special recognition goes to: LA Smith Studio for Kitchen of the Year and Kitchen Design; Alatalo Brothers for Small Commercial Project; Scott James for Renovation/Addition of the Year; B&H Homes for Project of the Year. The presentation of these awards took place in Melbourne at the Crown's Palladium, in front of a gathering of 1000 individuals. I acknowledge the hard work and accomplishments of these local businesses and wish them continued success as they work and inspire other businesses to excel.

ANAM FATIMA

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)—I would like to recognise and congratulate St George Girls High year 11 student, Anam Fatima for completing the Premier's Reading Challenge 11 times. The Premier's Reading Challenge aims to encourage a love of reading for students across NSW. It is not a competition but a challenge for each student to read more literature and read more widely. Starting at Beverley Hills Public School in 2013, Anam has completed the Premier's Reading Challenge 11 times, every year from kindergarten to year 10. Even during the lockdown restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, Anam persisted and continued her love of reading participating in the Challenge despite the disruption to her usual school routine. Anam received the Gold certificate in 2016 for completing the Premier's Reading Challenge 4 times and the Platinum certificate in 2019 for completing the Challenge 7 times. This achievement is also a great reflection on the support and encouragement of her teachers and family, for encouraging a life-long love of reading over many years. I would like to celebrate and commend Aman for this monumental accomplishment. Her ongoing commitment and passion for reading is an inspiration to us all.

CYRENA ZHAO

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)—I would like to recognise and congratulate St George Girls High year 11 student, Cyrena Zhao for completing the Premier's Reading Challenge 11 times. The Premier's Reading Challenge aims to encourage a love of reading for students across NSW. It is not a competition but a challenge for each student to read more literature and read more widely. Starting at Blakehurst Public School in 2013, Cyrena has completed the Premier's Reading Challenge 11 times, every year from kindergarten to year 10. Even during the lockdown restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, Cyrena persisted and continued her love of reading participating in the Challenge despite the disruption to her usual school routine. Cyrena received the Gold certificate in 2016 for completing the Premier's Reading Challenge 4 times and the Platinum certificate in 2019 for completing the Challenge 7 times. This achievement is also a great reflection on the support and encouragement of her teachers and family for encouraging a life-long love of reading over many years. I would like to celebrate and commend Cyrena for this monumental accomplishment. Her ongoing commitment and passion for reading is an inspiration to us all.

JENNIFER LUONG

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)—I would like to recognise and congratulate St George Girls High year 12 student, Jennifer Luong for completing the Premier's Reading Challenge 11 times. The Premier's Reading Challenge aims to encourage a love of reading for students across NSW. It is not a competition but a challenge for each student to read more literature and read more widely. Starting at Brighton Le Sands Public School in kindergarten, Jennifer has completed the Premier's Reading Challenge every year since 2012, finishing the Challenge for the 11th time in 2022. Even during the lockdown restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, Jennifer persisted and continued her love of reading participating in the Challenge despite the disruption to her usual school routine. Jennifer received the Gold certificate in 2015 for completing the Premier's Reading Challenge 4 times and the Platinum certificate in 2018 for completing the Challenge 7 times. This achievement is also a great reflection on the support and encouragement of her teachers and family for encouraging a life-long love of reading over many years. I would like to celebrate and commend Jennifer for this monumental accomplishment. Her ongoing commitment and passion for reading is an inspiration to us all.

JUMP SWIM SCHOOL ST MARYS

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney)—I would like to congratulate Jump Swim School St Marys, for winning 'Jump! Swim Schools Franchise of the Year' 2023. Jump Swim School does great work in servicing the wider community of St Marys. They are dedicated to teaching children and adults how to swim, while aiding the progress of their

swimming skills. Furthermore, I would like to congratulate Miss Lee who won the 'Best Jump! Swim Teacher' of 2023. These are great achievements for both the swim school and Miss Lee, who dedicate their time to teaching children the vital skill of swimming and water safety. Congratulations!

KATE MCCLYMONT

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)—On behalf of the Sydney electorate, I would like to record congratulations and thanks to investigative journalist Kate McClymont. Ms McClymont is well known to NSW residents for exposing criminal and corrupt behaviour, with her articles in the Sydney Morning Herald drawing attention and investigations from ICAC and others, with a number of high profile court cases relying on her in-depth investigations and relentless pursuit of justice. Her reporting is essential reading for anyone concerned about exposing wrongdoing up to the highest levels of government, celebrity and business. Kate's work has resulted in appointment as a Member of the Order of Australia, induction to the Media Hall of Fame, 10 Walkley Awards and now a special Walkley for her outstanding fearless reporting over 30 years. I regularly hear from constituents about the need for action on the cases she uncovers. The Sydney electorate has long benefitted from Kate's fearlessness and determination to lay bare scandal, fraud and vice. We hope that this brave journalism will continue, with other journalists following in her footsteps and other media outlets supporting investigative journalism. I thank Kate for her many years of exposing corruption and maladministration.

SARAH JOYCE

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—I would like to take this opportunity to recognise an inspiring constituent Sarah Joyce and the wonderful advocacy work of the Sarah Joyce Project in raising awareness for meningococcal disease. Meningococcal disease is an acute bacterial infection that can cause death within hours if not recognised and treated in time. Although most victims will recover fully, 10 per cent of those infected will die, and around 20 per cent will have permanent disabilities. At the age of 30, Sarah had just landed her dream job when she was struck down with the disease. Sarah became critically ill and was lucky to survive. Since contracting the illness six years ago Sarah has just endured her 70th operation. Despite her ongoing daily health challenges, Sarah continues to raise much needed awareness and strong advocacy to ensuring the vaccine for the Meningococcal B strain which is the most common cause of illness, disability, and death of all strains in Australia, is funded under the National Immunisation Plan for all. Thank you, Sarah, for your continued efforts to raise the community's awareness of Meningococcal disease which is a vaccine preventable disease. Everyone should check their vaccination records and speak with their GP.

MURRAY BRAUND

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—I would like to take this opportunity to celebrate my constituent Murray Braund who was recently inducted into the Surf Life Saving Australia Hall of Fame, which commemorates and recognises members who have achieved outstanding accomplishments and exceptional contributions to the development of surf lifesaving in Australia. Murray Braund is a distinguished Member and Life Member of the Avoca Beach Surf Life Saving Club and was a formidable, highly respected, inspirational and distinguished competitor during an illustrious career spanning 16 competitive seasons from the late 1960's to the mid 1980's. Murray is considered one of the country's finest ever surf ski paddlers and arguably the finest exponent of surf ski paddling of his generation as evidenced by his three World championships, seven Australian championships, five Interstate championships and 13 NSW championships in open surf ski and team events. Murray was also an accomplished marathon surf ski paddler and was also the driving force of the highly successful Pye Australian Surf Ski Challenge held during the 1980's. After retiring from competition, Murray competed in several World Masters events adding three more titles to his list of achievements. Congratulations Murray on this distinguished recognition and accolade.

MEALS ON WHEELS

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate this fantastic community focused organisation. For over 54 years, Meals on Wheels Central Coast has been providing a much-needed quality service to our seniors and people with disabilities with the help of over dedicated 200 volunteers. Meals on Wheels is not just about delivering an affordable nutritious meal. This service improves the lives of locals, allowing them to continue to live independently in their homes and provide a source of companionship for those who may otherwise be isolated. Just knowing someone will be dropping by to say hello is a boost to everyone's health and happiness. Meals on Wheels Central Coast recently reached a huge milestone delivering 16,000 meals for the month of September. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to join volunteers, such as Barry on delivery runs and to see firsthand the impact a personally delivered meal, having a friendly chat, and completing a wellness check can improve people's lives. Congratulations to everyone involved with Meals on Wheels Central Coast. Your exceptional service and wonderful army of volunteers exemplifies the community spirit that makes living on the Central Coast very special.

VERONICA PETER

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt)—I wish to recognise Veronica Peter, Known as Vv Pete, is an up-and-coming Australian rapper and singer from my electorate. Vv Pete has secured multiple performances at venues such as the Sydney Opera House and the Oxford Arts Factory, a testament to her extreme talent and popularity. With just two tracks released Vv claimed the Next Big Thing award at the annual FBi Radio Sydney Music Art and Culture Awards in 2022. I congratulate Vv on receiving this outstanding industry award and I look forward to seeing her future successes.

BANKSTOWN AIRPORT INVESTMENT

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills)—I would like to commend the Aeria Management Group for their unwavering commitment to investment in the future of Bankstown Airport, a hub for aviation, industry, and business in the local area. Aeria Management Group has recently announced an investment that will fundamentally transform and elevate Bankstown Airport. The heart of these ambitious plans is the proposed aviation hub, featuring up to nine new hangars, which will bring greater facilities and services to Bankstown Airport. The commitment to this venture not only strengthens the airport's position as a key player in the aviation industry but also amplifies its potential as a driving force for economic growth and job creation in the area. This monumental announcement was unveiled during the City of Canterbury Bankstown's CB Evolve event at Bankstown Airport which I attended on 8 November. The event was a testament to the unwavering dedication of Aeria Management Group and their vision to elevate Bankstown Airport to new heights. I applaud Canterbury Bankstown Mayor Bilal El-Hayek and the team at Aeria for their collaboration with the community and their investment in the future of Bankstown Airport and the East Hills Community.

INDY HAGGETT

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills)—Congratulations to Indy Haggett of Picnic Point Public School for being awarded first prize (primary student) in the 31st Mil-Pra Aboriginal Education Consultative Group's [AECG] art competition. Indy is a First Nations student in Year 4. Her work, entitled 'Indy's Story', was showcased at the Casula Powerhouse during November and is a self-portrait with her totem, the 'dhuliiny'. The 'dhuliiny' (goanna) is the animal of Indy's people, the Wiradjuri people. The Wiradjuri show their stories through art and symbols. Indy's creative talent shines through her work. I was so grateful to Indy and her school for gifting me her artwork when I attended the school earlier in November. Indy is also a published author having recently participated in the Warami Book Launch, which showcased First Nations students' artwork and storytelling from the Bankstown Network of Schools. Cultural and spiritual identity of First Nations children is vital for their sense of belonging and connection. Thank you to Picnic Point Public's Principal, Karen Sellick and the P&C for inviting me to tour the school and presenting me with Indy's work. It was an honour to meet Indy and speak to her about her amazing achievements.

PADSTOW PARK PUBLIC SCHOOL'S COLOUR RUN

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills)—I congratulate Padstow Park Public School on the success of their annual Colour Run event. Organised by the dedicated school P&C, with generous raffle contributions from local businesses, this event marked a new record, raising a remarkable total of \$7,992. The funds raised during the Colour Run will undoubtedly have a substantial impact on the school's resources, enriching the educational experience for the students. Such accomplishments are a testament to the unity and commitment of the Padstow Park Public School community, showcasing the power of coming together for a common goal. The Padstow Park students exhibited extraordinary determination and resilience despite the heat, as they walked, skipped, hopped, and ran through each course, all while being doused in vibrant coloured powder. I'd also like to recognise Padstow Park's top fundraisers, including the Support Unit which raised an incredible \$1,395. The success of this fundraiser is an example of how community's collective efforts can lead to positive change. I would like to extend my thanks to Padstow Park Public School, its P&C, the local businesses that contributed to the success of this event.

NEWPORT VILLAGE

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—Today, I acknowledge the fundraising achievements of residents of Newport Village and commend them on their donation of \$2,500 to the Wauchope District Memorial Hospital's Palliative Care Unit. Two major events in the Newport Village of Port Macquarie have raised \$2,500 for the Palliative Care Unit allowing for the purchase of an alternating air-pressure mattress designed to manage and prevent pressure-related injuries. The state-of-the-art mattress has received praise from staff and patients alike and are a valuable addition maintaining the high level of care and comfort at the Unit. A Halloween Party and a Melbourne Cup High Tea were hosted at Newport Village by resident John Norton, also known as 'Mr Entertainment' to raise funds for their chosen charity. John led a 15 strong Committee called the 'Busy Bees', focussed on delivering delicious food, good music and a unique method of fundraising. Dave Stephens entertained

a crowd of 70 residents to East Side Jazz and Joy Sabitzer coordinated the gift bags and handknitted berets for patients. I thank all the residents of Newport Village for supporting these wonderful events that have fundraised to make such a difference in the lives of people staying in the Palliative Care Unit.

MATTHEW BRUCE AUSTRALIAN MUAY THAI CHAMPION

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—Today I recognise Matthew Bruce, a Port Macquarie Mixed Martial Arts Fighter who has successfully claimed the ISKA Light Heavyweight Australian Muay Thai Title on November 18th in Brisbane. This outstanding achievement was six years in the making with gruelling sacrifices along the way and as Matt acknowledges "between work, training and sacrificing time away from friends and family to put in the effort ... that Title made it all worth it". However, the Title did not come without its challenges and a few days out from the fight his opponent pulled out. His new opponent Dave Mitchell requesting the original fight discipline being kickboxing be changed to the Mixed Martial Art discipline being Muay Thai. Matt agreed to this change and in true Australian spirit and determination rose to the occasion to take the Title. Matt now has his sights set on his original goal of winning the Australian title in kickboxing. Matt is our local ambassador for the sport and I join with the community to wish him every success in the future as he chases his second Australian title.

SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS LILY MAQUEDA & ARALYN MARTIN

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—Congratulations to Year 12 students Lily Maqueda and Aralyn Martin from Hastings Secondary College Port Macquarie Campus for receiving scholarships from the University of Newcastle and the University of New England respectively which were announced at their recent School Graduation Formal. As a former teacher I firmly believe that the key to a successful and gratifying future comes from a strong and consistent commitment to education. Students Lily Maqueda and Aralyn Martin are a perfect example of this and are now reaping the rewards. Lily Maqueda is described as an all-round student, demonstrating excellence in sports and a wide range of academic subjects. At graduation, Lily was presented with a \$2,000 scholarship from the University of Newcastle. Lily will undertake a Bachelor of Design in Architecture in 2024. Aralyn is another high achiever who has already set goals for her academic future. Aralyn was awarded a \$2,000 scholarship from the University of New England for her consistent and hardworking effort in multiple subjects. Aralyn will study a Bachelor of Agriculture and a Bachelor of Law. Fantastic role models and ambassadors of public education, I wish Lily and Aralyn well in their future endeavours.

KANDY TAGG

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)—Mr Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and thank Kandy Tagg who has recently stepped down as President of the Management Committee of Community Northern Beaches. CNB is a unique not for profit organisation, located in the heart of Manly, serving the whole community of the Northern Beaches. CNB has worked with the most vulnerable since the mid-1970s operating firstly as a drop in centre for refugees, the homeless and victims of domestic violence offering over 15 core services. Kandy has been closely linked with CNB from the days it was known as Manly Community Centre and is typical of those members of my community who see a need and step up to fill that need. Kandy first began fundraising for CNB then progressed to working as a volunteer on the front desk greeting clients with a smile and a cuppa. Kandy was appointed as a member of the Management Committee in July 2017, then Vice President and finally President in January 2022. Thank you Kandy for your commitment and professionalism you have brought to the role of President – I look forward to seeing your next volunteering role in my community!

CHRIS LAKE

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)—Mr Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Chris Lake who has recently been appointed to the position of Chair of the Management Committee of Community Northern Beaches. CNB is a unique not for profit organisation, located in the heart of Manly, serving the whole community of the Northern Beaches. CNB has worked with the most vulnerable since the mid-1970s operating firstly as a drop in centre for refugees, the homeless and victims of domestic violence offering over 15 core services. Chris has been on the Committee since early 2022 and brings to the Committee exemplary skills of leadership and governance combined with over 30 years working in the financial industry. Chris is also the Co-Founder of mindAssist, Mental Health First Aid Trainers. With these management and interpersonal skills Chris is a well-placed advocate to lead CNB and I know he will be a steady hand for the organisation into the future.

RICHARD SMITH

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)—Mr Speaker, I rise today to put forward my heartfelt thanks to Richard Smith of Balgowlah Automotive and his team. Recently, a disturbing incident occurred in my electorate when nearly 30 car windows were destroyed by an act of vandalism. Richard was advised by my office that a young mother who had only arrived in Manly from Dubbo the night before, had become a victim of the vandal when her

3 car windows were destroyed, leaving her with no ability to pay for their replacement. The young mum was in Manly with her children who were being medically assessed at the Royal Far West facility. Richard immediately sourced new windows, installing them quickly at no cost to the grateful mother who was able to leave Manly returning home to Dubbo a few days later. Richard and the team at Balgowlah Automotive who in 2024 will have been part of the local community for 50 years, exemplify all that is good, all that is amazing and all that is generous in our community. Well done to Richard and Balgowlah Automotive – for this young woman her traumatic experience was turned into an uplifting story. Thank you.

HELENSBURGH LIONS CLUB

Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote)—Lions clubs do so much for their communities – and the Helensburgh chapter is certainly no exception. It was particularly heart-warming to see such an enormous turnout for the club's Country Fair, held on October 28 this year. It was the first time the festival had been held in four years and judging by the estimated 3000 people who attended, it was certainly worth the wait. The suburb of Helensburgh is a very tight-knit community, so events like this are always highlights on the annual local calendar. It was heartening to read the Illawarra Flame and see the club's president Rod Peppernell say the Charles Harper Park seemed 'full' from opening to closing time. The Helensburgh Lions Club was chartered in 1979 and featured more than 40 original members. Since that year the club has gone from strength to strength and has helped support a wide variety of community projects. On behalf of the entire Heathcote community, thank you to all the past and present members of Helensburgh Lions Club for all your hard work and dedication.

ROYAL NATIONAL PARK ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTRE

Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote)—Educating young people about the importance of protecting and preserving our native flora and fauna is so important. It's also why places like the Royal National Park Environmental Education Centre are so critical. The aim of the facility is to help students from kindergarten all the way through to year 12 gain an appreciation and greater understanding of the environment and the need to ensure it not only survives, but also thrives. Given the challenges we face now in terms of climate change, that message has never been more important. The facilitators of the programs are qualified and highly experienced Department of Education teachers. Whilst the centre is located in the Royal National Park – the second oldest National Park in the world – teachers also host programs on site at schools as well. Thank you to all the staff at the Royal National Park Environmental Education Centre for your commitment to educating our younger generations. I know our community will bear the fruits of your labour in years to come.

GOULBURN MODEL T FORD CLUB

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)—I rise today to recognise the Goulburn Model T Ford Club. The Goulburn Model T Ford Club Inc. NSW celebrated its fiftieth Anniversary over four days at the end of October. The celebratory event saw motoring enthusiasts drive their vintage cars that were manufactured between 1908 and 1927 to Goulburn. Not only were there opportunities for the public to admire these cars around town, but there was also a motionless display held at the Goulburn Historic Waterworks. The Model T Ford was named the "Car of the Century" in 1999, as it was seen as the opportunity that brought motoring back into the reach of the working-class populations. The event was also a wonderful opportunity for participants to catch up with long-time members and those new to the club. A time to reflect on the time Model T Ford enthusiasts met in Sydney for the first time back in 1973 and going on to form a Model T Ford Club, not realising at the time the longevity of it. I congratulate all members on their continuing enthusiasm and preservation of the Model T Ford history and thank them for choosing to celebrate their 50th year in Goulburn.

MISS BELLA CROKER

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)—I rise today to recognise Miss Bella Croker. Bella is a Year 10 Crookwell High School student, who has demonstrated her amazing hockey skills and talents for several years now. Bella has held representative and leadership roles as part of the winning team at the Australian Nationals in 2021, and in 2019 she led the NSW PSSA State hockey team. Bella has continued to be recognised for her talent, determination, and athleticism. Having now been selected in the Australian Under 17 All Stars Hockey team. Bella, alongside her teammates will be travelling to Kuala Lumpur to play for Australia in the Mirawan Cup in November. I sincerely acknowledge and congratulate Bella on her extraordinary achievements in hockey and wish her the very best for her debut in the Australian team.

AGENT 2.0 REAL ESTATE

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)—I rise today to recognise Agent 2.0 Real Estate. Agent2.0 Real Estate – Goulburn is an independently owned real estate agency, which specialises in sales, property management and land developments in Goulburn, whilst also servicing Crookwell, Taralga and Murulan areas. Recognition of the importance to continue to evolve, has seen the business model of Agent 2.0 embrace

new technologies and the digital space, to provide property services to meet client needs. This foresight has been recognised, seeing Agent 2.0 being awarded the Excellence in Innovation award at the Goulburn Business Awards held in July. More recently Agent 2.0 has been the recipient of The Excellence in Innovation at the 2023 Far Coast Business Awards. This award is for a business that has implemented innovative solutions for new and existing needs through the introduction or improvement of a product, technology, or application that impacts the wider community. I congratulate the team at Agent 2.0 Real Estate and their ability to adopt and incorporate new and emerging technology, to meet the ever growing and developing demands of the community to service their needs. Congratulations on your awards.

WALK AGAINST VIOLENCE

Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith)—Each year the Penrith community reaffirms its commitment to ending domestic and family violence by hosting a campaign to deliver the important message that everyone deserves to feel safe, and that domestic and family violence will not be tolerated in Penrith. Locally we know that three women have died as a result of domestic attacks from partners or ex-partners since November 2022. As part of this year's 16 Days of Action Against Gender-Based Violence campaign, the Walk Against Violence was a community event facilitated by council and held along the Nepean River last Sunday 26 November. Participants gathered at the 'blue tree' for speeches and formalities before our sombre walk. Zonta Club of the Nepean Valley had a powerful exhibition of empty shoes at the end of the walk, this depicted every Australian woman or child killed in 2023. We also had a Yarn bombing workshop of French knitting, crochet, knit, and pompom making to contribute to the yarn installation. The yarn bombing installation along Mulberry Tree Lane at Tench Reserve will be in place during the 16 days of action. After our walk community enjoyed a breakfast BBQ, live music, and other family activities.

BHUTANESE IN AUSTRALIA

Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith)—I recently attended the Association of Bhutanese in Australia [ABA] Sydney, community's Annual Day celebration marking the first arrival of Bhutanese in Sydney in 2008 under the humanitarian settlement program. There are now close to 7,000 people settled across Australia including around 450 people in Sydney mostly living in Western Sydney throughout Penrith and Blacktown. Those resettled under this program had spent over 17 years in Nepalese refugee camps calling Australia home. Western Sydney has become a haven for those who have fled adversity, providing independence, freedom and a sense of community. This year's theme was aptly named Harmony through diversity. The program on the day included speakers and many cultural performances. A special highlight included a book launch: Bhutan Migration History - A life in three countries. The book, published by SydWest Multicultural Services is based on seven individual stories who share their learnings of their settlement journey. They represent the experiences and voices of the Southern Bhutanese community spread across the world. I look forward to this colorful celebratory event each year. I think it is fitting that during the program that we all acknowledged the community seniors by placing a tributes around their shoulders.

ERSKINE PARK RFS 60TH ANNIVERSARY

Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith)—On 29th November 1963, the Penrith Mayor chaired a meeting at St Marys Memorial Hall to form a new Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade within the area. Subsequently, the South St Marys Bush fire Brigade was formed. Initially the Brigade equipment was housed in a trailer which was stored at the Captain's house and contained Knapsacks and beaters. In 1980 the Brigade's name was changed to Erskine Park Rural Bushfire Brigade. Mr Frank Blackwell kindly donated land on Lenore Lane for a brigade station to be built, in 1981 a 2 bay station was built to house the brigades firefighting appliance, an old Bedford Truck. In 2006 the Brigade relocated to its current location to a purpose-built station. Since the Brigades formation, the now 52 members remain integrated within the Erskine Park/St Clair community, assisting with fund raising events, a Santa's run, attending incident calls within the area and assisting with out of area commitments. Most notably members have been involved in large bush fire events such as the '94 Fires, 2003 Canberra Fires and more recently the 2019/2020 fires. Congratulations on 60 years and also Erskine Park members award recipients collectively with 83 years' service.

ROSS HALL - WENTWORTH

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—Madam/Mister Speaker, today I would like to recognise Ross Hall of Wentworth for his contribution to the Wentworth Shire community. Ross has been involved in the local scouting movement for over 50 years, beginning as a Cub at Curlwaa Pack before eventually moving up to a Group Leader, a role he still holds today. Ross attained the Queen Scout and has been recognized as one of three members within the Sunraysia District to receive his Silver Kangaroo, the highest award in Scouting. The 'Gang Show' is a Guiding and Scouting stage production for youth where Ross's 44-year contribution saw him awarded a Life Membership. He was further awarded a Life Membership for his 21 years as a civilian volunteer with

Wentworth Blue Light Disco. Ross was an early member of the Wentworth Show Society, and Neighbourhood Watch and today he continues to assist community groups in his capacity as a volunteer bus driver. I congratulate Ross on his many years and dedication to working with and empowering youth and support within our community. Your commitment is valued and appreciated.

NEIL PLUMRIDGE-COOMEALLA

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—Madam/Mister Speaker, today I would like to recognise Neil Plumridge of Coomealla for his drive, passion and persistence while building a big shed! A former teacher and deputy principal, of some 40 years, embracing the implementation of programs for disengaged youth, now embracing his community supporting mental and physical health of Men's Shed members. Neil became actively involved in Men's Shed, following his retirement in 2013 and was appointed publicity and promotions officer, and grants writer for the Dareton Men's Shed where all positions are still held today. With the committee and community support, Neil has played a huge part driving the funding and development of a new Men's Shed, 50m x 40m in size. On reflection when asked what's involved with building such a shed, Neil advised the first bit of advice I would give them is to find a good psychiatrist, and book weekly sessions! I congratulate Neil for his never-give-up attitude and 'can do' approach, wishing him and his committee a most successful launch of this magnificent shed in April 2024 during the Dareton Centenary celebrations.

JAN WHITE-WENTWORTH

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—Madam/Mister Speaker, today I would like to recognise Jan White, of Wentworth for her contribution of 34 years teaching and dedicated community service. Jan has been referred to a stalwart for the community, for numerous decades providing volunteer support to the New South Western Standard Bulletin as the founding editor for over 40 years, a member of the CWA for 50 years, Secretary of the Wentworth Bowling Club, and 20 years servicing Meals on Wheels. Jan's impact to the Wentworth Show earned her Life Membership this year and her involvement with the Wentworth Community Op Shop and past Swimming teacher role during school holidays have all resulted in significant benefit to the community. I wish to acknowledge and congratulate Jan's well documented contribution to the people of the Wentworth Shire and thank her for all her valued educational and community commitment.

CRONULLA GIRLS BOARDRIDERS CLUB

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)—I congratulate the Cronulla Girls Boardriders Club on celebrating its 25th anniversary. Started by Sari Lokollo and friends, she says the club started because the boys had Sharks Boardriders and they thought it fitting that they started their own girls club. From the club's first competition when numbers reached about 18 started, Cronulla Girls Boardriders began running regular local competitions and these continue today. For around six years sisters Kathryn and Jen Ward have been running the club as co-presidents. Jen says she loves that they are part of a movement for advancing women's sport and providing a place for women to feel supported and comfortable. She says it is important for them to run a serious club with competitive surfing, but they're also cognisant that surfing should be fun and social. Past and present club members got together on 25 November for the annual presentation and a 25-year party, where they spoke about how much they love their club. Congratulations to everyone who's been involved in Cronulla Girls Boardriders Club over the quarter century, giving young women the chance to enjoy surfing and compete in a supportive environment.

DR HELEN PROUDFOOT WOMEN IN PLANNING AWARD WINNER 2023 - TAMARA PRENTICE

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)—I would like to congratulate Tamara Prentice, award winner of the Dr Helen Proudfoot Women in Planning award for 2023. The award recognises Tamara's outstanding contributions which have enhanced and improved agricultural planning policy outcomes, along with the development of additional resources, supporting councils across the state. Tamara's role as Manager of Agricultural Land Use Planning-based at the Grafton Primary Industries Institute sees her lead a team of 10 land use planners across NSW, who were in fact the ones that nominated her for this award. I commend Tamara on her dedication and commitment to the work she loves and thank her for her contribution and positive impact in the agricultural industry. I look forward to hearing of the upcoming projects you are working on, well done Tamara!

TOBY POWER - JACARANDA KING

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)—I would like to congratulate Toby Power on being crowned Grafton's first 'Jacaranda King' since the Jacaranda Festival's humble beginnings, back in 1935. The 2023 Westlawn Jacaranda Royal Party Crowning ceremony took place in Grafton's Market Square on October 28, in front of a large and enthusiastic crowd of locals and visitors alike. The Clarence Valley crowd who attended the Crowning Ceremony were privileged to have as Guest of Honour, Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of NSW and the Governor's husband, Mr Dennis Wilson in attendance along with Guest of Honour, Troy Cassar-Daley. I would also like to congratulate Talissa Sparrow, crowned as the

2023 Jacaranda Princess while Sarah Langford was named Highest Fundraiser for the event. Grafton's Jacaranda Festival Committee and their dedicated volunteers are to be congratulated once again on an outstanding event, one that grows from strength to strength each year. Good luck in the year ahead representing Grafton, King Toby, you are sure to do us proud.

YAMBA AND MACLEAN MITRE 10 AWARDS

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)—I would like to congratulate the Maclean and Yamba Mitre 10 stores for taking home awards in the recent annual Independent Hardware Group NSW/ACT State Awards Dinner. The 2023 Independent Hardware Group NSW/ ACT Awards dinner and presentation was held at the Crowne Plaza Terrigal Pacific on October 13, with both Maclean's Mitre 10 manager Jo Luland and Yamba's Mitre 10 owners, Matthew and Alison White making the trip south for the event. To back up from last years' two awards at the Hardware Australia 2022 NSW Hardware and Industry Legend Awards, Yamba's Mitre 10 won the Northern Independents Village Small Store of the Year for the third year running. What outstanding achievements for our local businesses who continue to strive and deliver the best possible service to locals and visitors alike.

WAVERLEY SHIELD

Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse)—I would like to congratulate North Bondi on winning the 2023 Waverly Shield. Nippers from across the eastern suburbs including Bronte, Tamarama, Bondi, and North Bondi go head-to-head for the coveted Shield on an annual basis. This year, North Bondi won with a grand total of 1057 points – second place was Bronte on 647 points. As always, these carnivals are driven by the volunteers, who are mostly parents and club members. I would like to thank them for their time and dedication in raising the future surf life savers of tomorrow – including my own son who is enjoying Nippers at Nth Bondi. Congratulations North Bondi.

UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA - NSW

Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse)—I would like to acknowledge the United Nations Association of Australia (NSW). Under the leadership of CEO Dermot O'Gorman and President Patricia Jenkins, who I am proud to say is a local constituent, this is the pre-eminent institution in Australia promoting the objectives of the UN. Their purpose is to inform, inspire and engage Australians to create a safer fairer and more sustainable world for all. I would also like to congratulate the WWF, which won the prestigious UN Day Honour award at their Annual Gala Dinner for embodying UN values and priorities. We are all beneficiaries of the tireless work that these organisations undertake.

CARLA PENZA

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)—I am immensely proud to recognise Carla Penza, a talented pâtissier from Luddenham, who was recently crowned National Champion at the prestigious Bake Skills Fine Foods Festival held at the International Convention Centre in September. Carla's exceptional skills and creativity were on full display as she dazzled the judges with her impeccable pastry creations. Throughout the three-day competition, Carla demonstrated her mastery in the art of baking, creating an array of exquisite items including Mille Feuille, Pâtes Brest, Eclairs, Profiteroles, Seafood pies, Vol-au-vents, and sweet tarts. As a result of her outstanding performance, Carla was awarded an all-expenses-paid trip to France. This six-day culinary journey will include attending the Sirha Europain in France, a renowned exhibition for bakery and pastry professionals. Carla's success is not just a personal achievement but a source of great pride for our community. Her dedication, passion, and talent are an inspiration to aspiring chefs and bakers in our region and across Australia. On behalf of our community, I extend heartfelt congratulations to Carla Penza on being named National Champion and wish her the best for her exciting journey ahead in France.

ORAN PARK NETBALL CLUB

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)—I rise today to celebrate the remarkable achievements of the Oran Park Netball Club in their 2023 season. This thriving local club, established in 2013 with just four teams, has shown tremendous growth and spirit, a testament to the dedication and passion of everyone involved. This year, the club has seen an impressive number of over 180 players take to the court, spread across 18 diverse teams. Special recognition must be given to two of the club's teams who made it to the grand finals this year, showcasing exceptional skill, teamwork, and sportsmanship. Their achievements are a source of pride for the entire community and an inspiration to their fellow players. I would like to extend a special congratulations to Club President Samantha Perovich and all the volunteers, coaches, and members who have worked tirelessly to make this year a resounding success for the Oran Park Netball Club. On behalf of our community, I extend my warmest congratulations to the Oran Park Netball Club for an outstanding year and for being an exemplary model of community sportsmanship and teamwork.

1ST NORTHBRIDGE SEA SCOUTS CHRISTMAS TREE

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—It is a joy to see the 1st Northbridge Sea Scouts continuing their popular tradition of selling fresh Christmas trees for the 2023 festive season. The annual Christmas tree drive is one of their great fundraising initiatives with proceeds going towards equipment such as life jackets, sails, and tents for the Sea Scouts' activities throughout the year. The proceeds from the trees will also help fund upgrades and maintenance to the Scout Hall and Boat Shed. Cultivated in the Southern Highlands of NSW, these premium conifers make beautiful natural Christmas trees and will be an adornment to any home. I am pleased to support this great effort each year and look forward to the Sea Scouts visiting the Willoughby Electorate Office soon to help me install and decorate our Christmas tree! I commend the Northbridge Sea Scouts for this great community fundraising initiative and trust that this 2023 Christmas season will be a real success.

NORTH SHORE MULTIPLE BIRTH ASSOCIATION

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—I was delighted to celebrate some early Christmas fun with the North Shore Multiple Birth Association on Sunday 26 November. The Association does wonderful work supporting parents through the challenges of raising twins, triplets and sometimes even larger multiple births of newborns. As a not-for-profit club run by a team of dedicated volunteers, the Association provides care and support for new parents of multiple births with periodic catch-ups, family-friendly socials, information sessions, webinars, equipment hire and special discount offers for its members. As the parent of young children, I love the work that the Association does to help parents of multiple births in Willoughby and other areas of Sydney's North Shore. Attending the Association's Christmas party with my parliamentary colleague, Matt Cross MP, and my Federal colleague, Paul Fletcher MP, it was wonderful to meet the families and children of the Association, including twenty from Willoughby. I thank the Association for making me feel so welcome and for the remarkable contribution they make to our community.

CHINESE TEA EXPO

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—Willoughby is home to a large Chinese Australian community and on Friday 24 November, it was my pleasure to join my local community for the opening of the Chinese Tea Expo at the Civic Pavilion in Chatswood. Together with the Mayor of Willoughby, diplomatic and community leaders, it was wonderful to be present for the Expo showcasing such an iconic feature of Chinese culture. At the Expo, visitors were able to enjoy free tea-tasting and interact with over thirty different tea-makers from China. I was impressed by the plethora of different teas and exquisite tea sets on display. Tea drinking is such a focal point for Chinese communities around the globe, including my community of Willoughby. I know that Chatswood itself is home to many tea houses where locals can savour a pot of authentic Chinese tea. On any given day, one will find these tea houses buzzing with activity as locals and visitors sip and savour their favourite tea, making Chatswood the ideal location for staging the Chinese Tea Expo. I would like to thank all involved for making this Expo a great success!

VALOUR SPORT NETTY LEGEND

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)—I rise today, to commend Stacey Mawby from Nambucca Valley Netball Association who has been recognised as this month's Valour Sport "Netty Legend". It is admirable to see someone making a positive impact in their community, by creating a welcoming and knowledgeable environment for umpires wanting to take the whistle. Stacey fosters a sense of unity and teamwork among the badged umpires and mentors throughout the Association. Stacey embodies the spirit of a "Netty Legend". She is someone who not only excels in her role but also inspires others through her passion, dedication, and positive outlook. Whether that be umpiring for the little under-12s or in the high-stakes Netball NSW Premier League, Stacey approaches all levels with determination to be the best she can be and sets a fantastic example for aspiring umpires. Congratulations Stacey Mawby for being named this month's Valour Netty Legend. I hope to see you continue to inspire and uplift others with your amazing work on the netball court.

A LITTLE ACT OF KINDNESS GOES THE MILE

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)—A small act of kindness has warmed the heart of 11-year-old Isabella Northey as she battles one of the most testing times in her life. Today, I rise to acknowledge the work of a quiet volunteer, Glenda, who ensures children like Isabella have a comfortable flight when utilising vital services like Little Wings. Isabella travels with her family from Kempsey to Sydney using the Little Wings service – a not-for-profit organisation connecting ill children from regional areas to metropolitan hospitals. Glenda heard about Little Wings and decided to dedicate her time to creating quilts, paying for postage herself, and mailing them out to the service. To date, Glenda has constructed 24 quilts for children like Isabella. The generosity and selflessness caught the attention of Regional Road Express and offered to courier her blankets for free, saving Glenda money to buy more fabric for families across New South Wales. Thank you Glenda for your simple acts

of kindness and bringing comfort in times that are challenging for any family. Its stories like this that showcase the big hearts those in Oxley hold.

KEMPSEY UHA CREATE CHRISTMAS CHEER

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)—It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas, with the Kempsey community uniting, digging deep, to raise vital funds for medical equipment. I rise today, sharing my sincere gratitude for the Kempsey Branch of the United Hospital Auxiliary who held an inaugural bowls day and raised \$8,000 dollars for Kempsey Hospital. Bowlers went to great lengths to impress on the greens, with outfits fitted in tinsel to antlers and bells. While the many dedicated volunteers enhanced the event's success with barbecues, live music, prizes, and an auction. Kempsey Heights Bowling Club not only opened their fields, but opened their hearts to the fundraising cause, with a further \$2,000 donation on top of their meat raffle proceeds over the past few months. It's great to see our community coming together for a worthy cause, especially at this time of the year when our vulnerable members need crucial lifesaving equipment the most. Thank you Kempsey UHA for continuously going to the extra mile for hospital patients, their families and the hardworking staff members. You are a shining light in Kempsey and we are lucky to have your support.

WESTFUND DENTAL CARE

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)—Congratulations to the team at Westfund Health Insurance who won Excellence in Innovation at the Energy Australia Black Rose Excellence in Business Awards recently held in Lithgow. Westfund's origins go back to 1881 in the Vale of Clwydd. The Miner's Fund registered in November 1953 as the "Western District Mineworker's Medical Benefits Fund", which is today's Westfund. The new state-of-the-art Westfund Dental Care features cutting-edge dental technology, a wheelchair treatment room and sensory-designed spaces to ensure all patients feel comfortable when visiting. Westfund Dental Care is committed to the wellbeing and care of our regional community. The facility is staffed by highly qualified and experienced clinicians, dental assistants and support staff and is available to everyone. They are a Quality Innovation Performance (QIP) accredited facility owned and operated by Westfund, providing a range of no gap preventative treatment with restorative and cosmetic dental services. The team at Westfund Health Insurances are passionate about what they do and are worthy recipients of the Excellence in Innovation award.

WESTFUND HEALTH INSURANCE

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)—Congratulations to the team at Westfund Health Insurance who won Excellence in Large Business at the Energy Australia Black Rose Excellence in Business Awards recently held in Lithgow. Westfund's origins go back to 1881 in the Vale of Clwydd. The Miner's Fund registered in November 1953 as the "Western District Mineworker's Medical Benefits Fund", which is today's Westfund. Founded on, and driven by community values, Westfund has invested in their members and the communities it serves. It provides quality health insurance to families, couples, individuals and organisations across Australia and members have access to one of the nation's largest private hospital networks and 3,500+ network of providers. Insurance gives people peace of mind and it is important to have businesses such as Westfund supporting locals and offering these vital services. Westfund is also a large employer for the region which is helping to keep residents stay local and have fulfilling careers. The team at Westfund Health Insurances are passionate about what they do and are worthy recipients of the Excellence in Large Business award.

LUSH HAIR AND BEAUTY PORTLAND

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)—Congratulations to the team at Lush Hair & Beauty who won People's Choice at the Energy Australia Black Rose Excellence in Business Awards recently held in Lithgow. At their small salon in the heart of Portland, Lush Hair & Beauty take immense pride in fostering lasting relationships with their cherished clients. Everyone deserves to feel happy and confident in their own skin, Lush Hair & Beauty pamper their clients, so they leave each appointment feeling just like that. Winning People's Choice is a clear indicator of the support the residents of Lithgow, Portland and surrounding areas have thrown behind Lush Hair & Beauty. Building a successful business loved by all is no easy feat, yet owner Michelle and her team have done just that creating a community of their own in the salon. The team at Lush Hair & Beauty are passionate about what they do and are worthy recipients of the People's Choice award. Congratulations!

RECOGNITION OF MIA MONTGOMERY

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise the achievements of PLC Armidale student Mia Montgomery, who was selected to play halfback in the NSW Combined Independent Schools side, at the Australian secondary Schools Rugby League Championships held at Redcliffe. I congratulate Mia for taking every opportunity to accelerate her career in football and playing a range of football codes. Like many, Mia's journey began with Tackle Rugby as a junior, League-Tag and onto Rugby Union and Rugby League. Mia has played in the Central North Junior Rugby Union, Union for the Inverell Highlanders, Tackle Rugby League for

the Greater Northern Tigers, with the latter responsible for giving Mia a real taste for the sport of League. I commend Mia on her hard work and practice, along with her commitment to sport of Rugby League. A special thank you to PLC and all those supporting Mia to compete in League at this elite level.

INVERELL'S GOT TALENT COMPETITION

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise the talented entrants who took part in the 2023 Inverell's Got Talent competition held recently. Traditionally the talent show heralds the opening of the town's Sapphire Festival, with this year continuing the success of the event, having more than 20 contenders entering the competition and performing at a very high standard. I congratulate the overall winner, duo Virgil Sereva and Jonathan Maru, for their rendition of 'Tennessee Whisky,' which followed with an audience standing ovation. Other winners included: Best Original Song – Alex Munro; Best Junior Performer and winner of the Jenny Fox Memorial Prize - Savannah Lea and a highly commended to Fletcher Andrews. In the senior section: Clara Bryan and Susan Davis – vocal duo; Kiara Lind – dance; Alex Munro – vocal; and V.S. and J.M – vocal duo. I commend all involved in staging this event, including Tim Newburry the Coordinator; Judges Chris Richter, Jasmine Aleisha and Peter Champion; volunteers from the Inverell East Rotary Club, the Inverell community and the Inverell High School; Allen East for sound-engineering and lighting; Inverell Shire Council, sponsors, STA FM and the Inverell Times, each for their support.

ARMIDALE STUDENTS TO STAR IN ONSTAGE SHOWCASE

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise students from the Presbyterian Ladies' College (PLC) and The Armidale School (TAS) on being selected to perform in the prestigious OnSTAGE, which celebrates the most promising young talent in NSW. Students have been nominated and selected as part of their HSC Drama works, in terms of group and individual performances. I congratulate each of the students from the PLC Drama class: Makenzie Roberston, Nathea Ping Kee, Seraphina Katta, Gabrielle Cotterell, Chantelle Farag, Hattie Gilpin, Fi Fi Imberger and Catie Alcorn. Special thanks to their dedicated teachers and Head of Creative and Performing Arts Joanne Wysel. I also congratulate class teacher and the Head of Creative arts Andrew O'Connell and TAS Students: Pierre Morcellet Will Nash, Oliver Morse, Claude Toakley, Felicity Barton, Chelsea Bourke, Meave Churchard, Jasper O'Neil, Netty Whysall. I commend PLC and TAS and their teams behind the students, who have nurtured and supported their talent, as well as enriched all aspects of their everyday lives. Your time and effort given to the students is appreciated by all.

NICK ROTONDO

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)—I wish to bring to the attention of the House sad news from the West Ryde Rovers community of the passing of Nick Rotondo. A beloved and longstanding member known for his unwavering commitment and dedication to the club, Nick's departure has profoundly impacted those within and around the West Ryde Rovers. Nick was more than a member of the Rovers; he was a vital part of its spirit. His enthusiasm and love for the community were evident in everything he did, whether organising events, actively participating in activities, or offering a friendly chat. His presence was a source of joy and support, bringing light and laughter to the group. I know the void left by Nick's passing will be deeply felt, and that many in the local sporting community in particular will be reflecting on his lasting impact on their lives. As the Rovers move forward, Nick's legacy of kindness and community spirit continues to inspire. He will be dearly missed, but his memory will forever remain an integral part of the Rovers' history. Vale Nick Rotondo

DIWALI FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)—I wish to bring to the attention of the House the winners of the City of Ryde's first Diwali Festival of Lights competition. The competition invited local residents to festively decorate their homes and apartments - the first time in Ryde's history thanks to the initiative of Ryde Councillor Shweta Deshpande. The competition aimed to foster community spirit and cultural celebration, and I am sure will become a regular fixture in Ryde's ongoing program of events. Congratulations to Vishal Tripathi from North Ryde who took out top honours in the best house/townhouse display category, and to Sanjana Arora from Ryde and Manish Shah from Eastwood who were joint runners-up. I also acknowledge Rashmi Dhongade from Meadowbank who claimed the top spot in the best apartment category. Each display was meticulously set out, and I know brought much joy to passers-by. Diwali symbolises the triumph of good over evil and light over darkness, and I can't think of a better way to symbolise these values than through the lighting of homes. Congratulations to our winners, and thank you to everyone who participated. On behalf of all in this House I wish you a Happy Diwali.

2023 RYDE CHRISTMAS CARD COMPETITION

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)—I wish to bring to the attention of the House the winners of my first annual Christmas Card competition. This year's contest drew a spectacular array of entries, showcasing the immense artistic talent of our young participants. Congratulations to the following students who won their respective year

group prizes: Kindergarten: Angelina, from Eastwood Heights Public School; Year 1: Piper from Holy Spirit Primary School; Year 2: Sidhant from North Ryde Public School; Year 3: Ethan from St Michaels Primary School; Year 4: Yue from Ryde East Public School; Year 5: Olivia from St Charles Primary School; Year 6: Mia from Ryde Public School. Each demonstrated enormous talent, and creatively incorporated our theme of the year, 'The Magic of Christmas'. I also recognise Ava from Melrose Park Public School, who was the overall winner for 2023. Her work will form the cover of my official Christmas card, that will be sent to residents, stakeholders and community groups right across Ryde. Thank you to every student, their parents and schools for participating and bringing a little bit of Christmas magic to Ryde. Congratulations and Merry Christmas!

PAWS AT THE POINT

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)—Definitely deserving of the tag "ultimate dogs day out", Paws at the Point at Wentworth Point Town Square was the place to be on the 7th of October. Organised by Lauren aka Loz, the owner of Tasty Weiner Treats with support of Cambridge Markets Sydney. The event brought the local community together to celebrate our collective love and passion for dogs. Anyone who lives or has visited Wentworth Point in recent years will know how much the Pointers love their dogs so Paws at the Point offered locals an opportunity to showcase and spoil their beloved pets with toys, accessories and doggy treats available at multiple pop-up stalls. I had the pleasure of hosting my own stall, appropriately named PAWliament Pups (excuse the pun). We had set up our very own Pawliament Pups Throne Photo Booth, inviting small to medium dog owners the opportunity to take a cute picture of their dogs. I also thank Carla from Bankstown for her involvement at the event in announcing the Best Dressed Pooch at the Fashion Pawrade. It's great to see the popularity of Paws at the Point grow. A fabulous day for our canine friends and their carers.

100 YEARS OF ABC RADIO

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)—At 8pm on November 23rd, 1923, Sydney radio station 2SB became the first licensed station to broadcast over the airwaves in Australia. On that night a few hundred listeners tuned in to hear some "light orchestral music". This was the beginning of an era of news and entertainment in the home - transforming the Australian cultural and media landscape forever. Never before had news, politics, bible talks, plays, serials and music been so accessible to all. Over the next 100 years the station was renamed 2BL, then 702 and now ABC Radio Sydney. Interviews were rare until the 1930s and talkback wasn't embraced until 1973, well after it had become commonplace on commercial radio. In 2024 the ABC will move 300 staff across radio and television to Parramatta Square. As the true heart of Sydney, it makes sense to have a significant presence in Parramatta that will provide a unique opportunity to expand on its current operation to something much more substantial and reflective of the region. ABC Parramatta will be a home for innovation and collaboration, designed and equipped to help better reflect the news stories from across metropolitan Sydney for another 100 years.

ART TRAIL IN LISMORE CBD

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—The Lismore Regional Gallery was among the many victims of the devastating 2022 floods, but in typically gritty Northern Rivers style it has come up with an innovative way to keep exhibiting its precious surviving collection of local artworks – by making use of empty shopfronts around the city centre. Working closely with Lismore City Council, the Lismore Regional Library and CBD property owners, the gallery has established an interactive ArtVenture Trail to showcase decades of work by our regional artists. The trail currently includes reproductions of 13 artworks, with new art pieces being added and others coming down as shops fill up with new tenants. Overseeing the art trail rollout is Lismore Regional Gallery Curator Kezia Geddes, who says many of the pieces on display are by nationally and locally significant artists that have been part of the gallery's collection since 1948. It is also the first time these pieces have been on public exhibition since the 2022 disaster. So if you're visiting Lismore, pick up a map of the ArtVenture Trail at Lismore Regional Gallery's pop-up space at 46 Magellan Street in the CBD and start exploring!

LISMORE LAKE REVIVAL

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I'm very pleased to see plans afoot to bring back Lismore Lake as a community asset, after years of neglect which saw it become dilapidated. Located on the Bruxner Highway on the western approach to Lismore, the lake precinct comprises 10 hectares of lake surrounded by 14 hectares of parkland. Back in my early years in Lismore the lake was a scenic location and a magnet for picnicking families, swimmers and water skiers, but sadly fell into disrepair. The good news is that in September Lismore City Council signed a licensing agreement with community organisation Lismore Lake Incorporated to manage the precinct, which means the group can start fundraising and applying for grants. Lismore Lake Inc. President Brad Lancaster has been the driving force behind the revival project and is already in discussions with a local farmer to buy water to replenish the lake as required. Other priorities include weed removal, bush revegetation, upgrading toilet blocks and constructing an accessible 1.5km path around the lake. Motorised boating will not be allowed as the lake has become a bird sanctuary but swimmers and picnickers will once again be welcome, which is fantastic news.

ONE VISION EMPOWERING YOUTH

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—Congratulations to Mark Robertson, the Director of One Vision Productions, for winning the Julie Leitch Leadership through Lived Experience Award at this year's Wayahead Mental Health Awards ceremony held in Sydney on 6th October – a highlight of Mental Health Month in October. One Vision is a local production team that uses hip-hop music to inspire young people dealing with mental health issues and its work with schools in Tweed Shire over many years captured the judges' attention. Students taking part in One Vision's five-day intensive workshops write hip-hop songs, design film clips and then create them using their own raw talent. The full-scale musical and performance immersion frees participants to explore their passions and direct their lives, giving them the confidence to deal with feelings of shame, anxiety and depression. One Vision is rapidly attracting an overseas audience via its social media channels and one of its hip-hop film clips has already attracted more than 200,000 views. Now Mark and his team are about to release the MPOWER Rap app, which will be full of resources and challenges for young people to access wherever they are in the world. Well done One Vision!

RESEARCH AUSTRALIA - HEALTH AND MEDICAL RESEARCH AWARDS 2023

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)—On Thursday 2 November 2023, I attended the 2023 Research Australia Health and Medical Research Awards. Now in its 20th year, the awards recognise outstanding contributions to the fields of health and medical research. They are a springboard for impact and advocacy which is a significant driver of the creation of a healthier population and a healthier economy as a result. I recognise CEO and Managing Director of Research Australia, Nadia Levin; and General Manager Lucy Clynes for their leadership. Congratulations to the 2023 award winners Professor Michele Sterling from the University of Queensland, Professor Georgina Chambers from the National Perinatal Epidemiology and Statistics Unit at UNSW, Geoff Cumming from Karori Capital, Col Reynolds OAM from The Kids' Cancer Project, Dr James Pang from Monash University (who I sat next to on the night), Professor Jake Baum from UNSW, Associate Professor Angus Turner from Lions Eye Institute, and Emeritus Professor Caroline Isabel Bower AC from Telethon Kids Institute. I appreciate and I am grateful for all the work undertaken by researchers, and I am proud to be a strong advocate for health and medical research.

OXFORD FALLS GRAMMAR SPORTS PRECINCT

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)—On Friday 10 November 2023 I attended the Dedication Assembly for the new Oxford Falls Grammar (OFG) School Sports Precinct. Oxford Falls Grammar has a strong spiritual direction and quality contemporary education. I recognise Pastor Pringle for his ongoing support as the most recent past President and founding member of the School Board. Sport is an integral part of OFG education, evidenced by the school's alumni. It was wonderful to have Chloe Dalton OAM as the special guest speaker. Chloe has represented Australia in rugby in 2016 Olympics in Rio, the Sydney Uni Flames at the NBL, and GWS Giants and Carlton in AFL. What a role model for students! Despite the hurdles of COVID-19 pandemic and the 2022 floods, the Sports Precinct is now complete and includes basketball courts, a grass oval, new underground carpark and many other facilities which will greatly enhance school sports and activities. I recognise and thank Principal Dr Peter Downey, together with the School Board, staff and students of Oxford Falls Grammar. I am proud to represent many of the students and parents in the Parliament of NSW.

NORTHERN SUBURBS FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT'S DINNER

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)—On 3 November I attended the 2023 Northern Suburbs Football Association (NSFA) President's Dinner at the Kirribilli Club. Established in 1957, NSFA represents 30 clubs from the Sydney Harbour Bridge to the Hawkesbury that includes over 18,000 players who play for these clubs. The annual President's Dinner recognises outstanding contributions to the game of the many clubs, players and officials who have helped to make football the most popular sporting code in the Northern regions of Sydney. I recognise all the award winning clubs, including local clubs Gordon Football Club, Lindfield Football Club, and Turramurra United Football Club. I recognise President Kevin Johnson and Chair Ian Plant for their work, as well as the players, officials and the board who have contributed to the growth of the sport across the region. You cannot talk about football in Australia without mentioning the rise and rise of the fabulous Matildas, whose World Cup success has been a huge boost to interest in the sport.

RALPH PODOLSKI

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)—With a great honour, I want to acknowledge a remarkable artist on the Central Coast, Ralph Podolski, a 96-year-old Polish WW2 veteran. Ralph's artistic endeavour started in the 40s, right after he won a scholarship to the Academie Royal Des Beau-Art de Brussels. His artistic gift brought him a commendation medal for being first in his year, while he was studying at the Academie. Ralph Podolski's arts showcase the beauty and richness of his life experience. He lived through the bombing of Warsaw, survived

multiple concentration camps and the communist take-over in Poland; yet, he managed to enrich our world with his fabulous artworks. He migrated to Australia penniless in 1950 as a labourer, but his hunger for art studies took him to Canada and then, Paris. Eventually, he returned to Australia in 1964. During his lifetime, Ralph has created a marvellous collection of art and some of them will be exhibited at Gosford Regional Gallery in January. Moreover, he was also named as the finalist twice for the prestigious Archibald Prize. I invite the beautiful people of the Central Coast to come and experience Ralph's extraordinary life through his artworks.

UNCLE BOB WILLIAMS

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)—Uncle Bob Williams is known for his tireless efforts in lending a helping hand and a friendly ear to support some of the most vulnerable people in our community. In his working days, Bob was a much loved and sought after Indigenous Support Worker and in his retirement, Bob is still there for those in need. You can catch him turning a snag on the barbie at the Adventist Church in Woy Woy each fortnight, where they provide a place for homeless or disadvantaged community members to connect with others or access the Food Pantry. Bob is also a member of the Woy Woy and Umina Aboriginal Men's Group, working with communities, schools and Indigenous people who need help. Some of his best stories are around how the group has helped over a dozen school aged children to travel overseas to participate in their sporting ambitions. Last but not least, Bob is also a go-to-man for St Vinnies when they have an Indigenous person in need of support and guidance. Thank you for being a pillar of our community and for always lending a hand and an ear to those in need. You are truly amazing.

SPICES 29 GOAN INDIAN RESTAURANT

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)—One of the best things about the Central Coast is the food. We are so blessed with amazing restaurants, which offer various international cuisines around the world. Today, I want to praise a particular restaurant that wins our hearts. I would love to congratulate Spices 29 Goan Indian Restaurant for winning best Indian restaurant in Regional NSW, and the Bronze Award winner for the best Indian restaurant in Australia at the 2023 NSW Restaurant & Catering Hostplus Awards for Excellence. Opening its door to our community just over 5 years ago, Spices 29 has transformed our experience of authentic Indian cuisine. Moreover, the welcoming atmosphere at this restaurant is one of the biggest factors that attributes to their victory. The business owners, Mr Nelson Fernandes and Ms Selma Rocha have a combination of more than 20 years in the hospitality industry and this victory really showcases their hard work and passion for high quality food and services. Thank you, to the team of Spices 29, for continuously providing excellent food and services to our community. I believe that you will bring home more victories in the coming years.

SCHOOLS SPECTACULAR - LOCAL SCHOOLS FEATURED ARTISTS

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)—I congratulate Sutherland Shire students Nadia Yassine and Max Fernandez for their featured artist roles in the recent 2023 Schools Spectacular shows held on 24 and 25 November at Qudos Bank Arena. Getting a lead role is not an easy task and a dream for many students who have a passion for the performing arts. Nadia Yassine is from Cronulla High and Max Fernandez from Kirrawee High. They were among 146 students from the state who had a lead part in the show. Nadia and Max went through intensive rehearsals in the school holidays which included practicing routines, one-on-one workshops, styling, costume fittings and wellbeing sessions to prepare for the performance. They also had to undergo a rigorous audition process against more than 900 nominees to secure a part in the largest performing arts events in the Southern Hemisphere. I also congratulate Cronulla High's Ellenore Howison, Madison Pintley and Kyla Kearney, as well as Kirrawee High's Georgia Campbell and Sophie Milmlow who were featured dancers.

JOHN DOVER

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—Speaker, I would like to recognise the incredible effort of Lieutenant Commander John Dover, who became the 222nd Australian to climb Mount Everest. After a trip to Nepal in 2017 that got Commander Dover thinking about what it would take to get to the top, the Dubbo Naval Officer's years of intense training began. Having already completed three iron mans, John said he was ready for a challenge and broke it down into each little step that he needed to complete. Working in the navy has also helped shaped how John visualises a challenge. The Everest climb itself was a two-month expedition, with the push to the summit taking a week to climb. Scarily, if he had not been connected by rope to his fellow climbers, John wouldn't have made it back down the mountain. One person in John's group had a stroke and at one stage, John ran out of oxygen. Despite his near-death experience, the pain and cost, John is already planning his next climb in Pakistan in 2025. Congratulations John, this climb is legendary, and you should be extremely proud of yourself.

GEORGIA DELARUE

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—Speaker, I would like to recognise Gulgong woman, Georgia Delarue on receiving the National Award for Horticulture Student of the Year, through the Australian Institute of

Horticulture. Georgia began her journey in horticulture unexpectedly, as she initially joined her father's business, Delarue Structural Landscapes, as a labourer. Sharing her father's passion for creating outdoor spaces, Ms Delarue pursued a Certificate III in Landscape Construction. Georgia wants to follow in her dad's footsteps and said she would be honoured to one day, call his business her own. Working alongside her sister Amelia, the girls share the same enthusiasm and drive for landscaping. Ms Delarue is also enthusiastic about breaking gender barriers in the industry and is encouraging more women to pursue careers in landscape construction and horticulture, with many avenues within horticulture itself to choose from- everything from landscape architecture to soil and water conservation. Congratulations on this achievement Georgia! Your outstanding commitment and professionalism are extremely admirable. You should be extremely proud of yourself.

GLENN MORRISON

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—Speaker, I would like to recognise Dubbo local Glenn Morrison who was recently named Volunteer of the Year, by Bowls NSW. Glenn's involvement over the past few decades has led to some really great outcomes for junior clubs around the region. In particular, the Junior Academy at Club Dubbo which has introduced our regions young people to the sport and has even helped them to produce State Titles and Australian representatives. Glenn is very enthusiastic at everyone having a go at bowls and is currently trying to expand the reach of the sport to get as many young people involved as they can. Through Glenn's involvement, Club Dubbo provides free coaching and equipment, uniforms, scholarships, and a great deal of social events- so everyone feels welcome. I am very proud that Dubbo is now on the world stage for Bowls, with the International Fours being run over the past two years, and the club being engaged to host the NSW Championships over 16 days. Congratulations Glenn. The recognition of your involvement and commitment to the sport is commendable. Well done!

SUTHERLAND HOSPITAL'S 65TH ANNIVERSARY MORNING TEA

Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)—On 27 October 2023 I attended the Sutherland Hospital's 65th Anniversary Morning Tea. The hospital, established in 1958, is a teaching hospital with the motto "Endeavour to Serve", has embedded itself in the Shire community with 98 per cent of its patients living in the locality. At the Morning Tea, major donors to the hospital were honoured for their contribution to such a great cause. That included Marko Franovic, who donated \$1 million to the hospital last year after the wonderful doctors and nurses saved his life when he contracted Covid-19. I had the pleasure of meeting him— he was a wonderful human being and an incredible soul. I would like to extend my thanks to Vicki Weeden, General Manager of Sutherland Hospital, Tobi Wilson, Chief Executive of the South Eastern Sydney Local Health District, and frontline workers at the hospital for all the work they do. I look forward to celebrating with them in the future!

RADIO 89.3 2GLF 40TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)—On Saturday 21 October 2023 I attended the Radio 89.3 2GLF 40th birthday celebration in Warwick Farm. Community Radio has long played a big part in the ongoing development of South-West Sydney, and born out of the social difficulties facing the area of Green Valley during the sixties and early seventies. 2GLF grew into the community radio station it is today, based out of Bigge Street in Liverpool for more than a decade. It was a wonderful night of celebration and reflection on the roots and history of such a storied radio station. I would like to extend my thanks to the current board for all the work they do, including Chairman Chris Sparrow, Secretary Ian Becker, Treasurer Michel Malik and Directors Phil Savell, Colleen Sparrow, Fe Hayward, and Jim Dimovski. Here's to another 40 years of 89.3 2GLF!

TURBANS 4 AUSTRALIA REGIONAL MUSEUM EXHIBITION LAUNCH

Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)—On Saturday 28 October 2023 I had the delight of attending Turbans 4 Australia's exhibition launch at the Liverpool Regional Museum. Turbans 4 Australia (T4A) is a charity established in 2015 by Amar Singh, the volunteer group has worked tirelessly to help thousands of Australians during times of adversity, including during natural disasters, domestic violence, poverty, unemployment, and isolation. Through their work, they break down barriers to promote multiculturalism in this great state. This was certainly on show at the exhibition launch, which was a fantastic celebration of Sikh culture, history and values right in the heart of South-West Sydney. I would like to extend my thanks to Amar Singh, who has been a wonderful advocate for our region and providing help to those who need it most for almost than a decade.

VALHALLA MEN'S SHED

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge the outstanding work the Valhalla Men's Shed. Recently they organised and sponsored a homecare services presentation with four local Central Coast providers including Wesley Mission, Services Australia, Carers NSW and Carers Gateway Group. The presentation was attended by 125 residents from Valhalla Village and got a very positive response from attendees, who found it very

informative. Our men's sheds do so much amazing work in our communities and are such vital institutions to keep up social connection and engagement. I know the Valhalla Men's Shed Christmas Party is always well attended and I always look forward to it. Thank you to Valhalla Men's Shed for your work in organising the homecare services presentation and supporting your community.

TRACY GAUCI

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)—I would like to congratulate Tracy Gauci who was recently named the 2023 Far West Adult Volunteer of the Year. Tracy is a businesswoman and hairdresser who helps people in their journey through cancer. Tracy volunteers with the Broken Hill Breast Cancer Support Group, using her skills as a hairdresser to provide cancer patients with wigs, makeup services and advice throughout their treatment. She raises funds for the purchase of medical equipment, operates a free wig bank, and assists patients with travel and accommodation costs for treatment. Tracey has been offering these services for over 15 years to the Broken Hill community, coordinating Paint our Town Pink, the Look Good Feel Better and Encore programs. Tracy thank you for your generosity and kindness to help others feel better.

ROTARY CLUB OF NORTH SYDNEY

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—After an extraordinary ninety five years, the Rotary Club of North Sydney is facing its final curtain and will wrap up its operations at the end of the year. Many in our local community would have seen many members of the Rotary Club of North Sydney out and about in our local community, at market stalls, raising money for charity, and standing behind the bbqs at local community and sporting events. I want to acknowledge the extraordinary efforts of the committee over its many years, and in particular want to acknowledge Toni Field OAM as President. The Club has often stood as a beacon of community success, embodying the principles of service, fellowship, and leadership. Their innovative projects, ranging from community development to healthcare and education, have garnered widespread acclaim, particularly with their work in ending Polio. I join my local community in thanking the Rotary Club of North Sydney for their many years of service to our local community and we wish all their members the very best for their future endeavours.

QUEENWOOD GIRLS TAKE ON THE WORLD SCHOLARS CUP

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—Speaker, I would like to recognise three outstanding students from Queenwood in my electorate, Chantilly Ho, Anna Wood, and Melody Yin, who all recently flew over to the USA to compete in the Tournament of Champions at Yale University. Throughout the year, these girls have been competing in several World Scholars Cup rounds, which encompasses debating, writing, the Scholar's Challenge, and the Scholar's Bowl. I congratulate them for their outstanding achievements, winning a total of 18 medals in the final round at Yale, where they competed against over 1300 students from across the globe. During the tournament, the girls formed friendships with countless people from around the world, even making friends with several alpacas. Once again, I congratulate these girls on this incredible achievement. It is a testament to their hard work and persistent efforts, studying up to 9 hours a day in the lead-up to the competition. I wish Chantilly, Anna and Melody all the best in their future endeavours; their future looks incredibly bright.

THE HONOURABLE SOCIETY OF THE INNER TEMPLE GRAND DAY

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—On Wednesday, 1st November 2023, I had the great privilege to attend the Grand Day of The Honourable Society of the Inner Temple, Inns of Court, London. The most prestigious event of the Inn's calendar, Grand Day is hosted by the Treasurer, Sir Robert Francis KC. The evening began with a wonderful service of Choral Evensong within The Temple Church, in the presence of Master HRH The Princess Royal, accompanied by Vice Admiral Sir Timothy Laurence. This was followed by a champagne reception and Dinner. I had the great pleasure of discussing our shared legal interests with Sir Geoffrey Vos, Master of Rolls, issues concerning financial crime with Professor Barry Rider OBE of Jesus College, Cambridge; then dining with The Reverend Mark Hatcher, Reader of the Temple, Master Thomas Cosgrove KC, Master Ryan Kohli, and Jack Barber of Cornerstone Chambers, Henry Gordon of Foundry Chambers. Thank you all for your great camaraderie, conversation, and hospitality. The evening concluded with a performance by The Temple Singers. I particularly wish to thank Kate Peters and Rosy Humphrey, and the Inner Temple events team, for their hard work in creating such a wonderful evening.

MUSEUM OF THE ORDER OF ST JOHN, LONDON

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—As the Chair of the NSW Parliamentary Friends of St John Ambulance, on 3 November 2023, I had the privilege of visiting the Museum of the Order of St John, London. A guided tour of the Museum was provided by the very learned Rachel Job, Collections and Engagement Officer, and I had the good fortune of being accompanied by Susan le Jeune d'Allegeershecque, Secretary General, St John International. The Museum showcases the unique and fascinating 900-year history of the Order of St John, from its origins as an ancient religious military Order, caring for sick pilgrims in the Holy Land, through to its

modern-day role, so well-known by our Australian community, as St John Ambulance, an international first aid charity focused on providing humanitarian and medical relief. The Museum stands on the site of the Priory in Clerkenwell, established as the English headquarters of the Order in the 1140s. The modern Order of St John was granted a Royal Charter by Queen Victoria in 1888. Thank you for such a wonderful tour, and to all the members of St John for your selfless dedication to the vulnerable members of the community.

OUR LADY QUEEN OF PEACE GREYSTANES – ANNUAL CRAFT MARKET

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—It was a pleasure to visit the Annual Craft Market at Our Lady Queen of Peace, Greystanes, on 18th November 2023. Facilitated by a group of committed volunteers, the Annual Craft Market is a vibrant community event that showcases creative talent in our community. Featuring exciting stalls, the market sells hand-made goods including Christmas decorations and gifts, baby wear, décor, plants, embroidery, jewellery and delicious treats. The Craft Market provides a welcoming social environment, for all members of our community to connect and share their vibrant and unique creations. With a tradition of donating their proceeds, the Craft Market raised \$4,500 for HeartKids. A charity that advocates for people impacted by childhood onset heart disease, HeartKids strives to give every child, teenager and adult with congenital heart disease a chance at a long, healthy, and fulfilling life. Thank you to Market Coordinators Julie-Ann Mifsud and Lisa Bright, the dedicated Craft Market Committee, volunteers and stall holders for their efforts to facilitate this wonderful event. Your efforts to support local charities are an exemplar of how our community cares for one another.

ELIZABETH MISEK

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)—Congratulations to aspiring children's book illustrator Elizabeth Misek for her recent achievement of First Prize in the New England Illustration Prize 2023. Elizabeth entered the New England Illustration contest for Children's picture Book Publishing. The competition, which has run for 8 years, attracts artists and illustrators from across the country to create an illustration suitable for a children's picture book. With this year's theme of "Dreaming is a Super Power". The Thornton artist prepared an illustration of a sleeping girl dreaming of dancing in the royal ballet. With 2023 being her first year competing, she was thrilled to be named first prize winner in the competition. While Elizabeth is, so far, unpublished, this win will put her in good stead for future projects. Congratulations, Elizabeth.

HALT NSW 2023

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)—Congratulations to the remarkable educators of Maitland and surrounding communities in achieving the Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher (HALT) accreditation. The HALT Recognition Ceremony held annually recognises and celebrates the hard work, dedication and achievement of NSW teachers who have attained HALT accreditation. Belinda Lantry from Rutherford Public School, Teliah Buckton from Rutherford Technology High School and Thomas Walker from Millers Forest Public School each received their HALT medal on World Teacher's Day on October 27 from the Minister for Education, the Hon. Prue Car at NSW Parliament. The HALT accreditation requires applicants to meet 37 different teaching standards. Passing these requisites stands as a testament of each accredited educator's well-rounded and exceptional practices. Well done Belinda, Teliah and Thomas on your significant achievement and thank you for your unwavering commitment in nurturing and developing our precious young people each and every day.

PETER KIRKWOOD

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)—I would like to acknowledge the 30 years of outstanding work of Maitland local and Karate Instructor, Peter Kirkwood. To earn a black belt in karate takes 3-6 years of study and training but only 5% of those who start, achieve their initial black belt status. That is what makes it even more impressive that Peter Kirkwood's Kaizen Ryu (kai-zen ru) school in Rutherford sent 7 women for their black belts last weekend and have another seven preparing to take the exam next year. Peter, who opened his school in Maitland in 1993 has taught 10,000 students in the Kaizen Ryu style – which means 'constant improvement'. He is a 7th Degree Black belt himself, so knows what it takes to succeed in the sport. But he loves it. Peter teaches mixed classes and female only classes across all age groups. In Peter's own words he said "I get more out of the sport than I put in. It gives the women such confidence. It's just wonderful." Thank you, Peter, for your decades of exceptional dedication and commitment to the lives of young people and the culture of our Maitland community.

DETECTIVE CHIEF INSPECTOR ROBERT ALLISON

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, I would like to congratulate and commend Detective Chief Inspector Robert Allison of the St George Police Area Command, for his decades of dedication and service to the New South Wales Police Force. Detective Chief Inspector Allison has served for 40 years on the force and recently

clocked in for the last time at Kogarah Police Station. As one of the longest-serving officers in the New South Wales Police Force, I am sure he would have his fair share of stories. Joining the force in 1983 at the former Darlinghurst Police Station, he quickly rose through the ranks and was drawn to the field of criminal investigation. Detective Chief Inspector Allison spent 12 years on the Homicide Squad and for the last four years, has been the crime manager at the St George Police Area Command. Keeping our local area safe is certainly no easy job, but our wonderful local police officers like Detective Chief Inspector Allison continue to work hard for our community. I would like to thank Detective Chief Inspector Allison for all his efforts and wish him the very best for his retirement.

ST GEORGE AND SUTHERLAND MEDICAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION – GRANT RECIPIENTS

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, I rise to recognise the medical grant recipients, whose efforts were celebrated recently at the St George & Sutherland Medical Research Foundation celebration dinner. It was wonderful to be able to attend this annual end-of-year celebration dinner, to recognise these local champions of innovation, who continue to display exceptional talent and commitment. I would like to highlight the fact that there is some valuable work being done at local hospitals within our area, including St George Hospital. Medical research is constantly changing the lives of those within my community, and I am so proud of each and every grant recipient. Many of them are making enormous strides in a number of fields, including treatments, vaccinations, cancer research, surgical procedures and so many more. I would like to thank the Chief Executive of the Foundation, Pam Brown, for her continued efforts. I would also like to congratulate all of the grant recipients who have received funding. I wish you all the very best into the future, and I look forward to seeing more valuable medical research being undertaken within my local community.

RICHARD SHEAHAN

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, I rise to highlight an individual of outstanding merit within my local community – Richard Sheahan. Richard is currently the President of the Lions Club of Oatley and does fantastic work within our local community. It was my pleasure to award Richard with an individual volunteer achievement award at my 2023 St George Community Awards, which I have hosted each year since 2010. Since first joining the Lions Club of Oatley in March of 2017, Richard has remained an active member, making substantial contributions to club projects, committees and fundraisers. It was also a privilege to host Richard recently at my senior's morning tea, which was a resounding success. Richard shared a presentation with the local senior's community, demonstrating what the Lions Club of Oatley is doing within the local area and how we can get involved. I truly believe that individuals like Richard are incredibly few and far between, so I would like to recognise him for his efforts. I wish him all the best for the future and look forward to continuing to work alongside him.

GREENTHORPE FARMER AIMS FOR TRIFECTA

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—I would like to take the opportunity to recognise Robert Taylor from Greenethorpe, a fourth-generation farmer who has been busy sowing the remaining winter crops on his 2,500-hectare property, striving to achieve his goal of taking out the upcoming NSW Dryland Field Wheat Competition for a third year. For the past two years, Rob has previously won the title and if the 2023 season is as productive as the past, which harvested some of the highest wheat yields on record, then Rob is definitely in the running. Like many of our farmers, Rob and his family work countless hours to ensure his crops are the best for his consumers. Our farmers are always at the mercy of Mother Nature, with constant changes in the weather, from last year's widespread flooding to the current El Nino conditions. These dramatic changes can affect crops in many ways. I wish Rob and all our farmers across the state of small communities all the best when the state winner is announced in mid-January 2024.

LINDSAY BROWN

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—I wish to congratulate the efforts of former West Wyalong local Lindsay Brown. Through his judging performance, Lindsay won the 2023 National Merino Sheep Young Judges Championships. Lindsay attended the NSW State Final in Merino Sheep Judging earlier this year at the NSW Sydney Royal Easter Show. After winning his division, Lindsay was then eligible to compete nationally. On Thursday, 12 October 2023, Lindsay joined other budding agricultural experts from across Australia at the Launceston Royal Show for the National competition. Lindsay was one of five competitors in the 15–25-year-old Merino Sheep Young Judges division. After a rigorous process, Lindsay stood out in this category and took home the boots, claiming the National Merino Sheep Young Judges Championship title. Through this competition, Lindsay has developed lifelong skills in visually assessing livestock and public speaking. These skills develop Lindsay's understanding of merino sheep and enable him to contribute to the industry. Well done Lindsay on this achievement and best of luck for the future in the rural sector.

LIFE MEMBERS OF COOLAMON ROVERS

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—I stand to congratulate three members of the Coolamon Rovers Football Netball Club on receiving life memberships. Greg Mangelsdorf received life membership and Libby Mangelsdorf and Trevor Tipping received life membership posthumously at the Club's end-of-year presentation evening. Greg received this prestigious award for his invaluable contributions and involvement with the Club. Greg's involvement with the Club began in the 1980s; since then, he has been a player and a volunteer. Greg has also been instrumental in maintaining the grounds at Kindra Oval. Libby Mangelsdorf, Greg's wife, received a posthumous life membership. Libby tragically lost her life in 2021. Libby played for the Club and saw the potential netball could have on her community, Libby was then integral in fundraising efforts to enhance netball facilities in Coolamon and introduced the Club to the Riverina Football League netball competition. Trevor Tipping also received a posthumous life membership. Trevor was a former player, reserve grade coach, and club president and played a monumental part in the placement of the Festival Hall at Kindra Park. Greg, along with Libby and Trevor, have made a substantial contribution to their local Club and community.

THE JUNCTION PUBLIC SCHOOL CONCERT BAND AND STRING ENSEMBLE

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle)—Congratulations to The Junction Public School Concert Band and String Ensemble for their amazing achievements at Bandfest 2023. Every year, school bands from across the Hunter and Central Coast region meet and compete at Bandfest to be named the best band of the year. This year, the talented musicians at The Junction Public School concert band won the Primary Premier Section and The Junction Public School String Ensemble took out the Primary Open Section. Congratulations to all the students who performed and to all the teachers and parents who supported them.

THE PRINCE OF MEREWETHER

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle)—Any dispute over where to get the best burger in NSW has been settled. You can find it at The Prince of Merewether Hotel, who's Prince Beef Burger has been named the Best Burger at the Australian Hotels Association NSW 2023 Awards for Excellence. This culinary creation was a collaborative effort between the genius chefs in The Prince kitchen and the burger connoisseurs at Rascal, a Newcastle institution. The Prince was also named a finalist for Best Retail Liquor Outlet, Best Regional Local, Best Cocktail List, Best Steak, Best Parmi, and head chef Joshua Lips was a finalist for Regional Chef of the Year. But of course, the team at AHA NSW has to share the love and can't give every award to this fantastic pub, as much as I know they'd like to. Well done to The Prince Hotel.

COTTAGE POINT KIOSK AND BOAT HIRE

Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)—I acknowledge the Cottage Point Kiosk for its wonderful service of the local community and all those who visit. Pittwater is spoilt by our local environment, and the beautiful Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park is no exception. Nestled in the National Park is a small suburb known as 'Cottage Point'. Despite their small population and remote location, the Cottage Point community is active and proud, and the Cottage Point Kiosk is an institution within the local area. Built around 1918, the Kiosk occupies one of the oldest riverside cottages in Cottage Point. Over the years it has been home to many different families, services, business owners and menus, however it has always remained an iconic, nostalgic place for locals and visitors to meet, eat, drink and relax. I congratulate Angela and Trent Wilson for all their efforts as owners of the Kiosk and key contributors to the Cottage Point community. A general store, café and place to hire boats, the Cottage Point Kiosk has it all. Thank you, Angela and Trent! I am pleased that acknowledgement of the Cottage Point Kiosk is now preserved in the records of the oldest parliament in our nation.

NORTHERN BEACHES RFS IN CANADA

Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)—I acknowledge Jim Boyle, Wayne Stanley, Stuart Dawson and Garry Roach for their service during the Canadian wildfires. Since March 2023, Canada has been affected by ongoing wildfires. All provinces in Canada have been impacted, with the 2023 wildfire season seeing the most area burned in Canada's recorded history. To support Canada's firefighters, the Australian and New Zealand National Council for fire and emergency services coordinated over 600 volunteers to be deployed to Canada. This deployment included RFS volunteers from the Davidson, Duffys Forest, Northern Beaches Headquarters and Mackerel Beach brigades. Upon arrival in Canada, each Aussie had to quickly adapt to fighting fires in a different environment, and with different vehicles and tools, learning skills they can apply back home. Thank you, Jim, Wayne, Stuart and Garry for your service. To give up your time at home with your loved ones to help others overseas is very admirable and your sacrifices and bravery are to be applauded. You have made our community proud, and I am pleased that acknowledgement of your service is now preserved in the records of the oldest parliament in our nation.

ELANORA HEIGHTS CHRISTMAS MARKETS

Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)—I recently attended the 2023 Elanora Heights Village Christmas Markets. The markets were an opportunity for the 2101 community to come together ahead of Christmas and support local businesses. With live entertainment, activities for kids and over 80 stalls, the event was a major success. Stalls ranged from arts and crafts, local charities, Christmas gifts and plenty of food options. The Pittwater community is like no where else in Sydney, for residents of Pittwater, your suburb is your village. It is events like the Elanora Heights Christmas Markets that make our communities so vibrant and closeknit. Thank you to all the businesses and supporters of the event, and thank you to the wonderful organisers: Chloe Feris of MWP Care and local hero, Karla Rothpletz-Tatt - the de facto Mayor of Elanora Heights and Elanora Heights Post Office proprietor, and Tom Graham - Top Shot Espresso owner, supplying needed caffeine to the community. Organising such a massive event takes untold hours on top of your already busy lives, and our community is so appreciative. Thank you, Chloe, Karla and Tom! I look forward to the 2024 Elanora Heights Village Christmas Markets!

MIRANDA RSL YOUTH CLUB

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I commend the team at the Miranda RSL Youth Club on another amazing Display Day held on 26 November 2023. The Miranda RSL Youth Club has been at the heart of our community since its establishment in 1962. Throughout this time, the club has grown to provide fun and skilled activities such as karate, trampolining and tumbling to young people aged 25 and under. The annual Display Day showcases the sporting prowess of the Youth Club's members in these pursuits and recognises their achievements throughout the year. Amongst those recognised on the day was Stephen Brown who received the 2023 Rita Emily Coulton Trophy for Youth of the Year, in recognition of his contribution to the Club. Of course, the continued success of the Miranda RSL Youth Club would not be possible without the dedication of the team. I recognise President John Boes, Vice Presidents Anthony Bull and John Caruana, Treasurer Bill Lewis, Secretary Amanda Donaldson, Chief Instructor Louise Brown and Head Coach Robert Bull for their efforts. I thank the team at the Miranda RSL Youth Club for their contribution to our community and extend my best wishes for the future.

MIRANDA DIGGERS

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I acknowledge the newly elected Board of Directors of the Diggers Miranda RSL Club Sub-Branch Limited ("Miranda Diggers"). Located in the heart of Miranda, the Miranda Diggers was originally established by the Miranda RSL Sub-Branch which later sold its holdings to the Miranda Diggers in 1999. In addition to housing the Miranda RSL Sub-Branch, the Miranda Diggers host a number of groups that bring our community together including the Captain Cook Day Club, Toastmasters and the Diggers Miranda RSL Bridge Club. Furthermore, the Miranda Diggers has an incredible impact on our community due to the ongoing support of community groups including the Gwawley Bay Football Club, Endeavour SKWAD, French Association of the Sutherland Shire and One Meal Miranda through sponsorships and other assistance. Of course none of this would be possible without the work of the incredible team. I recognise the Board of Directors namely President Yvonne Fryatt, Vice President Patrick Feeney and Directors Robert O'Shea, Shane Meier, Brian Senior and Harden Erskine, as well as CEO Sara Watkins for their efforts. I congratulate the newly elected Board of Directors of the Miranda Diggers and extend my best wishes for the future.

SUTHERLAND HOCKEY CLUB

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I congratulate the talented women at Sutherland Hockey Club on yet another successful season. Formed in 1965, Sutherland Hockey Club has gone from strength to strength particularly amongst the women. This season was no exception with the Club's Women's ML3 Sutherland 1 Team winning the Sydney Women's Hockey League Third Division Premiership and team stalwart Sarah Dredge named Club Person of the Year. Sarah is the Club Secretary and has previously served as registrar and a coach. She has developed a reputation for getting things done and creating an environment where female players feel welcomed and valued. Such success would not be possible without the dedication of the incredible players. I recognise the ML3 Sutherland 1 Premiership winning team of Liv Coxsedge, Kristen Agius, Felicia Swift, Alex Noy, Hannah McClung, Sarah Dredge, Paris Barnard, Yasmine Caine, Jamie-Grace Pittello, Meagan Mazurek, Isabelle Fletcher, Ruth Sannes, Hannah Ubrihien, Emily Carey, Amelia Domrow and Kate McKinley as well as Coach Craig Turner and Manager Kathleen Pittello on their success. I commend the incredible women at Sutherland Hockey Club on these achievements and wish them every success for the next season.

BANKSTOWN SOUTH INFANTS SCHOOL

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)—Bankstown South Infants School is taking part in a Swim School program at Max Parker Leisure and Aquatic Centre where Year 1 and 2 students are immersed in lessons to develop fundamental survival skills in pools and beaches. The Royal Life Saving Society Australia

research has revealed that more than five hundred children under the age of five have drowned in the past 20 years. With summer just around the corner, Bankstown South Infants School has taken steps to ensure that its students learn fundamental swimming survival skills. Assistant Principal, Laura Osman said that students have been learning how to back float, glide, enter a pool safely, and most importantly never be in the water without adult supervision. Not only is this Swim School program teaching our infants about safe swimming, but also the importance of sun safety - to wear a hat, use sunscreen, and wear long-sleeve swimming rashies to protect them from the sun. I would like to acknowledge Bankstown South Infants School for promoting awareness and understanding of the potential risks associated with infant swimming and encouraging a safe environment for our infants to enjoy the water.

YASMINE-BELLA YOUNES

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 17-year-old Yasmine-Bella Younes from Bankstown Sports Club who has been making waves in pools around the world and has her sights set on the 2024 Paralympic World Championship trials. Hoping to be named in the Australian Paralympic team to compete in Paris in 2024, Yasmine-Bella most recently competed in women's multi-class events at the 2023 Australian Short Course Championships at Sydney Olympic Park, including the 50m Butterfly, 50m Freestyle, and 100m Freestyle, finishing with two bronze medals. In November 2022, Yasmine-Bella was named on the Australian team to compete at the Oceania Asia Virtus Games in Brisbane, an international multi-sport competition for elite athletes with intellectual impairment, where she medalled in the relay event. Her next challenge will be the State Age Championships in December, followed by the Metropolitan Championships in February and the State Open in March. She will then tackle the Australian Age Championships in April, before facing the world's best para-athletes at the Para World Trials in June. Her mother Marie thanked Bankstown Sports for their support of Yasmine-Bella for supporting her professional swimming career. Congratulations Yasmine-Bella and good luck with all the upcoming challenges.

PHILOTIMO JUJITSU

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)—I would like to acknowledge Philotimo Jujitsu for the wonderful work that they do within the Bankstown electorate. "Philotimo" means "Love of Honour", but it is a difficult word to translate. Essentially, it is about service, doing good for your community, and your family, and always helping others. Their logo depicts the Goddess Artemis, from Greek Mythology. She was the goddess of women, of childbirth, the patron and protector of young children, especially young girls. Congratulations to students Suhailah Shams, Joumana Ibrahim, Kauthar Isa, and Easha Mohammed Ghouseuddin on the hard work and dedication that they have put into something they are passionate about. Learning self-defence cannot stop domestic violence, or violence against women. But what it can do, is give girls a sense of mastery over their own bodies, a sense of self, and a realisation that men's bodies are not unstoppable. It gives women the space to expect and demand better for themselves. Philotimo's mission is to help women achieve this for themselves. It can be one of many tools in the toolkit for women to use to help navigate domestic and intimate partner violence, coercive control, and consent education. Well done girls!

THE ROCK CHARITY BALL

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—I would like to acknowledge the organisers of The Rock Charity Ball who have once again staged a great event for their community, all while raising money for worthy causes in the small but steadily growing community south of Wagga Wagga. About 400 music fans from as far afield as Queensland and Victoria visited to enjoy two great bands and the fun of camping out with friends. All money raised goes towards The Rock Progress Association and The Rock Yerong Creek Football and Netball Club, with an associated boost to local businesses. The ball is a major event for a small community and special thanks should go to Gail Driscoll, Traci Driscoll, Mark Driscoll, Kelly Forrest, Paul Forrest and David Pieper for making it possible. Sadly, insurance costs have soared, putting the return of the event next year in some doubt but this year, several thousand dollars will go towards improving the town and its sporting heart – the football and netball club – making it another big success for a small community.

FISHING FOR KYAN

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—I would like to acknowledge the family and friends of the late Wagga Wagga teenager Kyan Armstrong for their work to raise money for local charities in honour of Kyan, who died last year of a brain aneurism at just 15. Special mention should go to Kyan's parents Matthew Armstrong and Alysha Sheedy, uncle and aunt Damian and Renee Armstrong, grandfathers Graham Armstrong and Rod Sheedy, and Carol, Al and Lachie Wurtz. Together they worked tirelessly to create Fishing for Kyan, a community day at Wagga Wagga's Lake Albert where hundreds of people gather to catch fish and raise money, in memory of Kyan's

love of fishing. The funds raised went to the Brain Foundation and grant programs to help young people in the city. Fishing for Kyan, a not-for-profit-activity, has become an annual event that not only supports charitable causes but encourages local families to spend time together in a fun and healthy way. Kyan was a vibrant and much-loved young man whose life ended way too soon, but his loved ones hope his memory will live on with the support of a caring community.

UNCLE HEWITT WHYMAN

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—I would like to acknowledge the community advocacy and service of Vietnam veteran and Wagga Senior Aboriginal Elder Uncle Hewitt Whyman. Uncle Hewitt, like many Vietnam veterans, was not treated with dignity or respect upon his return to Australia. He and his unit have fought for recognition and recently both the NSW and Wagga Wagga RSL have apologised for prior treatment of Vietnam veterans. Uncle Hewitt has been a long-time advocate for improved Aboriginal Legal services and established the Aboriginal Legal Service office in Wagga. He was also a foundation member of RivMed and established the Wagga Aboriginal Land Council. He has in recent years been appointed as a Warrant Officer with the Australian army and actively mentors young Aboriginal recruits going through the Kapooka training base. Uncle Hewitt was a proud supporter of the Voice and a leading advocate of the Yes vote around communities in the Riverina region and beyond. He has spoken at many forums. More recently Uncle Hewitt and members of the Riverina for Yes Campaign met AFL legend Michael Long at the Charles Sturt University Playhouse as part of Mr Long's 'The Long Walk' along with the former Senator Nova Peris.

BORDER BUILDERS CLEAN UP AT AWARD

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)— I would like to extend my congratulations to the outstanding border businesses who have been honoured in this year's Housing Industry of Australia – CSR Victorian Housing and Kitchen and Bathroom Awards. Special recognition goes to: LA Smith Studio for Kitchen of the Year and Kitchen Design; Alatalo Brothers for Small Commercial Project; Scott James for Renovation/Addition of the Year; and B&H Homes for Project of the Year. The presentation of these awards took place in Melbourne at the Crown's Palladium, in front of a gathering of 1,000 individuals. I acknowledge the hard work and accomplishments of these local businesses and wish them continued success as they work and inspire other businesses to excel.
