



**New South Wales**

# **Legislative Assembly**

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)**

**Fifty-Eighth Parliament  
First Session**

**Thursday 30 November 2023**

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Thursday 30 November 2023**

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

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

## *Announcements*

### LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY PHOTOGRAPHS

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

*[Notices of motions given.]*

## *Bills*

### CONSTITUTION AMENDMENT (WATER NSW AND LOCAL WATER UTILITIES) BILL 2023

#### **First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Ms Steph Cooke, read a first time and printed.**

#### **Second Reading Speech**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (10:18):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Constitution Amendment (Water NSW and Local Water Utilities) Bill 2023 goes to the very heart of one of the most fundamental aspects of life in rural and regional Australia. Water is a basic human right. Without it, we simply cannot survive. In the regions, it is the lifeblood of our communities. It not only sustains us but it also powers our economy and fuels our ability to grow and thrive and create a fertile outlook for residents and for the generations that follow. Members on this side of the House do not take amendments to the Constitution lightly. That is why we have worked hard to ensure that this important constitutional change is done correctly and thoroughly. Fundamentally, it is about protecting the basic rights of people—wherever they may live in the State—to access, as the Premier himself has described, "safe, reliable, publicly owned water".

Issues surrounding the safe and secure supply of water, particularly in our regions, have in recent times taken on the added urgency of drought. As I hope most members in this place know by now, an El Niño has been declared across the country. Australia just had its driest August to October since 1900. All major water storages across New South Wales are sitting above 77 per cent but are slowly falling. In a massive turnaround from only one month ago, the area of the State deemed drought impacted has more than doubled. More than 75 per cent of the State is either drought affected, in drought or in intense drought. We truly are the land of droughts and flooding rain. Over the past five years we have been through two extremes: the worst drought in history, and one of the wettest years on record, which saw many communities experience unprecedented flooding. The impact of these events, whether drought or flood, was keenly felt throughout the 153 communities that I represent, as it was across the rest of New South Wales.

The ramifications of such an increasingly dire situation are vast. We know the impact it has on food and fibre production and the flow-on effects in terms of cost-of-living pressures. Those pressures are already creating a heavy burden for households across the country. On a personal level, for those directly impacted, drought can lead to anxiety, depression and, in some cases, suicide as farming families watch their paddocks dry up, their water supplies dwindle and their way of life simply evaporate. Of course, the impact of this then flows on to our local rural and regional towns and villages that rely so heavily on the surrounding primary industries to sustain them. I say all this to highlight just how vital water is to the lives and livelihoods of those living in rural and regional areas. As I have mentioned, it is the lifeblood of our communities.

Just last week I met with members of the Country Mayors Association [CMA] who were gathered here in this building for their general meeting. Chief among their concerns was the issue of water and how best to secure investments in the infrastructure that enables the long-term storage and delivery of safe and reliable water for their ratepayers. But I fear this Government simply does not grasp how important the secure supply of water is to our way of life beyond the Great Dividing Range. How else does one explain the exclusion of local water utilities and WaterNSW from the Government's Constitution Amendment (Sydney Water and Hunter Water) Bill 2023 earlier

this year, which ensured continued public ownership of the Sydney Water Corporation and the Hunter Water corporation and their main undertakings?

Today I stand in this Chamber gravely concerned that the Premier has one set of rules for those living in urban areas and another for those living in the regions when it comes to the safe and secure supply of water. Either that or he simply has failed to grasp the severity of just how dire the issue of water security and infrastructure has become in parts of regional New South Wales and is ignorant of the impact this has on future growth and prosperity. Quite simply, the Constitution Amendment (Water NSW and Local Water Utilities) Bill 2023 is unfinished business. The fact that the Government agreed to set up a joint committee to look at the complex issue of how to protect regional water assets from privatisation is an admission that the Government fully understands that something was missing from its Constitution Amendment (Sydney Water and Hunter Water) Bill 2023.

The member for Albury and I are the only lower House Liberal or Nationals members of the committee, and we are honoured to be able to represent the people of regional New South Wales on that committee. Currently we are engaged in a constructive process that is enabling the Parliament to hear directly the challenges we are facing with aging water supply and service infrastructure across the regions. I thank all those who have made submissions to the inquiry. Of course, as a member of that committee, I am limited in what I can say with respect to our work while our work is underway. What I will say, though, is that as the local member representing nine local government areas in regional New South Wales—it should be 10, but we will get to that when we demerge Cootamundra and Gundagai—I am genuinely distressed by the lack of urgency displayed by this Government around the protection of water assets and security in regional parts of the State.

I am putting forward a bill that enshrines government ownership of WaterNSW and the 89 local water utilities across regional, rural and remote New South Wales in the State Constitution. What does that mean in practice? It means that no matter where you live, whether in Sydney or regional New South Wales, your essential water assets will not be put up for sale when this Government inevitably starts looking for things to sell off to pay its mounting bills. It should not matter where you live; our duty in this place is to prioritise the security, management and infrastructure of water resources for all citizens in New South Wales. That means ensuring continued public ownership of our most essential assets. Instead, all we have seen from this Government is legislation that discriminates against the 1.85 million people who rely on water utilities other than Sydney Water and Hunter Water. Its failure to include other utilities in the legislation protecting Sydney Water and Hunter Water leaves us wondering about the New South Wales Labor Government's agenda in relation to the future privatisation of WaterNSW and local water utilities across the State.

It was not just those on the Opposition benches who raised deep concerns about the gaping holes in the Government's metro-centric bill earlier this year. Local water utilities I have consulted are looking to this Parliament to ensure they are protected, hence my bill to create constitutional safeguards around water utilities for the people of regional, rural, and remote New South Wales. I remind the House that members of the Country Mayors Association sought support from the water Minister for local water utilities to be included in the Government's earlier bill. The CMA has been unequivocal on this. Members should not take my word for it; this is a direct quote from its media release earlier this year. It said:

Country Mayors Association of NSW (CMA), on behalf of its members, is calling for an expansion of the scope of the Bill to include all local government-owned assets to stay in the hands of Local Government to ensure Local Government will never lose control of its most important asset – our water.

Deputy Chairman of the CMA, Mayor Firman, stated:

Our CMA members have spoken loudly and clearly ... We strongly and respectfully call on our new State Government to please include the protection of our water in the NSW Constitution. Water gives us life – it really is critical that our members are listened to.

Finally, Chairman Mayor Chaffey had this to say:

CMA has long held the position that our water and sewer utilities must remain in the hands of Local Government, not State Government or any other entity or be privatised. Do not touch our water. Add Local Government to the Constitution change

I say to all members of this place—those from the Government, the minor parties and the Independents—that the bill before the House is their chance to right a wrong. I ask them to support this bill and, in doing so, ensure the continued public ownership of WaterNSW and certain local water utilities and their main undertakings. The Government must support this bill and thereby demonstrate that it is here to govern and provide for all of us, not just those in Greater Sydney, the Illawarra, the Blue Mountains and the lower Hunter. The Premier himself has declared that everyone has the right to clean and safe water. Prior to the election, the Premier said:

Labor also believes that a guaranteed right to a safe, reliable, supply of clean water—provided by the Government of this State—should be a constitutionally protected right for the people of New South Wales.

The Premier has had eight months to do just that. He has demonstrated his capacity to act swiftly and decisively with respect to the people of Sydney and the Hunter, but when it comes to those kinds of issues where is the plan for the regions? If Labor is truly serious about protecting end-to-end water supply in New South Wales, it will support the bill and not exclude one-third of our State's population simply because of the location of their water meter.

As I said earlier, I fear the Premier does not understand the basics of water infrastructure in the regions and how vital it is to our way of life. Case in point: Earlier this year during a rare visit outside Sydney the Premier visited Narrandera. It is a beautiful country town in my electorate. The Premier was so impressed by the mural on the town's water tower that he had his photo taken in front of it, before sharing the image with his 20,000-odd Instagram followers. That is all well and good, except in his post he mistakenly identified the structure as an old silo, not a water tower. It may seem trivial to nitpick about a social media post, but it goes to the lack of awareness the Premier seems to have when it comes to the critical issue of water infrastructure in our regions.

I now turn to the bill in further detail. Without a doubt, water security, management and infrastructure are critically important, as is our need to ensure that those responsible for the supply and delivery of water have confidence in their future. There were several problems with the Government's earlier bill that this bill seeks to rectify. Of the eight State-owned corporations governed under the State Owned Corporations Act 1989, three are responsible for the delivery, supply and management of water and sewerage services to the people of New South Wales: Sydney Water, servicing around five million people across Greater Sydney; Hunter Water, servicing around 600,000 people across the lower Hunter; and, importantly, WaterNSW, a State-owned corporation supplying water in bulk to water utilities across metropolitan and regional New South Wales.

The Government's bill dealt with only two of them—Hunter Water and Sydney Water. A closer look at the purpose and operations of the omitted WaterNSW reveals that that State-owned corporation supplies two-thirds of the water used in New South Wales. WaterNSW has five functions. Two of those are to protect the Greater Sydney drinking water catchment and to supply raw water from its storages to communities, customers and the environment. To this end, WaterNSW manages a total of 42 storages—dams, weirs and reservoirs—across New South Wales, which include 11 major supply dams in Greater Sydney, including Warragamba Dam. It is a point worth repeating: Sydney Water obtains its water from WaterNSW, and WaterNSW was entirely omitted from the Government's original bill. It is safe to say that, by omitting WaterNSW, the Government's bill failed to safeguard against a future government selling off the assets held by WaterNSW. Through the operations of WaterNSW, the bulk supply of raw water is not limited to the Greater Sydney region. Its reach extends far and wide across regional New South Wales.

The raw water supplied is treated by Sydney Water, Hunter Water or other customers of WaterNSW—that is, councils and local water utilities. They, in turn, supply it directly into the drinking water network established throughout towns and villages across New South Wales, or it is used in its raw form for farming and irrigation purposes. Importantly, in regional New South Wales, bulk water is moved using the State's river systems and WaterNSW's network of dams and weirs, whilst in Greater Sydney bulk water is transported using a network of rivers, pipes and canals. Most of the bulk water is supplied to the Prospect Water Filtration Plant operated by Sydney Water, which supplies approximately 80 per cent of Sydney's drinking water. WaterNSW should therefore never have been omitted from the Government's original bill. It should have been afforded the same protections as Sydney Water and Hunter Water. The bill will seek to address this omission.

In addition to WaterNSW, 89 local water utilities are responsible for delivering safe, secure, efficient, sustainable and affordable water supply and sewerage services to 1.85 million people living in regional New South Wales. They protect public health and the environment, and support economic development and liveability. Local water utilities are governed in New South Wales by the Local Government Act 1993 and the Water Management Act 2000, as well as other relevant and applicable legislative and regulatory instruments. Astoundingly, they too were left out of the Government's bill. As I have alluded to previously, it is little wonder that the local water utilities I have consulted were disappointed about being omitted from the Government's original bill.

The Premier was all too happy to offer protection from privatisation through additional safeguards in the New South Wales Constitution Act for residents in "Greater Sydney, the Blue Mountains and in the Illawarra and Hunter regions". Disappointingly, the same cannot be said for the Premier when it comes to similar safeguards for the people of regional, rural and remote New South Wales. The Opposition has always believed water security should be enshrined in the New South Wales Constitution Act and that should be the case regardless of where you live in the State. I remind the House of a key statement made by the Premier:

The bottom line is that Government members believe safe, reliable, publicly owned water is a constitutional right and should therefore be in the New South Wales Constitution.

The bill is about ensuring that those in the State who rely on WaterNSW and local water utilities, are afforded the same protections as those who rely on Sydney Water and Hunter Water. The Government must support our bill and thereby demonstrate that it is here to provide for all of us, not just Greater Sydney, the lower Hunter, the Blue Mountains and the Illawarra. The Opposition will always fight for the basic right of all people in New South Wales to access clean water, regardless of where they reside and their water meter is located. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

## **WATER MANAGEMENT AMENDMENT (TRANSFER OF WATER) BILL 2023**

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 23 November 2023.**

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (10:38):** I complete my contribution to debate on the Water Management Amendment (Transfer of Water) Bill 2023. I reiterate that the New South Wales Government acknowledges the importance of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan as one of the most significant environmental reforms in our history. I also reiterate that the New South Wales Labor Government wants to see the plan deliver the environmental outcomes intended, while supporting regional communities and industries. New South Wales has been seeking more time to deliver projects and more flexibility to maximise water recovery efforts so that the environmental outcomes intended under the Basin Plan could be achieved. To be clear, the New South Wales Government does not support water buybacks. Our position on this has not changed.

The New South Wales Government wants to see the Australian Government prioritise investment in recovering water through other ways. The Government wants to see water recovery through investment in projects, programs and infrastructure. The current drafting of the bill is impractical and may generate more problems than it will solve. The bill may prohibit farmers and other water users the right to freely sell their water licences and overall restrict the legitimate water trading purposes for some farmers and water users. The option to sell water licences could help unlock other investment opportunities for them. This bill will add layers of bureaucracy and lengthy assessments that will cost significant time and money. Those delays will have a statewide impact, not just in the southern basin communities but right across coastal and metropolitan regions as well. The New South Wales Government will continue to strongly advocate for farmers, irrigators and other water users to minimise the social and economic impacts of water buybacks on New South Wales communities and the water market.

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (10:40):** The Water Management Amendment (Transfer of Water) Bill 2023 seeks to tackle a very important issue. However, regretfully, I cannot support the bill in its current form. I acknowledge the long interest and expertise of the member for Murray in water issues and her passionate advocacy for her community in this place. We would be hard-pressed to find as vocal a local member of Parliament as the member for Murray when it comes to the effects of water buybacks on regional New South Wales. I am conscious that she brought the bill to the House out of genuine concern for her community and for regional New South Wales water security. It has been a long week and we are at the end of the year. I have only been in the Parliament for a short time but when I reflect on the bill, I am reminded of the expertise members bring to a whole range of issues, whether they are from the inner city, Western Sydney, or rural and regional electorates. Whether it is health, education, environment or social justice, there is a breadth of knowledge, skills and expertise in the Parliament, and the member for Murray has expertise on regional New South Wales and water.

The Murray-Darling Basin produces around half of Australia's irrigated agricultural production and is home to about 2.3 million people, which roughly equates to one-tenth of the population of Australia. The basin supports a plethora of unique ecosystems, including 120 species of water bird, 50 species of native fish and 16 internationally significant wetlands. Despite the variable cycles of drought and flood, the overall low rainfall and high evaporation rates mean that water that those people and ecosystems depend on is more often than not in short supply. Australia is a harsh land and can sometimes, as it is doing now, veer from one extreme to the next, from La Niña to El Niño, and we are seeing that at the moment. Government policies have long encouraged an agricultural economy around the basin. It has kept the nation fed and going, and has kept the economy going, for close to two centuries.

The Murray-Darling Basin now accounts for 62 per cent of the water used for irrigation in Australia. However, as irrigation has developed, we have seen adverse effects on some of the important and unique ecosystems around the basin. There are intense forms of agriculture, and unfortunately they have had a detrimental effect on the ecosystem. That includes species decline, wetlands dying, salinity and poor water quality. We have seen what happens when the water does not flow, including mass fish killings. Seeing those images is

heart-wrenching. The images of the Murray-Darling Basin during the last drought are seared into my memory. It is a catastrophic event, and I can only imagine how regional communities feel when they have to deal with the consequences of that. With another dry spell on the way, the New South Wales Government is committed to ensuring that it is not complacent and to doing everything it can to prevent it from happening again.

The Murray-Darling Basin Plan seeks to implement more sustainable water use to restore those ecosystems while continuing to support our farmers and irrigators in the basin. The New South Wales Government supports the implementation of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan in full. Under this Government, there is no uncertainty about our position. I note that when those opposite were in government, that was not the case and they could not figure out if they were for or against the plan. John Barilaro was telling people that he wanted to rip it up and walk away, while Premier Gladys Berejiklian was telling those same people that she was committed to the plan. That points to the deep division in the Opposition, which we saw this week. If media reports are to be believed, there were deep divisions in regard to Racing NSW. I was glad to see them finally get on board and find a position after several party meetings. How refreshing it is to have a government that knows its position on the Murray-Darling Basin Plan. Make no mistake, the National Party's constant undermining of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan is why we are in the position we are in today. The Barilaros of the world have derailed the plan, like so many other things. To get back on track, New South Wales has a lot to do.

The bill of the member for Murray seeks to amend the Water Management Act 2000. The bill would restrict the transfer of water access licences to either the Commonwealth or the State unless certain conditions are met. It would do this by requiring the Minister for Water not register a transfer without an assessment first being undertaken to demonstrate that said transfer would cause either a neutral or positive socio-economic impact. It would then require the Minister to publish a report on those assessments. The Government is concerned that the passage of this bill would significantly slow down, or even stall, New South Wales water users who wish to sell their water access licences on a voluntary basis. For many in our regional areas, the option of selling their water licences can help unlock other investment opportunities. The Government wishes not to see those legitimate water trading practices hindered by new layers of bureaucracy and lengthy assessment processes. Like any market, it is important that the water market is fluid—pun intended—and not stalled by unnecessary bureaucracy and red tape.

Delays caused by changes proposed in the bill would have an effect in not just the southern basin in the electorate of the member for Murray; the effects would occur statewide in both coastal and metropolitan areas. The Government is also concerned that the restrictions of trade on water access licence holders will open a Pandora's box of legal and constitutional issues. For example, the bill does not designate who is responsible for carrying out socio-economic and environmental assessments, and no time frames for assessment are prescribed. Significant development applications or proposals that need to be assessed by an agency can sometimes be left waiting for years. On water specifically, in my part of the world a number of developments have been held up because of a need for the SES to undertake a flood evacuation study. Additional layers of bureaucracy and required assessments with no time frames can have a significantly detrimental impact.

The bill's relationship with Federal water policy raises the potential for a long, arduous and costly dispute with the Commonwealth, including constitutional litigation. I am happy to take on the Federal Government when necessary, and I have done that in this sitting fortnight regarding infrastructure, particularly the M7 and the M12. In fact, I also gave a private member's statement last night in relation to more immigration and the need for the Federal Government to do more to help people fleeing Israel and Palestine. However, the New South Wales Government is not willing to take a risk when it comes to the bill.

I understand that the interest of the member for Murray in this issue is borne out of genuine concern for the community, and Government members acknowledge and share those concerns. However, we believe that the passage of the bill would further complicate the existing labyrinth of water management in New South Wales. As I previously stated, the Government's position is that it supports the full implementation of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan. It is one of the most significant environmental projects in the State's history. The Government wants to see the plan deliver the most positive outcomes, as intended for our environment, while supporting regional communities and industries throughout the process. [*Extension of time*]

The Government wants to see the extraction of water within the sustainable diversion limits, all 20 of our water resource plans accredited by the Commonwealth, our sustainable diversion limit adjustment mechanism projects delivered, a contribution towards the target 450 gigalitres of additional environmental water, and the implementation of our toolkit measure projects in the northern basin. However, Government members are realistic. We know that all of these projects cannot be delivered by the 30 June 2024 deadline, which is why the New South Wales Government has been seeking more time to deliver projects and has asked for more flexibility to maximise water recovery efforts to allow for the best environmental outcomes.

The State Government has been clear that it does not support water buybacks. Regional communities have made it clear that buybacks leave them worse off. Government members have significant concerns about the

negative social and economic impacts associated with water buybacks and have pushed the Australian Government to provide substantial structural support to affected communities, like those the member for Murray represents. My good friend the Minister for Water, the Hon. Rose Jackson, MLC, was clear when she said:

We want to see the Australian Government prioritise investment in recovering water through other ways. We have been proactive in scoping these options and putting them in front of the Commonwealth for consideration.

I know the Minister is very passionate about water. She has been out to my electorate to help with some issues in relation to water, specifically Sydney Water. I commend her for her work both in Sydney and across the State. The State Government is prioritising constructive and robust conversations with the Federal Government and other basin States. Only when we come to the table can we deliver results. The member for Murray can be assured that, with the advent of a new government this year, we are taking a seat at the table and unapologetically advocating for communities like hers.

Our regional communities deserve strong leadership from the State Government on this issue, not division, like we had from the previous Government. I know the Minister for Water is providing that strong leadership. The Government is looking at innovative ways to implement the Basin Plan. Whilst it is opposed to water buybacks, the Government maintains its support for the delivery of 450 gigalitres of additional environmental water, as I mentioned previously. The Government is open to finding innovative ways to contribute towards that target that do not undermine regional communities, farmers or irrigators. The Government and the Minister for Water are engaging stakeholders to craft and put forward proposals to the Federal Government. New South Wales is dedicating itself to prioritising investment in infrastructure projects that recover water for the environment and deliver good basin outcomes. Projects like off-farm water efficiency projects, which enable water users to upgrade their infrastructure, are an example of that.

In conclusion, I reassure the member for Murray that the State Government shares her concerns for basin communities. While we cannot support the bill in its current form, I know the Government remains committed to engaging with her and her constituents to draft innovative ways to meet our contributions to the Murray-Darling Basin Plan while supporting farmers and irrigators. New South Wales under this Labor Government will continue to strongly advocate for farmers, irrigators and other water users to minimise the social and economic impacts of water buybacks on communities and on the water market.

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (10:54):** I make a brief contribution in opposition to the Water Management Amendment (Transfer of Water) Bill 2023, introduced by the member for Murray. Firstly, I thank the member for Murray for her advocacy in this area and her passion in representing her constituents. The bill in its current form aims to impose restrictions on the transfer of water access licences to either the Federal or State government, introducing conditions that must be met before such transfers can occur. Specifically, it seeks to hinder the Minister for Water from registering a transfer in the access register under the Act unless an assessment is conducted and a report is made publicly available that demonstrates neutral or positive socio-economic and environmental impacts in the relevant area.

While the intentions behind the bill may seem sensible at first glance, its implications could be detrimental. It threatens to impede the voluntary sale of water access licences by New South Wales water users to the Federal Government for purposes such as environmental water, recovery under the Basin Plan or other essential needs. The amendments proposed in the bill have the potential to create more problems than they aim to solve. They could restrict legitimate water trading purposes, preventing farmers and other water users from freely engaging in the sale of water licences. This is a crucial option that could unlock various investment opportunities for them. Moreover, the additional layers of bureaucracy and extended assessment processes mandated by the bill will inevitably lead to significant time and financial costs. These delays will not merely impact the southern basin communities, they will also reverberate across the entirety of New South Wales.

There have been claims that the bill will bring New South Wales in line with a moratorium on water buybacks imposed by the Victorian Government. However, that is not the case. Like Victoria, the new South Wales Government is adamantly against water buybacks. Regrettably, the Victorian Government's refusal to approve of recent agreements with the Federal Government on the Basin Plan does not prevent buybacks from occurring in its State. Unlike members opposite, Government members welcome the opportunity to collaborate with our Federal counterparts. Engaging in conversations allows us to create policies that are not just beneficial for New South Wales but also contribute positively to the entire country.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** Order! Members will come to order. The member for Mount Druitt will be heard in silence.

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA:** The Government's focus lies in investing in infrastructure projects that facilitate water recovery for the environment, such as off-farm water efficiency projects that enable water users to enhance their infrastructure. We champion initiatives that support farmers, irrigators and water users while



mitigating the social and economic impacts of water buybacks on New South Wales communities and the water market.

The Murray-Darling Basin Plan is one of the most significant environmental reforms in the State's history. The Government needs to make sure that the plan provides the environmental outcomes intended whilst continuing to support regional communities and industries. The Government supports the implementation of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan in full, which means it wants to see the extraction of water within sustainable diversion limits. The Government's goal is to make sure that all 20 of our water resources plans are fully accredited by the Federal Government and that sustainable diversion limit adjustment mechanism projects are delivered, as well as ensuring that the contribution towards the goal of 450 gigalitres of additional environmental water is met.

However, we understand that it is impossible to deliver all of those community commitments by the deadline of 30 June 2024 that has been set for the Basin Plan. As such, New South Wales has been seeking additional time to deliver more projects and flexibility to maximise the water recovery efforts so that the environmental outcomes intended under the Basin Plan can be achieved. The agreement reached between the State Government and Federal Government will provide more time for delivery, as we have previously requested, as well as pathways for new projects to be brought forward. The New South Wales Government has made clear that the Federal Government must explore new and innovative ideas to meet the water recovery targets under the Basin Plan without causing substantial impacts to regional communities. However, if the Federal Government follows through—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** I hate to interrupt the important contribution by the member for Mount Druitt. However, it being 11.00 a.m., pursuant to standing and sessional orders, debate is interrupted for question time. I set down resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a later hour.

*Visitors*

#### VISITORS

**The SPEAKER:** I welcome everybody to the final question time of the year—the member for Port Macquarie is having an emotional crisis over that. I extend a warm welcome to some guests who have joined us in the gallery. There are quite a few, and it is wonderful to see them here in the beating heart of representative democracy in Australia. I extend a warm welcome to Neel Erande, who is completing work experience in the Premier's office this week. I also warmly welcome guests of the member for Swansea, the member's mother, Ann Catley—I am sure mother Catley will not exhibit the same kind of behaviours as her daughter, which I think is all on the member—and niece, Aimee Sinclair. The member has been very good this week. I welcome to the gallery three very special guests of the member for Myall Lakes, the member's husband, Ben—it is lovely to see you again—and daughters Lara and Lucy. I welcome them.

I also welcome to the gallery my guests, the carers and members of Vision Australia book club. I welcome guests of the member for Parramatta, Merindah Thornton, Ellie Thornton, Katya Schwalbe and Oshana Fernando. I acknowledge guests of the member for Upper Hunter, Reverend Angela Peverell and members of the congregation from St Alban's Anglican Church Muswellbrook, and Chanelle Wilson, Upper Hunter Showgirl. I also acknowledge guests of the member for Kiama, the members of the Lions Club of Gerringong. I welcome the guest of the member for Riverstone, Hassan Naveed, executive director of the Office for the Prevention of Hate Crimes for New York City Mayor. I acknowledge guests of the member for North Shore, students from Monte Sant' Angelo Mercy College, Zoe Brownlow and Zaya Olender. They would be amazed at the behaviour of the member for North Shore. Finally I acknowledge staff from the Department of Education, who are participating in training conducted by the Parliamentary Education and Engagement team. I welcome all the guests. It is wonderful to have them here on the last day of sitting—we hope—and certainly for the last question time of the year.

*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*

#### MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT OFFICE STAFFING

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (11:08):** My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. Does the Minister accept that former Labor candidate, former Labor political adviser and current Transport for

NSW director Anne Purcell, acting as a department liaison officer in her office, sent out political attack lines in response to a media inquiry?

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (11:09):** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. It is nice to know that those opposite have found some new tactics for the last question time of the year. As the police Minister would say, it is groundhog day. Here we go again.

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

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** Do members know what else is groundhog day?

**Mr Matt Kean:** Your political judgement.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** No, it is you naming public servants again and again, undermining the value that they bring to New South Wales.

**Mr Matt Kean:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Canterbury will come to order. I call the member for Canterbury to order for the first time. Has the Minister completed her answer?

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** No, I have not.

**The SPEAKER:** Then I will hear from the member for Hornsby on the point of order.

**Mr Matt Kean:** My point of order is under Standing Order 129, relevance. It is the Minister who named Kieren Ash, Camden Gilchrist and Anne Purcell.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** Again, he is naming public servants.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Hornsby will resume his seat. I call the member for Hornsby to order for the first time. The Minister is entitled to make some introductory comments. The Minister has the call.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** I have to say, there used to be a line in politics, and that line was that we do not name staff.

*[Opposition members interjected.]*

No, we do not name staff. We do not name public servants, and we do not name family. All that members opposite do is dig dirt. The fact is that the public servant that they just named has dedicated years to public service. In fact, she was acting within her obligations under the department liaison officer circular and the DLO handbook. Members opposite should not throw stones.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Under Standing Order 249A, I direct the member for Hornsby to remove himself from the Chamber for a period of 10 minutes.

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

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** I will end with this point: Members opposite should not throw stones, especially because the shadow Minister for Transport—

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

**Mr Tim James:** Why don't you kick them out?

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Willoughby knows how it works.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** The shadow Minister for Transport and Roads, who was the Minister for Metropolitan Roads, had a department liaison officer working as her director of media.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Oatley will come to order. It is not like him to behave in that manner.

#### GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (11:12):** My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Education and Early Learning. Can the Deputy Premier update the House on the actions that the Minns Labor Government has taken in its first eight months to rebuild our public education system and responsibly manage the State budget?

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (11:12):** I certainly can. I thank the hardworking Labor member for Camden for her question—I still cannot get over saying that in response to the member for Camden. The year 2023 brought a new era for the people of New South Wales. After 12 years, finally, the people of New South Wales have a

government that is rebuilding essential services, valuing essential workers and finally putting an end to the obsession with privatisation. We have done all that at the same time as starting to fix the fiscal mess left to us by members opposite. The so-called financial managers on the other side of the House left New South Wales with the biggest debt in our history and never-ending deficits. We all know that under the Liberal-Nationals Government New South Wales lost its triple-A credit rating for the first time in a decade.

**The SPEAKER:** Opposition members will cease interjecting and come to order. The member for Clarence will come to order.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** They came to government with three As, and they left with two. Their talking point was, "Well, we did better than Victoria." Thumbs-up to them. Great work. Apparently, we should be grateful that they racked up less debt than another State. The people of New South Wales know it to be true that for 12 years members opposite pretended to be responsible financial managers. They love talking a big game about it, but their record is a dog's breakfast. In just eight months, the new Minns Labor Government has delivered a plan to reduce debt by \$15 billion. That is the biggest ever reduction in debt, and in doing so we will reduce interest costs by \$2.3 billion.

That means that we can start doing things that make a difference to the people of New South Wales. That is crucial, because Government members believe in it and Opposition members clearly do not. We are investing significantly in vital public services, because that is what Labor is about. We are ending the systemic suppression of workers' wages once and for all, delivering higher wages for hundreds of thousands of workers across New South Wales, including teachers, nurses, firefighters and police. Meanwhile, those opposite still advocate for suppressing the wages of essential workers. [*Extension of time*]

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

**Ms PRUE CAR:** Members opposite continue on. Why do they hate workers? I am so proud of our Government. We are rebuilding our education system by valuing and paying the people who are delivering in the classroom. This time last year, there were more than 3,000 permanent teacher vacancies. That is unacceptable. Every day 10,000 lessons are impacted by merged and cancelled classes. No-one in this Chamber can say that is acceptable.

**Mr Ryan Park:** That is their legacy.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** That is their legacy, and it cannot continue. Under this Government, teachers are finally being valued. This year we have delivered the biggest pay rise in a generation for our teachers.

**Mrs Sally Quinell:** Life changing.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** It is life changing. I thank the member for Camden for that comment. We delivered the biggest pay rise in a generation, taking our teachers from being the worst paid in the country to among the best. Only this Labor Government is committed to better education outcomes. Who is giving teachers the biggest pay rise in a generation? It is Labor. Who has given permanent security to 16,800 temporary teachers and support staff? It is Labor. Who has made the biggest investment in school infrastructure in Western Sydney and regional New South Wales? It is Labor. Who is empowering principals to make our schools safe and productive? It is Labor. Who is reducing the workload on our teachers? It is Labor. Who is banning mobile phones in our schools, which those opposite could not do? It is Labor. By comparison, members opposite have no idea. The people of New South Wales gave their verdict, and we are delivering for them every day.

**The SPEAKER:** Members will come to order. I am surprised at the member for Miranda; it is unlike her to interject. The member for Myall Lakes will come to order before I call her to ask her question. She has been a bit fractious this morning.

#### TRANSPORT FOR NSW EMPLOYEE WORKPLACE SAFETY

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes) (11:18):** My question is directed to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads. In an answer given last week regarding the death threats made against a female Transport for NSW employee, the Minister said, "I continue to express unreservedly my support, sympathy and apologies to her." Has any member of the Minister's ministerial staff briefed any member of Parliament or their staff that the female employee is "unstable"?

**Ms Jenny Leong:** I hope you have consent from that person to ask that in question time.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (11:19):** I acknowledge the interjection from the member for Newtown, which is at the heart of this matter. I am appalled by the way the Opposition has conducted itself in this matter.

**The SPEAKER:** Opposition members will come to order. The Minister will be heard in silence on this sensitive matter. I call the member for Terrigal to order for the first time.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** Last week in question time when I was speaking about this matter I said:

I do not want to say anything that would prejudice her case. That is important to me. Even more important than that, I am concerned—

And then I was interrupted by the member for Dubbo with his respectful point of order—or whatever. I was going to say that I am absolutely concerned for her. I guarantee members that my staff have a similar concern for anyone who maybe in a similar situation to what she is going through. It is an awful situation to be in. Many women and men in our community go through this at work. I am really concerned about her. Her comments in the media about her feelings about the way this has played out concern me. I am concerned about the distress she has experienced, and continues to experience. All of the commentary would be triggering her. I have no other words. I have a whole lot of things that I can say on record, but I am not interested in defending myself or Transport. I am concerned about that person and I want her to be safe. That should be the primary concern of every member in this place.

### HEALTH SERVICES

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (11:21):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Health. Will the Minister update the House on actions the Government has taken in its first eight months to begin to ease the pressure on the New South Wales health system?

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (11:21):** I thank the member for Granville for her advocacy for health services on behalf of her community in Western Sydney. It is an incredible privilege for members on either side of the House to have the opportunity to be a government Minister, and one that for a long time I thought would never happen.

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** Tell them how long.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** I spent one or two days on the other side of the House. Being a Minister is an incredible privilege. When we came into government in March this year, I understood that NSW Health and the department had their priorities, but I wanted to set my own. Today I will go through exactly what those priorities are and how we are working on them. There have only been about 43 health Ministers in the entire history of New South Wales government. To be one of those 43 is an incredible privilege and honour. We never know how long we will be in these jobs, so it is important to me to work as hard and as fast as I can.

I have focused on five areas of priority. The first priority was making sure that health services were safe and available to people across the State. We have done that through a number of initiatives and reforms. We are rolling out 25 urgent care services across New South Wales. We are changing the way we are delivering many of our services. We have invested in virtual health care. For the first time in many years, we are focusing on the virtual health care element. We are continuing to look at ways to deliver health care and improve the delivery of health care across New South Wales.

The second priority is workforce. My focus is making sure that we have a sustainable and engaged workforce. We are like no other jurisdiction. We are challenged at the moment. That is why we are investing in 500 additional paramedics. We are investing in safe staffing reforms that have not been done in the past 10 years. They are significant reforms for hospital staffing. We are making sure that we have incentives for those coming into the system and staying in the system. That is the way in which we are targeting our workforce. I understand that we also have to improve our health infrastructure, both capital and virtual. My third priority is building health infrastructure across regional, rural and metropolitan New South Wales. [*Extension of time*]

We are doing that through record investment in Western Sydney hospitals. We are investing over \$3 billion into health services, with 600 new beds and massive increases in scale and size for hospitals like Rouse Hill—which is important to the member for Riverstone. We are also investing in virtual technology that will take world-leading hospitals and surgeons into some of the smallest and most remote towns and villages in the State so that they have access to world-leading health services in the same way that those in metropolitan areas do.

My fourth priority is focusing on regional, rural and remote healthcare services to make sure that we continue to deliver those services across New South Wales regardless of where towns or villages are located. Last but not least, we are focusing on the way in which the size and scale of our health service can deliver for the most remote and vulnerable members of our community. We are talking about our framework where we invest in young people and families in the first 2,000 days to change their trajectory for the rest of their lives. We are talking about a commitment to double the funding for our women's health services—which has never been done before—to look after the most vulnerable women in our society. We are talking about making sure that we will continue to

invest in the vulnerable to make sure that no matter where people live or what stage of life they are in, they will have a world-class health system delivering world-class health services.

#### NORTHERN BEACHES YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (11:27):** I say to the Opposition leader and the Deputy Premier—as well as, I think, Lachie and Tamsin—that that was outstanding last night. It was hard work to deliver that, and they were amazing. Well done. It was fantastic.

**The SPEAKER:** It is good to see that the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Premier have a fanboy. The Leader of the Opposition's recognition has just gone up by 100 per cent.

**Mr MICHAEL REGAN:** My question is directed to the Minister for Health representing the Minister for Youth, and Minister for Mental Health. When can the northern beaches community expect a decision about the full delivery of enhanced youth mental health services committed by the previous New South Wales Government over 1½ years ago, including acute paediatric mental health beds at the Northern Beaches Hospital?

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (11:28):** I thank the member for his question. I am honoured to represent the Minister for Mental Health and a range of other portfolios—including Youth, Homelessness and Housing—in this place. On behalf of her, I express my thanks for the way the member has engaged with, advocated for and fought for his community. As a first time MP, he is doing a fantastic job. The people he represents are lucky to have him in our oldest Parliament. There were some existing challenges around mental health services when we came into government, particularly in the northern beaches. I start by talking about the Northern Beaches Hospital. The hospital's model has not worked for the community. We will not be doing that type of healthcare service again. There were a number of members on this side of the Chamber who fought very hard. Thankfully, with a new Minister we were able to change that approach. We will not be going back to that previous approach.

In relation to the dedicated unit, I will give the member for Wakehurst an update on where that is at. Around 27 July this year the Minister for Mental Health provided Healthscope with a period of eight weeks to get back to her on the way in which those health services will be delivered. Healthscope, which runs Northern Beaches Hospital, was unable to present a plan that was acceptable to the Minister and the community. The mental health division of NSW Health has again looked at what we can do on the ground to improve capital and service delivery and the way in which we might roll those services out more broadly. I am very glad to say I have had a number of discussions with staff at the office of the Minister for Mental Health about the issue because the member for Wakehurst has raised it previously. I know that the Minister and her staff have been engaging with the member, the Federal member and, importantly, stakeholders and community members around what those services might look like. I can update the House that the Minister has received a range of different options around both capital and delivery of mental health services in the northern beaches area. [*Extension of time*]

There is nothing that is completely ideal yet. I will go to that in a minute. In relation to what those initiatives might look like, she is likely to hand down something towards the end of this year. We still have a situation where there are four beds. Two of them are in an adult ward. They are special, meaning one-to-one care. Two are in a paediatric ward. I am very aware and accept that that is not an ideal model. But I assure the community of a couple of things. We are focused on developing a solution around this problem, which the Minister is considering at the moment. No doubt she will engage the member more.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I have noticed that the clock was not reset. The Minister has an additional one minute.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** Hopefully that solution will be considered before the end of this year. I remind all members that when we were in opposition we made two significant commitments in the lead-up to the election. One commitment concerned the record investment into Kids Helpline. Members who have been involved in the education of young people know how important that is. The other commitment was the new record investment into Lifeline. I also note the importance of that. I thank the member for Wakehurst for his advocacy and for being a tenacious fighter for his community. He should rest assured that the Minister in the other place is doing a fantastic job and will continue to engage with him and his community to deliver better services for the people of northern Sydney.

#### HOUSING SUPPLY

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (11:33):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. Will the Minister update the House on actions the Minns Labor Government has taken in its first eight months to boost housing supply across New South Wales?

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

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (11:33):** I thank the member for Mount Druitt for his question. He is acutely aware of the need to deliver more homes for the next generation of Sydney residents and particularly Mount Druitt residents.

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

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** While the Opposition is off at its conference in a galaxy far, far away, searching for new hope, the Minns Government is getting on with reforms to a planning system that almost completely turned into a death star for homes and jobs in New South Wales. We are using the force. We are using the force that the New South Wales people delivered to us in March to make that meaningful change. We have increased self-assessment powers for the Land and Housing Corporation, the Aboriginal Housing Office and Landcom to deliver more homes. We have directed Landcom to reinvest \$300 million into housing projects to produce over 20,000 homes over the next few years.

We are delivering on our election commitment of \$60 million for build-to-rent projects on the South Coast and the Northern Rivers. We have announced incentives for the private market to deliver affordable housing. Our first budget delivered \$2.2 billion of investment for housing and housing-enabling infrastructure. We have reformed infrastructure contributions to provide a consistent source of revenue to fund infrastructure that supports new homes. We have reserved \$1 billion of those contributions over 10 years for grants to local government for regionally significant infrastructure. We have made it easier for young people to enter the housing market by ending the former Government's forever tax on the family home and raising stamp duty exemption thresholds.

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

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** We are the only State to introduce new nation-leading thermal and energy efficiency standards to address cost of living for home owners. But we are doing amenity as well. We have delivered the first ever beach to Western Sydney: Penrith Beach. The member for Hornsby is C-3PO. He should listen up and pay attention; he might learn something. We fixed parking at Moore Park and we will deliver more parkland there in the future. We are rezoning Parramatta North for more homes. We have approved a new metal coating line in Western Sydney to create jobs and supply the building materials we need for new homes. We have approved new jetties at Port Kembla, for BlueScope to continue to produce steel to make sure that Colorbond ends up on 70 per cent of roofs of houses throughout New South Wales.

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

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** We are rezoning and doing work around Macquarie Park. I am going to continue the *Star Wars* analogy because, like *Star Wars* sequels, this list just does not stop. I am going to have to jump into hyperspace if I am to cover the rest of what we have done in our first eight months. [*Extension of time*]

I am happy to provide extra information. We are providing more affordable homes in Lachlan's Line. We are rezoning Macquarie Park for more homes. We are supporting more planners into the system through our Strong Start Cadetship Program. We are introducing artificial intelligence into the planning system—the same stuff those opposite use in their tactics committee. We are removing design competitions for high-rise developments in well-located areas, which will cut about 12 months off approval times. We are developing a pattern book of well-designed homes that will get homes through the system even faster and make sure there are well-designed new homes in our suburbs.

We are amending planning laws to support the return of live music, to continue outdoor dining and to bring back the fun. This week we have announced major reforms to allow much more low- and medium-density housing in suburbs close to transport, jobs, opportunity and centres. But just like *Star Wars*, there is still more to come. The Opposition is in need of a new hope, but it is the same old evil empire. The Leader of the Opposition is like Darth Vader—not because he is scary but because no-one recognises his face.

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

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will resume his seat. The Clerk will stop the clock.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Two standing orders have been breached. The first is Standing Order 129 relating to direct relevance. The second is the standing order against false self-congratulations.

**The SPEAKER:** I rule against the point of order.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** It is good to see Emperor Palpatine back in the Senate.

**The SPEAKER:** The Force is obviously with you.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** In March the people of New South Wales sent us a message, "Help us, Chris Minns, you're our only hope for housing."

### TEACHER POLITICAL DISCOURSE

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (11:39):** My question is directed to the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Education and Early Learning. This week the Teachers Federation encouraged teachers to defy the education department's code of conduct by wearing the Palestinian keffiyeh and even taking protest signs into the classroom. What action will the Minister take to stop the Teachers Federation from encouraging the code of conduct breaches and the politicisation of our classrooms?

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Pittwater to order. Members will tone it down and return some decorum to the House. This is a sensitive and important question. The Deputy Premier has the call.

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (11:39):** I thank the member for Vaucluse for the question, and I acknowledge its importance and sensitivity. Obviously I am going to answer the question seriously because I take my responsibility for providing a safe and respectful place of learning for children in New South Wales very seriously. As a government, we have made our expectations of teachers very clear. Our expectations of our wonderful teachers in our schools is that they are impartial in the classroom. We rely on them to ensure that classrooms are not places for political activism. That is why I am very disappointed with the Teachers Federation in this instance. I have made that very clear.

We do not want classrooms to be places where political activity takes place. That is not what schools are for. We cannot have any actions that provoke unrest or discomfort, or make other students or other teachers feel unsafe or unwelcome. That has no place in any school. I have responsibility for public schools, and that behaviour has no place in public schools. I understand that people have personal political beliefs that they want to express, but they are to be expressed in their own time; they are not to be expressed in the classroom. It is not appropriate to make a child or another member of staff feel uncomfortable or unwelcome. My concern is that actions of the type the member for Vaucluse cites may have that effect. That is why I am disappointed in the actions of the federation in this instance.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** What are you going to do?

**Ms PRUE CAR:** With respect to the Manager of Opposition Business, I am answering the question in full because I agree with the Opposition that this is inappropriate. It is inappropriate to be encouraging teachers to express political views in schools in either overt or clandestine ways. It is not acceptable, and I am clearly saying, as Minister, that it is contrary to our expectation. We have Jewish children in public schools. We have Palestinian children in public schools. We have Jewish teachers and Palestinian teachers. At all times we must make sure that political views that make people feel uncomfortable and unsafe are not being expressed in the classroom or in the playground during school time. We are a multicultural, multi-faith society and the place where that is expressed in the most complete way is in our public schools, which are multicultural, multi-faith environments. We will protect that at all costs. I have made my expectation about the code of conduct very clear, and people will be dealt with in accordance with the code of conduct if they breach it.

### TRANSPORT PORTFOLIO

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (11:43):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport. Will the Minister update the House on the actions that the Minns Labor Government has taken in its first eight months to improve the reliability of transport systems across New South Wales?

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (11:43):** I thank the fabulous member for East Hills for her question. She is a tireless advocate for public transport.

**The SPEAKER:** Members, including the member for Wahroonga and the member for Davidson, will come to order.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** In fact, thanks to her advocacy and the action of our Government, we are delivering a new school bus service in term 1 next year for Menai High School, which is in her electorate. That is something the former Government said could not be done, but we are doing it. I am very pleased to inform the House of some of the really important systemic changes that we are making in transport to benefit the people of New South Wales. Members opposite left us a complete mess across the entire Transport portfolio, but we are beginning to make the changes to turn that around. It is going to take some time. We know extreme weather events and things on the network that are beyond our control impact our efforts and impact passengers, but we have begun the work to fix our train services.

Under those opposite, we had the worst on-time running we had seen since before the pandemic. Passengers were left stranded and experienced delays and cancellations. That is why, in our very first week in government, we announced the Sydney Trains review. In line with its recommendations, we are rolling out our rail repair plan.

As I said yesterday, we have made incredible progress. We have removed 80 per cent of the high-priority defects, thanks to the thousands of transport workers who are out there helping us each and every weekend. We are also delivering on some of the other key review recommendations to improve the way that we communicate with passengers. For the first time ever in New South Wales, we are going to use geotargeted broadcast SMS alerts when there are significant disruptions on our network to provide real-time information for passengers. We are also installing new smart screens across our network so that people can connect to other modes of transport, including rail, light rail, buses and ferries. We are working to put the new intercity fleet on the tracks next year, which is something those opposite could never do.

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

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** We have also begun to fix our bus services. The former Government privatised the whole system and broke it. We are dealing with a shortage of bus drivers and a contracting model that is failing passengers. That is why we created the Bus Industry Taskforce, and we are urgently implementing its recommendations. We have made it cheaper and faster to become a bus driver.

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

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** We are cutting red tape and for the next 12 months have waived the \$70 application fee to become a bus driver.

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

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** We have 144 drivers in training right now. We have launched a recruitment campaign which has seen 450 people receive their bus driver authority in just the past couple of months. We have provided free Opal cards for bus drivers. [*Extension of time*]

We have held our bus operators to account—like in region 10, where those opposite signed a contract that failed passengers. We intervened and brought that operator to account so passengers have a service they can rely on.

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

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** Our Government has announced that we will finish the city and south-west sections of our metro. Currently along the Bankstown line there are stations that only receive four trains per hour in the peak.

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

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** When this section of the metro is completed next year, thanks to this Government, they will receive a train every four minutes. That is a massive increase in services. All of those stations have lifts and are now accessible to everybody, which is a great thing. We are bringing back the iconic, reliable, Australian-built Freshwater ferries. The former Government retired the Queenscliff. We brought her back. We are building ferries in Australia for the Parramatta River. We are a government that stands up for domestic manufacturing. We are building the replacement trains we need for the Tangara fleet right here. We are going to use the procurement power of the New South Wales Government to support local content like local steel. That is one of the reasons people voted for change this year.

I have such a long list and I have only 45 seconds left. But let us have a look at some of the other things we have done. We have slashed fares on Fridays. We have put the Manly Fast Ferry on the Opal network. We are making sure that Uber surge pricing is limited during network disruptions. We have commenced e-scooter trials in Wollongong and Armidale. We are cracking down on taxis that do not turn on their meters and charge dodgy fares. We are delivering electric charging stations at commuter car parks, like the one in Penrith. We have updated our freight policy so we can have emissions-free vehicles on our State roads. We are just getting started. Those opposite left us a complete mess in public transport. We are delivering the services that the people of New South Wales need and deserve.

#### PARAMEDIC STAFFING

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (11:49):** My question is directed to the Minister for Health, and Minister for Regional Health.

**The SPEAKER:** Members will come to order and listen to the member for Hornsby.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** Members of the ambulance division of the Health Services Union have threatened to boycott their professional registration effective from tomorrow, which would take approximately 1,500 paramedics out of action. What are the Minister's contingency plans to ensure the people of New South Wales have access to adequate paramedic services while he struggles to solve his industrial dispute?



**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (11:49):** I thank the member for Hornsby for his question. It is an interesting question from a former Treasurer who had a thing called a wages cap that capped wages for 12 years. When you cap the wages of essential workers for 12 years while other States to our north and south do not, even year 1 or year 2 mathematics would indicate there will be a greater gap in wages when compounding comes into place.

**Mr Matt Kean:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, relevance. The Minister has not mentioned the word "paramedics". Simple mathematics says he promised a pay rise in line with inflation, but he has given them a pay cut. Inflation is 5.3 per cent but he has given them 4 per cent.

**The SPEAKER:** I draw the Minister's attention to the requirement for direct relevance. I uphold the point of order.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** My response to the people of New South Wales and the Health Services Union entails a number of things. Firstly, we are continuing to negotiate and to discuss the issues the Health Services Union has raised. That is an expectation I put on myself and that the staff also put on me. Secondly, we are continuing to develop contingency planning across NSW Ambulance, particularly for regional, rural and remote areas, by making sure that available staff in a network model can move and be available across the system. Thirdly, whilst the official expiry for that registration is 1 December, there is a four-week grace period in which they can continue to operate. As late as yesterday and today we continue to have discussions with the workforce. We are working through this issue.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister's time has expired.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** But I will not be lectured to by a Treasurer who put in place a wages cap that made sure that the gap between what paramedics got paid in Queensland and Victoria and what our paramedics got paid was significant.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will resume his seat. I call the Minister for Health to order for the first time.

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** People don't like being lied to!

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

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order: The language used by the member for Dubbo was unparliamentary. It is not the first time that interjection has been yelled across the Chamber. Members opposite know they cannot use those words.

**The SPEAKER:** The words were unparliamentary. The Leader of the House is entitled to take a point of order and even to ask for the words to be withdrawn; however, he has not done so.

### PUBLIC SECTOR WAGES

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (11:53):** Speaking of wages caps, my question is addressed to the Minister for Industrial Relations. Will the Minister update the House on actions the Minns Labor Government has taken in its first eight months to abolish the wages cap in New South Wales and value our essential workers?

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

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (11:54):** I thank the amazing member for Liverpool for her question and congratulate her on the fantastic job she has done. It has been great having her in the Parliament this year. The member for Liverpool has over 11,000 essential workers in her electorate. She has been working hard with her local health workers and knows how important lifting the wages cap has been. This Government has done more to help essential workers and working people in this State than members opposite did in 12 years. The Minns Government went to the election with a commitment to abolish the Coalition's unfair wages cap to ensure that essential workers get the pay rise that they deserve—and it has done that. However, those opposite voted against it, so they support bringing back the wages cap. They will go to the 2027 election saying to the people of New South Wales, "We are going to 2027 with a wages cap." Doogie Howser, the member for Ryde, has—

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

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** —over 7,000 public sector workers in his electorate.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will resume her seat. The member for Wahrenoonga rises on a point of order.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** The Minister's language is unparliamentary and the comment should be withdrawn. Furthermore, the Minister is infringing Standing Order 74 by inciting quarrels across the Chamber.

**The SPEAKER:** I am inclined to uphold the second part of the point of order. I did not watch *Doogie Howser M.D.*

**Mr Jordan Lane:** Nobody has! That show is a thousand years old. How old are you people?

**The SPEAKER:** So I am not sure how offensive it was. However, it was an inappropriate way to refer to a member. The Minister will not incite bad behaviour.

**Ms Charishma Kaliyanda:** Mr Speaker—

**Ms Jenny Leong:** Mr Speaker—

**The SPEAKER:** I note that the member for Newtown is on her feet. I will hear first from the member for Liverpool.

**Ms Charishma Kaliyanda:** I seek an extension of time.

**The SPEAKER:** An additional two minutes is granted. The Minister will be more mindful of her interactions across the Chamber. I will now hear from the member for Newtown.

**Ms Jenny Leong:** To the point of order: Mr Speaker, I appreciate that you may not have watched the show, but it is important to point out that the reference is quite ageist. It refers to a young medical doctor in a show that I used to watch in the eighties—I am old enough to remember it. The remark is actually quite offensive. It would be problematic if the situation was reversed. If older members were referred to as Angela Lansbury, that might also be offensive.

**The SPEAKER:** I will give a considered ruling after I have had a nap. I thank the member for Newtown. I do not know whether the remark was ageist. However, it is not an appropriate way to address a member of the House. I have granted the Minister an additional two minutes. She will please work with me on this. The Minister has the call.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Ms Lansbury was a very wise woman, so I thank the member for Newtown for the reference. I apologise to the member for Ryde, who has 7,000 public sector workers in his electorate. I hope he tells them, "Guess what? We're bringing back the wages cap." We have lifted the wages cap, brought back a new bargaining system, increased pay by 4.5 per cent and introduced the industrial relations bill, which is currently being debated. This is real, good reform. We established a \$3.6 billion Essential Services Fund. Guess what we have done?

**Mr Jihad Dib:** What have we done?

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** We have established portable long service leave for community sector workers. Guess what?

**Mr Jihad Dib:** What? What?

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** The security industry has knocked on our door and said, "We also want to be involved in you establishing portable long service leave for security guards." That is what our Government has been doing. What else are we doing? We are improving workplace rights for gig workers. Too many gig workers have died in the workplace. We will introduce a leave scheme and workers compensation scheme. One of my favourite policies, other than industrial relations, is the transfer of 17,000 teachers and support staff to permanent positions. Those opposite created the largest insecure workforce in the Southern Hemisphere. I have a confession to make: When the Premier returns, he will find a number of industrial deafness claims on his desk from the union secretaries with whom I have had multiple meetings, as those opposite have said. Lucky we are bringing in mandatory hearing tests for all workers from 1 January.

#### PORT OF NEWCASTLE PROTESTS

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (12:01):** My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. In light of Monday's arrests of over 100 protesters for acting illegally at the Port of Newcastle and the Premier's stated position that we cannot have our ports blocked, will the Minister ask the police commissioner to deny any future requests from Rising Tide to hold blockade-style protests?

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (12:01):** I thank the member for Goulburn for her question.

**Ms Robyn Preston:** Read from your notes.

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

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** As she should be. I have said in this place over and over again that protesting is legal in this country, so long as it is peaceful and lawful. For the benefit of the House, I inform members that is not just my view. In fact, I have key support for it, such as this public affirmation, "The Government supports the right of all individuals to participate in lawful protest. Freedom of assembly and speech have long been recognised by Australian courts as important rights that are integral to the democratic system of government."

**Mr Paul Scully:** Who said that?

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** It was the member for Cronulla, just last year.

**Mrs Wendy Tuckerman:** Point of order—

**Mr Warren Kirby:** We know he's irrelevant.

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

**Mrs Wendy Tuckerman:** My point of order relates to direct relevance. The question asked the police Minister whether she will deny any future requests from Rising Tide to hold blockade-style protests.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** I do not make that determination.

**The SPEAKER:** I thank the member for Goulburn. I consider what the Minister has said so far to be introductory comments.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** The police Minister does not make that determination. So, if they ask the right question? What is interesting is the Opposition making demands that the Government stop protests from going ahead at all. Yet, last year when they were in government, they went ahead. Did anybody hear a word from them? Absolutely not. In 2012 Mike Gallacher failed to stop it happening. In 2014, then Minister Stuart Ayres failed to stop it from happening.

**Mrs Wendy Tuckerman:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock.

**Mrs Wendy Tuckerman:** My point of order again relates to direct relevance. We need to know. The question is whether the Minister will ask the police commissioner to deny any future requests. It is quite simple for the Minister to understand the question, and I am happy to repeat it if she does not.

**The SPEAKER:** I thank the member for Goulburn. I understand that the issue is direct relevance. The Minister will assist the Chair by being directly relevant. I appreciate that she has been addressing the broader issue, but she will be directly relevant.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** In 2016 Troy Grant failed to stop it. In 2020 David Elliott failed to stop it from happening.

**Ms Eleni Petinos:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will resume her seat. The Clerk will stop the clock.

**Ms Eleni Petinos:** Mr Speaker, the Minister is deliberately flouting your ruling.

**Mr Ryan Park:** To the point of order: I have listened to the question and the answer. The Minister has answered directly. She has been talking about the way in which this protest was carried out in the past at that port. I do not know how much more relevant she needs to be, other than draw pictures for the member.

**The SPEAKER:** I thank the member for Keira. I uphold the point of order. I do not believe it is necessarily deliberate, but I ask the Minister to be directly relevant.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** We have seen a conga line come through—tough action from those opposite. Here they are, the hypocrites. The principal difference in all those years is that the Labor Opposition never demanded that we stop the democratic right of people to protest.

**Mrs Wendy Tuckerman:** I seek an extension of time.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Goulburn seeks an extension of time. I am inclined to grant it, but I will revoke the extension if the Minister's answer is not directly relevant. The Minister has not been directly relevant to the question. The Minister said it is not her role, and I accept that. But that was not the question. The Minister will be directly relevant.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** The port authority makes that decision. Those opposite have mud on their faces again. They need to speak to the relevant Minister for the port.

**Mrs Wendy Tuckerman:** Point of order—

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** I just answered the question completely directly. That is a fact.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Goulburn will resume her seat.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** The principal difference in all those years was that the Labor Opposition did not demand that the Government stop that lawful protest. That is because we are not idiots. The hypocrisy on display in this place this week has been absolutely breathtaking. I congratulate the NSW Police Force on the work it does.

**Mrs Wendy Tuckerman:** Point of order: It is again direct relevance.

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock.

**Ms Eleni Petinos:** Point of order—

**Mrs Wendy Tuckerman:** The Minister has not mentioned the police commissioner at all.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Miranda will resume her seat. I will hear the point of order.

**Mrs Wendy Tuckerman:** Clearly, the Minister does not understand the question.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Goulburn will resume her seat. The issue that is vexing the Opposition and the member for Goulburn relates to the part of the question that asked whether the Minister will ask the police commissioner to deny any future protest requests. The Minister has not answered that part of the question directly. I believe the Minister has heard—

**Ms Jo Haylen:** She asked three questions in one.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Summer Hill will cease interjecting.

**Ms Jo Haylen:** It should have been ruled out of order in the first place.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will assist by answering the question directly.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** I congratulate the New South Wales police on another tremendous job. We know how much pressure they have been under for seven weeks. Every day they are out on our streets, in our communities—

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister's time has expired. She will resume her seat.

#### NET ZERO EMISSIONS TARGETS

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (12:09):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, representing the Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, and Minister for the Environment. Will the Minister update the House on the actions the Minns Labor Government has taken in its first eight months to deliver a path to net zero while ensuring energy reliability and affordability?

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (12:09):** I thank the member for The Entrance for his question. He is very passionate about affordability and the opportunities that renewable energy can bring to his electorate. The Minns Labor Government is glad to be delivering energy bill relief to households and small businesses, especially in the electorate of The Entrance. Part of that package will provide \$500 to around 1.6 million eligible households and \$650 to over 300,000 eligible small businesses. Providing energy bill relief is critical due to cost-of-living pressures and the transition from aging coal-fired power stations toward renewable generation.

Transforming our electricity system will provide New South Wales households and businesses with a reliable supply of clean, affordable renewable energy and support the jobs of the future. I am very glad that last night this House came together and enshrined our net zero targets in law. I am pleased to report the Legislative Council has ratified the bill this morning. The first step on the path to net zero is the transformation of our electricity system. Last week, in partnership with the Commonwealth, we announced support for over a gigawatt of new firming infrastructure, which are critical projects to keep the lights on and the prices down.

We are getting on with the job of implementing the recommendations of the Electricity Supply and Reliability Check Up, which we commissioned to kick the tyres on the road map. We are equipping EnergyCo to be the delivery agency for five renewable energy zones. The role of the Energy Security Target Monitor will be

brought back in house so that New South Wales residents and customers have a tough cop on the beat when it comes to ensuring energy security. The first Minns Labor budget delivered \$1 billion for the Energy Security Corporation; \$800 million for renewable energy zones; an additional \$260 million to support the rollout of electric vehicle charging infrastructure; and \$480 million to support net zero manufacturing. We are also harnessing the enthusiasm for electric vehicles and rooftop solar through the development of a Consumer Energy Strategy for the uptake of small-scale renewables.

In the debate around energy reliability yesterday, there was a great deal of consternation around the role of gas. That was literally brought home to the Parliament yesterday when many were concerned about what seemed like the strong odour of gas and the potential of a gas leak. The great people from Fire and Rescue NSW were quick to come to Parliament and get onto the job. They went through the building, searching for leaks and for where the odour was coming from. *[Extension of time]*

Fire and Rescue staff did their job, and they checked everywhere but they could not find it. I was still concerned about a leak. Everyone is worried about a leak, so I went to level 10 to find out where the stench was coming from but it was just hot air.

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

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** It is direct relevance. This has no relevance and it is not funny.

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order.

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** I was talking about the gas leak. I went to the other well-known place of leaks, the member for Hornsby's office. I did not find a leak but I found smouldering copies of last year's budget. I went to Jeremy Buckingham's office because there was a smell coming from there, but it was not gas. One can imagine what smell was coming from that office. I then went to David Elliott's old office. We know there were some leaks there; maybe he left something. There were no leaks but I found a box of hot sauce to be delivered to Linda Silmalis. I then went to the member for Rockdale's office because there was vapour billowing from it, but it turns out he was just stockpiling vapes before the ban comes in. I then went over to the member for Lane Cove's office because there was some smoke coming from there. He was burning coal to keep himself toasty. Everyone knows about the barbecue for the member for Summer Hill. That barbecue was electric and not gas. Finally, I went to One Nation's office but it was so toxic I called for the hazmat crew.

**The SPEAKER:** Minister, it is all about timing, and yours is out.

#### WESTERN SYDNEY AIRPORT FLIGHT PATHS

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (12:15):** Merry Christmas, everyone. My question is directed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. The Western Sydney airport State environmental planning policy [SEPP] is affecting my area and stopping the building of secondary dwellings. It is also limiting government housing goals. I have written to the Minister a number of times this year and asked this question: When will the SEPP be modified for Wollondilly residents? When will it be fixed?

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (12:16):** The Western Parkland City State environmental planning policy came into effect in 2020 and placed restrictions on those new areas because the flight paths were still to be determined. As the member would be aware, and as we have discussed on several occasions, we must make sure that when we are planning around the airport we take those flight paths into consideration. The flight paths have been released recently by the Commonwealth. They are on public exhibition at the moment, as the member for Wollondilly would be aware. I am sure many in her community are commenting on them. On 24 October the Government placed the preliminary flight paths and the associated noise contours for the first runway on exhibition. The noise contours are based on a single runway allowing for 15 million passenger movements in the first instance. That reflects the first stages of the airport's operation.

The noise contours in the SEPP map safeguard development within those noise contours for the full operation of the airport, which is expected to be two runways and 82 million passenger movements. It would be premature of the Government to make any changes while we have not got those final flight paths in place. The public exhibition continues to 31 January 2024. I encourage those interested to make a submission. The Commonwealth Government will then finalise those noise contours in 2024, and that will give us the opportunity to have a good look at the restrictions placed on land around the airport. I am determined to remove or relax any of those unnecessary restrictions. I am not going to needlessly put people in the way of noise from the flight paths. But if there is a restriction that should go because the flight paths have been made clear and it is no longer necessary then we will look to remove that as quickly as we can.

## SOUTH COAST ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr RON HOENIG:** By leave: Pursuant to Standing Order 131 (7), I table a written response from the Premier to a question asked of him by the member for Kiama during question time on 22 November 2023.

### *Documents*

## PRINTING OF PAPERS

**Mr RON HOENIG:** I move:

That the following papers be printed:

- (1) A submission from the Hon. Mark Dreyfus, KC, MP, to the Federal Joint Select Committee on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice Referendum, dated 21 April 2023.
- (2) Report of the Independent Statutory Review of the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Act 2019, dated April 2023.
- (3) Report on the statutory review of Part 3A of the Service NSW (One-Stop Access to Government Services) Act 2013, dated May 2023.
- (4) Report of NSW Department of Education for 2022.
- (5) Reports for 2022 of Charles Sturt University; Macquarie University; Southern Cross University; University of Newcastle; University of New England; University of New South Wales; University of Sydney; University of Technology, Sydney; University of Wollongong; and Western Sydney University.
- (6) Statutory report of the Coercive Control Implementation and Evaluation Taskforce entitled *Crimes Legislation Amendment (Coercive Control) Act 2022—Statutory Report*, dated 1 June 2023.
- (7) Report on the Statutory Review of the Terrorism (Police Powers) Act 2002, dated May 2023.

**Motion agreed to.**

### *Members*

## UNPARLIAMENTARY LANGUAGE

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (12:19):** I return to an incident in question time. I appreciate that it is the last school day of the year and members have been quite animated, but there is a well-established precedent in this House about the use of unacceptable language. When referring to members on this side of the House, the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism used the word "idiots". In fact, she said that Government members are not idiots, therefore impugning members on this side of the House. The word "idiot" is well established as being unparliamentary. I appreciate that the Minister is not present in the Chamber, but in the interests of preserving the dignity of the House, I ask that she returns to the Chamber before the end of the sitting day and withdraws her very clear unparliamentary language. If members on this side of the House, such as the Leader of The Nationals, are called to order for saying that members lie, then surely the Minister should demonstrate more dignity and decorum than to use the word "idiot" in this place.

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (12:21):** There is an obligation on members to draw to the attention of the Chair the use of unparliamentary language by way of taking a point of order. During question time the Chamber was very rowdy, with a lot of interjections. The Speaker cannot hear every word that is said, so it is incumbent on the members. If the member for Miranda heard that language, she should have taken a point of order at the time but she did not.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Miranda did seek to draw the matter to my attention. In the context of what was happening in the Chamber, I declined to hear the member's point of order. I discussed the matter with her subsequently and agreed that she could raise it now. I am happy to discuss the matter with the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. As always, it is up to the individual Minister or member as to how they deal with it. I thank the member for Miranda for bringing the matter to my attention.

### *Documents*

## DEPARTMENT OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

### **Reports**

**The SPEAKER:** It is with great pleasure that I table the annual report of the Department of the Legislative Assembly for the year ended 30 June 2023. The report covers an historically interesting time in New South Wales that included significant events, such as the tribute to Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, the proclamation of His Majesty King Charles III, the opening of the Fifty-Eighth Parliament and the transition to a new Parliament. The department and its staff played a key role in facilitating the changeover to a new Parliament and the induction of new members. I congratulate the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, Helen Minnican, and departmental staff

on their achievements. I encourage members to read the report, which will be published on the website shortly. If members do not wish to read the report because it has lots of words in it, there are also lots of pictures that I think all members feature in. I order that the report be printed.

## DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY SERVICES

### Reports

**The SPEAKER:** I table the report of the Department of Parliamentary Services for the year ended 30 June 2023. I order that the report be printed.

## AUDITOR-GENERAL

### Reports

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with section 52B of the Government Sector Audit Act 1983, I announce receipt of a Performance Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *Regional road safety*, dated 30 November 2023. I order that the report be printed.

## AUDITOR-GENERAL

### Reports

**The CLERK:** In accordance with section 52B of the Government Sector Audit Act 1983, I announce receipt of the following:

- (1) Financial Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *Regional NSW 2023*, dated 29 November 2023 and received the same day.
- (2) Report of the Premier and Cabinet for the year ended 30 June 2023, received 29 November 2023.
- (3) Financial Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *Enterprise, Investment and Trade 2023*, dated 30 November 2023 and received the same day.

### Committees

## COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

### Inquiry

**Mrs HELEN DALTON:** As Chair: In accordance with Standing Order 299 (1), I inform the House that the Committee on Children and Young People has resolved to conduct an inquiry into the 2024 review of the annual reports and other matters of the Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People and the Office of the Children's Guardian, the full details of which are available on the committee's home page.

### Business of the House

## SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: BILLS

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (12:25):** I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to extend the lapsing dates for the Electoral Amendment (Voter ID and Electronic Mark Off) Bill 2023 and the Independent Commission Against Corruption Amendment (Ministerial Diary Disclosure) Bill 2023 until 30 June 2024.

These bills will lapse over the upcoming holiday period. Whilst I do have the opportunity, as members would be aware, to reintroduce the bills next year, in the past courtesies have been extended to members whose bills have lapsed. In fact, the member for Sydney's bill was extended so that he could continue debate and not have to go through the process of its reintroduction.

For the benefit of members, the Electoral Amendment (Voter ID and Electronic Mark Off) Bill 2023 deals with proposals emanating from the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters that deal with electronic mark-off and voter identification. The Independent Commission Against Corruption Amendment (Ministerial Diary Disclosure) Bill 2023 arises from recommendations from Operation Eclipse that deal with lobbyists, transparency and accountability measures concerning ministerial diaries and Parliamentary Secretaries. This motion to suspend standing and sessional orders is a procedural motion. It is not about the bills themselves; it is about whether or not the House is prepared to have those matters carried over to next year. As I said, I can reintroduce them, but it would be unnecessary to have to give the second readings speeches again.

I say to my crossbench colleagues, I have always supported the right of members to be heard in this place. This motion is not about the substance of the bills themselves; it is about the right of members, supported by their communities, to be heard on issues of transparency and accountability. Whilst I understand that members might have different views on the bills and want to amend them, that is not the issue before the House today. The issue

is whether or not the bills should be carried forward to next year's parliamentary sitting calendar, as has been done with the member for Sydney's bill. I simply ask that the same courtesy be extended on these bills so that they can be debated and voted on next year. Whether they pass or fail is a matter for a different time. There are other avenues to reintroduce them, but why go through all that rigmarole when they can be carried over now?

I say to my friends on the crossbench, in particular, that I always have and always will support their right to be heard. My principled position is that members come to this place to work on behalf of their communities and put forward legislation, not to have it nobbled by timings in the standing orders that relate to the lapsing of bills. I encourage members to think about that when they vote, because that is my principled position. Regardless of how members vote today, I will continue to hold that position because members should always be heard. With your indulgence, Mr Temporary Speaker, I acknowledge Gerringong Lions in the gallery. I look forward to taking them to lunch shortly. I was making sandwiches late into the night, and they will be ready shortly.

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (12:28):** The Government does not support the motion to suspend standing and sessional orders. In any event, the bills relate to significant public policy issues that the Government is currently working on. Regarding the crossbench, generally speaking, whether we agree or not, there is always a significant interaction—if it is genuine—between the Government and crossbench MPs to see whether or not their views can be incorporated into Government legislation. Alternatively, if they cannot, they always have the right to introduce their own bill. In fact, the Government has extended an open door policy to all crossbench members to bring public policy to it to consider.

A difficulty of when a government does not have a majority—and it is the same difficulty that was faced in the last part of the former Government's term—is that private members' bills, whether they are genuine or designed to wedge the Government or to obtain individual publicity, require the machinery of government to examine them to make sure there are no unintended consequences. It is one thing to support a policy position. It is another to ensure that the legislation is accurate, thought out and free from unintended consequences. The Parliament legislates with the best will in the world and with detailed consultation, but often there are unintended consequences. In fact, almost always there are unintended consequences, but the object of the exercise is to minimise them.

Opposition members will recall during their time in government that when bills that had not been considered by the machinery of government came from the other place to this House both the then Government and the then Opposition faced the problem that passing a bill may bring consequences that we did not know about at the time. Members may agree with the policy positions behind these bills. But the member for Kiama has introduced them as private member's bills and not genuinely sought to work with the Government on those policy positions. The member now says it is an integrity matter and he wants to extend the time that the bills can be before the House. That is not the way the Government prefers to deal with policy matters of a significant nature. As I said to the member for Kiama this morning, that is the most significant reason the Government is not prepared to accede to his request.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (12:32):** By leave: I will endeavour to be brief. I was disappointed to hear the contribution from the Leader of the House. The member for Kiama is not asking the Government to agree to support his bills. He is simply asking to not have to resubmit the bills and give the second reading speeches again next year. The matter is entirely procedural. The Leader of the House says that the Government may not support the bills. That is irrelevant. That is not what this application is about. It is simply about not wasting time having to resubmit the bills and re-give the second reading speeches.

In 2018 the Coalition sat for over 20 sitting weeks, but the House will sit for only 15 weeks next year. I would have thought that the Leader of the House would be interested in efficiencies of process so that the work of the House can be conducted in the most efficient manner possible. I am staggered that he would not agree to this humble and reasonable request, particularly when one of the bills seeks to implement integrity recommendations made by the ICAC. Just so it is clear for the people of New South Wales to understand, the Minns Labor Government is trying to block an attempt to implement ICAC corruption recommendations in the most expeditious fashion possible. That is a disgrace. It is a disgrace on the last day of Parliament and needs to be called out strongly. The Government is seeking to stifle accountability for its actions and trying to tie things up in unnecessary procedure when all the member for Kiama is asking for is a procedural extension so that his bills will not lapse at the end of the year. I find that staggering.

I point out one piece of hypocrisy that fell from the lips of the Leader of the House. He talked about consultation, but when Labor sought to refer the private member's bill of the member for Pittwater regarding PEP 11 off into the ether, it did not consult with or give any forewarning to the Opposition at all. It is all very well to talk the talk, but it must be backed up by action. That is not happening with what is an already arrogant Government that does not invite accountability.



**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (12:35):** By leave: I put on record The Greens' position. In this instance, we will not support the member for Kiama's request. However, we believe that we will continue to see this problem. The sitting calendar for next year shows that we will have 15 days of private members' business. There are now significantly more crossbench members. In addition, the Opposition will presumably also want to put forward private members' business items. That is a concern for us. We will have to keep dealing with this issue because individual members will keep seeking extensions—as the member for Sydney did with his bill. We will continue to have this problem if we do not find a way to deal adequately with the scope and scale of private members' business next year.

We will not support this motion because on principle we believe it is critical that space is created for other private members' bills to be debated. If we just extend them all, then it will be harder to find the time. But there is a bigger issue here. There is not enough time allocated to private members' business to reflect the size of the crossbench now. The Greens ask for further discussion between the Government, the crossbench and the Opposition about how we manage private members' bills next year so that we do not keep having to deal with these kinds of motions.

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (12:36):** In reply: I thank the Opposition for its support. I note the Government's position. I note the Leader of the House attempted to conflate the issues by talking about the bills themselves rather than the procedural nature of this motion, which is to save the time of the House. Given that he indicated the position the Government wishes to take, if the motion fails I will certainly give notice that I will introduce those bills again and I will go through the process again. It is disappointing if he believes that is the requisite path, particularly on issues of transparency and accountability that relate in part to the Independent Commission Against Corruption and its recommendations.

I am disappointed to hear the position of The Greens, but I am not surprised. I appreciate the opposition by the Greens, though, because every time they oppose me my vote goes up. I hope they feel free to continue to do that. It is extraordinary for them to say that they want more time for crossbench members but they will oppose a crossbench member seeking more time. That is somewhat contradictory, but that is a matter for them. I will support them when they want more time because I am principled and consistent. But I am disappointed that The Greens are choosing to side with Labor to shut down debate on ICAC and transparency amendments. Let the record show that is how they will vote. That will remain on *Hansard* for all to see.

**Ms Kobi Shetty:** So whose private members' business gets deferred to make room for yours?

**Mr GARETH WARD:** On that uncharacteristic interjection from the member for Balmain, I agree with the member for Newtown: I think that there should be more time given to private members' business. In fact, I would like to see an arrangement similar to the upper House, where we have more time on a Thursday to debate private members' bills. This Government is behaving as if it has a majority, and it is enabled by The Greens to behave that way. What we should be doing is ensuring greater accountability by ensuring that the crossbench has the time that it needs to bring forward proposals, regardless of whether members agree with them or not. This is not about the bills before the House. It is about whether or not members support the crossbench bringing legislation to be debated and for the House to have that time to consider them. I will support more time for the crossbench, and I hope members will do that today as well. I commend the motion to the House.

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

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....37  
Noes .....45  
Majority.....8

# AYES

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

James, T  
Kean, M  
Kemp, M  
Lane, J  
Layzell, D  
Marshall, A  
Perrottet, D  
Petinos, E  
Piper, G  
Preston, R  
Provest, G

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

## AYES

Henskens, A  
Hodges, M

Roberts, A

Wilson, F

## NOES

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

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

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

## PAIRS

Toole, P

Minns, C

**Motion negatived.**

### SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: COMMITTEES

**Mr RON HOENIG:** I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to permit the moving forthwith of a motion, of which notice has not been given, amending the terms of reference for the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters inquiry into the 2023 New South Wales State election.

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

**The House divided.**

[In division]

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** For the benefit of crossbench members, I allocate all of the seats to my right to the ayes and all of the seats to my left to the noes.

Ayes .....48  
Noes .....39  
Majority.....9

## AYES

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

Hannan, J  
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

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

## AYES

Finn, J  
Hagarty, N (teller)

Mehan, D  
O'Neill, M

Whan, S  
Wilkinson, K

## NOES

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

Henskens, A  
Hodges, M  
James, T  
Kemp, M  
Lane, J  
Layzell, D  
Marshall, A  
McGirr, J  
Perrottet, D  
Petinos, E  
Preston, R  
Provest, G  
Regan, M

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

## PAIRS

Minns, C

Toole, P

**Motion agreed to.**

*Committees***JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL MATTERS****Establishment**

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (12:55):** I move:

- (1) That the resolution of the House of 22 June 2023 establishing the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters be amended by replacing paragraph (3) with:
  - (3) All matters that relate to 2 (a) and (b) above in respect of the 25 March 2023 State Election shall stand referred to the committee for any inquiry the committee may wish to make, including:
    - (i) whether other entities and individuals whose business relates to property development should be prohibited from making illegal donations;
    - (ii) whether it is necessary to address the risk of property developers making political donations through shell companies;
    - (iii) whether truth in political advertising laws for New South Wales State elections would enhance the integrity and transparency of the electoral system, taking into account any implications of the Commonwealth's Communications Legislation Amendment (Combating Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023.

The committee shall report on the outcome of any such inquiry within 18 months of the date of this resolution being agreed to by both Houses.
- (2) That a message be sent informing the Legislative Council of the resolution of the House and requesting its concurrence with the amendment to the terms of reference of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (12:57):** The Leader of the House continues to move amendments of this kind that are completely irrelevant and unnecessary. The relevant Minister can refer matters at any time to the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters. It is unnecessary to continue to make applications to amend the terms of reference when it can be done by letter. Indeed, Minister Graham has made several references by letter to that committee already, so I do not understand why our time is being wasted with frivolous motions for the suspension of standing orders.

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (12:58):** By leave: I contribute to debate briefly to support these referrals to the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters. The Greens have been working hard to try to get the committee to review issues about concerns with property developers and with truth in electoral advertising. It is important that those issues are fully investigated. I thank the Government for referring these issues.

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

**Motion agreed to.***Petitions***PETITIONS RECEIVED**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** I announce that the following paper petition signed by fewer than 500 persons has been lodged for presentation:

**Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise**

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly urge Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs Penny Wong to impose targeted sanctions on Myanmar junta-controlled Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise, received from **Ms Lynda Voltz**.

*Bills***CLIMATE CHANGE (NET ZERO FUTURE) BILL 2023****Messages**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council agreeing to the Legislative Assembly's amendments.

**24-HOUR ECONOMY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (VIBRANCY REFORMS) BILL 2023****Messages**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council agreeing to the Legislative Assembly's amendment.

**CASINO CONTROL AMENDMENT BILL 2023****Returned**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the bill with an amendment. I set down consideration of the amendment as an order of the day for a later time.

*Motions***CHRISTMAS FELICITATIONS**

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (13:01):** I move:

That the House take note of Christmas felicitations.

I send my best wishes to the people of New South Wales—the people we are privileged to represent and advocate for in the Parliament. It certainly has been a busy year and one of change for many in this place. We all join together in hoping that everyone in New South Wales, both inside and outside this building, can take time to enjoy the company of family and friends over Christmas. It has been full-on. There was a State election campaign and a referendum. The fact is some of us may have spent more time doorknocking and on polling booths than we have with our families. Some of us may have also spent more time in Parliament than we have with our families, particularly this week.

I thank the people outside this building, the working men and women of New South Wales, who deliver the essential services we all rely on, particularly as we enter another bushfire season. I thank all our emergency services personnel and the volunteers who work beside them keeping people safe when times are really tough. I also thank the nurses, teachers, firefighters, police and all the people whom we rely on so desperately. What goes on in this place aims to serve and support them in their vital work in hospital wards, police stations and classrooms every day.

This place has seen quite a bit of change in 2023. I acknowledge and thank the former Ministers who still serve in this place. We might disagree on very many things, but each Minister on this side of the Chamber now appreciates the amount of work it takes to run a portfolio in New South Wales. I take a moment to thank each of them for their service to the people of this State. I also extend that thanks to the Leader of the Opposition and wish him and all his colleagues a restful Christmas. Obviously, March saw a change of seating arrangements in the Chamber. I extend my heartfelt thanks to the Premier for his leadership. We all wish him a speedy recovery from COVID.

The Premier's energy, discipline and dedication led Labor back to government for the first time in 12 years. I acknowledge his incredible efforts over the past year in now leading us in government. I also acknowledge former Premier Dominic Perrottet. Both he and the now Premier set the standard for an election fought on the issues and with mutual respect. That is true leadership, and our democracy is stronger as a result. I also must thank crossbench members in this Parliament for the constructive way they have worked with us this year. We have been able to achieve quite a lot in just a short time with their help. The Government values and appreciates their cooperation and frankness—that one is for the member for Murray. I thank them all for their contributions and their input in helping to deliver real, positive outcomes that their communities, and our State, need and deserve.

I also acknowledge that a lot of families are facing challenges with cost-of-living pressures. Everyone is. Regardless of where we sit politically, I know that is on the minds of everyone in this place. When we leave this building and return to our electorates, that is what we will work on every day. We all want to support those who are doing it tough. I know everyone in this place shares that commitment. I thank the Speaker, the Hon. Greg Piper, for his orderly and generally cheerful running of the Chamber. He has taken to the role like a duck to water. He has shown a teacher-like sternness that we have all grown to admire. We all appreciate his delicate balance of forbearance and discipline. I extend that thanks to the Deputy Speaker, Ms Sonia Hornery; the Assistant Speaker, Mr Jason Li; and each of the Temporary Speakers, Clayton Barr, Donna Davis, Stephanie Di Pasqua, Alex Greenwich and Dave Layzell.

I thank the Leader of the House, the Hon. Ron Hoenig, for his brilliant work. He has kept me entertained this week. I thank Omar Rodriguez from his office for their work. I thank the Manager of Opposition Business, Alister Henskens, MP, for his dedication to keeping this place running as well. I thank the former Whip, the Hon. Steve Whan, and Nathan Hagarty, his exceedingly able replacement. I also thank Colleen Symington from the Whip's Office, whose work ethic is unbeatable and whom everyone on the Government side of the Chamber absolutely loves. She is the only person who can yell at us to get us somewhere and still make us love her so much.

I thank my colleagues in the other place, including Penny Sharpe, who has the wonderful job of leading the Government in the Legislative Council and keeping it working through the night, with the help of her long-term staffer Peta Waller-Bryan, who was with her in the tough years in opposition, and Harry Gregg, who has joined and hit the ground running. I also thank John Graham, who ably supports her. I thank the Deputy Government Whip, Janelle Saffin, Opposition Whip Adam Crouch and The Nationals Whip Gurmeh Singh for keeping us all in check throughout the year. I thank the staff who so ably ensure the successful operation of the Parliament, including the Legislative Assembly Chamber staff: Ian Delahunty, Danny, April, Peter, David, Lloyd, Matthew, Monica, Chris and Lubo.

I thank all the Hansard staff. I cannot believe what they have to hear. I do not know whether they all have to just go home and sit in a silent room after they have finished work. One thing I do not think gets recognised is how invaluable their work is during election campaigns, when we can easily find what each of us might have said about an issue a couple of years ago—what we wish we had never said. While entire press conferences do not last, the *Hansard* record remains forever. So I thank Hansard, particularly on behalf of the Labor Party head office. I thank everyone who makes this place work: cleaners, catering staff, cafe staff, IT and maintenance. Without them, this place would be literally chaos. It is probably not much of a stretch to say that democracy depends on them.

As always, on the Labor side it has been a team effort. We celebrate our successes together. We face our challenges together. And we gain strength from one another. The past 12 years have been incredibly tough, so I thank and acknowledge all the team and all the staff who have hung in there. We would not be the Minns Government without the efforts of our hardworking staff across the Parliament, our electorate offices and now our ministerial offices. I have to take the opportunity to thank my amazing staff, led by the indefatigable Jo Mathews, my chief of staff. I thank my hardworking electorate office staff, led by Lois Fisher. She has been a constant support not only to me but also, most importantly, to the communities that I represent in the electorate of Londonderry since I was first elected in 2015. People still stop me in the street—more so these days—and thank me for what I have done, and it is pretty much always Lois.

As the Minister for Education and Early Learning, I cannot finish my small contribution without thanking everyone working in our public schools, including teachers, principals, support staff and admin staff. Schools do not run without them. Teachers are the most important resource in every classroom. Everything we do in education depends on them. I acknowledge that they are at the end of term 4, and it is a herculean effort just to get through the last couple of weeks to the end. I know the past few years have been incredibly hard for the people who work in our schools. I acknowledge that many of them have felt exhausted, burnt out and undervalued, but they continue to show up every day and be there for our kids. I thank them for their deep commitment to the students of New South Wales.

I share with the House something really special. A couple of weeks ago we were able to acknowledge and honour a phenomenal group of people: teachers who had spent more than 50 years working for the Department of Education in some way. Those teachers epitomise the level of passion and dedication in public service. Sadly, this week we learnt that one of those teachers had recently passed away. I take this opportunity to talk about her and put her story in *Hansard*. Ruth Elston was a brilliant teacher librarian at Lane Cove Public School who had dedicated more than 56 years to teaching in public schools, which is truly exceptional. The amazing thing is that at the time of her passing, she was still teaching. I extend my condolences and thoughts to Ruth's family and acknowledge the incredible contribution she has made to literally tens of thousands of students.

Finally, I thank my departmental secretary, Murat Dizdar, for guiding me through some very wild months, and those from the department who have provided invaluable support to me as a new Minister. Transitions are not easy, but I think we have been able to do pretty well, and a lot of that is down to the leadership and advice of the department. I really value their support. I wish everyone who has anything to do with democracy in New South Wales a safe Christmas and a great break. May they go forth and enjoy the period of Christmas and school presentations with pride.

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (13:12):** I offer my first greetings for the season to the people of Cronulla, who I am honoured to represent and who, for the fourth time, have bestowed upon me the honour of representing them in this place. Public life can be brutal, but to serve as an elected representative of a community is a privilege bestowed on comparatively few. I could not undertake this role without my electorate staff team. My electorate office is led by my dedicated, hugely experienced and highly capable senior manager, Michelle Lawson, who is supported by Peter Leate, Joel Johnson, Cecilia Falson and Amity Lees.

Cheryl Gwilliam, my chief of staff as Leader of the Opposition, continues to provide exceptional wisdom and sage advice, drawing on her many distinguished years working in Federal and State governments. She is always eager to see the result of the day's work on the evening news and, on one occasion, she asked at 4.45 p.m. where the 5.00 p.m. news was. Ian Zakon and Luke Nayna work tirelessly to prop me up in Parliament, by the side of the road, in a park or elsewhere, across the length and breadth of Sydney and beyond, to ensure my two cents on the matters of the day are heard.

Dimitry Chugg Palmer and Andrew Humpherson do a great job of managing and responding to the business of the House. Nick Johnston continues to bring energy and laughter to the office, alongside diligent and often urgent advice in policy across a much broader spectrum than that to which he was accustomed before. Kit Hale has done great work as my office manager and executive assistant this year. I extend my thanks to Thomas Ryan, Daniel Rindfleish and Ben Sheath, who departed through the year. I thank drivers Steve O'Keefe and Dean Simpson who joined me this year, and thank them for remaining with me in opposition.

I thank all the parliamentary staff, including the Clerk, for their patience and goodwill. They do a marvellous job keeping the Chamber on the straight and narrow. I thank the Speaker, Greg Piper, for taking on a new mantle of responsibility in this Parliament. I thank my Liberal Party leadership team, Natalie Ward, Damien Tudehope, Robyn Preston and Alister Henskens for their collective advice, wisdom and counsel. I thank my entire shadow ministry team, including Nationals leaders Dugald Saunders, Bronnie Taylor and Sarah Mitchell. Some shadow Ministers have stepped up to the frontbench role for the first time this year. They have all hit the ground running in their portfolios, and I thank them for their dedication and tenacity.

I thank the Opposition Whips, Adam Crouch and Chris Rath, for keeping us organised and on task. I thank all my parliamentary colleagues from the Government, Opposition and crossbench for their contributions. I thank all new members from all sides of the House for their service to the State to date, and I hope they have settled in well. We all come from different perspectives, but we genuinely share a passion to make this State a better place. An election year is a bruising endeavour for all of us. I hope we will all find time to recharge and reset over the summer break. I wish the previous tenant of my office, the Premier, a speedy recovery from COVID, and I thank him for leaving behind the stationery and desktop speakers, which have been put to good use.

The message of peace is part of the fabric of Christmas. The angels proclaimed on that holy night, "Glory to God in the highest, and on Earth, peace and goodwill toward men." Today, more than ever, we find ourselves in need of this message. In a world grappling with division, challenge and uncertainty, the call for peace and goodwill is timely and crucial. As we celebrate with our loved ones, let us not forget those who may be facing hardship or adversity. Christmas beckons us to extend a helping hand to the less fortunate, and to be beacons of light in the lives of those in darkness. Our communities thrive when we come together, irrespective of our backgrounds, to support one another. I wish everyone in this place and across New South Wales a safe and merry Christmas.

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (13:16):** I begin my contribution by echoing the comments made by the Leader of the Opposition. I also add my thanks to all of those staff he has already mentioned, particularly

all the staff that help the Parliament function. From the time we walk into this place, sometimes very early, to the time we walk out—which sometimes, like lately, has been very late—we are well looked after by everyone who makes this place work as smoothly as possible for us. That includes all of the guards manning security when we walk in and walk out, the Clerks, the attendants, the parliamentary staff, the reception staff, and the cafe and restaurant workers who feed us right throughout the night as needed. We have cleaners, library staff, special constables and countless others who have been mentioned today, including Hansard. I thank all of them for what they do. We can clearly only do what we do because of the work that goes on behind the scenes, and making the Chamber run is a hugely important part of that. We often do not quite know what to do, and we rely on the staff to help. It does not go unnoticed, and it is important to recognise that.

Obviously it is no secret that this has been a slightly difficult year for the Coalition. Losing an election is never easy. We have worked hard as part of the Coalition in opposition to hold the Labor Government accountable. That is the job of the Opposition. I thank and recognise my Nationals colleagues in this place who are hard workers for their electorates and for regional New South Wales: the member for Tamworth, Kevin Anderson; the member for Cootamundra, Steph Cooke; the member for upper Hunter, Dave Layzell; the member for Northern Tablelands, Adam Marshall; the member for Tweed, Geoff Provest—100 per cent Tweed—the member for Coffs Harbour, Gurmesh Singh, who is also our Whip for the National Party; and the member for Bathurst, Paul Toole. We also welcomed three new MPs to our team this year, each of whom have shown themselves to be exceptional in this place as well as absolute champions for their electorates: the member for Oxley, Michael Kemp; the member for Myall Lakes, Tanya Thompson; and the member for Clarence, Ritchie Williamson. I thank them very much.

What we do in this place is backed by what our colleagues in the other place do. We have a small but formidable crew in the Legislative Council, which has once again been amazing in 2023. The "fab four" consists of the Deputy Leader of the NSW Nationals, Bronnie Taylor, who is my right-hand lady—the boss lady. We have our upper House leader, Sarah Mitchell, Sam Faraway and the energetic Wes Fang. Each of them has once again been amazing and tireless, spending many hours in this place and beyond working to represent the regions to ensure the best outcomes for the bush, as has each and every regional member in this Parliament who is part of The Nationals team.

I thank our former parliamentary colleagues Nichole Overall and Scott Barrett, whom we lost at the election. Both remain fantastic contributors to the NSW Nationals. I also thank our candidates who failed to win the electorates they contested at the election this year. As members know, putting yourself up for election and being at the mercy of the constituents is a massive thing to take on. Each of our candidates worked hard and handled themselves extremely professionally during the campaign and post-election. I also thank our Liberal colleagues, led across both Houses by Leader of the Opposition Mark Speakman, Natalie Ward, Robyn Preston and Damien Tudehope. As I mentioned, going from government to opposition is not easy, but both the Nats and the Liberal Party have wonderful teams that come together as one. We have done that well again in 2023.

Members of Parliament, party leaders and even Ministers are only as good as their staff. I thank the staff who I have worked with over the past 12 months. Things happen very quickly when a party loses an election, and I never really had the chance to thank those who worked in my office when I was Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales. I thank James, Sarah, Candice, Ben, Jodie, Sally and Tobie, as well as Dave, Georgie, Tricia, and my old mate Pedro, who spent many hours in a car with me around all parts of New South Wales. I sincerely thank each of you for all the effort you put in when we held that ministry. I am glad that some of those people came back to help establish my office, alongside Nat Openshaw, when I became Leader of the NSW Nationals. In recent times we have been joined by Amy, who brings a wealth of knowledge with her.

I thank my electorate office staff, who are a huge part of what I am able to do and hold the fort at home. Whether I am there or not, they are always there. As all regional MPs know, we spend a lot of time travelling, which can place a heavy burden on our staff in the electorate office. I say a special thankyou to my staff in Dubbo. I single out my senior electorate officer, Jane Diffey. Jane is exceptional in so many ways. I thank Jane for her consistency, friendship, advice and great times we have together. I also thank Laura, Susie and Beck, who recently moved to Canberra, for their tireless efforts in supporting me. I also thank the people of the Dubbo electorate, who have given me the great honour to represent them at the past two elections. Regional New South Wales is a great place to live, work and play. I have said many times before that Dubbo is definitely the best electorate in the best State in the best country in the world.

I thank the Speaker, Greg Piper; I note Temporary Speaker Greenwich is in the chair. Even though I do not necessarily get as many of the points of order I take upheld as I would like, members respect all who sit in the chair. I thank the Speaker for his efforts in moving into the role, as well as all the Speakers, including Alex Greenwich. We appreciate the effort. There have been many long nights where people have had to sit in that chair and preside over the Chamber. Thank you all for doing that. The staff in the Office of the Speaker deserve acknowledgement for making sure everything flows in the Chamber. The staff in the offices of the Whips on all

sides of politics do an amazing job. They work tirelessly to make sure this place keeps running smoothly. I acknowledge and thank Premier Chris Minns, Deputy Premier Prue Car and their team, as well as the crossbench members in both Houses. While we do not necessarily agree on many things all the time, I hope that all members get to have a safe and fantastic holiday period.

Lastly, and most importantly, I thank my family. Being leader of the NSW Nationals, and before that a Minister in government, is a massive privilege. However, with that privilege comes significant time away from loved ones. I know I am far from alone in that regard. I know all members thank their families for putting up with what we do. I thank my wonderful wife, Karen, for everything she does to support me in this role, and for her endless patience when I spend time away and the fact the work does not stop whether I am home or not. To our daughters, Georgie and Charlie, I am so proud of you becoming beautiful young adults. I hope the work we do in this place contributes to making New South Wales a better place for them in the future. I close by wishing everyone a safe and restful Christmas spent with family and friends. Take care on the roads if you are travelling. I look forward to seeing everyone in 2024.

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (13:24):** I commence by thanking the residents of my electorate of Heffron for returning me to this House with the overwhelming support they have given me to continue as their local MP. I also acknowledge and thank all my parliamentary Labor colleagues for the generous support they have given me, particularly since I have been Leader of the House. For 12 years many of them sat on the Opposition benches and struggled as I did to return Labor to government. I thank so many of my parliamentary colleagues for their counsel throughout our shared journey, which culminated in the election of the Government in March this year.

In particular, I thank the Labor leader and Premier, Chris Minns, for his tenacity and his unwavering dedication. I thank him for simply being my friend. I thank my ministerial colleagues. It is a difficult journey from being in opposition to becoming a Minister after a change of government. Filling the Government benches, assembling an office and undertaking the process of understanding a portfolio is a huge task requiring considerable dedication and patience. I thank them all for their collegiate support.

I acknowledge the Leader of the Opposition, and member for Cronulla, his shadow Ministers and members opposite. The Leader of the Opposition, an eminent silk and highly regarded member of the bar, has taken on what is generally regarded as the most difficult task in politics. As he struggles to restore some unity to his defeated party, I acknowledge his contribution to the people of New South Wales as former Attorney General. I recognise the vigour that he collectively brings to this Chamber every day in those circumstances. A vigorous opposition is a fundamental part of the Westminster democratic system. I acknowledge the efforts that you and your colleagues have made—and I wish that you long remain on that side of the House.

Having been a Minister for almost eight months, I have great appreciation for the dedication and hard work that is necessary to fill the role to the standards required—the standards that the people of New South Wales deserve. It really is a different experience being on this side of the House, but every day we have the immense privilege of being a government that actually makes a significant difference in the lives of the people of New South Wales. As Leader of the House, the parliamentary team has been instrumental in ensuring that this minority Government continues to have not just confidence in supply but also runs smoothly every time the House meets.

I particularly thank Omar from my office, and Sachin and Kara from the Premier's Office. Those three individual staff members work seven days a week for extraordinarily long hours to ensure that the Government remains stable and workable and is able to succeed and achieve for the people of New South Wales, in accordance with the mandate given to Labor on 25 March. I also thank and acknowledge the Speaker, and member for Lake Macquarie, the Hon. Greg Piper, whom I have known for quite some years through our local government days before entering Parliament. He has taken on one of the most difficult jobs. I thank him for the professional and dedicated manner in which he approaches the job of the Chair every day.

I thank the Deputy Speaker, my friend Sonia Hornery, for her contribution, dedication and advice that she and her staff have provided to me since I came into the House. I thank Assistant Speaker Jason Yat-Sen Li and the Temporary Speakers, including the member for Sydney, who is in the chair. We have not only worked to ensure the stability of the Minns Labor Government but also worked together since he has been the member for Sydney to achieve for our constituents who seem to come in and out of our electorates depending on what decision is made in a redistribution. I know the continuity of representation that we provide for those citizens. They appreciate his service and my service. I thank him for the immense assistance he has provided in relation to decisions ultimately made by the House.

I also acknowledge the Government Whip, and member for Leppington, and his predecessor, the member for Monaro, who is now a Minister. It needs to be widely understood that the survival of the Government depends upon the efficiency of the Government Whip, and Colleen in the Government Whip's office. It is not just about



the discipline, the organisation and provision of assistance; it is fundamental to the survival and stability of the Government. I acknowledge the Government Whip, the former Government Whip and Colleen for their dedication, support, friendship and assistance.

I also acknowledge members of the crossbench. The experience of a minority government has been of benefit to the people of New South Wales, because it is the crossbench that drives the Minns Labor Government to be a better government. Governments after an election always say that they wish to be a transparent government and suggest that there is to be a new paradigm. I know that the Premier wants this to continue to be a transparent government, and the crossbench plays a significant role. I thank them for the genuine way in which they have exchanged their public policy provisions and legislative suggestions with the Government, particularly with the Premier and me. I thank them for the respect that they have shown but, most significantly, for their keen understanding of the Government's mandate and the need for the Government to deliver on it. I also thank them for their support that enables the Government to continue to proceed and deliver that mandate. The crossbench challenges us and ultimately enables us to deliver better outcomes for the people of New South Wales.

I also recognise, thank and express my appreciation to the Clerk, Helen Minnican; the Deputy Clerk, Carly Maxwell; and all the team in the office of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly. The Clerk makes herself available 24/7 to provide advice to me on a wide range of matters that stem from constitutional advice, to standing orders advice, to the practice of the House advice. She patiently listens to the frustrations that I have from time to time. The Chamber would not function in accordance with the Constitution and the rules made under it without the dedication of this fine example of a constitutional officer. Many of us would be lost without her guidance and the guidance of her staff.

I thank my ministerial staff—who I do not think ever go home and ever go to bed—for their contribution and dedication. Not many would know the significant challenges they face with the structure of the Office of Local Government that I inherited and that many of my predecessors inherited. But those challenges are now those of my ministerial staff, led by the very capable Pete McCabe and our other staff, Brendan, Clare and Jennifer, as well as Omar and my department liaison officers. They ensure that we can continue to deal with a portfolio and the vital third tier of government that has had significant challenges, generally imposed upon it by the Parliament.

I also acknowledge members of the press gallery and wish them well. The fourth estate is important to keep all of us—the Government, the Opposition and crossbench members—accountable and honest. Freedom of the press is a cornerstone of democracy. That is not just an unfashionable expression but it is fundamental to the democratic process. Whilst those of us in public office might feel discomfort from time to time, without their essential part of the democratic fabric of the State we do not have a democracy.

Our jobs in this place would also not be possible without the staff of the Department of Parliamentary Services. It provides everything in this place to us. I thank Department of Parliamentary Services Chief Executive Officer Mark Webb for his assistance, cooperation and support, and all the staff who are accountable to him. I also acknowledge members of staff of the IT department. I understand—although others may not—the restriction of allocation of funds impacts upon the quality of the services that they can provide, but I thank them for their assistance and support in an effort to deal with some of the challenges that my electorate office and I face.

I also acknowledge the commitment of the Parliamentary Counsel's Office, led by Annette O'Callaghan, to make sure that our vision for the State is translated into legislation to make life better for the people of New South Wales. As I tell members, as a barrister who has spent time over the decades reading and interpreting legislation, it is a completely different task to be able to write it. I am in awe of how Parliamentary Counsel is able to produce some of the complex legislation it does to give effect to the Government's policy in legislation, or any member's policy that they seek to contain within a bill introduced into Parliament.

I also express my appreciation to the cleaners, the catering staff, special constables and all the other officers in the building. They treat us with respect and courtesy. We value them and we hope we demonstrate to them the same respect and courtesy that we feel for the tasks that they provide. I thank them for keeping us in check. I thank the officers in the building for protecting us and providing security for us. It is reassuring that they are present to look after the people who work in this historic Parliament. To the people in my electorate of Heffron, it has been an honour and privilege to represent you in this House for another year.

To my team in my electoral office, Dorothy, Aidan and Jo, I know that you are overwhelmed with the volume of work that an active local member generates, and I know that my ministerial duties take me away from my electoral office. You carry such a load on my behalf and I express to you my great appreciation because you ensure that every resident who brings an issue to my attention, or every issue in my election that requires my attention, is treated with the respect and compassion they deserve.

Finally, to my wife, Christine, and my two grown sons, Ben and Matt, I am forever grateful for the sacrifices that you have had to endure for many decades, which have been even greater this past year, and for your patience. It is only thanks to you that I can serve the people of my community and the people of New South Wales every day. To all those who celebrate Christmas, I wish you all a safe and merry Christmas. For those who do not, I hope this time of the year provides you an opportunity to spend some valuable time with your loved ones. I wish everyone a happy and prosperous new year.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** It being after 1.30 p.m., debate is interrupted. I shall now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.30 p.m.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (14:30):** I am grateful for the opportunity on this final sitting day of 2023 to deliver a Christmas message to the New South Wales Parliament, my electorate of Wahroonga and the rest of New South Wales. I begin by acknowledging that this is a difficult time for many households in our State. Economically, in terms of cost-of-living pressures, it has probably been one of the worst times in many years, although in previous years we struggled in a different way. My wish is that, unlike the previous two Christmases, I do not have COVID this Christmas Day. The State struggled with the pandemic but many people are struggling in a different way at the moment with financial pressures. My message to them is to hang in there and use this time to enjoy the company of family and friends. There are people who love you, and I am convinced that things will get better. It is important for everyone to cherish this special time of year. That would be my message, particularly to people who are struggling at the moment.

I thank you, Mr Speaker, for the way in which you have conducted yourself this year in your new role. I know it is not an easy role, and from time to time there is a bit of argy-bargy, but you know that I have the utmost respect for the way in which you have performed the role. I thank you for the way in which you have presided over the Parliament this year since the election. I thank all the parliamentary staff, led by the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, who keep this incredibly complex and difficult place going. As you know, Mr Speaker, we have had two very late nights, where we have sat well after midnight.

That puts a huge stress on the staff, and we need to do something about that in the standing orders. Nevertheless, we are all very appreciative of all the parliamentary staff, who make this place work. I thank my sparring partner, the Leader of the House and the member for Heffron, for again working in a collaborative way to try to ensure that the House runs smoothly. I know he does not take our sparring personally, which is a good thing. The role of Leader of the House is a difficult one. I have been there, and I know it is not easy to keep this place running, so I commend him for his diligence.

I acknowledge my fantastic electorate office staff. Deanna Turner, my senior electorate officer, has been with me for more than eight years now. Before that she was in the office of Barry O'Farrell for a number of years, so she has been a great servant of the public. She is a great support for me and I thank Deanna for everything she does. I also acknowledge Emily Kerris, who joined my staff this year, for the great job she does. I thank her for everything she does. It would be great if I could hang on to her so she does not go to another role. Steph Le Bas, who joined the team this year, has been absolutely fantastic trying to organise me and keeping the paperwork in order. I hope they all have a great Christmas.

This year I also lost two members of staff. Di Woods worked for me from when I was nominated for preselection for the Ku-ring-gai electorate, which at the time was the safest Liberal electorate in Australia, with an 88 per cent two-party preferred vote, delivered by Barry O'Farrell in 2011. Many people wanted the preselection, but Di helped me get it. I would never have been able to get it without her. I hope she enjoys her retirement. She seems to be on holiday so much that I never get to see her anymore, but I am sure we will catch up over Christmas. Also, Ryan Aivazian left my office this year after two years. I wish Ryan all the best. He may or may not be back from travelling around the world.

This year has been a big year for the State, with a change of government. The Opposition has been getting used to its new role of holding the Government to account on the decisions it makes. This year I was also honoured to be elected to Parliament for the third time but for the first time as the member for the reconstituted electorate of Wahroonga. I was the member for Ku-ring-gai for the first two terms. This electorate is steeped in history, with two former Premiers, Nick Greiner and Barry O'Farrell, as previous members. As the first member for Wahroonga, it has been great to get to know the new communities in the redistributed electorate. I now have more of Waitara, Normanhurst, Thornleigh than I had prior to the redistribution. New areas like Westleigh and Pennant Hills have come into the electorate. I have really enjoyed going and around meeting new people in those communities, attending functions and getting to know the issues that are important to them. It is also a great privilege to continue to represent suburbs like Wahroonga, Warrawee, Turramurra, Pymble and West Pymble, which I represented for the previous eight years.

The community of the Wahroonga electorate is unique and special. It is unlike any other place in this State or country. We have the highest rate of volunteering in the State, which goes to the kind of civic-minded people who are in the community that I am privileged to represent. From sporting groups, Meals on Wheels and Rotary to the RFS and SES, my area is full of incredible volunteers doing things for people who are less advantaged than them or, alternatively, who are going through a difficult time in their lives. I give a big shout-out to all those incredible volunteers in my electorate. When the Australian Day Honours List comes out, so many people who have excelled for communities in my electorate are always included. It is a great privilege to represent them and I hope they all have an absolutely fantastic Christmas.

I love visiting the wonderful schools in my electorate, which has some of the best public, independent and Catholic schools in the whole country. Those schools regularly top the HSC in every subject, from animal husbandry to physics, chemistry, Latin and so on. We have fantastic schools. We have brilliant primary schools. I give a big shout-out to our schoolteachers. I hope after what has been a number of difficult years that our schoolteachers have a wonderful Christmas. I look forward to seeing a few of them in the coming days during presentation season.

This Christmas has the promise of being a Christmas that we will all remember for many years to come. Although economically the world is tough at the moment, we have our health. The fear of the pandemic has subsided, and that is a great thing to celebrate this year at Christmas and over summer. I wish my incredible constituents in Wahroonga and everyone in New South Wales a merry Christmas, a happy Hanukkah and a happy new year. I wish everyone a happy, healthy and safe 2024.

**The SPEAKER (14:40):** I thank the member for Wahroonga. He could have pushed his luck a bit more; he was so kind in his comments about the Speaker that I was inclined to give him a sneaky extension. I thank the House for allowing me the privilege to make my Christmas felicitations from the chair. This is the first time that the 25 new members of Parliament have the opportunity to deliver Christmas felicitations in the House and it is the first time that I have the opportunity to do so from the chair. Therefore, I will perhaps cover a wide range of topics. I comment on the remarkable nature of the Fifty-Eighth Parliament. I congratulate members on their re-election and congratulate those newly elected. Only one new member is in the Chamber at the moment—the member for Castle Hill. I have spent time with all of them and can say this is probably one of the most remarkable member intakes. The people of New South Wales elected some amazing representatives. I commend all members for their work.

The new MPs make up a bit more than 25 per cent of the members in the House. That is a significant and healthy turnover for representative democracy. We have had an extraordinarily smooth transition. Last night at a media event the nature of the relationship between the outgoing Premier, whom I acknowledge, and the incoming Premier was commented on. It is so refreshing that we can have that kind of engagement across parties. In relation to my own re-election, I acknowledge the people of Lake Macquarie. I do not know why they did it, but they increased my margin. I really appreciate it. I like to think I work hard, but I know that others do too—including my opponents on the election circuit. I appreciate everything that has been given to me by the electorate of Lake Macquarie. It is not at all taken for granted.

It is an extraordinary honour that the House elected me as Presiding Officer, and I assure members that I feel a great responsibility. I will continue to do my best to maintain order in the House but also allow the free flow of contributions and ideas—particularly from the member for Wollongong. I certainly would not want to suppress him.

**Mr Paul Scully:** No, never. Thank you.

**The SPEAKER:** I thank my Speaker's panel. They have stepped up, although many did not understand the responsibility or what it might involve. I acknowledge my Deputy Speaker, Sonia Hornery; the Assistant Speaker, Jason Li; the member for Sydney, Alex Greenwich; the member for Upper Hunter, David Layzell; the member for Cessnock, Clayton Barr; the member for Drummoyne, Stephanie Di Pasqua; and the member for Parramatta, Donna Davis. I thank the member for Upper Hunter, who is in the Chamber, for the heavy lifting he has done. Everybody has felt the weight of the extra workload with long sitting hours. It is not easy for anyone, but members who also participate in debates—as the member for Sydney does—have many responsibilities to manage. They also step up to take the chair and assist with the carriage of business through the House. It is much appreciated.

I acknowledge the Premier and wish him all the best as he recovers from COVID. I am sure he would have chosen to be here. He will not necessarily be enjoying the break from this place in the last week of sitting. I wish him and his family all the best over the Christmas break, as I do the other leadership groups. The Deputy Premier, Prue Car, has stepped up admirably this week. It is never easy to be in opposition, and I recognise the Leader of the Opposition, Mark Speakman. I appreciate the manner in which he transacts business and treats everybody with

respect and dignity. I acknowledge the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, with whom I enjoy a good working relationship, as I do with most of the leadership group in the House. I cannot go on without acknowledging their staff. I am sure I speak for most members when I say that none of us could do what we do without our staff. I reflect on that and thank them all for their assistance.

I have always had a good working relationship with the Leader of the House, the member for Heffron. The member for Sydney and I have enjoyed working with him through two Parliaments and two minority governments. We have found that we can work productively and be treated honourably by the Leader of the House and by the Manager of Opposition Business. So I thank Ron Hoenig and Alister Henskens. As the member for Wahroonga alluded to, debate in here gets robust at times. He has some good sparring opportunities with the member for Heffron—and, behind the scenes, sometimes with me and the member for Sydney. But we move on. It is all in good faith, and I thank them for that. I acknowledge the Whips. The member for Leppington has stepped up. It is quite extraordinary for a first-term member to move into a role as important as Government Whip.

**Mr Paul Scully:** And he is doing a good job too, Mr Speaker.

**The SPEAKER:** As the member for Wollongong said, he is doing a good job. I pay him my respects and thank him for the way he has performed in the role. He is learning quickly because he has taken advice—not from me—and goes about his business in a thoughtful way. I have known the member for Terrigal for quite some time, and he knows better. Hansard will insert "general laughter" at this point. I thank the member for Terrigal for his friendship over time. Once again, being a Whip is not easy. Being a Whip in government carries a lot of responsibility but it is certainly not an easy role in opposition. The member should understand we recognise that. We truly do. You need your Deputy Whips and the staff who support you. I thank them all. For the Government, I recognise Omar Rodriguez and Colleen Symington in the Whip's Office. I truly respect both Omar and Colleen. I really appreciate the help that I have had from Colleen Symington, not just in my role as Speaker but over the years. From the office of the member for Terrigal and Opposition Whip, Bo is absolutely wonderful to work with. I thank them all.

I acknowledge my electorate office staff—I am hope they are listening because I think they truly do not believe I remember them. I am just not there often enough, and I truly do feel that. I see the planning Minister nodding in agreement. It is so hard to carry out all our roles and responsibilities and keep in contact fully with the electorate. It is something I am working really hard to do—and I hope I am succeeding. It is working now because of my staff. I recognise Belinda Pevy, Kim Williamson, Alex Freeland, Roisin Moir and Debra Dennis, my relief staff. They make the office work so well. It could not happen without them, and I thank them.

Whether it is an affectation or a confection, there has always been this tension between the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly. If we were a unicameral system, we would not have to deal with them. But, as we do, I must say that I could not be more pleased that The Nationals so generously gave their blessing to the President, Ben Franklin. I thank all Nationals members involved. I am working very well with the President, and I think the Parliament is working much better across the Chambers under this particular paradigm. I can say that Ben Franklin and I wish to continue to grow that relationship across the divide. I also work closely with his staff—his chief of staff, Will Coates, and Rebel Neary.

I acknowledge David Blunt, the Clerk of the other place. David is an extraordinary professional. He is hugely experienced in his role, whether it is in dealing with members of the Legislative Council or the Legislative Assembly—he will actually talk to us. If members get a chance, they should avail themselves of David Blunt's wisdom and knowledge. There are of course extraordinary people in our own area. Three of them are our Clerks at the table, and I thank them. The Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, Helen Minnican; her deputy, Carly Maxwell; Serjeant-at-Arms Simon Johnston; and Jonathan Elliott are all extraordinarily professional, engaging people. We greatly appreciate everything they do. I also acknowledge Todd Buttsworth for all he does to assist us.

I turn now to the Department of Parliamentary Services. I recently spent an extraordinary amount of time working with the Department of Parliamentary Services—something I rarely had to do unless I had a problem in the electorate office. But I have got to know so much about this Parliament in the short time since 9 May. I have huge regard and respect for the work of Mark Webb. I am sure that Mark is listening; he loves a good speech. So, Mark, tick that one off: I said something really nice about you, and I genuinely meant it. I also acknowledge Julie Langsworth and Kelly McFayden, and Rob Nielsen and Lyndall Smith from building services and IT.

I am sure all members deal with the people in catering—they do a fantastic job—Lee Kwiez, Carlos Andrade and Vanessa Harcourt. I am very pleased that Vanessa has returned to this precinct and taken over our catering. I thank our staff in cleaning; finance; Human Services; security, being Anthony Macvean, Ralph Ewen and Song Charoenkitti; the Library, Matthew Dobson and his team; media, Ingrid Lane; and education. And I am just going to look up at Hansard in awe. I do not know how they do it—the long hours, the

transcribing. I truly do mean it: I thank them. I thank them for what they do on those long, late nights. We do that; we are the masters of our own destiny. But they come along and they step up. We thank them very much. It is greatly appreciated.

The cleaning staff around this place are a bit like the United Nations. I have made so many friends over the years, and they are such wonderful people. I cannot list them all, but I want to mention some that I have known over the years. I see Gusti Saiful every morning. I love to see Gusti. Carmen Vejarano cleans the Chamber every morning. Members might see Carmen in here early in the morning. She is a lovely lady. Jonathan Vega—if anyone is into music—is also a musician who plays rock and blues. He is a pretty cool guy and a great all-rounder. I thank him for everything he does. In catering in this place, I thank Kim. I am sure almost everyone knows Kim. She is always there with Anong Vichapol, Charlotte Page and Mai Le. They do a wonderful job. They certainly serve the needs of the Speaker's team, particularly when we are entertaining—we have many people from the consulate and visiting dignitaries call into the Parliament. The team certainly makes people's visit here that much better.

I hope that members know all these people. On my team, I am sure that most members know Jason Gordon, my chief of staff, who came with me from my electorate office originally and has been absolutely extraordinary stepping up into that role. Jason, thank you for everything. I am sure the people you have to deal with are equally appreciative and want to thank me for putting you on. Your work across the Chamber and around the building is fantastic. Jodi Rahme and Shu-fang Wei were there when I came into this role as they worked for the former Speaker. I was absolutely blessed that they wished to stay with me and offered to do so. I could not have made a better decision. The same goes for Ally Hawes, who also helps out in that area—although I should not say "Ally"; I like to call her "Alexandra". I thank Floyd, my driver, who is also part of the team. He knows so much. He does not say anything about anyone, but he knows. He is very discreet. It is a great team. None of us could do this without our teams around us.

I will wrap up now and thank the entire Parliament. The goodwill across this Chamber is extraordinary. I intend to keep mining it. I want to extract the best from everybody. I think everybody knows there is so much good in everyone in this place. Members do not get here if they do not have something to give, and I think we should also look to get the best out of it. That does not mean we will not have good, robust debate—as perhaps exemplified in yesterday's public interest debate. I congratulate Opposition members on finally finding their feet and having a good, robust debate. Of course, I also acknowledge the Government for having won the vote. With that, I conclude my remarks and just thank everybody. I wish you all a wonderful Christmas. Come back nice and relaxed and ready for a big 2024. Thank you very much.

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (14:59):** While we have not had much chance to get around to shopping centres lately, I am reliably informed that the sound of Mariah Carey and Michael Bublé is getting plenty of airplay around shopping centres, which leaves us in little doubt that the festive season is upon us once more as well as the end of the parliamentary year. It is a good time to reflect on the year that has been. While we get rather animated and have robust and combative debates from the dispatch box, I give my best wishes to all members of this place and the other place. I particularly thank you, Mr Speaker. You are the best Speaker I have ever had in my time here, without a doubt. As a member, a Whip and your office neighbour upstairs, you have been generous with your advice and your time by welcoming us newbies with a dinner on the Mondays before sitting weeks. That has been an excellent initiative, and we can feel the history in the room. Thank you for being so generous with your time and mentorship.

I thank the leadership team of the Government, including the Premier, the Deputy Premier, the Leader of the House, and everyone on the front bench as well as their staff. I give a special thanks to the class of 2023. We have all come into this place together and, regardless of what political stripe we might bear on our way in, we are getting along and looking after each other. We are helping each other navigate this funny old place. So far, so good. I hope everyone enjoys their time off this holiday season and spends it wisely, with family and friends. I am sure they are missing us after what has been a very long week and a long seven or eight months. We have well and truly earned a break, given our late nights this week.

I give my best wishes to the fantastic parliamentary staff, including the Clerk and her team, the guys from Hansard, the Legislative Assembly team, IT, and those people who we might not notice as much, like catering and cleaning. The Speaker mentioned Carmen in particular. My office has a Whip cam, which is a live stream of whatever is happening in the Chamber. Whether it is sitting or not, we can see what is happening. Carmen comes into the Chamber every morning with a feather duster to make sure that this place is spick-and-span every time the House sits. I thank her and the other cleaners who keep this place looking fantastic.

As a newbie to Macquarie Street, the assistance of the parliamentary staff has been instrumental to helping me learn the ropes and find my feet, both as an MP and as a Whip. I give a special shout-out to the team in the Department of Parliamentary Services who spent a large chunk of the year getting my brand-new electorate office ready in Leppington—David, Jayden, Ryan, Sean, Brandon and Maddie. There were many more people involved

in that job, and I thank them on behalf of my team as well. We absolutely love our new digs. The MPs who have visited me at my office are jealous, and that is a good thing.

Speaking of my electorate office, I thank my electorate office team, including Sharon Rawlins, Nicholas Petkovic, Shannen Potter, Liam Thorne and my fantastic short-term relief, Hazel Neville, who filled in while one of the other four were away. I thank them for coming on this adventure with me. It has been a big year and I could not have done it without them. All members in this place would accept that they would not be much without the hard work of their staff every day behind the scenes.

I give a big thanks to Colleen Symington, who, as every member in this place knows, keeps this place running. When I was asked if I wanted to become Whip, I was told, "We recommend that you keep Colleen in the job." I said, "I'm mad for taking the job. I would be even madder if I let Colleen go anywhere." I thank Colleen for helping me with this steep learning curve. She has made the transition a breeze. I thank her for her fantastic work. She is getting a well-earned break over the Christmas season. I hope she puts her leg up to rest and has a few on behalf of all of us. I give another big thankyou to my Deputy Whip, the member for Lismore, Janelle. Her experience and wisdom have helped me find my feet. She has been an excellent adviser and guide during my short time as Whip. I wish her and her constituents in the north a safe and happy holidays.

We all know the sacrifices our families make to get us to this place, and my family is no different, including my wife, Christy, and my two amazing children, Evan and Nia. My daughter, much like the Premier at the moment, is battling COVID. I know this job takes me away from them, so I thank them for their support. To the constituents of Leppington I am eternally thankful for bestowing on me the honour of being the first member for Leppington. I wish them a happy Christmas season and I look forward to working with them for many years ahead. I am sure I have missed countless people, but I extend my well wishes to all of them. I encourage everyone to rest up, listen to their favourite Christmas songs and watch their favourite Christmas movies. In the spirit of my favourite Christmas movie, in the words of John McClane, "Yippee ki-yay!"

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (15:06):** On this day, the last sitting day of 2023, I wish all members on both sides of the House, and their staff and families, a safe and joyful Christmas. I also acknowledge and thank the many people who make this place run, ensuring that the important work of the House gets done. I acknowledge the Speaker and thank him for his kind words earlier and for kicking me out of the Chamber for one minute and 34 seconds. If you blink, you miss it. I thank him for his good humour, friendship and the great work that he does. I thank the Deputy Speaker, the Assistant Speaker, and yourself, Mr Temporary Speaker Layzell, as well as the entire Speaker's panel. I thank the Leader of the House, the Manager of Opposition Business, and the Government Whip, who just left the Chamber. I will work with him on how to watch a clock so that he keeps his speeches on time. I thank the Deputy Government Whip, Janelle Saffin, and The Nationals Whip.

The Clerks play an enormous role in the function of the House. Their advice on matters of procedure and practice is invaluable. I thank Helen Minnican, Carly Maxwell, Simon Johnston, Jonathon Elliott, Amanda Alam, Emma Wood and Todd Buttsworth. I thank the entire staff of the Parliament who look after us every day, including the amazing Hansard team, who turn terrible speeches into works of art; the Chamber attendants; IT services; the catering team; and Café Quorum, particularly Kylie for keeping up the caffeine and the muesli. I appreciate it. I give an incredible thanks to the special constables who keep us safe every day.

I give another special thanks to Mark Speakman, Senior Counsel, Opposition Leader and Leader of the Liberals, and his incredible staff: Cheryl Gwilliam, Dmitry Chugg-Palmer, Luke Nayna, Nick Johnston, Ian Zakon and Kit Hale. Mark is a truly wonderful person. It is a privilege to serve with a member with such care, compassion and drive, who puts the people of New South Wales first. It is an honour to be Mark Speakman's Whip. I also acknowledge the shadow Cabinet members and their staff, who do an amazing job. As those in Government know, it is difficult being in opposition. But the staff and the shadow Cabinet do a wonderful job holding the Government to account. All staff members have a tough job in balancing the many demands on their time, especially the shadow Ministers. While it is not possible to name all staff, I particularly mention the following people for their incredible work this year: Nat Openshaw, Amy Firmstone, Viv Lee, Andrew Humpherson and Sinclair Hill.

I also thank my wonderful and loyal staff for their ongoing support this year in the beautiful Terrigal electorate. Jack Robinson, my senior electorate officer, is doing a great job. Donna Golightly looks after every single human being in my electorate. She is doing a wonderful job and I greatly appreciate what she does every day. Julie McFadden and Debra Beattie are absolutely wonderful. I again thank all my team for the great work they do every day for the people of the Terrigal electorate and, in a lot of cases, for the people of the neighbouring Labor electorates as well. A lot of people seem to call our office when they need help. I really appreciate the great work that my incredible team does every day and I appreciate them looking after me.

I say a big thankyou to Ben Sheath, my former Whip's adviser, who was seconded from Mark Speakman's office on my return to Whipdom this year. I thank the wonderful Bo Ok, my current Whip's adviser. She truly is an outstanding person. The level of care and compassion that she shows for people in this place is truly amazing. She is an outstanding Whip's assistant. I know that she will enjoy her very well-deserved break. I thank the Government Whip and member for Leppington, Nathan Hagarty, and the Deputy Government Whip, the delightful Janelle Saffin, who is in the Chamber. It is wonderful being able to share a corridor with them, especially Janelle. I also acknowledge the former Government Whip, who has been demoted to Minister, Steve Whan. He should have kept the other job—it is much more entertaining.

I say a big thankyou to the incredible Colleen Symington for keeping the Chamber running. I have been on the other side of the Chamber. I know what she, along with Bo, does every day. We extend our greatest thanks to them. I encourage her to have a break, enjoy herself, and put that leg up and rest. I thank my partner in crime, the National Party Whip and member for Coffs Harbour, Gurmeh Singh, and his wonderful adviser Emma Toole. Obviously, it is great to be back in Whipdom. Of course, the Government Whip will learn to say the word "no" while smiling at everybody. To all of those members who will seek leave next year, the answer is no. I thank all my Liberal-Nationals colleagues. As the Opposition, they have embraced the incredible responsibility of holding the Government to account and have done so with great diligence, commitment, passion, excitement, enthusiasm and a sense of wellbeing.

That was evident yesterday during the now-famous public interest debate, when the Government was held to account. We may lose the vote but we win the battle. It was great to see a wonderful team of united people in this Chamber yesterday. I wish everyone a very merry Christmas and a relaxing, safe and very happy new year. I give a big shout-out to one of my locals on the Central Coast—I have mentioned him a couple of times—Robert Gilbert from Copacabana. I know he is back enjoying country race meetings and getting out and about. Finally, I have to acknowledge my incredible wife, Jill. Sweetheart, I know it has been tough. Her strength and bravery is nothing short of amazing. I look forward to spending this Christmas with her and having that time together. I wish everyone a very merry Christmas and a safe and happy new year.

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (15:12):** I do not think I can remember all the names to thank today. I am a bit sleep deprived, like all of us. I have had a hectic day, so I am going to associate myself with all of the names that have been mentioned in this Chamber. I have listened to the speeches in and out of meetings. They often say, "It takes a village", and I feel like it is a bit of a village at Parliament. It is a community in its own right. None of it works, and we as members cannot do the work we do, without everybody backing and supporting us. From Hansard to the staff in our offices in Parliament to our wonderful parliamentary attendants, everybody does a great job to make it all work so that we can represent our communities in the best possible way we can. That includes, from the Government side of the Chamber, prosecuting the Government's agenda and, from the Opposition side, holding the Government to account in the responsible system of government that we operate in. We all take turns on each side. I can see the look on the member for Wollongong's face.

**Mr Paul Scully:** We are not going back anytime soon, though.

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN:** One of the challenges is that not only do we operate under responsible government, which has its strengths in a separation of powers, the rule of law and all of those things, but we also live in communities that are part of a participatory democracy. That is a challenge for all members: how we represent the people in our communities in this place. Each and every one of us plays a part. The committee system plays a part. My observation from being in a few Parliaments is that we could strengthen the committee system and make it work even more effectively. It does work well, because it is where we come together and come to agreements. It has a great strength and helps represent community issues. Some more strengthening around that over the years would be good.

Steve Whan as Government Whip was terrific. We had a great relationship. Now Nathan Hagarty is Whip. We have a great relationship. I acknowledge Colleen Symington from the Whip's office and Omar Rodriguez from the Leader of the House's office. The four of us work really well together. We work well with the Opposition Whip. I thank Crouchie and Gurmeh, my neighbour and one of the northies. He is from the North Coast and my electorate is in the Northern Rivers. They are both delightful to work with. We have had a very constructive working relationship this year. We have done that for the benefit of this House and for the benefit of members. We are quite accommodating of each other when we go about our business. It is not a contest. We just need everything to work in the Chamber and to get through the business. I thank the Leader of the House, Ron Hoenig, for his leadership in this place. It is not easy to be Leader of the House and to get through the business he has to get through. I also thank his Opposition counterpart, Alister Henskens, for making it work as well. I thank my Labor colleagues for continuing to support me. I know that is not always easy.

**Mr Paul Scully:** You're a fierce advocate, Janelle.

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN:** It is funny that the member for Wollongong is in the Chamber. We are pretty close. But I do speak without fear or favour.

**Mr Paul Scully:** We wouldn't have it any other way.

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN:** That is right. It does not matter what position I occupy in this place. I represent my electorate and community first and foremost, as well as the broader community of New South Wales in my role as Parliamentary Secretary for Disaster Recovery. I must thank my Labor colleagues. I also thank my Liberal and Nationals colleagues. I probably do have a little favouritism for the Nats, given where I live and have always lived.

**Mr Paul Scully:** Don't we all.

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN:** Don't we all. I always say to people that I live in Nat territory. I have spent most of my life in Nat territory. I am the Labor incursion. We fight each other in elections, but we work well together, particularly in my neck of the woods, for the benefit of the community. We also do that in this place. To my staff, the past few years have been really challenging, with bushfires and then more bushfires, as well as drought, mice and huge floods that we have never experienced before. Now, we have imported red fire ants to add to that list.

**Mr Paul Scully:** Nothing good comes out of Queensland.

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN:** That's right. They come out of Queensland. I say a big thankyou to my staff because we carry a heavy load in my office with all of the disasters that we have had and continue to have. They take years to recover from. I give a really big shout-out to them, because they carry not only the physical load but also the emotional load in dealing with traumatised people. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Have a great season. I say a big thankyou to everybody. We come into this Chamber to spread goodwill and I think sometimes it is good to spread the love.

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (15:18):** Thank you, Janelle. I will post a membership form in your Christmas card this year.

**Ms Janelle Saffin:** Gurmesh, you have tried before.

**Mr GURMESH SINGH:** I think we should rename those red fire ants maroon fire ants, so everyone knows just where they came from. As the last sitting week of 2023 draws to a close—a very long week—I take this opportunity to wish everyone in this place and out there listening a very merry Christmas. I acknowledge all the work that my colleagues in the National Party have done over the last year advocating for the people of regional New South Wales. Earlier this year we lost a close friend and long-serving member of this House, Stephen Bromhead. Our thoughts are with his family and friends at this time. I thank my colleagues in the Liberal Party for another great year working in partnership for the people across the State. It is an honour to work alongside you all.

We had an election at the start of the year. I congratulate the Labor Party on winning government. I know governing is not an easy task, and I wish Government members all the best for the Christmas season. I hope they have some time with their families and some time away from the office to catch their breath after a pretty exciting and hectic 12 months. I thank the Leader of the Opposition, Mark Speakman, and the Leader of the National Party, Dugald Saunders, for their leadership and dedication throughout the year. It has been a pleasure to work with my partner in crime in this place, Opposition Whip Adam Crouch; the Whip's adviser, Bo Ok; and Viv Lee and Emma Toole in The Nationals' office. I thank them for everything they have done to keep us on track, and for keeping us very well fed.

I thank the Government Whips, Steve Whan, Nathan Hagarty and Janelle Saffin. It is a pleasure to work with all of them, as well as Colleen in the Whip's office. I wish them a merry Christmas. I thank the Clerks, attendants, Hansard staff and all the committee staff. It is because of them that this place runs smoothly. They facilitate the felicitations. I practised that in front of the mirror like Ron Burgundy. I wish them all a merry Christmas and hope they enjoy a restful and well-deserved break. I thank the team in the Coffs Harbour electorate office: Cheryl, Craig, Katie and Diane. I thank them for another great year and all the work they do. The team in the electorate office always go above and beyond for the people of Coffs Harbour, and I acknowledge their continued dedication and hard work.

Finally, I thank my family for their continued support and patience. I know an election year is particularly tough, so I thank them. It is not always easy with me being away frequently, but my five-year-old has now discovered FaceTime audio. Last night at 10.30 p.m. he rang Dugald Saunders through my Apple ID. I do not know what he was doing up. I appreciate the sacrifice my family makes to allow me to represent our community. We are incredibly lucky to call the Coffs Coast home. I feel privileged to have been given another four years as the member for Coffs Harbour to serve my community. There is a lot more work to do, and I look forward to



continue fighting for our region. I conclude by wishing everybody a safe and restful Christmas break, a merry Christmas and a happy new year. I look forward to seeing everybody back in this place in 12 weeks' time.

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (15:22):** I extend warm holiday wishes to all my parliamentary colleagues on both sides of the House in both Chambers. As we approach the festive season, I sincerely hope they find time to celebrate with their families and loved ones, embracing the joyous spirit of Christmas and welcoming the new year with happiness and safety. This is an opportune moment to express my gratitude to the Premier, Chris Minns, for his leadership, as well as to extend my appreciation to our Ministers and my fellow parliamentarians. It is an honour to work alongside such committed colleagues and staff members.

I acknowledge the Whip and the Whip's Office, especially Colleen Symington, whose diligence and dedication keep us well-informed and disciplined. Colleen, as always, your wealth of knowledge is invaluable, and I cannot thank you enough for all your assistance. A thankyou is also due to the Legislative Assembly Clerk's office, table staff, Hansard staff, committee staff and security personnel for their indispensable contributions to the functioning of our Parliament. The Parliamentary Library's timely research and support is also greatly appreciated. I express my gratitude to the facilities staff, catering team, cleaners and information technology staff for their professional service, ensuring the smooth operation of Parliament for all members and their staff.

A nod of appreciation goes to the parliamentary press gallery for keeping the public informed about the issues raised within these walls. I extend a heartfelt thankyou to my dedicated Labor branch members for their tireless support in the community. Recognition is also extended to the New South Wales Labor Party leadership team and staff for their ongoing support. I acknowledge the resilience and dedication of my local community groups, especially during challenging times. Their hard work does not go unnoticed, and I thank all of them for their commitment to the wellbeing of our community.

Special appreciation is reserved for the volunteers of the NSW Rural Fire Service and my local emergency service, and a special thankyou to those who will be working over the Christmas break to ensure our health, safety and wellbeing. I am deeply grateful to the Mount Druitt Hospital staff and the Mount Druitt police for their outstanding contributions to our community's wellbeing.

I extend a heartfelt thankyou to my office staff, who work diligently to serve the Mount Druitt community with professionalism and keep my office running smoothly. I particularly appreciate the efforts of my office manager, Sarah Hatch, and my dedicated electorate office staff, Phil, Yvonne, Norma and Maddie. I am always grateful for their commitment and dedication. Finally, I must express my gratitude to my family for their unwavering support. To my wife, Dimyana; daughters, Natalie and Eustina; son-in-law, John; and grandkids, Elise and Nicholas, thank you for your understanding and tolerance of my demanding schedule. I wish everyone a very merry Christmas and a happy new year.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (15:26):** I wish the entire parliamentary community a restful break. It has been a very big year with an election and indeed a very big week with a lot of late sittings. From the moment we walk into the building, the special constables greet us and keep us safe. The front desk attendants welcome us, our visitors and our guests. I thank all the amazing Legislative Assembly staff; Department of Parliamentary Services staff, including Mark Webb; the catering, facilities, IT and events teams; and the cleaners. There is an amazing community here that helps our democracy function.

I particularly thank the Parliamentary Counsel Office team, led by Annette O'Callaghan. I acknowledge the crossbench has kept them busy with lots of amendments and legislation this year, and we will probably continue to do that. I am really grateful to the Clerk, Helen Minnican; the Deputy Clerk, Carly Maxwell; and the entire team of Clerks for the guidance and support they give all members in this Parliament, especially crossbenchers. They help us get up to speed with what is happening in the House and how to do procedural motions.

I thank all the committee staff and particularly the members of the Privileges and Ethics Committee. We have dealt with some high-profile and quite difficult issues, and we have always put partisanship aside to resolve them in the best interests of the Parliament. I would like to thank the amazing Hansard team, who look down over us in this place and record everything we say and do, and the wonderful team in the library. I thank the press gallery for holding us all to account.

I thank the Speaker, the member for Lake Macquarie, Greg Piper. It was an honour to nominate him as Speaker and I think he and his entire team, including chief of staff Jason Gordon, have done a great job looking after the Legislative Assembly and guiding a minority Parliament in a mostly calm way through most of the proceedings. I also acknowledge all members of the Speakers' panel, including Temporary Speaker David Layzell, who is currently in the chair. I think we are a good group of bipartisan people who stay up late, who understand procedures and who are at times challenged.

**Mr Paul Scully:** And challenging.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH:** And sometimes challenging. Mainly it is Mr Speaker who is challenged; I think the rest of the panel members are pretty good, actually. I thank the Government: Premier Chris Minns, Deputy Premier Prue Car and Leader of the House Ron Hoenig. There has been genuine and meaningful engagement with the crossbench, and respect for our ideas, thoughts and proposals. That has been returned with the respect for the mandate that the Government has from winning the election. Particularly, I call out Omar Rodriguez and Sachin Saxena in the Premier's office. Both work so well with the crossbench to keep us up to date with what is happening, and I hope my crossbench colleagues keep them up to date with what we are doing. I acknowledge the Opposition and its members for their important job in holding the Government to account. I thank the Leader of the Opposition and the Manager of Opposition Business, Alister Henskens.

I pay particular tribute to my crossbench colleagues. We represent some of the smallest seats, geographically, and some of the remotest seats. We all get along, respecting our role and our differences. I pay particular tribute to the new members of the crossbench—the members for the electorates of Wakehurst and Wollondilly—and thank them for their contribution to the Parliament. All new members of this place are absolutely wonderful and hugely impressive, as the Speaker said in his felicitations. I could not do this job without my amazing team of Tammie, Roy, Leanne, Annie, Donna, Zander and Briana, nor the amazing support of my husband, Victor.

I thank everybody in this Chamber and, indeed, the parliamentary precinct who has been wearing rainbow lanyards throughout the year. There can be challenging times for the LGBTQ community. As many members know, this year I have come under attack for my sexuality. Walking into the Chamber or a room in this building and seeing someone wearing a rainbow lanyard provides you with a sense of safety. Particularly, I thank Pride @ Parliament and everyone who has donned a rainbow lanyard. As members leave my electorate to go to your own electorates for this period, I thank you for being here and thank my constituents for hosting you here. I look forward to seeing you all back in 12 weeks.

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill) (15:31):** As we move into the Christmas period, members return to our own electorates—yes, leaving the electorate of the member for Sydney. We return to our communities having spent many hours and many days in this House. As members of Parliament, when we are not in this House we spend time at community meetings and events within our electorate. The Christmas period provides a time to spend with our family and friends. As this is my first chance to record Christmas felicitations in *Hansard*, I start by wishing every member of Parliament the very best for the Christmas break. I hope everyone has a merry and safe time with their families and friends. I extend my wish for a merry and safe Christmas to the Speaker, the Speaker's staff, the Temporary Speakers, parliamentary Clerks, Hansard staff, committee staff and all those who serve the community within this Parliament.

To our party leader and the party leadership team—Mark, Natalie, Robyn, Damien, Alister and our Whip, Adam—I thank you for your leadership and friendship over the past 12 months. I hope you are able to spend time with your families over Christmas. I wish each of you a merry and safe Christmas. To all my Liberal Party and National Party colleagues, I thank you for your time, friendship and assistance. I wish you all a wonderful and safe Christmas. I extend my Christmas wishes to members of the Labor Party, The Greens and to all Independent members of this House.

Since my election to this House in March 2023 I have had the opportunity—more than the opportunity, the privilege—of being able to give back to the members of my community. It was an incredibly humbling experience to be elected to represent what I believe is one of the greatest electorates in this State. I assure members of my electorate that the responsibility of being their representative in this House is not taken for granted. The Castle Hill electorate has its own challenges, and I have met a wide range of constituents. Recently I received a text message from a family I was able to help. I will share the text with members. It reads:

I can't begin to tell you the joy you brought with what you were able to do for her—

—being their daughter. It goes on:

As a family we thank you so much.

It is always wonderful when we members are able to help our constituents. We all serve our communities to help our residents and it is wonderful when we can bring joy to any of our constituents. Serving the communities we represent is very much like Christmas. We serve to assist our communities. We serve to bring joy. We serve to give our time and support to the members of our communities. In some instances, members of our communities simply want someone to listen to what they have to say.

We are not able to serve our communities without our electorate staff. I am fortunate to have wonderful, skilled and hardworking staff. As members, we cannot serve without our dedicated electorate team. I thank Helen,

Leanne, Molly and Dougal for your service, your loyalty and your friendship. Thank you for everything you have done for me this past year. I wish you and your families a wonderful, safe and merry Christmas. We are not alone in the service of our communities in the areas we represent. The Castle Hill electorate is mainly within The Hills Shire Council. I wish a merry and safe Christmas and new year to general manager Mr Michael Edgar, council staff, mayor Peter Gangemi, councillors and families. I look forward to continuing to work with council to serve our community in the new year. I will catch up with the general manager, councillors and council staff over the Christmas period.

Within the Castle Hill electorate we have many charitable organisations that continue to give back to the community. These organisations include wonderful hardworking groups such as Rotary, Lions, masonic clubs, men's sheds, women's sheds, domestic violence prevention groups, the Positive Vibes Foundation, the India Club, the North-West Community Foundation, the Sydney Community Group, the Fit Kidz Foundation, the Rural Fire Service, the State Emergency Service and many, many more. I have got around the community and met all these groups. They are made up of wonderful people who serve the Castle Hill electorate community. I wish every community group, their members and their families a safe, merry and happy Christmas. I look forward to speaking to them in the new year.

Christmas is a time when we reflect on and strengthen our own family bonds and values. As I am sure is the case for all members after a long year, I am looking forward to spending time with family and friends over the Christmas period. My wife, Raylee, and I will be spending time with our family: our children, Natalie and Matthew, our son-in-law Michael and our grandson Charles, who has recently turned two. Most importantly, I thank my family. I thank my parents for the values they have instilled in me. I thank my incredible, wonderful wife and children. I wish everyone a merry, safe and happy Christmas. I look forward to seeing everyone in the new year.

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (15:36):** Christmas comes but once a year, and always brings some feel-good cheer. It also brings reflection time, and I'll present it all in rhyme:

This time last year I was a chalkie  
Talking to kids 'bout Keating and Hawkey  
Mentioning music at every chance  
And showing those kids how to really dance.

But since that day in March this year  
I've had a slight change in my career  
And with this move has come some changes  
And people who were once just strangers.

The staff who've helped with entitlements  
They've also kind of made HR make sense  
They're always ready on the phone  
To DPS, who've never left me alone.

No matter the hour or time of day  
The security staff have been here to stay  
To get me into my locked-out office  
And kept this place our safe fortress.

To Charlotte and Kim and the catering staff,  
Who feed us and provide us a hearty laugh  
They stand in for family far away  
And manage to provide a caring place to stay.

Helen and Carly, I have no words  
For the kindness and being a bunch of nerds.  
The House is a crazy place of rules  
That you managed to educate this happy fool.

To the boss of bosses, Christopher Minns,  
Who took us through the win of wins,  
And also to my good friend Prue:  
Merry Chrissy and thank you to both of you.

And now to the team that has been the best  
At showing me around—I've been quite blest  
To get to know you two quite well  
Colleen and Omar, from "this side of hell".

The class of 2023 is really a team  
I hold you all in such esteem.  
We all come from such different places  
And now I'm pleased to know your faces.

I have some staff who are quite unique  
 They make me look organised and sleek.  
 They never complain when I bring them work.  
 They're all named Mel, which is quite the perk,

And Sharyn and Noah, and Gail and Deb  
 I've had a few helpers from the beginning of Feb.  
 You've put up with my singing and Christmas obsession  
 And this to you is my confession:

I couldn't have got through this year without you  
 The ups, the downs, the time just flew  
 So now your names are contained in print  
 We'd pay you more, but the Government's skint.

To the people of Camden who put me here  
 I wish you all some Christmas cheer  
 I wish you everything you need right now  
 We'll get our infrastructure somewhere, somehow.

But Christmas time is for family  
 Those people who restore our sanity  
 And though we spend these days away  
 Without them we'd all be in disarray.

In closing I've not mentioned the biggest guy  
 Who at this time we praise on high  
 Christmas, St Paul's, it's at 7  
 Singing at the piano, heading to heaven.

In whose name I bless each day  
 I offer to Him all my play  
 My work, my thanks and Christmas too  
 For that is what I'm coming to.

Christmas makes us all reflect  
 On people and things that we respect  
 So, to everyone here and all around  
 Merry Christmas and may the joy abound.

**Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn) (15:40):** I was a bit worried we were going to get some singing at one stage during the last speech.

**Mr Paul Scully:** Only from you, Lynda.

**Ms LYNDA VOLTZ:** Not from me, I can assure you. The Minister has heard my singing and he knows how bad it is. The member for Camden has promised us Christmas carols outdoors next year—no singing in the Chamber, member. As the member for Auburn I note that we approach the end of the parliamentary sittings in the electorate of Sydney. But the reality is the city does not belong to the electorate of Sydney; it belongs to everybody. It is the jewel in the crown of Australia. This is probably the best city in the world. I cannot imagine anyone who would not want to live here. There are great places around New South Wales, but—

**Mr Paul Scully:** Wollongong is pretty good.

**Ms LYNDA VOLTZ:** Wollongong is good, but in terms of our global cities—I am talking about those guys down south—this place belongs to us all. I wish everyone in my community and here in the Parliament a safe and peaceful Christmas and holiday period. In my electorate there will be some great events. I am hoping that everybody gets out this year. It has been a tough couple of years. Cumberland City Council has its traditional Christmas in the Gardens at Auburn Botanic Gardens on 9 December. I am sure the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces would like to come up and give Wollongong a bit of a break. Santa and the gingerbread man will be there, alongside lots of craft and activities.

He can do Christmas card making at Regents Park Library on 14 December. Canterbury Bankstown Council has the Bankstown Christmas Village Markets on 7 December at Paul Keating Park. There will be the big tree lighting that day. We do not want to miss that. There is also the Festival of Sydney coming out to the west, where it should always have been. It will hold events over January, including the fantastic Symphony Under the Stars in Parramatta Park on 20 January. There will be *Dinosaur World Live* at the Riverside Theatre. That is a great one for all the kids.

Local swimming pools such as Birrong and Auburn will be open every day except for Christmas Day and Boxing Day, if people cannot get to the beach. For everyone in my electorate, remember if you are going to the beach to stay between the flags, obey the instructions of lifeguards, and never take your eyes off children around water. If people are going for a bushwalk this Christmas and New Year holidays, let someone know where you

are going and when you will return. If you are camping or trekking, let the local police know you are in the area and when you should be back. If you are travelling, download the Hazards Near Me app to keep an eye out for bushfires and weather events such as flooding. If you are going away, have a neighbour regularly put your bins out and inform them of your travel plans.

There are so many people in the electorate of Auburn who have worked hard over the past few years. I hope everyone takes a break. We really have had it tough. I thank all the teachers, principals and support staff. I hope they have a great break. For our doctors, nurses and paramedics, I know Christmas can be their busiest time, and while everyone is at home they will be working hard, but I thank them for their service. Likewise, summer is the busiest time for New South Wales police and emergency services. Hopefully this year it is not your turn to be rostered on on Christmas Day. But if you are, we will be thinking of you.

Our cleaning staff across our schools, hospitals, the Parliament and everywhere are some of the hardest working people in the State. They are the unsung heroes of our public service. A say a big thankyou to all the cleaners across the State, because they do such a fantastic job. The other people who will be working over Christmas are our local government staff. They do not get a lot of credit, the people who pick up our rubbish, keep our parks clean and organise our events. They really are at the grassroots. Thank you to all the local government staff who will be working this summer.

Remember over Christmas that if you need help, there is help. Our community organisations are amongst the hardest working in the country. In Auburn we have the Salvos, Barnardo's and Western Sydney Community Centre. Most of our mosques, churches and temples are there to lend a hand over Christmas if you need help. If you want to reach out for Christmas lunch, St Peter Chanel Church in Berala has a delicious buffet, and they are ready to welcome anybody. Pop up there for Christmas lunch if you need to see a friendly face. If you are in financial crisis, then contact the Salvation Army at Auburn. If you find that you are struggling over the Christmas period, remember to contact Lifeline on 13 11 14 or Kids Helpline on 1800 55 1800. Of course my office is always there to help—my hardworking staff Skinny, Suzette, Rafa, Nola, Caro, and everyone who makes me look good. Even if the office is closed, we will monitor emails. Give us a hoiy, drop us a line, and hopefully 2024 is a great year and a happy new year for everybody.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** Before I leave the chair for the last time for this year, I say my own thanks to all the parliamentary staff, to everyone who works in the building, all my parliamentary colleagues and, most importantly, to my electoral office staff Kirsty, Gary and Brett, who work really hard to make sure that we do the work that we do for the community. It is tough at times and we rely so much on our electoral office staff. I say to the people of the Upper Hunter, have a great, merry Christmas, have a happy New Year and all the best into 2024. It is my greatest honour to represent the electorate in this place, and I thank them for giving me this opportunity. Finally, to the people I never spend enough time with, my family, merry Christmas and I look forward to spending some time with you all.

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (15:46):** On this last sitting day of 2023 we look back on what has been a very eventful year, to say the least. I start by thanking the Speaker, and member for Lake Macquarie for maintaining order in this place. To the many staff members who keep the wheels turning to ensure our days here in Parliament run smoothly and ensuring the workings and integrity of the House are kept in high regard, thank you for your commitment. The House does not function without the staff who make this building a hive of activity: the IT services, the library staff, the Chamber attendants, the catering team, the special constables, and the diligent Hansard team who ensure the words spoken in this place will remain long after we have gone. I cannot express how bolstering their kind greetings have been as we go about our work at all hours of the day and night.

To my Nationals and Liberal colleagues, your passion is clear to see. During our time in government we delivered so much for the people of this State. I am particularly proud of the contributions and investments we have made in rural and regional communities during our time in office. I thank you all for your hard work as we continue to support our communities in opposition and loudly champion their causes, their interests and their concerns. I thank the Coalition leadership team, starting with the Leader of the Nationals, Dugald Saunders, and the Deputy Leader of the Nationals, Bronnie Taylor, along with the Leader of the Opposition, Mark Speakman, and the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party, Natalie Ward. Thank you for your leadership and dedication to the State of New South Wales.

This year marks my sixth year as the member for Cootamundra in this place. Cootamundra electorate is the place I call home, the seat of small communities that I am so very proud to serve. Whether it is visiting a local country show, or having a cuppa with the Country Women's Association or the men's shed, I am always interested to hear how our communities are travelling and what issues concern them. I will always stand up and be their voice and fight for what is needed. People spend countless hours farming and producing the products that many of us enjoy when we sit down to eat our Christmas lunch this year. I thank them for their efforts. I acknowledge the dedication and continuous efforts of the members who make up the communities across the electorate, along

with their supporting councils, including the mayors, councillors and staff who work behind the scenes to help and support their communities.

This year also marks my first year as the shadow Minister for Water and the shadow Minister for Crown Lands. These are two vitally important portfolios, and I am deeply honoured by the trust placed in me to take on these very challenging responsibilities. The water portfolio in particular is one of great significance; it impacts every single resident of the State in one way or another. It takes on added significance in our rural and regional areas, given its importance to the livelihoods of communities west of the Great Dividing Range. Water is the lifeblood of those communities, and I am deeply committed to doing everything I can to ensure that every town and village has access to a safe, secure and reliable water supply. I am also committed to being the voice of reason when it comes to ensuring that our farmers have access to the water they need to feed our nation.

Last but by no means least, I thank my staff back home in both the Young and Junee offices: Cath Sheridan, Brianah Griffin, Daniel Lloyd, Kim Hill, Julie Siegert, Clare Taylor and Marie Tame. I am grateful for their constant updates and for ensuring that I have everything I need when I am on the road. For the number of calls, messages and emails no matter what time of the day or day of the week, they are always there when I need them. I am so proud of the dedication they all have in the roles they play and the passion they have for the communities of the electorate of Cootamundra. I hope that everyone has a relaxing and safe holiday break with their family and friends. I wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and look forward to what the new year brings for us all.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** Before I call the member for Prospect, I also wish a very merry Christmas to every member, as well as to all my staff and all the cleaners in the whole world because they are all wonderful. I hope everyone is happy and safe. I wish my family, as well as all of my wonderful colleagues, a happy Christmas.

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (15:51):** Christmas is a time for family and community spirit. It is an opportunity to give thanks and be kind. I express my sincere gratitude and acknowledge the community groups and charities in the electorate of Prospect that have worked tirelessly this year. It has brought an immense amount of pride to see our community care for one another in the cost-of-living crisis. Their efforts are a testament to the strength of our thriving Western Sydney community. I wish them all a joyful festive season surrounded by family and loved ones. I also thank the many people who will be working this Christmas, including the essential services, who look after our health, safety and wellbeing. I also thank the hospitality industry and retail industry, as we celebrate the end of another year and the beginning of a new year.

In Western Sydney, we live in a multicultural harmony, respecting each other's values and beliefs and championing what unites us. I am so proud to represent Western Sydney, a place that offers a safe and welcoming home for all. It is an immense privilege to represent the wonderful electorate of Prospect. I thank my constituents for placing their trust in me as their State member of Parliament for a third term. I am so proud to represent our community and look forward to continuing our work in the new year to build a better future for us and our families in Western Sydney. With the myriad challenges faced in our community this year, my electorate staff have worked around the clock to ensure the concerns for individuals, families and businesses in Prospect were met. I thank my hardworking electorate staff for their dedication to the electorate of Prospect, their friendship, their support and their loyalty, including Mary Azar, Annie Wang, Brandon Perrett-Hale, Caitlyn Long, Dustin Dao, Stephen Bali Junior and Bryant Lam.

I thank our Premier Chris Minns and Deputy Premier Prue Car for their courageous leadership throughout our first year of Government and in the recent election campaign. We have had a fantastic start, and I cannot wait to see what the Minns Labor Government will accomplish next year. I thank the fantastic team in the Premier's office, particularly Cherie Burton and James Cullen, who have been integral to the success. As Parliamentary Secretary, I thank the Attorney General, member for Maroubra and an old friend, and the people in his office, Phil Kelly, Dylan Parker and Rose Dandolo, and the Department of Community and Justice.

I acknowledge the work done by the Speaker and the Speaker's office, and the Government Whip and the Whip's office, in particular Colleen Symington, who works so hard in keeping us all in line. We love you, Col, although everyone has already said that. I thank Omar Rodriguez from the office of Ron Hoenig, the Leader of the House, for his hard work, the long hours he put in and his dedication. I thank the Legislative Assembly Clerk's office, particularly Helen Minnican and her team, and the Parliamentary Counsel Office. I thank the Hansard staff so much, who work tirelessly to polish up our speeches, often making them better in print than in presentation. I thank the New South Wales police special constables for keeping us safe and informed, and the Parliamentary Library and the Research Service for their timely and valuable research. I acknowledge the parliamentary press gallery, who perform an integral function to keep our communities informed of the matters being argued in this place.

I thank the fantastic team at the Department of Parliamentary Services, including the administrative and finance staff, the IT department particularly, the cleaners, maintenance and the catering team for providing exceptional service. Parliament sitting days can be lengthy and rigorous, but they have made the process seamless. I thank my parliamentary colleagues, from my old friends who have been with me over the past eight years to new-found friends elected this year from all sides of politics. Despite political differences, we all care for our communities and have pledged to serve New South Wales. We should be proud of our bipartisan achievements and must take this energy into 2024 to best serve our community. Finally, I thank my wonderful family, particularly my wife, Bettina, and our daughters. Their support means everything to me. Every action I take in this place I do to ensure they are proud of me. They are my greatest motivation. I pray that everyone has a great Christmas and holiday season surrounded by family, friends and loved ones. Merry Christmas and God bless.

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (15:56):** It is the final sitting week of Parliament for 2023 and it is timely that we acknowledge those who have made contributions to this place and beyond. I thank my parliamentary colleagues from all political persuasions for their interactions, contributions, leadership and debate. We hold privileged positions in this House. I particularly mention the Leader of the Opposition, Mark Speakman. I thank him for taking on such a challenging role. It can be a thankless role at times, and I appreciate his commitment and dedication. He conducts himself with the highest standard of integrity, and it is an honour to be his deputy in the Legislative Assembly. I also thank Natalie Ward, deputy leader in the other House, for her guidance, commitment and dedication to the cause. I thank the shadow Cabinet for working together. I thank our Nationals friends for their contributions and backing. I thank the team behind the Opposition leadership, Cheryl, Kit, Dmitry and Ian. They work tirelessly and never ask whether they can go home; they always just stay until the end.

I thank the Speaker, Deputy Speaker and Temporary Speakers for keeping a rabble organised. I thank our parliamentary staff and the Clerk, Helen Minnican, and her team. They always come to our rescue when we need it. I am overwhelmed by the time they give us, without fear or favour. They never give up and always deliver. I thank HR, members entitlements, the cleaning staff and maintenance staff; they all make a contribution. I thank our journalists who tell our stories, sometimes with great gusto, for their commitment. I thank my electoral office team, Felicity, Kim and Jess, for giving everything they can every day. I thank my former staff, Virginia, Dominica, Thera and Nathan, for their contribution to where we are today. I thank our constituents and community groups; they all have a say in how well the community runs. I thank the police, SES, RFS and Fire and Rescue. Hawkesbury has called on them time and time again and they have been there for us. I also thank Hawkesbury and the Hills shire councillors and their staff for their contributions. We work hard together, and I want to continue in that vein. Lastly, I thank my family for being there when I need you. Merry Christmas.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** It being 4.00 p.m., debate is interrupted for the petitions take-note debate. I set down resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a later hour.

#### *Petitions*

### **REGIONAL SENIORS TRAVEL CARD**

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

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (15:59):** I am proud to give a voice in this place to the many thousands of people who supported this petition throughout the Northern Tablelands for the reinstatement of the \$250 regional seniors travel card. Since 2020 it has provided some of the State's most vulnerable people a tangible and genuine hand up. In the midst of a cost-of-living crisis, members on this side of the House know how critical the card is for people in regional New South Wales. It is extraordinary to think that before the March election the Government promised to "roll it over", yet in the September budget the card was ripped out of the hands of nearly a million seniors across the State.

This petition attracted over 10,000 signatures in no time at all, which is testament to the fact that the seniors who enjoy this card are cranky. They are annoyed that something that they have not only utilised very successfully but also built into their household budgets for the next three years will next year be no more. The spurious reason the Government gave for removing the card was that seniors were rorting the scheme by buying cigarettes and junk food. Despite that claim, the Government has failed to produce one example of that from the 12,000 people in my electorate or the million people across the State who have been using this card for three years. I call BS on that claim, and so do the people who signed this petition, because it is spurious. The decision was made by Treasury and now the Government has to retrofit a spurious claim to smear over the cracks in the wall to justify a cold, heartless decision that will directly impact the lives of a million seniors in regional New South Wales.

Bruce from Glen Innes wrote to me very recently about how the card has helped him and his wife. He wrote, "In one recent 10-day period I had appointments to attend my Tenterfield GP for a regular consultation,

Inverell radiology and to Armidale to see a specialist. Following the scan, I needed to do a return trip to Tenterfield, hence medical trips amounting to 800 kilometres in that short time. My wife had a prearranged trip to Armidale for a medical appointment, so 1,000 kilometres all told in 10 days." That is quite a feat for a couple of octogenarians. The regional seniors travel card is clearly not a treat but an essential part of our annual budget.

Paul from Armidale hit the nail on the head when he wrote, "I'm appalled by the discontinuation of the only benefit that we get to help us in regional areas, where we don't have access to public transport to take us to the doctors and hospitals outside of our town. Imagine the uproar if they took away the pensioner discounts that the city pensioners are afforded on their huge transport offerings. Typical New South Wales: Newcastle, Sydney, Wollongong. We're just ignored in the country."

Well, Paul is not wrong. Countless other seniors have also written to me, as I am sure they have written to other regional MPs, about the card's axing. It is absolutely filthy. Some are tuning in today, like Sandra from Glen Innes, Stan from Gilgai and Rosslyn Miller-Hardy from the wonderful Wandera. I hope they enjoy what will be a very interesting debate. Many others would have liked to have been here today to fill the gallery but, sadly, the cost of travel from regional New South Wales to Sydney is expensive. If only there was a card to help them with the costs of getting to Sydney to sit in the gallery, but that card was taken away from them.

The petition sends a strong message to Government members about how important the card is in stretching the meagre budgets of our seniors that little bit further to enable them to live a quality life in regional New South Wales. I call on the Government to look within and see if the heart of stone that created the budget in September might soften just a little. Perhaps that introspection might even lead to the reversal of the decision and the reinstatement of the card in the budget next year. I implore the Government to reverse this decision immediately—reinstate the card and give seniors in the bush something to celebrate this Christmas.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (16:04):** When I was a kid growing up, I knew that something could only be taken away if it existed. That was a fundamental lesson that I learnt early on.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** Opposition members will come to order. I understand their passion for this issue but the member for Cessnock will be heard in silence.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** I am really happy that people are tuning into this discussion today because they will get told the truth, something Opposition members have not been telling their communities. To Sue, Sam, Will, Wes and everyone else who has tuned in, I can tell them this: The regional seniors travel card was not put in the budget that was handed down—

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

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** The regional seniors travel card was not put into the last budget handed down by the previous Government over the forwards. Funding was only provided for the previous financial year, not going forward. That was opportunity number one. That is a fact and not one Opposition member can contest that. Opportunity number two was when the half-yearly budget review was conducted. If the previous Government had realised its error, it could have put the money into the budget over the forwards then, but it did not. By this stage we are into November 2022 and the money still does not exist. That is another fact that no member can refute. Opportunity number three was the pre-election budget. The former Government could have declared any variations or changes then so that going into the election campaign everyone knew what was not funded. But it did not do that either. That is also a fact that no member can refute.

So that everyone watching knows, opportunity number four was the election. In the lead-up to an election, parties have to submit all their election promises and commitments to the Parliamentary Budget Office. But the former Government did not include the regional seniors travel card in their submissions. That is irrefutable. Within eight months we had the budget, the midyear budget, the pre-election budget review and the election costings. The former Government had four opportunities to allocate money to the regional seniors travel card, but it did not do that. There was no money going forward, as designed and dictated by the Liberal-Nationals Government, which then had control of the State's finances.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** The Clerk will stop the clock. I remind members that a number of them are on calls to order. Members who continue to interject will be removed from the Chamber. The member for Cessnock will be heard in silence.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** As I said, the former Government had four opportunities to allocate money in the budget for the regional seniors travel card, but it did not do that. That means there was no money going forward. That is an irrefutable fact. I know it is sad for some members, but it is a fact. To be fair to members opposite, I do not think any of them were in Treasury at the time, so they were campaigning in good faith after being told that the card would be funded.



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

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** Because they had been told by their bosses that the money was there, National Party members used some pretend credit card things and campaigned saying the National Party was committed to this.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** Opposition members will come to order. The Clerk will stop the clock. I remind members that several of them are on one or more calls to order. I would rather not do this today.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** Madam Deputy Speaker, may I say that I listened to the member for Northern Tablelands in silence.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** Thank you. Yes, you did.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** For all those watching and listening, the sad truth is that National Party members were out campaigning that they were going to deliver something that had been deliberately left out of the budget. They did not know, so viewers should not go too hard on them when they return to their electorates. But their leadership should have let them know that the money did not exist in the budget going forward. None of them have refuted that, and they cannot. So, please, let's just be honest. Of course, the seniors enjoyed the card but members opposite did not put it in the budget, so there was nothing to be taken out.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** I welcome to the gallery Daniel Thoroughgood from the Kempsey Shire Council.

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley) (16:11):** As one of the newest members in Parliament, I have had some lessons to learn. The number one lesson is what Labor has done since it came to power. What has it done?

**Opposition members:** Cut, cut, cut.

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP:** It has cut, cut, cut. What did Labor do with Active Kids vouchers? It cut, cut, cut. Importantly today, what did it do with the regional seniors travel card?

**Opposition members:** Cut, cut, cut.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** The Clerk will stop the clock. This is not "call and response" afternoon. Members will be quiet.

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP:** I am a quiet guy. I am respectful, reasonable and practical—most of the time—but I get riled up by a lack of transparency and fairness. So many people have come to my office complaining about the taking away of the regional seniors travel card. It has been really difficult. There were 25,244 members in Oxley who used the card, and 4,753 eligible seniors in the Kempsey local government area had some financial freedom. It put less pressure on 3,604 seniors in the Nambucca area. It helped 1,580 who reside in Bellingen. The electorates of Port Macquarie and Oxley share a border. In the Port Macquarie Hastings Council area, the card gave 15,307 constituents some hope.

I mentioned fairness, so let me speak about it. People in the city not only have the train, the bus and the ferry but also have Ubers and cabs in numbers. How fortunate is it to be able to travel for \$2.50 a day on all those trains, buses, light rails and ferries? In our regions, we might get a cab if we are lucky. Our oldies are isolated already, and the Transport for NSW website is a slap in the face for them. It says to them that they deserve the best transport discounts around. They do not have those services, let alone services with the electronic technology to accept an Opal card. What did the Government do to the regional seniors travel card? It cut, cut, cut it.

What was Labor's response? A shopper docket scheme for 4¢ a litre. But hang on a minute, that is only if people have a United service station in their town. Some of my constituents do not. In fact, there are only three spread throughout all the major towns. But let us go one step further. Imagine you lived in Macksville. Its United service station has been shut down for refurbishment since before the scheme started. Guess what? It still is. It would cost more than people would save if they had to travel to Kempsey or Coffs Harbour to fill up on fuel. That is just crazy.

How far does that 4¢ go? To get an equivalent \$250 worth would be two tanks a week or 60,000-odd kilometres a year. I do not know a single regional senior who travels that far. The Minns Labor Government is treating our regional seniors as second rate. What would members do if I gave them an ultimatum to buy food to eat or to go to a doctor's appointment? For many of my constituents, that is not a choice. The regional seniors travel card gave them a small reprieve. It allowed them to travel to see their grandchildren, attend a doctor's appointment or participate in community events.

I am a sportsman. If there was a gold medal race at the Olympics for parity between electorates, Western Sydney would win hands down, the inner west would take silver, and the rest of Sydney would take bronze. Where would our regional seniors place? In this example, they are not even allowed to run. That is how they are being treated. I ask the Minns Labor Government to make it right, have a heart and stop being stingy. Let our seniors in on the party and have some Christmas spirit. Let us get them back out there, enjoying company, attending medical appointments and seeing their grandchildren's sport and plays and attending school fetes. Bring back the regional seniors travel card and stop the cuts.

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (16:15):** When the Minns Government came to office in March this year, imagine the horror when it discovered that due to the financial mismanagement of the previous Coalition Government it had inherited the biggest debt the State of New South Wales has ever had—a whopping \$187 billion. It got worse. As we went line by line through the books, we discovered more and more unfunded programs and budget blackholes. Sadly, the regional seniors travel card joined a number of others that were entirely unfunded or only partially funded by those opposite. In total, the previous Government spent nearly half-a-billion dollars on travel cards that could have been spent on our local roads and roads all over the State that are falling to pieces because of those opposite.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** The Clerk will stop the clock. Opposition members and the member for Parramatta will cease interjecting. The member for South Coast will be heard in silence. The member has the call.

**Ms LIZA BUTLER:** When the travel card was first launched, besides not accounting for it in the budget, Coalition members also obviously forgot to undertake due diligence to ensure that it had acceptable eligibility criteria. In fact, they thought it appropriate to leave out senior veterans and people on a disability or carers pension until Labor members changed that. They also thought that it was appropriate that self-funded retirees on an annual income of \$95,400 if they were single, or \$152,640 if they were a member of a couple, should be eligible for the \$250 card.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** The Clerk will stop the clock. I should call the member for Oatley to order because he interjected the minute he walked into the Chamber, but I am in a good mood.

**Ms LIZA BUTLER:** He is just trying to intimidate me.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** If the member for Oatley interjects again, he will be called to order. Opposition members will not be mean.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** Is that a technical term?

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** Very. The member for South Coast has the call.

**Ms LIZA BUTLER:** There are families with mortgages living on the South Coast who do not earn that amount of money each year. This card was just plain unfair and a rort. It was not directed at the people that really needed it. In fact, those in most need of the support did not even know about it. Let us not forget the card itself. Even if 50¢ was left on it, the fee charged by the bank was \$2 every month. Even the Deputy Premier can add those figures up. It is an awful lot of money and making profit for a bank.

*[Opposition members interjected.]*

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

**Ms LIZA BUTLER:** Opposition members are trying to intimidate me and they are not doing it very well.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** I remind the member for Terrigal that he is on two calls to order. I do not want to call him to order for the third time. The member for Pittwater will come to order. I remind the member for Oatley that he is on two calls to order. I do not wish to add other members to the list. Members will cease interjecting. The member for South Coast has the call.

**Ms LIZA BUTLER:** We have set out to address those inequities in the first budget delivered by the Minns Government to ensure that those most in need in our communities across all of New South Wales get the support they require. The Government has introduced additional cost-of-living supports for everyone in New South Wales, including energy bill relief, with a \$500 electricity rebate for eligible families, pensioners, low-income households, veterans, carers and self-funded retirees. We have increased the low-income household rebate and the Medical Energy Rebate and increased the value for each equipment type up to \$1,639 under the Life Support Rebate. Claims can be made under the isolated patients travel scheme for those travelling longer distances to attend medical appointments. When I let my constituents know of those initiatives, they realised that they and their families are better off.

The Minns Government is also getting on with the job and doing the work to fix our roads, with \$390 million in funding for urgent road repairs and maintenance through the Regional Emergency Road Repair Fund. That funding will flow on equally to all councils on a per-kilometre basis rather than being sprinkled out for our mates. Our funding initiatives are about ensuring that those who really need support get it, no matter where they live. They also ensure that the roads used by regional communities daily are safe, reliable, efficient and useable. The Minns Labor Government is getting this State back on track. We are supporting people across the State. We are fixing our roads, supporting our workers, and slashing the debt left by an irresponsible Coalition Government that could not manage the economy.

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (16:21):** I begin my contribution by thanking the member for Northern Tablelands for bringing this petition to the House. I also acknowledge and thank the Kiama constituents in my community who have signed and also collected signatures for this petition. In particular, Margot Johnson sat at the front of Woolworths in Berry and collected signatures. I am pleased to follow the member for South Coast in this debate because it seems that she says one thing in her electorate but another thing in Parliament. When the member for South Coast was approached by constituents who were complaining about the regional seniors travel card, she told them, "Sign the member for Kiama's petition." She told her constituents to sign my petition. She told her constituents that she was opposing this cut, and you have been caught out.

**Mr David Mehan:** Point of order—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** The Clerk will stop the clock. Opposition members will come to order. The member for Kiama will calm down. I remind the member that he is on a call to order. The member for Kiama will direct his comments through the Chair. I will hear the point of order.

**Mr David Mehan:** My point of order concerns the member for Kiama. He does this time and again. He makes personal attacks on members opposite, and he fails to address the issue. Madam Deputy Speaker, I ask that you bring him into line again.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** The member for Kiama will resume his seat. Members will focus on the petition and not resort to being nasty. The member for Kiama has the call.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** What is nasty is members opposite going to an election, saying that they would keep a card, and then lying to regional seniors and cutting the card. Their leader said that he would roll this card over. The member for South Coast has been caught out. She is telling her constituents one thing in her electorate and saying another thing in Parliament. Where is the member for Bega? Where are the other regional members? If they truly believe in this initiative, as they tell their constituents in their electorates they do, why are they not in Parliament defending it? Clearly they speak out of both sides of their mouths.

I am here to support my regional seniors who are really doing it tough. If members speak to regional seniors, they will hear how hard they are doing it with the cost of living and everything going up. People are struggling in my electorate. I hear members opposite talking or laughing about the fact that regional seniors in Kiama are struggling. People are struggling right across this State. I will not single out any one electorate, but I will say that the cost-of-living pressures are being felt in my electorate. I read onto the record some of the letters that have been sent to me about that. Alma McPherson from Gerringong said:

This Regional Seniors card is especially important to those of us older members of the public who live in outlying areas where public transport is minimal and difficult to access.

Most of my appointments are in Nowra and Wollongong but sometimes in Ultimo and Royal North Shore Hospital.

Kathy Banks said:

During 2023, I have used the Regional Seniors Travel card not only for visits to specialists and allied professionals ... in Nowra, but also for trips to Wollongong ...

That is far away, and things like MRIs and other specialist appointments were needed. Kathy said:

The Regional Seniors Travel Card has been a tremendous help to me ...

Other constituents have told me that they have needed this card to visit their grandchildren, for chemotherapy and radiation therapy. This card is being taken away by this Government, which promised in its election campaign to retain it. It made that very clear at the election. It seems that the only people that it wants to hand this card to is the press gallery. I know thousands of people are following this discussion at home. They are watching the contribution from the knuckle-draggers opposite and listening to the lies that this Government is telling them.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** The Clerk will stop the clock. I do not appreciate that terminology.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** I withdraw the term.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** I thank the member for Kiama.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** I have to say it is reflective of how angry our communities are when we see stunts like the one of giving the travel card to a journalist to buy a meat pie and Winnie Blues. Suggesting that regional seniors are using and abusing a card like that was a smear on every regional senior. That is why people are angry. I have had people in my office in tears because the cost-of-living pressures are real. This decision has hurt people. People voted for Labor, thinking that this card would be continued. Every single regional Labor MP who told their community that this card would continue—and it has not—has lied to their communities. They have misled their communities. They will not forget the way in which Government members have misled them, particularly when members like the member for South Coast is saying to her members of her electorate, "I am supporting the retention"—

**Ms Liza Butler:** I do not.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** So you do not support it? Can we just get it clear? Do you support the regional seniors travel card?

**Mr David Mehan:** Point of order—

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

*[Government members interjected.]*

**Mr GARETH WARD:** You said you support it. Your speech was about how you did not support it.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** I remind the member for Kiama that it is not appropriate to point at Government members.

**Mr David Mehan:** Madam Deputy Speaker, you have already pulled up the member for Kiama on that issue. I ask that you control him. He continues to attack the member from a neighbouring electorate. He has done it before; that is his pattern. He is trying to belittle and intimidate new members in this place. It is most inappropriate. Members on this side of the Chamber were quiet when new members were speaking.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** The member for Kiama will resume his seat. Opposition members will cease interjecting. I uphold the point of order because the member for Kiama was behaving aggressively. The member will return to the subject of the petition.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** I am simply reflecting the anger of my constituents, particularly when members say things in this Chamber that are different to what they say outside of it. I do not think that my anger is any different to that of regional seniors around this State who were told one thing by members opposite during the election, but when they came to Government they did something entirely different. It does not matter whether it is the Premier or other Government members—you told a lie.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** I seek leave to make a contribution.

**Leave not granted.**

**Mr Adam Crouch:** You are not going to grant me leave? You are totally gutless. They don't want to have a debate. The member for The Entrance is a classic example of not speaking up for his electorate. Absolutely hopeless.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** Members will resume their seats. I have not given the call to any member, or to the Minister.

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN:** I seek leave to make a contribution.

**Leave not granted.**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON:** I seek leave to make a contribution to this most important debate.

**Leave not granted.**

**Ms Jenny Aitchison:** Point of order: I sought the call to speak before all of the other members.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** To the point of order: The debate is ended the moment the Minister speaks. Members are entitled to seek leave to speak before the Minister speaks in reply.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** I am aware of the standing orders. I will hear from the member for Coffs Harbour and that will be the end of the matter.

**Mr GURMESH SINGH:** On behalf of the 10,000 regional seniors travel card holders in my electorate, I seek leave to make a contribution to this petition debate.

**Leave not granted.**

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** Madam Deputy Speaker—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** I have made my ruling that no other members may speak to the point of order. The Minister has the call.

**Mr Gurmish Singh:** Point of order—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** I have made my ruling. I will not change my mind. Members will resume their seats. The Minister has the call.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (16:31):** In response: Madam Deputy Speaker—

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** Madam Deputy Speaker—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** The Clerk will stop the clock. I have made my ruling. Is it about that?

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** No, it is not. I move:

That the member for Maitland be not further heard.

**Question put.**

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....37  
Noes .....47  
Majority.....10

#### AYES

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

Henskens, A  
Hodges, M  
James, T  
Kean, M  
Kemp, M  
Lane, J  
Layzell, D  
Marshall, A  
Perrottet, D  
Petinos, E  
Preston, R  
Provost, G

Roberts, A  
Saunders, D  
Singh, G (teller)  
Sloane, K  
Speakman, M  
Taylor, M  
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  
Davis, D  
Dib, J  
Doyle, T  
Finn, J

Harris, D  
Harrison, J  
Haylen, J  
Hoenig, R  
Holland, M  
Kaliyanda, C  
Kamper, S  
Kirby, W  
Leong, J  
Li, J  
McDermott, H  
McGirr, J  
McKeown, K  
Mehan, D  
O'Neill, M

Piper, G  
Quinnell, S  
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

NOES

Hagarty, N (teller)

Park, R

PAIRS

Thompson, T  
Toole, PDaley, M  
Minns, C**Motion negatived.**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. Members will resume their seats.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak at last. During the eight months that we have been in government, members opposite have sought to pretend that they had funded this card. As the member for Cessnock quite rightly said, you cannot cut what is not there. It was not in the budget. It was not in the Parliamentary Budget Office costings. Those opposite had not put it in their forwards. Yet they entered the Chamber and said that it will be cut. You cannot cut what is not there. During budget estimates, it was clearly said by departmental bureaucrats that there was evidence that merchant codes had been changed. There was evidence that there had been fraud. The other thing we have to remember is that it was the then Labor Opposition that actually asked for the card to be rolled out to veterans and carers.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** The Clerk will stop the clock. There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. I remind the member for Terrigal that he is on two calls to order. The member for Coffs Harbour will come to order.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** The card was rolled out to veterans, carers and seniors with disabilities because of Labor's advocacy. What have we replaced this \$390 million—

**Mr Warren Kirby:** Point of order—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** The Clerk will stop the clock. If the member for Tamworth does not cease interjecting, I will place him on a call to order. The member for Riverstone rises on a point of order.

**Mr Warren Kirby:** I take a point of order under Standing Order 52, which states that a member should be heard in silence.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** I thank the member for Riverstone. The Minister will be heard in silence.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** Those opposite have such gall coming into the Chamber. They spent \$390 million over four years on people with pensions of \$95,000 for an individual or \$152,000 for a couple, while there were roads where people were losing their cars and where axles and tyres were being broken. People could no longer get to work.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** The Minister will resume her seat. The member for Upper Hunter will come to order. I remind the member for Dubbo that he is on three calls to order. This is his final warning.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** Those opposite have such gall. Some \$390 million went out the door over four years. We have rolled out \$390 million just this year to fix the roads that those seniors have been using so that their cars are not damaged. The problem is that there are no cohesive and comprehensive concessions in this State because it is just all about buying votes. Ask the member for Wagga Wagga what he faced at the ballot box when people with fake cards turned up. Those opposite know that. The member for Northern Tablelands said in a recent press release:

The injection of extra funding—  
from this Government—

will improve the safety for motorists and all road users, while making it easier to get Walcha's primary produce to market.

If members do not believe me, they should look at that press release. What about the member for Cootamundra? In a press release she said that recent road repair funding was "a significant step towards ensuring the safety and convenience of our community members". Those opposite know that they gave up on travel in the regions to the

detriment of our seniors. We will improve those networks. We will improve those roads and we will not fall victim to the lies of those opposite.

**Mr Adam Marshall:** Madam Deputy Speaker—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** Members will come to order. I am disappointed in the behaviour of a few members today. Members will resume their seats. I call the member for Northern Tablelands.

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (16:46):** In reply: I thank all members who participated in one of the more spirited petitions take-note debates I have been a part of. It is a great way to end the parliamentary year. There you have it. Everyone watching at home has heard the debate, but they have not really heard anything about why this card was taken away—not even a sorry or an acknowledgement that it will increase cost-of-living pressures. It all boils down to: "You didn't deserve it", "It was a waste of money that people shouldn't have had", "It was a rort"—again, there is no proof that anyone has been rorting the program—or, "It wasn't in the forwards." But there has been no explanation as to why a commitment that was made by Labor's leader, the now Premier, to roll the card over was reversed. Why was the decision changed?

**Ms Anna Watson:** Because we were billions of dollars in debt.

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL:** The member for Shellharbour is all chatty now. Where was her contribution to debate? She denied leave for all members on this side of the Chamber to speak, but she was not willing to make a contribution. You do not get a chance to interject now.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** The member for Northern Tablelands will direct his comments through the Chair. The member for Shellharbour will come to order. Government members will come to order.

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL:** The sad reality is that this was a cold, heartless decision made by toecutters within Treasury. I feel sorry for the Minister because I actually have a lot of respect for her. She has been set up by the Premier and the Treasurer to try to defend the indefensible and to possibly cut short a promising ministerial career on a decision that many members on the other side of the Chamber do not agree with. They will come to regret it. Seniors in regional New South Wales will never forget it. Those opposite had a chance today to give regional seniors a bit of Christmas cheer—something to celebrate, some hope before Christmas. Once again, their hopes were crushed. Cost-of-living pressures have been heaped on them. It was a disgrace.

**Petition noted.**

#### *Personal Explanation*

#### **MEMBER FOR KIAMA**

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (16:49):** By leave: I have been misrepresented by the member for Kiama. He made an allegation that I told residents in my electorate of South Coast to sign his petition. That is completely untrue. It did not happen. It is an invention of the member for Kiama and it is indicative of his character.

#### *Motions*

#### **CHRISTMAS FELICITATIONS**

**Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (16:53):** On this last sitting day of Parliament for 2023, I take this opportunity to wish all members of my community in East Hills a wonderful festive season. Christmas is a time to spend with loved ones and to reflect on the year that was. It has been an extraordinary honour and privilege to be elected to the Fifty-Eighth Parliament and to sit in this place with such wonderful colleagues. I thank the Speaker, Greg Piper, for maintaining order while allowing robust debate in this place. I also thank all parliamentary staff for ensuring Parliament runs smoothly and effectively. I thank the Whip and Deputy Whips for the tireless work they do in organising members. Well done to Nathan Hagarty for stepping up into his new role. I extend my heartfelt congratulations and special thanks to Colleen Symington, who has completed 10 years of service to the Parliament.

I thank my Labor colleagues for their guidance and wise counsel over the year. It has been a steep learning curve, and I am grateful for their support and encouragement. I especially thank Premier Chris Minns and Deputy Premier Prue Car, who are always welcome in my electorate of East Hills. I thank the Ministers, who have been wonderful to work with over the past year. I also thank my many Parliamentary colleagues for their generosity, support and friendship, and for sharing their knowledge and experience, all of which has been vital to me. I thank everyone else who works in the Parliament: Hansard for making our speeches look good and for

capturing everything that is said in Parliament; the library staff for their invaluable research efforts; the attendants; the catering staff, including the staff in Cafe Quorum, who always provide service with a smile; the friendly cleaning staff; and security.

It is a unique honour to represent one's community, and I acknowledge the role the Opposition play in our parliamentary democracy. Although we may disagree, we all try to represent the people in our electorates to the best of our ability. To all members of the Government and those sitting opposite, I wish you and your families all the best for Christmas and the New Year. I must make a few special mentions to members of my community. Firstly, I thank my friends in the local ALP branches of Revesby-Panania, Padstow, Georges Hall-Yagoona and the newly formed Condell Park branch, to whom I am deeply indebted. I thank all branch executives for keeping the local branches going strong. I wish them all a happy and safe festive period.

I also thank our hardworking councillors on Canterbury Bankstown council—Linda Downey, David Walsh of Revesby ward, and Chris Cahill of Bass Hill ward. I also thank Mayor Bilal El Hayek and Deputy Mayor Rachelle Harika for their assistance with council matters. I thank my great electoral staff, especially Jess D'Arienzo, who has gone above and beyond in supporting me in my new role and has organised my hectic work schedule. I thank Gemma Ashton and Ayman Awad for their hard work and advocacy on behalf of the community, and Jemma Hardman for her adept social media and graphic design skills. They work tirelessly in support of me and the constituents of East Hills, and I thank them for their dedication and service to the community.

I conclude by thanking my beautiful and wonderfully supportive husband, Graeme, and my lovely family. I am looking forward to spending Christmas with you all. We will be celebrating my youngest grandson Logan's first Christmas, and I am especially looking forward to spoiling both him and my whole family on Christmas Day. I wish everyone a merry Christmas and a safe New Year.

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (16:56):** As 2023 draws to a close, I am filled with a deep sense of gratitude and appreciation for the Goulburn electorate, and for the unwavering support I have received despite the challenges faced this year. It is with heartfelt sincerity that I extend my thanks to each of the individuals who have been instrumental in helping me navigate the complexities this past year has presented. The New South Wales State election in March this year saw my re-election as the member for Goulburn. I am so grateful for the opportunity to continue to represent the people within the Goulburn electorate. It is a privilege I hold very dear.

Over the past years, I have witnessed the strength and resilience of our community. I feel immense pride when I reflect on the challenges we have faced and overcome. The journey has been marked not only by the long drives to and from the House during sitting weeks, but also by the profound connections forged across our beautiful electorate. It is challenging to encapsulate in a few words the honour it has been to contribute and give back to a community that has given me so much. Each year since my election to the House there has been another formidable challenge, from the devastating bushfires and floods to the ongoing COVID pandemic and now the significant cost of living. In the face of those adversities, I take a moment to acknowledge and commend the extraordinary efforts of our community, from public servants and small businesses to truck drivers, farmers, essential workers, community groups and volunteers. I extend my heartfelt thanks to each and every one of you.

The year 2023 has been a transformative one for the New South Wales Liberal Party. Under the leadership of Mark Speakman and through the dedicated efforts of my colleagues, we have navigated enormous change and continue to make progress across various issues, which reflects our commitment to fostering positive change for the people of New South Wales. I thank all our Opposition staff, who support our parliamentary team so well. The former Government's focus on enhancing infrastructure, particularly in regional communities, was commendable, and the Goulburn electorate has benefited from the completion of a number of infrastructure projects started by the former Government this year.

First and foremost, I express my profound gratitude to my dedicated team in the Goulburn electorate office, which is led by the exceptional Cheryl Callanan, my senior electorate officer, together with Paige Penning, Amy Gann and Maret Rebane. Their tireless efforts for the electorate are to be recognised and commended. Their commitment to serving the Goulburn electorate has not gone unnoticed by the many people and groups they help. Most importantly, I thank them sincerely for the work they do in supporting me. I thank my husband, Michael, my sons and my adorable granddaughters, Letty and the beautiful Ocie, who joined us not quite a year ago. I thank them for their unwavering support.

As we approach the holiday season, I wish everyone a merry Christmas. May this time bring reflection and a renewed sense of hope. May your celebrations be filled with warmth, joy and the company of loved ones. Together, let us find the renewed strength to navigate the challenges that lie ahead. In unity and resilience, we will overcome. My hope is that the coming year will bring the promise of prosperity for the Goulburn electorate



and this State. I am looking forward to continuing to deliver for the Goulburn electorate in 2024. Stay safe, merry Christmas, and I wish everyone and their families all the very best for the new year of 2024.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** It being 5.00 p.m., debate is interrupted. I set down resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a later hour.

*Senate*

### SENATE VACANCY

At 17:00 the House proceeded to the Legislative Council Chamber to attend a joint sitting to choose a senator in the place of Senator the Hon. Marise Payne.

At 17:13 the House reassembled.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** I report that at a joint sitting this day Mr Devanand (Dave) Noel Sharma was chosen as senator in the place of Senator the Hon. Marise Payne. I table the minutes of proceedings of the joint sitting. I order that the minutes be printed.

*Motions*

### CHRISTMAS FELICITATIONS

**Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (17:14):** I wish peace and happiness upon everyone throughout this festive period. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I start by thanking all of the staff who make this Parliament work, including those in Hansard; the Clerks; the Serjeant-at-Arms; the special constables; Parliamentary Counsel; the cleaners who look after our offices; maintenance staff, who have had quite a bit to do in our parliamentary office this year; electorate office services, who have been kept busy settling us into our lovely new office in the electorate of Balmain; everyone in catering, who have kept us well fed; the amazing folks in the Library; members of the press gallery; Department of Parliamentary Services staff; and the Legislative Assembly staff.

I acknowledge my Greens colleagues in the upper House: Abigail, Amanda, Cate and Sue. I thank my colleagues in this House: the member for Ballina, Tamara Smith, and the member for Newtown, Jenny Leong. These women are tenacious, skilled and passionate and do a really remarkable job of representing their communities and their Greens values in this place. It is an absolute privilege to be among them. I also thank all of their staff, who are so generous with their time and expertise. As the first Greens MP to successfully retain a seat held by an outgoing Greens MP—indeed, what an excellent way to describe him, as an "outgoing" Greens MP—I thank the former member for Balmain, Jamie Parker, for all his help and support throughout my first year in this place.

I acknowledge and thank my staff, who have worked diligently throughout the year in helping me set up my office. We have really hit the ground running. Thank you to Ned, Anastasia and David, who have continued on in Balmain after working with Jamie Parker. Thank you to Lucy, who stayed on after working with me during the election before heading off to London to pursue a career as a rock star. Thank you to Rochelle, who recently joined us. What an impressive and supportive team. Thank you to all our short-term relief staff, including Jen and Hamish, who have worked with us this year. All my staff have worked extremely hard to serve the people of the Balmain electorate. I know they will continue to do so. The workload afforded to staffers on the crossbench is significant, as all members know. I am sure all members will agree that our electorate office staff do an amazing job.

I thank all the members of the House—Government, Opposition, and my fantastic crossbench colleagues, including our excellent Speaker, the Hon. Greg Piper. Outside these walls, I acknowledge those who will not be getting a holiday this Christmas: our frontline workers and emergency services personnel. As a person whose dad worked as a firefighter, I remember many Christmases where we either had to get up super early to open our presents before he headed off to work for the day or endure an excruciating wait to come home from the night shift so that we could see what Santa had brought us. I thank all those people, who do a remarkable service for our State. We are so grateful to them.

I thank everyone in my community, none of whom are ever shy in their frank and fearless advice. I have one of the most active, engaged and informed constituencies, but also the most supportive. For that, I am grateful. Thank you for putting your trust in me to represent you in this place. I call out those in the community who have worked closely with my office on a range of issues this year, including the Friends of Callan Park, Stop Cruise Ship Pollution, Climate Change Balmain-Rozelle, the Glebe Society, Hands Off Glebe, the Taverners Hill working group, the Friends of Ultimo, the Pyrmont Peninsula Public Transport Forum, Balmain Rozelle Chamber

of Commerce, Leichhardt Annandale Business Chamber, Residents for De-amalgamation, the Glebe art society, the Metropolitan Orchestra and, of course, City of Sydney councillor Sylvie Ellsmore and my colleagues on Inner West Council.

Finally, I thank my family for sharing me with the Balmain electorate. It has been a pretty interesting year for us while they have adjusted to having Mum in Parliament. It has been wonderful to have their support, particularly that of my amazing husband. Thank you for always having my back. I thank the House for the opportunity to deliver felicitations this year and wish all members a very Merry Christmas and a wonderful 2024.

**Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (17:18):** The festive season and summer break—or cricket season, as I know it—is just around the corner, thank God. I stand in this Chamber feeling incredibly thankful and reflective. It has been a crazy and busy experience—as it should be, and as I like it—but also extraordinarily humbling to come to this place as the Independent member for Wakehurst, an absolute newbie in this new Fifty-Eighth Parliament. There is so much to be grateful for. On behalf of the electorate of Wakehurst and my team, I thank you all for welcoming us and putting up with my questions and my bad sense of humour. Importantly, I thank you for actively and willingly working with myself and the team. We are grateful and we continue to learn.

From the time I walk into Parliament, saying good morning to the special constables and attempting to make the attendants at the front desk laugh, no matter how early it is, until the time I walk out, it is an extraordinary privilege to be here. My mind is consistently blown away every single time. The Speaker and the member for Sydney, but particularly Greg, have been so willing to assist me and my team from the day I rang up and said, "Hi, I'm Michael Regan. Apparently I won the seat of Wakehurst." It has been quite the journey. You and your teams are amazing. We newbies are very grateful for the commitment you have made to help us to settle into and succeed in our new careers. I thank the Premier for his generosity of time and for setting up a system of cooperation that enables crossbench members to be heard.

To my handler—as I call him—Ron Hoenig, the member for Heffron and fellow emeritus mayor, thank you for your efforts in helping to educate and organise us newbies. Omar and Sachin are amazing and I thank them both for their efforts. To all the staff here who we work alongside, such as Helen and her team—even if Helen cannot get my name right—and those behind the scenes, we may only deal with you by email and over the phone but you are all extraordinarily amazing and hardworking people. The people of New South Wales are lucky to have such a team working here. And that was underlined for me this week with the very late nights and then back again for early starts. You are all amazing. Thank you.

I also thank my parliamentary colleagues, whether in government or opposition, and my fellow crossbenchers in the nosebleed seats. It is so empowering to be in this place with you. Thank you for the time and attention you have all afforded to working with me. I look forward to our continuing collaboration, especially with Dr Joe in what we are doing and what we plan to do together. It has been good fun getting my head around some of those rural issues. I love my neighbours. I am surrounded by two brilliant MPs, Helen Dalton and Judy Hannan. They are amazing and I love their work. I am very proud and energised by the collaborative work we are doing—for example, in the domestic and family violence space. The public interest debate the other week that I was humbled to lead was a great reflection of what we can do together. Last night, just wow. Look at what we all did together—unanimously passed legislation to lock in meaningful net zero targets. We all played a role together in this place and the other place.

A massive thanks to my own team of staff and office volunteers this year: Ishbel and Suzie, who frequents this place with me. You two are formidable and amazing. I am proud to call you friends and colleagues. Gypsy, Vlad, Jules, Sally, Hanna, Nilmini, Stephen, Karen and Sean are amazing humans. The people of Wakehurst are lucky to have you. Thank you for everything you have done and continue to do. Thank you for everything this year. Thank you also to the people of Wakehurst, one and all. Your support, your ideas, your feedback and your energy are what drives us forward. Together, we are doing great things, and we will continue to do so. We will continue to ask for your assistance and feedback.

Here's to taking the spirit of togetherness into the new year. Let us keep making Wakehurst, and indeed all of New South Wales collectively, a top place to live. I finish by thanking my family, my two young adult boys—where has that time gone—and, of course, my amazing wife. Yes, she is the most extraordinary person alive. She does amazing things behind the scenes for our community. She also does a lot for me, for our family and for her family. We are very lucky to have her in our lives. I thank her for putting up with me and public life for 15 years. But certainly this new role is another crazy, strange and weird thing. Thank you, Bronwyn, you are amazing and I love you to bits. I finish with cheers to everybody. I wish you all a great festive season and a ripper new year. I can't wait for the new year.

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (17:23):** On my first parliamentary Christmas I extend my thanks to so many people who have assisted me this past year. To the constituents of the South Coast, thank you for putting

your trust in me and for giving me the privilege of working for you each and every day. It is a great honour to represent you in this place. But I could not do this alone. To my amazing permanent staff: Jake, Charmain, Skye and Stuart, you have been the absolute best over the past eight months. It is a joy to come to work every day and see your happy faces. Together, we have assisted over 3,000 people, and you go above and beyond to help everyone who walks through our door. To my relief staff: Carolyn, Christine, Janine and Isobel, thank you for coming on board and jumping in to assist wherever and whenever you can.

To the Premier, Ministers and their staff and all my parliamentary colleagues, thank you for all your support and guidance. As a new MP entering this place, it has been a huge learning curve and the support from my colleagues has been invaluable. To Colleen in the Whips office, you are a gem and the lolly jar is the best. It gets me through my days. To the Speaker of the House, your wit and wisdom has provided me with much entertainment in my first year of Parliament and I look forward to the next three. To all the parliamentary staff who keep this place running, I appreciate everything you do to make our work as MPs that little bit easier. To all the essential workers who work hard to look after us every day and all through the Christmas period, our doctors and nurses, teachers, paramedics, firefighters, road workers, council staff, and retail and hospitality staff, I thank you for all your hard work and I am grateful for everything you do for the people in our community.

To our volunteer community groups on the South Coast, thank you for everything. One of the best things about this year has been getting to know you all and helping you wherever I can. To our volunteer emergency groups—the RFS, the SES and Marine Rescue—thank you for helping to keep us all safe. I will be standing shoulder to shoulder with you all year. To my family, it has been a big year. I sincerely thank you for your unwavering support and for keeping me sane. I love you all more than you will ever know. I wish everyone here and on the South Coast a safe, peaceful and merry Christmas. Enjoy the holidays.

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley) (17:26):** I begin by thanking all the Speaker's team for their expert guidance for a newbie this year. I am delighted and grateful to offer my thanks and good wishes at this special time of the year. At the close of my first year as a member of this place, it is time to reflect on the year that has been and acknowledge the incredible contribution of the many people who work hard every day to build a better future for our communities. Representing the people of Oxley in this Parliament is my absolute privilege and something that I will never take for granted. To the people of Oxley, Bellingen, Nambucca, Kempsey and Port Macquarie-Hastings shires, thank you again for the faith and trust you have instilled in me to fight for you in this place.

It has not been an easy year for our community. Whether it be drought-like weather, bushfires, varroa mite outbreaks or other hardships associated with living in the regions, our communities have been tough as nails and many among us have stepped up to the plate and put themselves in danger to protect others. Oxley is an incredible place to live. At times it is a tough place, but our community always rallies together, and I thank every resident for their contribution to our beautiful region. Firstly, I thank my family. I would not be here without my wife, Brigitte. She is the one most affected by my work here. Brigitte volunteered to help me work for the community. I love you, babe. To my boys, Ashton, Pierson and Lleyton, who at times miss their dad, and I am sure there are many times they do not, I am looking forward to spending more time with you in the holidays.

I thank my hardworking staff who are at the forefront of helping constituents day in and day out. Jemma writes all my communications and speeches. Thank you for your eloquent writing and continued work on getting messages out to those who need them. Deb specialises in helping those in need to navigate the community services and social housing space. Thanks to her work, there are families spending Christmas with a roof over their head. To Susan, the matriarch of our office, thank you for keeping us on task and honest. Holly started as an intern in our office. She is becoming more and more confident every day, and should be proud of the things she is achieving. Jayden, our political powerhouse, keeps me on track and on target. It is much appreciated.

I thank all the people who make Oxley the best place to represent: the local volunteers, the sports groups and organisations, the local charities, the cultural groups and the businesses in my community. They are the essence of our area and all play a significant role in making Oxley a great place to live. I am honoured to have the opportunity to ensure that Oxley continues to be a great place to live, work and raise a family, while maintaining our country way of life. It is my mission to ensure that we build the schools, hospitals, roads and infrastructure, as well as protecting and promoting the businesses and industries that make up our community. Thank you to everybody, and while I am a big believer of no Christmas before 1 December, today I wish you all merry Christmas, only one day too early.

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (17:29):** I wish everyone in the House a very merry Christmas and a safe and happier new year. It was nice to have a bit of a breather this year, given the horrendous events that our State has had to endure from fires to floods and COVID-19, and my electorate was no exception. We all talk in this House about how our electorates are the best place on earth and how we would rather be nowhere else. But I know that is not true because I know most members will be holidaying in the Kiama electorate this season. I look forward

to seeing them all there, and suggest they spend up big because I know that our businesses are looking forward to hosting them. Like other members, I give a shout-out to my electorate office team. I thank James, Toby, Christie, Paula, Brian, Ben, Sam and all of my volunteers who also assist in office and ensure that we continue to represent the Kiama electorate well.

I thank my family, in particular my mum, Margaret, who was an absolute stalwart during this past campaign. I know that many of us have gone through rough election campaigns and some very difficult preselection campaigns. I did not have to worry about that this time. I wish everyone and their families a very safe and happy new year, because without our families we could not do what we do in this place. Marnie Shelley, my new niece, came into the world this year and I pay particular tribute to Emily and Alex. She is their firstborn and I am very excited for them. I know they will be enjoying a particularly special Christmas this year. I am looking forward to joining my dad and my sister in North Queensland for Christmas, and I am looking forward to seeing them.

A lot of members have thanked those who work in this place and, while I do not want to repeat what other members have said, the staff who work in this building are first class. They never show an inclination as to whether they agree with a proposition. They just professionally carry out the tasks that are asked of them, from the Clerk right through to her team. Sometimes they must be thinking all sorts of things about the requests of members, but we would never know that they held a particular view one way or another. That goes to not just the intelligence and the training but the character of the staff of this Parliament, from the Clerk through to the people who work in catering, the cleaners, security and the research team. I also particularly thank the Parliamentary Counsel's Office this year. I note that the member for Sydney also paid particular tribute to the Parliamentary Counsel's Office as he has had to work more closely with them in the past few months. I can attest to their precision and dedication, and I thank the team.

I thank the Speaker. The Parliament does not often have an Independent Speaker. I have had the pleasure of knowing the member for Lake Macquarie for many years, before he even came into this House. We have been very fortunate to have good Speakers over the years that I have been in Parliament. I give a shout-out to Jason Gordon. Mr Speaker and his team are serving this Parliament with great distinction. We are lucky to have a Speaker of his calibre who really cares not just about his own electorate or the role of the Speaker but every single member. I thank the Deputy Speaker, Assistant Speaker and the Temporary Speakers. That was the first job I was promoted to when I entered Parliament. Temporary Speakers spend their time in the chair when they could be doing other things. They do that to serve the Parliament. I thank them for what they do in that respect.

I thank the Whips, who keep their various parties under control. I thank my crossbench colleagues for their work in this Chamber. It has been a different experience for me working with them over the past few months, but I know that, even though we have different views, we respect those different views. I look forward to 2024 with great interest and I look forward to the things that we all work on together. Even though members have disagreements across the table from time to time, the stereotype about politicians does not stack up when it comes to members of the Legislative Assembly. One hears some of the claims about what people think of entitlements and everything else. Every member in this Parliament is so passionate and dedicated and works hard. We have arguments in this Chamber but one of the things the media does not report is the relationships outside this Chamber and the genuine work that goes on to serve our communities. I thank everyone for their work this year. I wish a very merry Christmas to all and a much safer and happier 2024.

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (17:34):** Christmas is almost upon us and, as it is the last sitting week for the year, I reflect on the year that has been. It is no secret that Christmas is one of my favourite times of the year. I am excited to say that tomorrow the kids and I will be putting up our Christmas tree. That is late for us; I wanted to do it a month ago but it has been a busy month. This year has been a challenging but rewarding one. Throughout the year a lot has happened across my local community. We have seen major upgrades to local schools completed at both Mosman High School and North Sydney Demonstration School, and the results have been absolutely amazing. As well as new and refurbished classrooms, there is increased outdoor play space, new libraries, halls and even a rooftop court at Mosman High School, with sweeping views down to Balmoral and Manly to the east and the city skyline to the west, which is a testament to the quality of public education and the investment we should be making in our public education students.

Construction has also kicked off at Neutral Bay Public School. I look forward to seeing that major transformation taking place as well, which I will have a front row seat at next year as my daughter starts kindergarten at that school. I thank the entire school community of each of those local schools, particularly the P&C associations, the wonderful principals and teachers, and students and their families, and all the schools across my community. I thank them for their assistance and advocacy for those projects and for working with us so closely.

Work is also powering ahead on the Sydney Metro. Late last week we got the first look at the amazing work that has been taking place in North Sydney at Victoria Cross station. The Sydney Metro is a real triumph of the former Liberal Government that will be a game changer for commuters in my local area. This has been a difficult year for many families across our State as the cost of living has continued to have a negative impact on household budgets, and many of our local small businesses are struggling to stay afloat. As we head into the Christmas season and the new year, I remain committed to working alongside our small and local businesses to help them get through the cost-of-living pressures we are facing. I am committed to minimising the impacts of major construction work on our local community. A lot is happening. Anyone driving north will see a lot of work on Warringah Freeway.

I am also continuing to push for improvements to our public transport services into 2024. There is so much more to do for our local community and I am looking forward to getting stuck back into it in the new year. I am incredibly grateful to my local community for supporting me earlier this year during the State election campaign and sending me back to Macquarie Street for the third time. I particularly acknowledge the incredible hard work and determination of the hundreds of volunteers who put in countless hours to keep North Shore blue. Whether it was at transport stops, markets, street stalls, pre-poll or election day, I cannot thank them enough. In particular, I thank my campaign team, my conference president Ted Wziontek, Georgia Lovell, Greg and Mary Blainey, Jess Kean, Jo Howe, Lachie Clark, Trent Zimmerman, Chris Puplick and Chris McDermott. I thank them all for their hard work and support.

I thank the staff of the Parliament who are instrumental in the running and organisation of this place. In particular I thank the Clerk, Helen Minnican, and her team for all their hard work. I thank the Speaker and his entire office. Parliament loves the Speaker. I have always had a particular affinity for the Speakers during my time in Parliament. I thank Hansard, the front desk staff, the security team, all the parliamentary constables who keep us safe, and the catering and cafe staff, who keep me very well fed and decaffeinated during parliamentary sitting weeks with all my decaf lattes. I thank the Whip and his office for working with me, and the Leader of the Opposition's office as well.

I thank the staff in my electorate office, Lisa Forrest, Chris McDermott and Emily Pavey, for all their hard work assisting me and my local community. Politics can be a blood sport but it really is a team sport. My team in my electorate office are the real people on that front line helping those who need it most and solving problems every single day. This job would be impossible to do without them, their compassion, their hard work and their dedication to my community. I thank them so much. I also thank Cassandra Mullard, Ethan Blair, Claire McDermott and Vicky McDonald, who have also assisted with relief work this year.

I recognise my family for all their love and support. This can be an intense job. To my mum, Lesley, my sisters, Alexia and Christiana, and their beautiful families, and particularly my own two beautiful children, Eleanor and Henry, thank you for your love and support. I know we will have a great deal of fun once Jelly the elf on the shelf returns tomorrow. I wish everyone a merry Christmas and send best wishes for a relaxing break with families and friends. I know that we are all eagerly awaiting Santa's visit, including my two little ones, just like many young kids across New South Wales. But I also spare a thought for children and families across the globe and wish them all a healthy, happy and peaceful Christmas and 2024.

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:39):** On the very last sitting day of the very last sitting week of 2023, I am thrilled to take this opportunity to reflect on the year that has been. Typically at this time of the year my kids would be running around the Parliament, the Chamber and my office, but I am happy to say that one of them is at school and the other one is at day care. This year has just flown by. It truly has been a massive year on many fronts. We had the coronation of a new King, *Barbie* versus *Oppenheimer*, world-shattering relationship rumours about Taylor Swift and Travis Kelce and, of course, I opened my first car park as a member of the Opposition at Riverwood train station with my own ribbon from home. It has been a massive year.

Importantly, this year we also had a State election. Whilst the Coalition did not stay in government, I was re-elected as the member for Oatley. I am sure Government members are just as happy as I am about that! On a serious note, whilst we may have been disappointed with the overall result, I extend my heartfelt thanks to all those who worked on the election, including the campaign volunteers, the party officials and the poll workers, as well as my many staff who helped as well. Their efforts helped to ensure that democracy in New South Wales remains as vibrant and as strong as ever. I particularly thank the people of the Oatley electorate for putting their faith in me as their representative in this place.

It is the greatest honour of my life to serve my community. Now in opposition, the Coalition must fight to ensure they receive the services and investment they deserve. The electorate of Oatley is the best place in New South Wales to live, work and raise a family. This year projects continued to start or be opened that will improve the daily lives of people in my community, including the opening of the new Riverwood commuter car park, bringing more than 140 new parking spots, and commencement on construction of a new 200-space

commuter car park in Beverly Hills. Construction on stage three of the St George Hospital redevelopment is also continuing, which is great. Work is also continuing nicely to widen King Georges Road from two to three lanes in each direction, getting local residents home sooner and safer.

Earlier this year I was privileged to hand out a number of significant grants to local community organisations like the Resourceful Australian Indian Network in Penshurst; schools including Lugarno Public School, Oatley West Public School and Penshurst Public School; and sporting groups like the St George Australian Football Club, to name just a few. Thanks to the amazing people of my local area, my community has achieved a lot so far this year. Recently, I had the honour of hosting the thirteenth annual St George Community Awards, where so many wonderful and dedicated volunteers who keep our local area moving were recognised. It was a fantastic night and I congratulate all the award winners on their amazing achievements in their local community.

Following the recent State election, I was also honoured to be appointed to the roles of shadow Minister for Multiculturalism, shadow Minister for Jobs, Industry, Innovation, Science and Technology, and shadow Minister for South-Western Sydney. I am extremely passionate about all these areas. It has been fantastic to get out and about this year to learn about the issues and concerns of industry and the innovation sectors and, of course, to continue to work with our vibrant multicultural communities. I thank the fantastic Leader of the Opposition, Mark Speakman, and congratulate him on his appointment and a great first year as leader, fighting every day to hold this Government to account and deliver for our communities. I also thank the frontline workers in my electorate and across New South Wales.

As every good MP knows, this job cannot be done well without good staff. I thank my staff—Clayton, Jayden, Liam and Will—for helping me work tirelessly for our community. From fielding phone calls and running my office to at least trying to keep me on time—which is not easy, I have to say—they all do a great job. Most importantly, my biggest thanks go out to my wife, Adla, and our two kids—"hurricane" and "tsunami", as I fondly call them—James and Sammy, for allowing me to do the job I love most. I thank them for all their unwavering support and guidance.

With Parliament wrapping up for the year, that will mean more early morning soccer games with James and more time to spend at the dinner table with my family. It was a big year for James, who was elected student representative council leader for year 4 and selected for the regional soccer Skill Acquisition Program. I also thank all the staff in this place, including the Clerk, the Speaker, Hansard, catering and many, many others. Finally, as the end of the year fast approaches, I take this opportunity to wish everyone in this Chamber and at home in my community a very merry Christmas, a joyous festive season and a happy new year.

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (17:45):** As I said in my inaugural speech, the people of the Ryde electorate are like family to me, so I would be remiss not to begin this contribution without thanking them for the extraordinary honour to represent them in this Parliament. There is no doubt that the March election was difficult for the Liberal Party, made all the harder because I was running for the first time. The closeness of my result is the greatest reminder that every person matters. My presence in this place against pretty much every statistical odd is a product of the longstanding and family-like relationships that I have been privileged to enjoy in my local community.

I love Ryde and thank the community for the way they have so warmly embraced me as their representative in the New South Wales Parliament. Already we have achieved much, and we are only just getting started. I love representing them, knocking on their doors, taking their calls, reading their late-night emails, and being with them in their places of work, worship and wondering. Already we have fought a few campaigns, won some and are bracing for others. Most importantly, we are elevating the standard of engagement between the community and its representatives, and trying so many different and new things. I thank the principals and P&Cs for having me in their schools, the service providers I have collaborated with, and all the people, especially young people and our newest citizens, who have engaged with local politics for the first time this year.

As a new MP, I am grateful to my Coalition colleagues, who have welcomed a new, young voice from Ryde so openly in the party room. It speaks volumes for their capacity and is a product of the strong Liberal leadership being provided by Mark Speakman, Natalie Ward, Damien Tudehope and Robyn Preston. To The Nationals I offer similar praise and acknowledge the leadership of Dugald Saunders, Bronnie Taylor and all those doing such an admirable job representing the regions in this State. While we may share different stories, experiences and world views, most non-Coalition members have been similarly welcoming, which is testament to their individual characters. I thank those colleagues.

This place has a lot of moving parts. To all the staff—whether they work for Ministers, members or Parliament itself—your contributions are valued more than anyone will ever give you credit for. Your service is the most noble of services. It ensures the functioning of one of the most successful democratic institutions in the

world. For some it is a job, but for most it is a calling. I thank them for accepting that call. Someone who not only accepted the call but went on to reshape what it means to serve is my senior electorate officer, Kathy Tracey. The old adage of if you want something done, get a busy person to do it is best epitomised by Kathy. Already a well-established fixture in local community sport, business, volunteering, schools, politics—you name it—she took to this role like a fish to water. There are some things you can teach a person and other things a person just has to have. Kathy has all of it, and in her spare time learned everything she did not already know. She has led a strong and capable team that is bringing new and innovative ideas to what is a pretty established old institution.

I thank Jasmine Ahlawat, Jem Macpherson and Jordan He, who each carried over from my predecessor, for bringing stability and their corporate knowledge into the new office. To the newer additions, I have been blown away by what you have been able to achieve in the short time you have been in the office. To Liam Bowden, Lisa Li, Tommy Bae and Sienna Rizzo, I am so grateful that you accepted the call, and for your passion and dedication to serving the people of Ryde. I acknowledge the Liberal councillors at the City of Ryde, who stepped up as I stepped away from the mayoralty before the election, and the local branch members and supporters who have done so much to support our cause in the local community. Each of them is deserving of a well-earned break and I thank them for what has been a hugely successful year.

This speech started with an acknowledgment of my Ryde family and I will conclude it on a similar note by thanking my immediate family. I thank my parents and sisters for their steady and constant grounding: I love and appreciate you more than I could ever acknowledge and know that 2024 will bring good health, happiness and hope. There is not a more deserving family, and I am so grateful for your love and support. Finally, to my partner, Natalie: I hate every minute we are apart and I am most looking forward to Christmas because it means more time spent with you. You have provided so much love and support as I embarked upon this new role, and no Christmas felicitation will ever do you justice. I love you so much and cannot wait to do 2024 alongside you. I thank members for this opportunity and wish you all every joy and wonder.

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater) (17:50):** Thank you, Madam Temporary Speaker Di Pasqua. It has always been a long-held ambition of mine to felicitate in this Chamber in your presence, so I am happy to be felicitating here today. This year has been quite a ride for many in the State, and indeed for many in my world. It is an honour to serve the community I love in this, the oldest Parliament in Australia. I have heard many members speak today about how their electorate is the greatest electorate. Quite clearly, they have not been to Pittwater. I call the best part of Sydney home, and I sincerely believe that.

I acknowledge all the wonderful people in my community, including from the 12 Surf Life Saving clubs or the many Rural Fire Service brigades, who serve our community and communities across the State, the country and even internationally. Recently, many of our volunteers went to Canada to help with those devastating wildfires. Pittwater has a 50 per cent higher volunteer rate than any other part of metropolitan Sydney. That is testament to the service-minded attitude of those who call Pittwater home. It is an honour to represent every one of them. It is my hope that I adopt the same service-like attitude that they have. I also thank the parliamentary staff who make everything we do here possible, from Clerk Helen Minnican and her team, to security and the attendants. I thank Pete Tuziak, who has on many occasions entertained and enthralled the visitors I have brought into Parliament. They love his humour, experience, wisdom, insights and good nature. He has impressed many members and their guests.

This has been an interesting year with the change of government and many new members who may have come into this place with a degree of scepticism and wariness about those they serve alongside. One thing that I have come to learn in a few short months is that all members are here for the right reasons. They are here because they love their communities and want to leave their world better than when they came here. Although people may see on screen what looks like angry scenes, they do not know the cheekiness that often lies behind what is being said or how it is being said. Even though members may have said unflattering things to or about one another, it is not said in a spirit of meanness. It is said with the passion that individuals feel for their community and their desire to see their community do better.

It is in that spirit that I take this place, notwithstanding that I feel like I am on the wrong side of the Chamber. I know the State will continue to move in one direction or another with people who are doing their best and attempting to apply their convictions, even if others might disagree with them from time to time. All we can really ask for is that people serve their communities as best they can. As we enter the Christmas season, many in our world might not be doing as well as they might like. Indeed, there are many not in our world but in our immediate vicinity who are doing it tough. Might we all remember in the times ahead those who are less fortunate than us so that we might seek to improve their lives and contribute to their betterment where we can.

It would be remiss of me not to thank my team who have helped me set up this year. I thank my current staff, Corbin Jennings, Sarah Halnan and Melissa Ceccaldi, who is, as my predecessor said, an angel always looking out for me and the people in my community. I look forward to hopefully seeing all of my family over the

coming festive season, including my parents, Guy and Alexe; my siblings, Chris, Lucinda, Dom, Mel and Cameron; my nieces, Olive and Eden; and my nephews, Beau and Banks. I hope that this period fills those in my community and around New South Wales with joy, merriment, happiness and reflection. I hope everyone is able to improve the life of at least one person in the period ahead.

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (17:55):** The close of the 2023 parliamentary year is an opportunity to reflect and give thanks for the year that has been. It is an honour and privilege to serve the people of Willoughby. I thank them for again placing their trust in me at the election in March. It is never taken for granted. Willoughby is a remarkable community, and it is the people and community groups that are the key to its greatness. I pay tribute to the hardworking, talented and generous people who run the local schools, clubs, churches, faith communities, businesses, associations, and charities that make Willoughby thrive and flourish.

I thank all the community groups and constituents I have had the pleasure of engaging with at listening posts, shopping centres, cafes, pubs, commuter stops, fetes, fairs, local events, front doors, meetings in my office and many more arenas. Community input, feedback, ideas and suggestions are always welcome and invaluable in helping me to deliver for our community. One of the great privileges of being an MP is having the opportunity to attend many local events throughout the year, from art exhibitions, school concerts and sporting matches to cultural festivals, street fairs and club prize presentations. It is always so gratifying for me to share in the achievements and successes of my constituents, whatever their field of endeavour. For so many reasons, Willoughby is truly the best place to live. I thank everyone in our community for continuing to make it so.

This was an election year, and I record my appreciation for the 12 years of Liberal-Nationals Coalition Government—a good government that delivered much for the people of New South Wales. I thank the many Liberal Party members and volunteers who turned out in force to campaign for my re-election earlier this year. I particularly thank my SEC president James Holt, the wonderful team that is the Willoughby SEC executive and the many members and supporters with us along the way. I thank my parliamentary colleagues, including our party leader, Mark Speakman; Whip Adam Crouch, and the hardworking Bo from his office; and all members of shadow Cabinet with whom it is a privilege to sit at that table. Indeed, I thank all members of this Parliament. I particularly thank the Speaker and the Speaker's panel for their great service to the Chamber.

Whatever side of the Chamber we happen to sit on, all members want to serve their community and the State. We are all here to make a difference. I know that beyond the rough and tumble of politics, it is a collegiate atmosphere. I thank the Premier, the Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading and the Minister for Work Health and Safety. Despite our party-political differences, we have worked constructively to seek to serve the people of New South Wales.

I thank my staff in the Willoughby electorate office, Margie Malouf, James Mount, Martin Schuitema and David Furse-Roberts, who are the first point of contact and have served the people of Willoughby with distinction. I particularly thank James Mount, who comes into Parliament with me each week. We do so much in respect of the shadow portfolios. I also thank the many stakeholders, the great industry body groups and the many more organisations across the portfolios of Fair Trading, Work Health and Safety, and Building.

I thank the many volunteers and interns who provide my team with assistance along the way. We could not do it without them. I could not serve the people of Willoughby without Team Tim, as it has become known. I thank all the staff who make our Parliament and the electorate offices function, including the Clerks, research officers, librarians, Hansard reporters, cooks, cleaners, IT support and security staff. Most of all, I thank my loving and supportive family: my wife, Nikki, daughters, Chloe and Madeleine, and son, Xavie. I thank my mum, Trish, mother-in-law, Lesley, and my extended family. The family of a member of Parliament sacrifices a lot, and for that I am ever grateful. Despite all the added pressures that can typically come at this time, Christmas is indeed the most wonderful time of the year. For the millions of Christians in our State, Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ and his message of love, peace, hope and new life.

The joy and goodwill of Christmas extends to people of all faiths and creeds, with communities and households across our State erecting Christmas trees and wreaths, exchanging gifts, feasting on food and drink, enjoying fellowship with family and friends, and—for those of us who are young or young at heart—awaiting a special visit from Santa. In Australia we are fortunate that Christmas coincides with the summer holiday season of sun, surf, cricket and family trips away. It is a special opportunity for quality time with loved ones, and for relaxation and recuperation after a long, busy year. As we enjoy our summer holidays, we must remember our essential service workers, who give up so much of what we take for granted. In particular, we honour the work of our police, nurses, doctors, paramedics and other emergency workers on the front line, who work around the clock to keep us and our communities safe and well. I wish everyone in this building, across Willoughby and across New South Wales a very Merry Christmas and a happy, fruitful and healthy 2024.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** The question is that the motion be agreed to.



**Motion agreed to.**

*Bills*

**WATER MANAGEMENT AMENDMENT (TRANSFER OF WATER) BILL 2023**

**Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Mr GARETH WARD:** I move:

That the question be now put.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....34

Noes .....42

Majority.....8

**AYES**

Amon, R  
Ayyad, T  
Clancy, J  
Cooke, S  
Coure, M  
Cross, M  
Crouch, A (teller)  
Dalton, H  
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  
Perrottet, D  
Petinos, E  
Preston, R

Provest, G  
Roberts, A  
Saunders, D  
Shetty, K  
Sloane, K  
Speakman, M  
Taylor, M  
Tuckerman, W  
Williams, L  
Williams, R  
Williamson, R (teller)

**NOES**

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

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

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

**PAIRS**

Anderson, K  
Singh, G  
Thompson, T  
Toole, P

Chanthivong, A  
Car, P  
Park, R  
Minns, C

**Motion negatived.**

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (18:12):** I continue my contribution to the interrupted debate on the Water Management Amendment (Transfer of Water) Bill 2023. The agreement reached between the New South Wales Government and the Australian Government will provide more time for delivery, as we have previously requested, as well as a pathway for new projects to be brought forward. The Government has made clear that the Federal Government must explore new and innovative ideas to meet the water recovery targets under

the Basin Plan without causing substantial impacts to regional communities. However, if the Federal Government follows through on its intent to pursue water recovery through buybacks, then we must ensure the buybacks are done strategically.

The Government will demand that significant support is provided to our local and regional communities to mitigate the negative social and economic impacts that may result. This does not change the New South Wales Government's position on water buybacks. It will continue to put forward projects to the Australian Government this year to support water recovery and reduce the risk of buybacks. I again thank the member for Murray for her good intentions and advocacy on behalf of her constituents, as well as for introducing the bill to the Parliament for us to debate. The Government understands the arguments raised by the member for Murray in the bill; however, in its current form, the bill poses a substantial risk to our State's water users and communities. We should be prioritising constructive dialogue and sensible solutions over measures that could impair existing challenges. For these reasons, the Government cannot support the bill.

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (18:15):** I contribute to debate on the Water Management Amendment (Transfer of Water) Bill 2023. I thank the member for Murray for her tireless advocacy on behalf of the people of her electorate on all matters, but especially those related to water. The purpose of the bill is to restrict the transfer of water access licences to the Commonwealth or the State unless certain conditions are met. The bill seeks to do this by, among other things, preventing the Minister for Water from registering a transfer of an access licence to the Commonwealth or the State without an assessment undertaken that demonstrates that the transfer causes neutral or positive socio-economic impacts. The member for Murray is rightly concerned about the socio-economic impacts of recovery of the 450 gigalitres of additional environmental water under the Basin Plan, and that is fair enough.

Water is the lifeblood of this State and its effective management will allow us to thrive as a State and a nation for decades to come. I share the member for Murray's passion for effective water management. Whilst I share the member for Murray's passion for regional New South Wales and its water resources, unfortunately I cannot support the bill. The Murray-Darling Basin Plan is one of the most significant environmental reforms in the history of New South Wales. This Government supports the implementation of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan in full and wants to see the plan deliver the environmental outcomes intended while supporting our regional communities. Whilst I have the utmost respect and admiration for the member for Murray, my concern is that the bill may generate more problems than it will solve. Legislation that delivers a net benefit to all residents of New South Wales is a fundamental reason why I am here and why I must speak against the bill.

I oppose the bill for the following reasons, some of which I will explore in more detail later in my speech. The bill is contrary to Commonwealth policy underpinning water trading rules in the Basin Plan and may create a potential constitutional dispute. The bill would likely hinder Basin Plan implementation and delivery of New South Wales commitments under the plan, and it poses significant implementation challenges and regulatory burden. The bill would apply indiscriminately across New South Wales, including to coastal and metropolitan areas, and it removes options and flexibility from agricultural and water-dependent businesses.

The bill could also lead to forced reduction in water allocations in New South Wales if water recovery could not be completed. Unfortunately, the bill also has other drafting shortcomings that are of concern. The Minns Labor Government is committed to taking meaningful action to protect communities from the potential impacts of the non-strategic buyback of water by the Commonwealth. Whilst the Government is aware of the concerns that have led the member to introduce the bill—and shares many of the same goals as the member for Murray—its approach to achieve those goals differs to that of the member for Murray.

One issue of concern is that the bill may restrict legitimate water trading purposes and prohibit farmers from freely selling their water licences. Limiting the ability of water users, including farmers, to sell their water licences could restrict those water users from unlocking other investment opportunities. That is a critical issue for farmers and, as the thousands of former National Party voters across New South Wales will know, the Labor Party is the true friend of farmers in New South Wales. Those former National Party voters know that we are in this situation because of the constant undermining of the Basin Plan by the National Party, which failed year after year to deliver on its commitments—no surprises there.

We should never forget that in 2019 then Deputy Premier John Barilaro said he would be prepared to rip up the Murray-Darling Basin Plan and asked for legal advice on whether the Liberal-Nationals Government could walk away from it. The bill will add layers of bureaucracy and result in assessments that take a long time at a high cost. While the bill before the House focuses on just part of New South Wales, those delays will have a statewide impact, including on communities across coastal New South Wales as well as those in the southern basin. Claims that the Victorian Government has imposed a moratorium on buybacks similar to the one in this bill—and therefore that this bill would bring our State into line with our southern neighbour—are just not correct. By not

agreeing to the recent agreement with the Commonwealth Government on delivering the Basin Plan, Victoria has not avoided buybacks happening.

The Minns Labor Government does not support water buybacks and we want to see the Australian Government prioritise investment in recovering water through other methods. The State Government is prioritising having constructive conversations with the Commonwealth Government and other relevant States because that delivers results for New South Wales. Unlike members opposite, the Minns Labor Government welcomes the opportunity to sit at the table with our Federal counterparts. That will ensure better outcomes for everyone in New South Wales and across the country. We will prioritise the investment in infrastructure projects that recover the water for the environment and deliver good outcomes for the Basin Plan. Our Government has off-farm water efficiency projects, which enable water users to upgrade their infrastructure.

New South Wales will continue to advocate strongly for farmers and other water users so that the social and economic impacts of water buybacks are minimised for communities and the water market. Members of this House have much work to do on effective water management. I assure everyone across New South Wales that the Minns Labor Government is focused on getting on with the job of fixing the mess of 12 long years of the Liberal-Nationals Government. I acknowledge the fantastic advocacy of the member for Murray on behalf of her community, but I will be opposing the bill.

**Business interrupted.**

## **INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AMENDMENT BILL 2023**

**Returned**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the bill with amendments.

### **Consideration in Detail**

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

*Schedule of amendments referred to in message of an earlier hour*

**No. 1    OPP No. 1 [c2023-195A]**

Page 3, Schedule 1.1[1], proposed section 129L(a), line 14. Omit "is to be".

**No. 2    OPP No. 1 [c2023-177B]**

Page 25, Schedule 1.3[3], lines 6–8. Omit all words on the lines. Insert instead—

- (c)        for the exercise of a function about public sector employees—
  - (i)        the fiscal position and outlook of the Government and the likely effect of the exercise of the Commission's function of the position and outlook, and
  - (ii)       if the exercise of the function involves the making of a decision before 1 July 2027—whether productivity improvements have been agreed by the parties that will fully offset any wage increases beyond the targets set out in the repealed *Industrial Relations (Public Sector Conditions of Employment) Regulation 2014*, clauses 6 and 6A, as in force on 15 March 2023.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (18:24):** I move:

That the Legislative Council amendments be agreed to.

**Motion agreed to.**

## **CASINO CONTROL AMENDMENT BILL 2023**

### **Consideration in Detail**

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

*Schedule of amendment referred to in message of an earlier hour*

**No. 1    GRNS No 1 [c2023-180B] [as amended]**

Page 4, Schedule 1[5], proposed section 157(6), line 27. Omit "10 sitting days". Insert instead "10 business days".

**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) (18:24):** I move:

That the Legislative Council amendment be agreed to.

An amendment to the bill was passed in the upper House to change the time frame for tabling any agreements that the Treasurer enters into with casinos. The time frame was amended from 10 sitting days to 10 business days. The Government has no objection to the amendment and believes it is a sensible compromise to ensure that agreements are tabled promptly.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** The question is that the Legislative Council amendment be agreed to.

**Motion agreed to.**

## **WATER MANAGEMENT AMENDMENT (TRANSFER OF WATER) BILL 2023**

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Business resumed.**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (18:25):** In reply: I thank all the members who have contributed to this important debate, including the exhaustive list of Labor members who have spoken this week and last week. For those members who are not across the detail of the Water Management Amendment (Transfer of Water) Bill 2023, its purpose is to implement in New South Wales legislation the resolution on water agreed to at the Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council—or MinCo—in 2018. In 2018 the MinCo—made up of the Commonwealth Government and the five affected States, including New South Wales and the Australia Capital Territory—agreed upon a neutrality test for the recovery of water pursuant to the Murray-Darling Basin Plan. That test would have guaranteed that any water removed towards the 450 gigalitres target in the plan would create positive or neutral socio-economic outcomes for the region in which that water was removed. Any other water buybacks would not be permitted.

That is what this bill is designed to achieve in our State—no negative socio-economic effects for where the water is coming from. The bill would enshrine the 2018 MinCo agreement in New South Wales law. Under such a law, a New South Wales water Minister would not be allowed to transfer water access licences to the Commonwealth or a State unless an assessment has been undertaken and a report on the assessment has been published on a publicly available website. That assessment must demonstrate that the transfer only causes either neutral or positive socio-economic impacts. As I said in my second reading speech, the bill may be one of the most important pieces of legislation that members will be asked to consider in this place. It is very important for us in rural areas.

**Mr David Harris:** Point of order: The member for Newcastle sought the call at the same time as the member for Murray did to make her speech in reply. He stood in his place. He clearly wanted to speak in the debate.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** I did not see or hear the member for Newcastle. I heard the member for Murray, who sought the call very loudly and clearly.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** To the point of order: The Chair has the right to call on whoever they wish. The Deputy Speaker did the right thing. The member for Murray is now making her speech in reply and there will be a vote on the bill.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** I did not hear the member for Newcastle. I did hear the member for Murray. She was very clear. The member for Murray will continue her speech.

**Mrs HELEN DALTON:** Last month the Federal water Minister, Tanya Plibersek, reiterated her determination to proceed with water buybacks, whatever the harm to rural communities, and tore up the 2018 MinCo agreement. She unilaterally tore up that agreement, trampled on State rights and did it for political and non-environmental purposes. It will damage rural communities, force up food prices and destroy jobs. I turn to comments on the bill made by the member for Keira quite some time ago, when he was speaking for the Government. He claimed that the bill prevents willing sellers from selling their water. It absolutely does not. They can sell to anyone they like, even the Commonwealth. The bill serves to protect the water market to ensure that irrigation communities survive. Let me be very clear about that. The member for Keira said that our communities want strong and collective leadership from governments working together to forge a pathway to deliver the Basin Plan. Our communities want to be protected from the negative socio-economic impacts of compulsory water buybacks, and the New South Wales Government has failed them in that.

The member for Keira also said passing the bill would raise constitutional concerns but did not specify what those concerns would be. The bill was specifically drafted to avoid constitutional conflicts and does not conflict with any Commonwealth legislation, so I am unsure what concerns he is referring to. As I said, he did not

provide us with any detail. The member for Lismore, also speaking for the Government, made comments in her speech about the potential for forced reductions in water allocations. That is certainly not something that would occur in the Murray and Murrumbidgee. The fact is that, under current arrangements, the Murray Valley could produce 25 per cent more for local, State and national economies without breaching the environmentally sustainable level of take. Any talk of reduced allocations is, with all due respect, scaremongering.

I acknowledge the words of the member for Monaro. When speaking for the Government he stated the fact that the southern basin valleys, most of which are in my electorate, have met every target to date. I find it interesting that the member for Monaro, who absolutely understands water, is not supporting my bill. He should be educating Labor on all of this. He also said we need to give an assurance to the Riverina that it will not pay the price if compulsory buybacks are enforced. No such assurance from the Federal water Minister, Tanya Plibersek, has been forthcoming, and that is causing a lot of anxiety in my electorate. People in my electorate are hyper anxious because they know what her bill means for us all. The member for Monaro was also right when he said that there needs to be a lot of measures beyond forced buybacks to save rivers and the environment. I hope to see a lot more funding for such measures in next year's budget. Karp is a huge problem. The Government should be addressing that.

The member for Cootamundra and the member for Albury, who represent communities in the Murray-Darling Basin, both made good, considered speeches. They spoke to the reality of Tanya Plibersek's forced water buybacks—the damage to agriculture, communities and the environment. Buybacks mean increased prices for food when children are already going hungry. As the member for Albury rightly said, water buybacks are a quick fix. The member for Albury also referred to the member for Keira's speech, saying that if the Government was not going to support the bill then the Government should introduce its own bill to provide the safeguards and certainties our communities deserve. I absolutely agree with that. I have not heard of any legislation being proposed by Labor on this issue. It is reckless for the New South Wales Government to allow the transfer of water, which will be lost to the State forever, without ensuring that there is no adverse socio-economic impact.

The approach proposed in the bill is no different to what we would expect of a Minister who is asked to sign off on the permanent sale or loss of other State's significant assets. We deserve a government that stands up for the rights of this State against Canberra and its overreach of power with its threat of compulsory water buybacks. The bill that I have put forward will provide the kind of protections that the regions in New South Wales desperately need, and which this Government will not provide. It seems this Government will not stand up to Canberra on this issue. Victoria will, and well done to it. New South Wales will not stand up to Canberra if we let the Government have its way. My electorate will stand up to Canberra. We will fight for the rights of New South Wales, its farmers, and its rural communities.

The irrigation communities in the Riverina were built after the world wars to drought-proof Australia. They are at the foothills of the mountains where it is most efficient to receive water. Importantly, they are located before river constraints, which means the water can be used without causing flooding. These are billion-dollar assets that will be lost to our State forever. I do not think the Government realises that. We cannot allow the New South Wales Government to transfer our precious water to the Federal Government without a fight. That water is the property of New South Wales and should only be sold, transferred or dealt with for the benefit of this State. We need to fight for our State, its rights, its farmers and its rural communities, and that is exactly what I am going to do. I call on all members to support New South Wales and to support the bill. 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.

**Business interrupted.**

*Business of the House*

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

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (18:35):** I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to permit:

- (1) Further consideration of the Water Management Amendment (Transfer of Water) Bill 2023 be deferred to a future sitting.
- (2) General business notices of motions (not being bills) debate until 7.15 p.m.
- (3) Community recognition statements.
- (4) Private members' statements.
- (5) Consideration of any messages from the Legislative Council at any time and resume the chair on the ringing of a long bell, if required.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** Point of order: I have been in this place for 12 years, and I do not believe that a suspension can be moved as part of the ordinary routine of business when the bill is due to be put to the Parliament. The motion moved by the Leader of the House is out of order. It will set a precedent, Madam Deputy Speaker, should you choose to allow the suspension to be moved at this point in the debate.

**Mr RON HOENIG:** To the point of order: The House is the master of its own destiny. It can determine what it wishes to do about any matter that is before the House. It can determine what is the order of business.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** I will consult with the Clerk.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** This would be extraordinary.

**Mr RON HOENIG:** What is most extraordinary is your involvement in this matter and putting the member for Murray up to it in the first place.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** Point of order: Reflections on members must be done by way of substantive motion. Those comments are out of order.

**Mr RON HOENIG:** To the point of order: There is no breach of Standing Order 73. If I really wanted to breach it, the member for Kiama would be going as red as a Labor Party balloon.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** Further to the point of order: That is a breach.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Withdraw it.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** You're under pressure. Are you going to withdraw the comment? That is a slur on people with albinism right across the State. He is attacking people with disabilities.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Withdraw it.

**Mr RON HOENIG:** No, I am not going to withdraw it.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** To the point of order: The Leader of the House, who is responsible for the decorum of the House, has just made an outrageous slur against a member of this Chamber who suffers from albinism, which is a medical condition that is out of his control to change. It is an absolute disgrace. In any other place that would be grounds for dismissal. He has refused to withdraw the comment, like the coward he is. It is an outrage.

**Mr RON HOENIG:** Further to the point of order: I made no such slur against the member for Kiama. He would know that I would make no such personal slur. No-one has treated the member for Kiama more fairly than I have. The behaviour of the member for Wahroonga as Manager of Opposition Business is a disgrace.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** I will consult with the Clerk. My interpretation, based on the very good advice of the Clerk, is that I can do two things and both are in order. The Leader of the House has the opportunity at any time to move a motion for the suspension of standing orders.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Madam Deputy Speaker—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** The member for Wahroonga will allow me to finish. The other option is that the second reading debate on the Water Management Amendment (Transfer of Water) Bill 2023 conclude with a division. I am inclined to take the advice of the Leader of the House, as well as that of the Clerk. The Leader of the House will repeat what he has proposed.

**Mr RON HOENIG:** I have moved a motion for the suspension of standing orders so that further consideration of the Water Management Amendment (Transfer of Water) Bill 2023 be deferred to a future sitting, and that the House then consider general business notices of motions (not being bills) until 7.15 p.m., after which the House proceed to community recognition statements and private members' statements, and await any bills that are returned from the Legislative Council and, if necessary, adjourn until the ringing of a long bell.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** Point of order: Madam Deputy Speaker, if you allow the motion of the Leader of the House to stand, I give you notice that, based on my objection, I will have to reluctantly move a motion of dissent from your ruling.

**Mr RON HOENIG:** To the point of order: If the member wishes to move a motion of dissent, under the standing orders he must give notice to the Table Office or to the House at the appropriate time and it can be considered at a future sitting of the House. Those matters do not get determined now.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** I am aware of that.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** The member for Kiama is entitled to do that. In the interim, the House is considering the motion of the Leader of the House.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Madam Deputy Speaker—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** Does the member for Wahroonga seek the call?

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (18:42):** I do, Madam Deputy Speaker. Debate on the bill had concluded and the question was put.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order: The member has already spoken on the motion that I moved earlier.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** No, he hasn't.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** He does not get to speak to it again.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** I have not, actually. I asked the Leader of the House to withdraw his outrageous slur.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** No, you spoke on the motion before.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** I will allow the Manager of Opposition Business to speak, but I am inclined to take the advice of the Leader of the House.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I draw your attention and that of the Clerk to Standing Order 151, which states:

The Speaker shall put the question as soon as debate is concluded.

The debate had concluded. You had started putting the question. The suspension motion is out of order. The standing orders are clear: The question should be put and debated under the standing orders. This is an outrageous attempt to shut down the democratic right of the legally elected members of this House to vote on the bill of the member for Murray. If the Government has the numbers, then the Government has the numbers. But we are entitled under the standing orders to vote on the bill. We are not to be shut down by the Minns Labor Government through its Leader of the House in what is an outrageous affront to democracy. What a sad state of affairs the mob opposite has got to when the Premier is away with COVID and this lack of leadership and outrageous behaviour is occurring in the House. The standing orders are clear: The question should be put. The motion to suspend standing orders is completely out of order.

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (18:44):** In reply: I remind the House that the Manager of Opposition Business was in the Chamber a short while ago voting on a division, which was negatived by the House, that the question be now put. The House determined to proceed with debate on the bill of the member for Murray.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** That was then, this is now.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** So let's vote on the bill!

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** The member for Wahroonga will cease interjecting.

**Mr RON HOENIG:** A number of members wanted to contribute to debate on the bill. It was always their intention to do so. But the reality is that the House is the master of its own destiny. This is the last sitting day of the year. There are members who want to move their general business notices of motions. There are members who wish to give community recognition statements. There are something like 30 or 40 private members' statements still to go and it is the last sitting day before Christmas. Let us get on with the business of the House.

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

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....42  
Noes .....38  
Majority.....4

#### AYES

Aitchison, J  
Atalla, E  
Bali, S  
Barr, C  
Butler, L  
Catley, Y  
Chanthivong, A

Greenwich, A  
Hagarty, N (teller)  
Harris, D  
Harrison, J  
Haylen, J  
Hoenig, R  
Holland, M

Piper, G  
Quinnell, S  
Saffin, J (teller)  
Saliba, D  
Scully, P  
Stuart, M  
Tesch, L

## AYES

Cotsis, S  
Crakanthorp, T  
Daley, M  
Davis, D  
Dib, J  
Doyle, T  
Finn, J

Kaliyanda, C  
Kirby, W  
Li, J  
McDermott, H  
McKeown, K  
Mehan, D  
O'Neill, M

Vo, T  
Voltz, L  
Warren, G  
Washington, K  
Watson, A  
Whan, S  
Wilkinson, K

## NOES

Amon, R  
Ayyad, T  
Butler, R  
Clancy, J  
Cooke, S  
Coure, M  
Cross, M  
Crouch, A (teller)  
Dalton, H  
Davies, T  
Di Pasqua, S  
Griffin, J  
Hannan, J

Henskens, A  
Hodges, M  
James, T  
Kean, M  
Kemp, M  
Lane, J  
Layzell, D  
Leong, J  
Marshall, A  
Perrottet, D  
Petinos, E  
Preston, R  
Provest, G

Roberts, A  
Saunders, D  
Shetty, K  
Sloane, K  
Speakman, M  
Taylor, M  
Tuckerman, W  
Ward, G  
Williams, L  
Williams, R  
Williamson, R (teller)  
Wilson, F

## PAIRS

Car, P  
Minns, C  
Park, R  
Thompson, T

Singh, G  
Toole, P  
Anderson, K  
Kamper, S

**Motion agreed to.**

*Motions***RENEWABLE ENERGY ZONES**

**Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (18:55):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes the bipartisan support in New South Wales for renewable energy zones and related transmission infrastructure as released in the New South Wales Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap in 2020.
- (2) Acknowledges that building new infrastructure requires excellent communication and benefits for landholders and communities impacted.
- (3) Notes numerous examples of renewable energy providing benefits for working farms, including continued grazing and viable and productive cropping operations continuing on land with high voltage powerlines.
- (4) Rejects efforts by the Federal Nationals to stop the timely transition to renewables.

It is very appropriate that this motion, which I put on the *Business Paper* some time ago, is being debated on the day that we passed the legislated targets for net zero in New South Wales—a very momentous day in the transition to net zero. It is pleasing to see bipartisan support for renewables and for the transition. My motion was prompted because while we have had bipartisan support in New South Wales, over the last year or so there have been efforts by some—presumably those who do not believe in climate change, like former Deputy Prime Minister, Barnaby Joyce—to suggest that renewable infrastructure, like solar and wind towers on farmland, is not compatible with farming. Indeed, what prompted me to move this motion was a comment by Barnaby Joyce, when he was criticising renewable energy zones and the transition, that "sheep don't live in caves".

It is important to put on record the efforts that many people and groups have made around rural New South Wales to work through issues about the transition to renewables, about the benefits that can accrue to agricultural operations from some of those, and to put the land use in perspective. While prime farmland is vitally important to New South Wales, so is the transition to renewables. I was involved in this process to an extent when I was



working at the irrigators' council. I was involved with the Agricultural Energy Taskforce and I worked on things like the Renewables in Agriculture Conference with Karin Stark, the founder of that conference.

A lot of farmers, including Farmers for Climate Action, put information out there to help people make proper, considered decisions on this and to avoid some of the unrealistic scaremongering that has gone on. For instance, to replace all of Australia's coal-fired power stations due to retire by 2040 with solar farms would require less than 0.016 per cent of Australia's total land area. While some of those solar farms will go on land which is used for grazing, like all things on farmers' land, it is an opportunity for them to make a decision on how they are using their land. It is important to uphold that principle. We do not tell farmers what sort of animals they can graze on their land. We do not tell them what crops they should plant. We all accept that the way they run their business is their choice. Similarly, if they choose to host solar farms on their land, that is something which can produce additional income for farmers.

Contrary to Barnaby Joyce's claims, solar farms on land are very compatible with grazing, particularly sheep. There are many examples around New South Wales and Victoria of sheep grazing under solar farms. In fact, it is a beneficial and compatible use because the solar panels provide shade and in dry times tend to promote more grass growth from the condensation. They can cool the temperature of the soil in hot times because they are providing that shade and provide better conditions for grazing operations. I heard an interjection in this Chamber the other day about needing to use the whipper snipper for grass around solar panels. Grazing under them means that does not need to happen.

I have heard recent comments that wind farms use prime agricultural land. That is a contradiction because wind farms generally tend to go on the rockier and higher-elevation areas. For many of the farmers who host those, they are an incredibly welcome additional revenue stream. I accept that to some people some of this infrastructure is visually unappealing, but it is simply untrue to say that renewable energy infrastructure is incompatible with agriculture. Transmission lines are controversial but that is why the former Government sensibly set up the renewable energy zones [REZ] in the first place. We can focus the necessary infrastructure on areas with renewable resources.

I know from my work in agriculture that one of the great frustrations for farmers who developed solar farms on their properties was the severe restrictions in being able to input to the grid. Developing REZs and taking expert advice so that farmers who develop their farms for renewable infrastructure have guaranteed access to powerlines can provide an additional income stream for people in agriculture. That is a win-win situation when handled properly. I recognise that that means best practice guidelines need to be followed in consultation with rural communities and neighbours. The Clean Energy Council, for example, has best practice charters, which are very important. Community benefit needs to be shown to the landholders hosting the infrastructure as well as adjoining landholders. All of those things are achievable if a discussion on opportunities is sensible and rational and not fired up by ridiculous comments like the ones from Barnaby Joyce. I hope this is an opportunity for the Opposition to reinforce its support for REZs by supporting this motion.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (19:02):** I appreciate the opportunity to contribute to debate on the motion. I move:

That the motion be amended by omitting paragraph (4).

I acknowledge the member for Monaro's comments about how great the past 48 hours have been in Parliament as we came together to pass some historic and very important legislation. He made a number of good points and mentioned a great organisation, Farmers for Climate Action. For the benefit of the House, I acknowledge what that organisation had to say about the legislation that passed last night. Farmers for Climate Action CEO Natalie Collard welcomed the news and said:

It's fantastic that the government, the NSW Liberal Party, NSW Nationals, Greens and crossbenchers worked together to get an excellent result. The emissions reduction target was strengthened to ensure stronger action on climate change and a more secure future for our farmers.

She then went on to say:

The NSW Coalition has shown what can be achieved with sensible collaboration: increased focus on regional communities paired with increased ambition. What a fantastic outcome.

That is a great endorsement of a lot of hard work that has gone into bringing forward legislation over the past 24 hours which will have a meaningful impact on effectively managing climate change and the continued risks that our urban and natural environment and agricultural industry face across New South Wales. As the member for Monaro noted, a steady stream of work has occurred in New South Wales over the past couple of years to ensure that the State is ready to transition to renewable energy. That began with the historic Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap and net zero plan introduced by the former Government a number of years ago. Sitting

underneath that plan are various policy instruments to support regional and rural communities with the energy transition.

We have to build thousands of kilometres of transmission lines to ensure that the energy gets from the new solar, wind, pumped hydro and other renewable energy sources into the grid and then ultimately powering businesses and homes across New South Wales. Getting the financing and planning approvals right, and ensuring that infrastructure is built in a way that is sympathetic to the impact on not only the amenity but important agricultural lands across New South Wales is a massive undertaking and requires a lot of heavy lifting. One of the important elements of the new Government's net zero road map is the number of benefits to the environment through the transition to renewable energy and to job creation and economic uplift in the regions.

I acknowledge that the New South Wales Nationals have been important partners in this State in ensuring that we have a measured and considered implementation of the renewable energy road map. I acknowledge the great work of the Hon. Sarah Mitchell in the other place who, along with the Leader of The Nationals, Dugald Saunders, and Gurmeh Singh, helped put together some well-considered amendments to the Climate Change (Net Zero Future) Bill. The amendments help elevate regional voices to make sure that those communities are well understood when it comes to the energy transition. The amendments were sensible, considered and useful, and ultimately they were supported by the Government. The Nationals are proud of the regions that they represent. They understand the value of a swift transition to a net zero economy for New South Wales. But they also want to ensure that the rural communities are cared for when it comes to the implementation of a tricky transition from coal-fired power to a renewable and clean energy future.

We need to make sure that future energy is clean, reliable and cheap, and in order to do that a dramatic system change is required. I acknowledge that the Federal Nationals support net zero by 2050. That is their existing policy position, and the motion should reflect that. Otherwise, the motion is good and celebrates the great past 24 hours we have had in delivering real action on climate change. I hope the Government supports the amendment.

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (19:08):** I contribute to debate on the motion and indicate my support. As the member for Manly has said, the motion refers to some of the issues the Parliament has worked through over the past 24 hours. Renewable energy zones are critical for New South Wales' future energy security, reducing emissions and supporting affordable electricity for households and businesses. The Government is getting on with the task of delivering five renewable energy zones under the Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap. We are very lucky to have strong support across the Parliament for the energy transition in the State.

Transforming the State's electricity system will provide New South Wales households and businesses with a reliable supply of clean, affordable electricity and support the green jobs of the future. The Government is getting on with the job of delivering the renewable energy zones. Since winning government, rescuing the Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap and getting the energy transition back on track has been a key focus. An important aspect of this transition is community engagement, which is critical to delivering the clean, affordable energy that New South Wales households and businesses need.

The Government has always acknowledged the importance of genuine community engagement to facilitate the energy transition, and it is acting on this. On Tuesday I was very pleased to support the member for Wagga Wagga's helpful amendment to the Government's energy legislation that requires the new board of the Energy Corporation of NSW to have at least one member with skills and experience in community engagement. Having a board member who is skilled in community engagement acknowledges the importance of EnergyCo's work in regional communities.

Our regions stand to benefit enormously from the transformation of our electricity system. It is the biggest economic transformation in a generation. A new, modern energy system based on renewable energy will ensure a reliable supply of electricity for businesses and affordable energy bills for households. We all know that the transformation of our electricity system is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to foster long-term prosperity in regional communities, which are central to the road map. I acknowledge that these developments can create uncertainty and concern in some communities. The Government understands the connection that farmers and other local residents feel with their land and their homes, which is why the Government wants to work closely with landowners, our First Nations community and local councils to ensure that we can smooth the bumps on the road to net zero and share the benefits it will bring fairly.

Recently the Government announced the first stage of funding for the Central-West Orana Renewable Energy Zone, \$128 million over the next four years, to provide community benefits and employment opportunities. Statewide, hundreds of millions of dollars of funding will become available over the next 30 years, leaving a lasting legacy for communities hosting renewable energy projects in their area. This shows the Government's commitment to working closely with communities as the transition is delivered. It has designated the successful delivery of the road map as a strategic whole-of-government priority. The Government will ensure

the road map's successful implementation because renewable energy is the cheapest and most sensible replacement for our aging coal-fired power stations. I support this important and timely motion and I thank the member for Monaro for moving it.

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (19:12):** I make a very brief contribution to debate on the motion and thank the member for Monaro for moving it. I am very conscious that the member for South Coast wants to make a contribution, so I will be brief. It was a great honour the other night to be part of the passing of the Government's important legislation around renewable energy targets. Climate change is an issue that affects the entire country and the entire world. For New South Wales to be leading the way is a great achievement that all of us in Parliament can be very proud of. During the election campaign, when discussing matters relating to energy and climate, I was particularly struck by how well received the energy renewable zones were. I give credit to the former Minister for Energy, the member for Hornsby, for his advocacy for the zones and I commend the new Government for continuing on that trajectory.

I have always been of the view that climate and energy policy should be viewed through the lens of an investment prospectus. This is about jobs, creating opportunities and investing in industry, new technology and clean energy. That is a good thing that people can get behind, no matter which perspective they take when it comes to these matters. Renewable energy zones are a great example of that. I commend the member for moving this motion. I support paragraphs (1) to (3) of the motion and believe strongly in excellent communication with communities and landowners. That is very sensible, and something I support completely from my local government background. I would be happy to see an amendment that removes paragraph (4), but I will leave that to other members. However, I commend all other parts of the motion.

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (19:14):** I thank the member for Monaro for raising the important issue of renewable energy. We have all seen the effects of climate change over the past decade, and it appears it is now racing towards us with great haste. Combating climate change is no longer negotiable for this Government, and its commitment to action is unquestionable. Transforming the State's electricity system will provide New South Wales households and businesses with a reliable supply of clean, affordable electricity and support the green jobs of the future. Already many farmers around New South Wales are taking advantage of the chance to host wind and solar projects.

Since the Black Summer fires in 2020, I have been working with Endeavour Energy and the wider community to create resilience for my small regional village by creating the first community microgrid in New South Wales. I am proud to tell members that it will go live next week. The microgrid will serve the community by providing a reliable, renewable and independent energy resource that reduces our dependence on centralised grids and minimises the risk of power outages during extreme weather events. It will also provide us with the resilience we need in times of emergency. The Government is not only investing in a cleaner and more secure energy future but also setting a precedent for responsible development and environmental stewardship. Let us lead by example to show that, even in the face of complex challenges, innovation and collaboration can pave the way to a brighter and more resilient tomorrow.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER:** It being 7.15 p.m., in accordance with the earlier resolution of the House, debate is interrupted for community recognition statements. I set down resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a later hour.

#### *Community Recognition Statements*

#### **GERARD "DOODY" DENNIS**

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (19:15):** How many oysters could an oyster shucker shuck if an oyster shucker could shuck oysters? If you were Gerard "Doody" Dennis, it would be 30 European flat oysters in approximately four minutes. Gamilaroi man Gerard Dennis won the oyster shucking competition at the Narooma Oyster Festival in May 2023, which led him to the world's oldest oyster festival, the Galway International Oyster and Seafood Festival in Ireland. Representing Australia, Gerard competed against oyster openers from Latvia, Finland, Estonia, France and Canada. He finished third in his heat and was placed respectively midfield overall, having only a short time to come to grips with the brittle-shelled European species. Gerard is the first Indigenous Australian to reach the international oyster shucking stage. I look forward to watching him in action at the Narooma Rocks oyster festival, which has been supported by a \$600,000 grant from the NSW Labor Government. Congratulations, Gerard. Don't say, "Aw, shucks!"

#### **DEEPWATER DRAGON BOAT CLUB**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (19:17):** I recognise and congratulate Deepwater Dragon Boat Club of Saratoga on its recent outstanding success at the nineteenth Australian Masters Games, held in Adelaide, bringing home one gold and two bronze medals. The games, held every two years, attracts competitors from all over

Australia, competing in about 45 different sports. The dragon boating competition attracted a large number of participants, with many clubs from regional New South Wales, including the Central Coast, attending. This was the second time the Deepwater club has attended the games, which was held over two days. The club won gold in the senior A open 20s combined through the Hunter River Dragons and bronze in the senior A open 10s and senior A mixed 20s. Congratulations to all the fantastic participants and supporters. I look forward to hearing of their continued success at the next Australian Masters Games, which will be held in Canberra in 2025. Again, congratulations to the Deepwater Dragon Boat Club.

### **TAMIL SWANS**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (19:18):** On Saturday I joined the NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors [STARTTS] at Granville Town Hall to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Tamil SWANS, which is a fantastic group of Tamil asylum seeker women. SWANS stands for STARTTS women's ambitious noble support. The STARTTS deputy chief executive officer, Lachlan Murdoch, highlighted the organisation's commitment to providing culturally relevant psychological treatment and support to refugees and emphasised the importance of its comprehensive range of services, including face-to-face and telehealth counselling, group work, and community interventions. Sivaharani Mayuran, the STARTTS counsellor who initiated the Tamil SWANS, shared the group's journey, explaining how the group has provided emotional support, skills development and a sense of community for Sri Lankan Tamil asylum seeker women.

### **REGIONAL MUSIC CONSERVATORIUMS**

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (19:19):** I recognise the important contribution conservatoriums make to the lives of people living in regional New South Wales. Conservatoriums are the heart and soul of our regional communities, and they are important cultural institutions that preserve the traditions of music while fostering the next generation of talented artists. In my region, both Gunnedah and Tamworth are home to conservatoriums. I recognise the important contribution they make to our culture. Our conservatoriums are the critical link between our prodigiously talented musicians and our community who enjoy hearing them play. Importantly, our conservatoriums foster the next generation of talented musicians, and the halls of the Tamworth and Gunnedah conservatoriums are filled with the sounds of young students perfecting their craft. We know the incredible impact that learning an instrument can have on a student's life, gifting our children with lifelong skills like teamwork, discipline and improvisation. I thank our conservatorium directors across New South Wales and pay tribute to Noelene Bosworth and Rebecca Ryan from my region, who do a fantastic job promoting music in our conservatoriums.

### **DOM ORLANDO**

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (19:20):** I recognise Dom Orlando, a Riverstone local and community worker at North West Community Services, who has made an indelible mark on the lives of countless individuals. His leadership in the aged team, especially in the community garden and men's shed, has transformed the lives of older residents by fostering a sense of belonging, purpose and camaraderie. Under Dom's guidance, the community garden has become a thriving hub of activity where individuals of all ages connect, cultivate, produce and forge meaningful bonds. The men's shed, too, has flourished under Dom's care, providing a welcoming space for older men to connect, engage in hands-on activities and combat social isolation. Dom's impact extends far beyond these programs. His unwavering commitment to the community is evident in his countless acts of kindness and support. He is always willing to lend a helping hand, offering transportation, companionship or a listening ear. Dom's dedication is an inspiration to us all. He embodies the true spirit of community service, demonstrating that even small acts of kindness can make a profound difference in the lives of others. I thank Dom for his unwavering commitment to his community.

### **WALCHA COFFEE**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (19:21):** I recognise Walcha Coffee for gaining international acclaim, being awarded silver and bronze medals at the Australasia Golden Bean Awards, the largest coffee roasting competition in the world. I congratulate Walcha Coffee owner Cameron Hayton and the team on their impressive win, going one better on last year by clinching three bronze and two silver medals from seven entries. In 2022 they won two bronze from six entries among a raft of countries. I commend Cameron and all the team at Walcha Coffee for their commitment to quality and hard work, and for being deservedly recognised for excellence. Walcha Coffee's success is not just about providing coffee to brew the perfect cup; it is about fostering pride and unity within the community of Walcha.

### **EAST HILLS BOYS SCHOOL**

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (19:22):** I celebrate East Hills Boys High School and congratulate the school on its remarkable auto shed program. I had the pleasure to meet with school principal Paul Abboud and

members of the P&C last week. This is an exceptional school, with a focus on real life and authentic learning experiences. The auto shed program is designed for year 10 students, providing one hour a fortnight in the shed with qualified mechanics. The multifaceted program includes an in-depth look at road safety rules, assistance for students in the attainment of their learner's permit and lessons on basic car maintenance, as well as real life education on the vehicle registration process and pink slip inspection procedure. The program has been so successful that it is now supporting two other local high schools at the purpose-built facility. I congratulate East Hills Boys High School on being the first in the State to find creative ways to engage our young men through programs like the auto shed. We wish the school the best of luck in its future endeavours.

#### **SYDNEY BY KAYAK**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (19:23):** There are many ways to enjoy the absolute beauty that is Sydney Harbour, but one of the most unique and special ways to do so is by kayak. It is only fitting then that the team at Sydney By Kayak has taken home two gold medals at the recent NSW Tourism Awards 2023, highlighting not only what an incredible business it is but also all its efforts in protecting our local environment. Laura and Ben, who run and operate Sydney By Kayak, are all about conservation, sustainability and protecting our spectacular but fragile marine ecosystem. On the night, the team took home gold in the ecotourism category and gold in the Take 3 For the Sea Award for Visitor Litter Prevention. This is in recognition of their many local achievements, such as personally planting nearly 200 mangroves so far—with a further 5,000 planned—collectively removing 5,489 kilograms of rubbish from Sydney Harbour and so much more. My own team recently joined Laura and her team on a sunrise tour from Lavender Bay out onto the harbour and it was spectacular. I congratulate Laura, Ben and the whole team on their achievements. I look forward to seeing some of their next projects in action.

#### **SAM ZUSTOVICH**

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (19:24):** I take this opportunity to recognise Sam Zustovich of Mollmook Surf Life Saving Club, who blasted away the world's best at the International Surf Rescue Challenge in Texas. Sam claimed three wins in the beach flags across the three tests and two seconds in the sprint. Sam has been dominant locally and internationally in surf lifesaving since he was very young, claiming his first world title in the Youth Male Beach Flags back in 2018 at the World Surf Lifesaving Championships. Sam is going to need a bigger pool room as he continues to accumulate medals, crowns and championships on the local, interstate and international circuit like few before him. In Texas, the Australian team was victorious for the ninth consecutive time, with the team coach, Kurt Wilson, saying that the team exceeded his expectations and their performance was a testament to their hard work and dedication. Go Sam. His club and the whole South Coast is so proud of him, and it is wonderful to see him achieve such recognition on the international stage.

#### **TOM SNOW**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (19:25):** I thank Tom Snow for his leadership and determination as founder and chair of Equality Australia. I was proud to work with Tom in the lead-up and during the successful yes vote that delivered marriage equality. Along with so many LGBTQIA+ Australians, I am grateful for his courage, tenacity, and generosity during a very challenging campaign. With the formation of Equality Australia, Tom ensured that the momentum for equality from achieving marriage equality has continued. As Equality Australia farewells Mr Snow as chair, he, his family and the community can be proud that Australia is a safer, fairer and more equal place for LGBTQIA+ people and their families. In a beautiful celebration of the improvements to the Marriage Act that Tom secured, he married his amazing husband, Doug Pengilly, just yesterday. I congratulate Tom and Doug. I thank Tom for his enduring commitment to fairness and equality for all.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** Congratulations, Tom and Doug.

#### **BONNYRIGG MOSQUE**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (19:26):** On 5 November 2023 I had the honour and privilege of participating in the monthly Sunday morning breakfast at the Bonnyrigg Mosque, hosted by the Bonnyrigg Turkish Islamic Cultural Association. Alongside Vice-Consul of the Republic of Türkiye in Sydney Imam Yasin Güngör, Mr Adem Cetinay the public officer, the honorary president Dr Ali Sarfraz, and other executive members and distinguished guests, we opened the newly constructed asphalt driveway. Engaging with our multicultural communities in my electorate brings immense joy and fulfillment. It symbolises the harmonious coexistence of diverse backgrounds and also highlights the significance of shared projects and values that contribute to the betterment of our community. Such experience reinforces the value of inclusivity and understanding, affirming my commitment to actively supporting and engaging with the vibrant multicultural communities within my electorate of Cabramatta.

### DUBBO DIRT BIKE CLUB

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (19:27):** I recognise the achievements of the chair of the Dubbo Dirt Bike Club, Bec Eade, along with the coach, Aaron Rankmore. At the recent Motorcycling NSW Community Awards, Bec was named Chairperson of the Year. Bec does a brilliant job. She has an "all-in" character, and is absolutely dedicated to doing her best for the Dubbo Dirt Bike Club. As chair, she has led the club through some tough times, but she is always looking for ways to improve and increase membership. Comments on the club's Facebook page like "volunteers build the magic for the riders to race and improve throughout their sport" and "the Dubbo club benefits from your leadership within the club", demonstrate the appreciation for Bec and her dedication and commitment to the sport. I also say well done to Aaron, who received the 2023 Coach of the Year Award, recognising his dedication to the riders week in and week out to ensure that they have the competitive advantage on and off the track. I congratulate Bec and Aaron. These awards are absolutely fantastic, and I am proud to recognise their achievements, along with their ongoing commitment to the sport and the Dubbo Dirt Bike Club.

### MATER DEI SCHOOL

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (19:28):** I acknowledge the Mater Dei School, Camden, for this year's senior retreat. This year the Wedderburn Christian Campsite played host to the retreat. The students were able to engage in a variety of activities that encompassed physical education, social skill development and team building. The students of Mater Dei continually challenged themselves outside their comfort zone, tackling physical challenges head on. Six students from St Patrick's College were able to join the students across the two days. Overall, the retreat was a fantastic opportunity for students to relax and engage with each other, forming new friendships and valuable experiences while taking part in reflections centred around the values of St Benedict and the Good Samaritan ideas. I congratulate Mater Dei School staff and students on another successful retreat.

### A NIGHT FOR AUSTIN

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (19:29):** The tight-knit community converged at Picton Showground on 4 November 2023, manifesting an unwavering support for young Austin's stem cell treatment journey. Organised by the Lions Club of Tahmoor Inc., the fundraiser "A Night For Austin" was a heartening display of solidarity. The showground buzzed with enthusiasm as attendees revelled in the car and bike show, bidding generously during the live auctions. Local food trucks and market stalls saw a bustling trade, while the air echoed with laughter from the jumping castles and live tunes. The raffles drew hopeful cheers, with each ticket sold edging Austin closer to a hopeful medical recourse. As the day morphed into a starlit night, the community's spirit of benevolence shone bright and illuminated the path of resilience and hope for Austin and his family. The event exemplified how collective efforts can significantly impact an individual's life and reaffirmed the potent sense of community that thrives in the Wollondilly.

### KING PARK PUBLIC SCHOOL

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (19:30):** King Park Public School recently marked its fiftieth anniversary. A testament to the importance of our public education system, King Park gives kids an opportunity to achieve their dreams in education, sports and life. Schools are one of our most important institutions, serving as a platform to enable New South Wales to propel forward. Over the past 50 years King Park Public School has had a life-changing positive impact on thousands of children growing up in Fairfield. Such an achievement would not have been possible without the assistance of the entire school community, both past and present. This includes the executive team, teachers, administrative staff, the many volunteers, parents and, of course, the awesome students. Thank you, King Park, and congratulations.

### CANCER COUNCIL STARS OF THE BEACHES DANCE GALA

**Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (19:31):** I commend the fantastic efforts of those involved in the 2023 Cancer Council's Stars of the Beaches dance gala. This spectacular event spotlighted nine local lunatics—sorry, legends—who not only embraced the art of dance but also played a pivotal role in fundraising for the Cancer Council, directly benefiting all of our northern beaches community and indeed that of New South Wales. Over a 10-week period, these dedicated individuals, paired with professional dance instructors, crafted impressive routines and highlighted their commitment to an incredibly important cause. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to Linda Petrone, Carol Reid, Michelle Dube, Gemma Keane with Sheena Umphray, Tanya Joy, Aimee Woolley, Claire Egbers, Adam Moore, and Councillor Sarah Grattan, who alone raised over \$8,000 and was honoured with the judges' choice award as well. The contribution of all participants, organisers and supporters was invaluable. They have the gratitude and admiration of the entire northern beaches community, not just Wakehurst. Well done.

### **COLLINS BOOKSELLERS THIRROUL**

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (19:32):** There are some businesses throughout the Heathcote electorate that are ingrained in the fabric of our community. Collins Booksellers Thirroul is certainly one of those businesses. The much-loved store has stood the test of time when many others have not. The rise and development of digital technology resulted in many people embracing ebooks and books that could be listened to rather than read. However, as Collins Booksellers Thirroul continues to show, there is still a strong demand for traditional paperback copies of books as well. There are several shops that I love regularly visiting in the southern end of my electorate, and Collins Booksellers is on that list. I often head into Collins intending to spend only a few minutes in the shop. However, 20 minutes later I am still there and walk out with a new book. The carefully curated collection of books in Collins Booksellers means that there is a read for everyone, regardless of age or area of interest. I thank everyone at Collins Booksellers for providing a much-needed service for our community.

### **RILEY DEATH**

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy) (19:33):** I proudly acknowledge the achievements of Riley Death, an outstanding year 6 student at Hammondville Public School. Riley's athletic journey has been nothing short of inspiring. At the NSW School Sport Primary Track and Field Athletics Championships, he soared to third place in the boys 11 long jump with a leap of 4.68 metres, earning him a well-deserved spot in the National Athletics Championships. Additionally, Riley showcased his versatility, finishing fifth in the high jump and twelfth in the 100-metre sprint in the State. Recently, at the 2023 School Sport Australia 12 years and under track and field athletics championships in Launceston, Tasmania, Riley secured the twelfth position nationwide for the 11 years boys long jump, covering a distance of 4.43 metres. Notably, he played a pivotal role in the combined 4 x 100-metre New South Wales relay team, contributing to their national gold medal triumph. Riley is a rising star in the athletics world, and I look forward to observing his progress in the future. Go, Riley!

### **YEAR 6 GRADUATIONS**

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (19:34):** I congratulate all the year 6 students in my electorate and across New South Wales on finishing primary school. Moving from little school to big school is a massive achievement, and they should all be very proud of themselves. Their hard work and determination have paid off, and now they are ready for the next exciting chapter in their academic journey. High school is a going to be an amazing time in their lives, filled with new experiences and friends, expanding their understanding of how the world works, turning them from a child to an adult. They should embrace the challenges ahead, continue to learn, and let their curiosity lead the way. The dedication of the amazing teachers and parents who guided and supported these bright stars has truly made a lasting impact. Here is to a successful journey ahead for the graduates, and heartfelt gratitude to the incredible team behind their growth. I again congratulate the year 6 graduates on everything they have achieved in primary school. Best wishes for a bright and successful future.

### **MARIST CATHOLIC COLLEGE PENSURST**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (19:35):** Tonight I acknowledge my former school, Marist Catholic College Penshurst, a vibrant dual-campus co-educational school. The school continues with dynamic teaching and personalised learning, and acknowledges every student achieving their personal best. Marist Catholic College Penshurst has continued a proud sporting tradition, with outstanding results in the Sydney Catholic Schools sporting competitions during the course of this year. The school and the community are proud of all the students and coaches for their hard work, team spirit and excellent results throughout the competition. The college boasts two Sydney Catholic Schools champion teams: the senior girls netball and the junior girls soccer. A further 10 teams won their conference 3 championships, an outstanding performance across a range of different sports. Well done to all involved in the sports program, a team of sporting stars from the Marist Catholic College Penshurst.

### **COBB AND SILVER CITY HIGHWAYS**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (19:36):** For more than a decade, over 150 men and women have been sealing the Silver City and Cobb highways, camping hundreds of kilometres away from their nearest town, spending months away from family members at a time—often in the extreme heat of 50-degree days and freezing nights. With incredible personal sacrifices, they have given New South Wales a fully sealed highway network for the first time in our State's history. I was honoured to celebrate this achievement with them and the member for Barwon, Roy Butler, MP, at Mount Manara, where we literally cut the ribbon on the sealing of New South Wales' last major gravel highway. After a warm welcome to country from Badger Bates from Barkindji Malyangapa and Big Jim West from Ngiyampaa, and official speeches, the students and teachers from Ivanhoe Central School sang their school song and read some wonderful poems that they had written. Their song has to be rewritten because it does not talk about a sealed road; it talks about

gravel roads. I thank the Country Women's Association ladies from Ivanhoe for the delicious repast. I also thank the former member for Murray-Darling and former mayor of Broken Hill, Peter Black, OAM, and local landowner John Elliott, who addressed the gathering. Most of all, I thank all those who made this enormous contribution to our State, fully sealed all the way.

### **WALK FOR RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (19:37):** I recognise the incredible team behind the Walk for Respectful Relationships, which was held in Cronulla on 24 November. This year's walk saw hundreds of participants brave the wet weather to walk from Don Lucas Reserve to Cronulla Beach in an effort to raise awareness of domestic and family violence in our community. This year's theme of "Call out, Speak out, Help out" was a call to action for us to call out behaviours that are disrespectful, speak to family and friends when we need support, and help out if we know someone who needs assistance. None of this would have been possible without the hard work of the Walk for Respectful Relationships committee, which consists of representatives from local community organisations in the Sutherland Shire. I recognise the contribution of committee members Daniella Luchi, Mardi Benson, John Masters, Ashleigh Daines, Kumari Taylor, Karen Chapman, Stephanie Alchin, Jodi Paton, Scott Findlay, Jeff Eager and Simone Marslew in organising the event. I commend the Walk for Respectful Relationships organising committee for its work to prevent domestic and family violence.

### **BONNYRIGG HIGH SCHOOL**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (19:38):** On 9 November 2023 I had the honour of welcoming Prue Car, the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Education and Early Learning, to our local Bonnyrigg High School with my parliamentary colleague the member for Liverpool. Teachers, staff and students were delighted to see our Deputy Premier and Minister. We toured the school and, in a short break, we ate cakes and desserts made by the students. I commend the school principal, the relieving principal, the leadership team and the P&C president for their efforts and commitment to the education of students and the continued improvement of the school. I had a great time listening to the school's important matters and how we can work together for the future of the school and its students. I thank the school for its kind invitation and warm hospitality.

### **TRIBUTE TO CATI MACHADO**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne) (19:39):** Over the weekend our community was rocked by the tragic passing of Cati Machado, a beautiful young woman who was taken too soon, and a victim of domestic violence. This evening on 30 November at 7.00 p.m. a memorial and candlelight vigil will be held in Chiswick, organised by Cati's neighbours, to pay respect to Cati and all women who are victims of domestic violence. Sadly, Cati is the fifty-fifth woman in Australia to have been tragically killed this year due to violence against women. We condemn domestic, family and gendered violence in all its forms. Violence against women has no place in our community. I send my sincerest condolences to Cati's parents and family in Brazil, her relatives and the friends that she made in Australia, her neighbours, and all who knew and loved her. We grieve and we will never forget. May Cati rest in peace.

### **SOMEWHERE NICE OP-SHOP AND CAFE**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (19:40):** I recently attended the launch of the Somewhere Nice op-shop and cafe in Liverpool, an amazing initiative of the Autism Advisory and Support Service [AASS]. Somewhere Nice is a social enterprise that provides training opportunities for people with disabilities and re-sells items donated by the community. Through collaboration with the work prep connect program, staff at the store can receive TAFE qualifications in hospitality and retail, helping them embark on meaningful careers. It was a delight to meet with members of the team, enjoy a coffee and purchase some new decorations for my office. I note that all purchases made seek to enable the store's growth and reinvestment in further education for staff. I extend my sincere congratulations to Grace Fava and the team at the AASS, who have worked tirelessly over many years to bring the project to life. I also thank the partners and sponsors that have helped make it possible, including Cabra-Vale Diggers and TAFE NSW.

### **DEBBIE NOTARA**

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (19:41):** I acknowledge Debbie Notara for 33 years of service with the Central Coast Community Women's Health Centre. Debbie attended the women's health centre as a participant of a group on reproductive technologies when it was located in Gosford. Debbie then studied at TAFE on the coast and qualified as a social worker. She taught counsellors at TAFE doing their Certificate IV in Community Services and Diploma of Community Services. During that time she learnt about the centre and decided she wanted to work there. Debbie worked as a health worker at the centre from 1991 to 1995, and she was a staff member representative on the board during that time. Debbie went on to work at TAFE but continued on the board as a community representative. She was chairperson from 1996 to 1997 and vice chairperson from



1997 to 1998. Additionally, Debbie was also a director on the board from 2006 to 2008 while working with the Department of Education as a community development facilitator. I am sure members will join me in congratulating Debbie on her overall service to the women's health centre.

### **WE CARE CONNECT**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (19:42):** It warms my heart to give a shout-out to a beautiful community organisation on the Central Coast today—the much-loved We Care Connect. The name says it all; it cares and connects preloved or brand-new essential children's items with families who need them the most. We Care Connect is a charity that is driven by volunteers who have the most heartwarming aim to change the story on childhood poverty. Together we can make a difference, together we can support thousands of kids in crisis and together we can remove the barrier of childhood poverty. Anyone can help support We Care Connect by donating items like clothing, nappies, baby monitors, bottles, blankets, prams, car seats and highchairs, as well as toys and crafts, especially clothes for boys under six. I am proud to say that my office in Woy Woy is a collection point for We Care Connect, especially its fabulous Christmas drive. I am always delighted when I see the generosity of locals as they bring in preloved or brand-new items. I thank the amazing team of volunteers at We Care Connect for looking after our community. Together, let us change the story of childhood poverty.

### **CAMERAGAL MONTESSORI SCHOOL**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (19:43):** I congratulate Cameragal Montessori School on opening its new school in North Sydney recently. The new school opening on Ridge Street sees the consolidation under one room of the Montessori head office, an under-three playroom and a three-to-six playroom. This work came about due to significant fundraising by the school community and also a grant delivered to the school by the previous New South Wales Liberal Government. Principal Janae Goodall, and the president of the association, Jacqui Mowbray, contributed a considerable commitment in setting up those beautifully prepared spaces so that students can thrive. Cameragal Montessori has been teaching young people across the North Shore community for more than 40 years. This new addition to the Cameragal Montessori School family will ensure that more students across more ages can continue to have a wonderful education into the future.

### **THE ENTRANCE ELECTORAL OFFICE STAFF**

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (19:44):** I acknowledge my staff and the work they do for The Entrance electorate on behalf of the Central Coast community: Catherine Wall, my senior electorate officer; Danielle Atherden; Alfat Karnib; and Bridget Wall, who fills in in my office. I am constantly reminded by people I meet in the community that I have wonderful staff, and I absolutely do. They support me brilliantly. They are a fine example of the best in public service in this State and in this country. They also provide a positive reflection of a group of people who support Labor Party principles and the work of Labor in the community. I thank them on behalf of the community because I know that the community appreciates the work they do.

### *Committees*

### **JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ELECTORAL MATTERS**

#### **Establishment**

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council informing the Legislative Assembly that it has this day agreed to the following resolution:

That this House agrees to the resolution in the Legislative Assembly's message of Thursday 30 November 2023 amending the resolution of the Legislative Assembly of 22 June 2023 establishing the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters.

### **JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE NSW RECONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY**

#### **Establishment and Membership**

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council informing the Legislative Assembly that it has this day agreed to the following resolution:

- (1) That this House agrees to the resolution in the Legislative Assembly's message of Thursday 30 November 2023 relating to the appointment of a Joint Select Committee on the NSW Reconstruction Authority.
- (2) That the representatives of the Legislative Council on the joint select committee be Mr Faraway, Ms Higginson, Mr Lawrence and Ms Suvaal.
- (3) That, notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the standing orders, this House requests that the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly set the time and place of the first meeting.

*Bills***GREATER CITIES COMMISSION REPEAL BILL 2023****Returned**

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the bill without amendment.

*Private Members' Statements***NORMANHURST SCOUT GROUP**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (19:47):** Scout groups across Australia provide young people with opportunities to learn important leadership skills, engage in community service and participate in outdoor activities. People from different cultural and religious backgrounds participate in Scouts right across the country. Over 17,000 youth and adult members are active in Scouts. Recently I had the pleasure of joining the Normanhurst Scout Group for its ninetieth birthday celebration. The member for Berowra, Julian Leeser, MP, who I have known for many years and is a good friend, also joined the celebration. The Normanhurst Scout Group started in the early 1930s, with some members attending the 1934 to 1935 Australian Jamboree at Frankston, Victoria. The group used to meet at what is now the Uniting Church on Buckingham Avenue, Normanhurst. In 1942, the group relocated to Normanhurst Public School. Apparently the Scouts of the time were quite rowdy and the group was asked to move in 1950 after making "too many holes in the walls of the hall".

St Stephen's church then became the new home of the group. In the mid-1960s the group was large and successful, and the decision was made to split into the 1st and 2nd Normanhurst. The 1st Normanhurst occupied a hall in Kenley Park and the 2nd Normanhurst began building the hall on Harris Road, which was a mammoth effort. It took the volunteers nearly 10 years to complete. However, their unpaid efforts have stood the test of time as the hall is now the home of "Normo". In the early 2000s changing demographics forced the merger of the 1st and 2nd Normanhurst with the 3rd Thornleigh to create Normanhurst Scout Group. Twenty years later, demographics and the popularity of scouting in Normanhurst, Thornleigh and Westleigh have created the second largest group in New South Wales.

The birthday celebrations were attended by current youth members, retired leaders and other leaders who have moved but are still very active in their scout groups. The birthday celebrations on Sunday began with a flag break and were followed by the presentation of awards to two current leaders who were recognised by the Governor-General and Chief Scout of Australia, David Hurley. Elizabeth "Liz" Foster is an assistant scout leader and was presented with a special service award. Liz has demonstrated her commitment with her consistent enthusiasm, completion of advanced leader training and commitment to adventurous activities training to the benefit of young people.

Geraldine "Kate" Andrews was also awarded the special service award. Kate is now an assistant venture leader and was recognised for her outstanding work maintaining an online program for young people during the COVID lockdowns. She has also shown a commitment to leader training and adventurous activities training, all of which benefit many young people. During the presentation, the group confirmed that four more leaders had been recognised this year, with venture leader Lainie Kalnins, scout leader Sarah Jaffrey, and assistant scout leaders Andrew Forsyth and Colin Healey all to receive recognition awards at a ceremony on 8 October hosted by Sydney North Region Scouts.

Melinda Draper has also been recognised for her support of *Hornsby Gang Show*, a live variety show performed by the scouts and guides of the Sydney North Region. Mel is a former leader and her husband, Alan, is an assistant group leader at Normanhurst. Both of her sons have also been in scouting. Following the presentation, the scouts participated in a range of activities, such as making damper. It was fantastic to see so many young people getting involved in developing their leadership skills and enthusiasm for the outdoors. It was my first time visiting the Normanhurst Scout Group as it has recently come into my electorate as part of the recent New South Wales electoral redistribution. I was encouraged to see the group thriving. In fact, the Normanhurst Scout Group is the second largest scout group in New South Wales and it operates all youth sections.

Normanhurst offers the scout program through a Joey Scouts unit for five- to seven-year-olds, two Cub Scouts units for eight- to 10-year-olds, two Scouts units for 11- to 14-year-olds, a Venturer Scouts unit, and a Rover unit for young adults aged 18 to 25. It has over 130 youth members aged five to 18. The Rover unit has over 30 members. All sections are supported by 30 leaders. Seventeen of those leaders have been volunteers for a combined 225 years of service to scouting and their communities. The volunteer spirit in the group is strong, with those years of service being in addition to their family, work and other commitments. Scouts plays an incredibly important role in our local communities by teaching our young people life skills, building their

leadership and encouraging their passion for outdoor activities. I congratulate the Normanhurst Scout Group on reaching 90 years and wish it all the very best in the future.

#### **SYDNEY CHILDREN'S HOSPITALS FOUNDATION**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (19:52):** One of the largest and most trusted kids health charities in the country and the exclusive philanthropic partner of Sydney Children's Hospitals Network is Sydney Children's Hospitals Foundation, which provides all children with access to the best possible health care, whenever and wherever they need it. It is a privilege to have the Children's Hospital at Westmead in the Parramatta electorate, which, like all the network's services, is host to incredible doctors, nurses, researchers, specialists, staff and families and, of course, the very special children.

For some kids, childhood is far from what it should be. Instead of play dates, there are appointments. Instead of sleepovers, there are hospital stays. And instead of firsts, there can be lasts. No child should have to go through that, but those who do deserve our all. Next Tuesday 5 December is the Sydney Children's Hospitals Foundation Giving Day, an opportunity for all of us to play a part in giving kids in hospital the brightest Christmas possible. Last year more than 500 patients visited the emergency departments at Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick, or the Children's Hospital at Westmead on 24 and 25 December. More than 140 children spent Christmas admitted to hospital and more than 1,000 staff spent their Christmas Day working across Sydney Children's Hospitals Network sites to support those sick kids.

Members will have likely seen volunteers collecting donations in Martin Place or Pitt Street Mall this week. They form part of the Sydney Children's Hospitals Foundation's Movement of Many, and next Tuesday they will be out in force. I bring to the attention of the House the incredible show of generosity and spirit that will be exhibited on Giving Day and ask that we all extend a hand in support. Donations made on Giving Day will be doubled thanks to Dooleys in the electorate of the member for Auburn. Dooleys will match donations made on the day to the value of an additional \$80,000. Let us beat last year's fundraising record, which was an incredible \$11 million.

I encourage all members to support and share the importance of the Sydney Children's Hospitals Foundation Christmas appeal with their electorate this Giving Day and through the Christmas period. Funds raised are directed to the front line and the future of kids health. The foundation also supports Bear Cottage, New South Wales' only palliative care service for children, and the statewide Newborn and Paediatric Emergency Transport Service, NETS, along with Kids Research, which relies significantly on philanthropic funding. I take a moment to share James' story with members. James is a six-year-old boy who lost function in both his legs at the age of three. James was in hospital, frightened and in pain, with no diagnosis. But thanks to a groundbreaking blood test developed at Kids Research, James' clinical team was able to diagnose his condition and commence a treatment plan, resulting in the reversal of his paralysis. James is now fully recovered.

James was one of the 158,000 children who benefit annually from Sydney Children's Hospitals Foundation fundraising. Next Tuesday let us all open our hearts to support sick children. I encourage every member of this place to join me in making a donation and to help spread the donation message amongst their electorates. I am truly honoured to play my part in bringing awareness to this year's Giving Day. I acknowledge those essential workers who work at our hospitals, and those children and families impacted by their children's illnesses who travel from across New South Wales to go to Randwick and Westmead. I am honoured to play my part in bringing awareness to this year's Giving Day and contributing to giving children from across New South Wales the brightest Christmas possible. I thank the Sydney Children's Hospitals Foundation for its Christmas appeal. Please give generously this Giving Day.

#### **PROFESSOR GRAEME CLARK, AC**

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (19:57):** Today I acknowledge one of Camden's finest sons, Professor Graeme Clark, AC. On Saturday 4 November I had the absolute pleasure of attending the Camden Museum for the opening of a brand-new exhibition showcasing and celebrating the life and career of Graeme Clark. The exhibition explores Graeme's upbringing in what was then the small town of Camden, well beyond the outskirts of Sydney, and his life and career, including the development of his invention, the cochlear implant. Graeme Clark was born in Camden to Colin and Dorothy Clark.

Growing up in Camden provided the young Graeme with the freedom and opportunity to experience a rural landscape. Graeme recalls that his kindy teacher asked him when he started school what he wanted to do when he grew up. He simply responded with, "I want to fix ears", after growing up with a deaf father at home. Professor Clark finished his secondary education at the Scots College in Sydney in 1951. He then went on to study medicine at the University of Sydney. In 1969 he completed his PhD at the University of Sydney, "Middle ear and neural mechanisms in hearing and the management of deafness".

Extraordinarily, at the same time he completed a Master of Surgery thesis titled *The Principles of the Structural Support of the Nose and its Application to Nasal and Septal Surgery*. In the 1970s, Professor Clark embarked on a mission to restore hearing to those with profound hearing loss. His vision led to the creation of the cochlear implant, a revolutionary device that directly stimulates the auditory nerve, bypassing damaged hair cells in the inner ear, which differentiates it from the hearing aid. This marked a paradigm shift in the treatment of deafness, allowing so many people to be able to hear well once again. The journey to the first successful cochlear implant in 1978 was no easy feat, and Professor Clark's perseverance and dedication to improving the lives of the hearing impaired cannot be overstated. His groundbreaking research not only propelled Australia to the forefront of medical innovation but also laid the foundation for the global development of cochlear implant technology. Professor Clark's work has helped change the lives of countless people in New South Wales, Australia and across the world.

The ability for people to hear clearly is taken for granted by so many of us who can do so on a day-to-day basis. But other people are not so lucky, with many people needing implants to be able to hear sounds clearly. Like other medical innovations, the cochlear implant is life-changing, and the impact Professor Clark's research has had on people's lives cannot be put into words. Today, the impact of Professor Clark's legacy extends beyond his research. It is a testament to the power of innovation, compassion and the commitment to help others. We express our deepest gratitude to Professor Graeme Clark for his enduring contributions to humanity and for placing Australia at the forefront of medical excellence.

The exhibition at Camden Museum was the culmination of three years of work and grants from the State Government and Camden Council. I was lucky enough to open the exhibition with Professor Clark himself, who I can attest is a truly wonderful, delightful man, a local Camden boy who has shaped the world for the better. I thank the Camden Historical Society for inviting me to the exhibition. It was a true privilege to attend and to be able to open the exhibition. I would encourage anyone who visits Camden, whether a local or a tourist, to visit the exhibition at 40 John Street, inside the library. The display is now open to the public, and is open Thursday through Sunday from 11.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m.

It includes first-class touchscreens, plus a display case showing all of the cochlear implants that a local resident, Danielle, has had throughout her life, which she has donated to the exhibition. It is truly an incredible local exhibit. Visitors can also walk down the main street of Camden to see where Professor Clark's father's chemist shop was. On the day of the opening, Professor Clark told the story of how people would come into the chemist to have a quiet, discreet conversation with their chemist, and the chemist would reply that he could not hear them. That is what inspired Professor Clark to invent the cochlear implant. I invite everyone to come down to Camden and celebrate one of our truly great sons.

#### DUBBO DAY AWARDS

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (20:02):** On 23 November 1849, Dubbo was gazetted as a village. To mark the sesquicentenary celebrations in 1999, the then Dubbo City Council introduced the Dubbo 150 Certificate. The Dubbo 150 Certificate was about recognising volunteers in the Dubbo community and the contribution they make to our lives. Following the celebrations in 1999, a mayoral minute was submitted to council with a proposal to perpetuate these awards as an annual event. The awards started in 2002 and are now in their twenty-first year. In 2014 the name was changed, and they are now known as the Dubbo Day Awards. This year, 10 community members have been recognised for their contribution to the Dubbo community.

John Robins was this year's Tony McGrane Award recipient. Tony McGrane was Mayor of Dubbo City Council from 1991 to 1999, and member for Dubbo from March 1999 to September 2014, the time of his death. The award was created in Tony's honour to recognise people who go well beyond what is expected of them in their paid employment or career while making significant contributions to the community. Mr Robins has been an active member of the community for many years. He is currently one of Dubbo parkrun's directors, a role he has held for the past eight years. He provides run coaching and plans for participants in the Dubbo Stampede, has conducted several free Love2Run clinics, and was involved in starting up Dubbo Tracksesh. Mr Robins was also a mentor for the Dubbo Senior College Talented Athlete Program, and is part of the leadership team at Dubbo Baptist Church.

Tim Morris was also recognised for his commitment to Dubbo parkrun, Dubbo Tracksesh, Dubbo Stampede and the Dubbo Senior College Talented Athlete Program. Through his business, Podiatry in Motion, Tim also collects and donates preloved sports shoes to Clontarf through the Shoes 4 Planet Earth program. Gerard Allen has been a volunteer coach with the Westside Panthers Football Club for 15 years. He has contributed over 2,700 hours of his time building the confidence and skills of young players in the local community, organising registrations, preparing and delivering training sessions, and organising game day events. Gerard's devotion to the club has seen many accolades, including Coach of the Year and Club Supporter of the Year, along with his Dubbo Day Award.

As a senior member of the Bangladeshi Community in Dubbo group and one of its founding members, Musarrat Khan was recognised for his work in establishing and maintaining the community group, providing leadership, support and direction. Mr Khan is a great bloke who has worked tirelessly to bridge cultural divides and promote harmony among different communities. Despite his numerous contributions he remains a humble and quiet contributor, reflecting the true spirit of community service. Jenet Stewart is a founding member of local not-for-profit organisation Pink Angels, who spent long hours establishing the charity. She was recognised for her work as foundation director of the Western Cancer Centre and her role managing its communication and public relations through social media and their website. Jenet is also a member of the Melanoma Institute Australia Dubbo Group and assisted in raising money for the organisation through the inaugural March for Melanoma.

In 2013 Debrah Davis joined the Dubbo Show Society, originally starting as a steward in the handicraft and cookery sections before becoming chief steward in 2016. Debrah has been recognised for her dedication to the society, always ready to assist with organising volunteers to help across all aspects of the Dubbo Show. The pavilion displays are certainly a testament to Debrah's dedication to the Dubbo Show Society and the community. Trish Gosper received a Dubbo Day award for her involvement with Dubbo City Ladies Bowls, also known as the Sporties, over the past 23 years. She was also recognised for her commitment to the Country Women's Association and Meals on Wheels as an on-call volunteer driver. Carmel Carolan was recognised for her volunteering role with St Vincent de Paul. Carmel started volunteering in the retail outlet in 2015. When the shop moved locations, she worked tirelessly packing up and moving all the goods. Carmel is a passionate scripture teacher and has dedicated many hours preparing lessons and gathering resources to deliver religious education. She is also an active member of the Saint Brigid's choir.

The Singhs were recognised for their pioneering and valuable contribution to the Dubbo community. The Singhs have left an indelible mark in the region through their selfless dedication and unwavering commitment to fostering multiculturalism and community spirit. Their remarkable achievements include initiating Dubbo's first multicultural festival in the mid-1990s, organising and implementing the Dubbo Multicultural Festival Food Committee, and being among the founding members of Orana Residents of Indian Sub-Continental Heritage, or ORISCON, in 2001. They also helped in coordinating the visit of the Indian Consulate-General to Dubbo for the opening of the Indian rhino and otter exhibit at Taronga Western Plains Zoo. I congratulate all the recipients of the Dubbo Day Awards. We all recognise that volunteers are a hugely important part of the community. I thank each and every award recipient for their contribution to the Dubbo region.

### COBB AND SILVER CITY HIGHWAYS

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (20:07):** I pay tribute to all of the people across regional New South Wales engaged in roadwork who are upgrading and completing State roads. In my own electorate of Maitland we are seeing improvements along the Pacific Highway with the commencement of the historic extension of the M1 to Raymond Terrace, which will put a new bridge over the Hunter River. The Government also announced the awarding of a contract for the Singleton bypass last weekend, and there is a lot of work being done on the Muswellbrook bypass. For generations, men and women have braved the elements of the outback in far western New South Wales to undertake the final sealing of New South Wales's highways.

For more than a decade, some 150 men have been working on the last of those projects: the Silver City and Cobb highways. Workers have been camping hundreds of kilometres away from the nearest town, spending many months away from their families and loved ones. They often work in extreme heat, 50 degrees or more, and suffer freezing nights during the winter. I was honoured to celebrate the end of this project with those workers at a community gathering at Mount Monara earlier this month, along with the member for Barwon. I cut the ribbon to mark the sealing of New South Wales' last major unsealed highway, and unveiled a plaque on a large rock near where the highway route was diverted as part of the sealing process to avoid a site that is sacred to the local traditional owners.

After a warm welcome to country from Badger Bates from Barkindji Malyangapa and Big Jim West from Ngiyampaa, followed by some official speeches, the students and teachers from Ivanhoe Central School gave a rousing rendition of their school song and read some wonderful poems they had written. I do note that they may have to change the following lyrics of their school song. In the spirit of member for Camden, I will have a crack at singing members the lines so they get the gist. I did only hear it once, though, so forgive me. The song went:

Roads you may travel from many miles away,  
Hillston, Menindee, Wilcannia and Hay  
Broken Hill and Cobar, singing as you go:  
"Where do all the dirt roads finish? Ivanhoe."

However, now that the Cobb Highway is sealed, that is not accurate anymore. I give special thanks to MIA Coaches Griffith, which brought the students along for that very exciting song—the students sang it much

better than I did. I also thank the CWA ladies from Ivanhoe, who prepared a delicious repast that was enjoyed by everyone. I thank them for their genuine, warm country hospitality. I also thank former member for Murray-Darling and former Mayor of Broken Hill Mr Peter "Blackie" Black, OAM, and local landowner Mr John Elliott, who addressed the gathering to talk about their long advocacy for the project over generations. The chair of Wilcannia Tourism, Mr Bill Elliott, and former member for Murray-Darling Mr John Williams, OAM, were also in attendance. We had apologies from the Hon. Duncan Gay and the Hon. Melinda Pavey.

It was a truly bipartisan, nation-building project. It is a significant event for New South Wales transport. I again thank everyone in Transport for NSW and all the contractors and workers who have contributed to this project over many decades. In fact, when working out how long the project had been going, archival footage of old-style caravans from the fifties was found. This process has been going on for many years in the outback. Together with the men and women who have made those incredible personal sacrifices to complete this work, Transport for NSW has realised a fully sealed highway network for the first time in our State's history. Indeed, it is a great achievement for any State in this extensive Commonwealth to have a fully sealed highway network.

Those men and women came together over months, years and decades and put their shoulders to the wheel to complete this mammoth, seemingly unending and historic task. On behalf of everyone in those remote regional areas, I say thank you. Those people have improved safety on our outback roads for future generations. They have increased productivity for farmers and freight carriers in some of the remotest areas of our State. They have made it so much easier for people to get to hospital and other health services, to get to school and other educational opportunities, to pursue important work and other economic opportunities, and even to do things that those in the metropolitan regions take for granted, such as playing sport and gathering for social meetings. Those people are an inspiration to us all. On behalf of the people of New South Wales, and indeed our nation, I acknowledge that we owe them a debt of gratitude forever. I thank the House.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** I thank the member for Maitland. That was well sung.

### **COAL ROYALTIES**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (20:12):** The Sydney electorate is deeply concerned that the unprecedented challenges associated with climate change and the rising cost of living require government investment to ensure that New South Wales can transition to a clean and green future and prevent environmental erosion, disaster and poverty. Coal is a dirty fossil fuel that is contributing to these challenges. Extracting and burning coal produces huge greenhouse gas emissions, which impact on weather events, food and water security and housing displacement. As a source of energy, coal is becoming unaffordable, and coalmining communities are at risk of economic shock as the world transitions away from coal. Profits from coal should be invested in solutions to these challenges. The war in Ukraine has created an unexpected short-term boom in the price of thermal coal, providing a rare opportunity to access new funds from it. I welcome the 2.6 per cent increase in the mining royalties rate, which has not risen since 2008. But new rates will not apply until next year and the flat rate will stay the same regardless of how high coal prices go.

Last year the Queensland Government introduced a new, improved royalty scheme to ensure that the people of Queensland would gain from increased coal prices. Queensland already had three brackets of royalty rates that increased as coal prices rose. It has now increased the number of brackets to six, reaching 40 per cent when the price rises to \$300 a tonne or more. Higher rates, though, only apply to the part of the price above the threshold, making the rates at the higher end only 12.3 per cent higher than what was paid under the previous policy. The maximum rate for New South Wales coal royalties will only rise to a maximum of 10.8 per cent for open-cut mines.

Using data on the export prices and volumes sold published by the Department of Industry, Science and Resources, the Australia Institute calculated the additional revenue New South Wales would have earned in the 2021-22 financial year if the Queensland rates applied here. In that period, New South Wales exported 144 million tonnes of thermal coal and 26 million tonnes of coking coal at prices ranging from \$118 per tonne to \$378 per tonne, which means we could have reaped \$2.8 billion in additional revenue each year. The institute's estimates for this financial year, based on published prices for the first quarter of the year and high and low forecasts for the three remaining quarters, suggest that we could increase royalty income by between \$4.2 billion and \$6.2 billion this year. Under new rates introduced, the State's budget is only forecast to benefit from an additional \$2.7 billion over four years. Every cent of additional profit from the rise in coal prices will line the pockets of multinational mining companies that are operating in this State, with no benefit to the community.

The coal in the State's earth belongs to the people—not the mining companies that exploit it—and we should get something back, particularly at a time when we urgently need to invest in generational infrastructure. We need to transition every aspect of society—including energy, transport, housing, construction and agriculture—to prevent global warming. We need to establish new green industries in coalmining communities to

help them survive the transition, including through the Royalties for Rejuvenation Fund, which is only funded for \$25 million a year for four different regions. We need to disaster-proof communities from fire, flood, drought and heatwaves and ensure that housing can adapt to the new environment.

Importantly, we need to build 5,000 new social housing homes every year for the next 10 years just to house those on the waiting list. Ensuring that coal companies can make mega profits out of the war in Ukraine is not a priority. It is time that the people of the State get a share in the benefits of soaring commodity prices. The mining boom of the 2000s was a missed opportunity. While it may have helped us stave off the impacts of the global financial crisis, ultimately the mining companies reaped the benefits through massive profits with little generational infrastructure to show for it. We do not want the legacy of this new boom—which will not last forever—to be nothing more than holes in the ground as miners clear out. I call on the Government to follow Queensland's lead and introduce a price-based coal royalties system that ensures that the people of New South Wales benefit from increased coal prices.

#### LAKE MACQUARIE ELECTORATE SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (20:17):** Here we are: We have reached the final sitting day, I believe, of 2023. Undoubtedly it has been a big year for everyone here. There has been a change of government, a change of Speaker and many new faces around the building. We will all leave here this evening—hopefully!—and return to our communities to consider the year that has been, our priorities for 2024, and hopefully take a little time to relax and be with our loved ones. Unfortunately, for many in our communities, and particularly this year, the festive season is not a time of joy and happiness. Rather, it is a time of increased stress, anxiety and, for many, loneliness.

The community of Lake Macquarie is a generous one that I am proud to represent. We have many local charities and not-for-profit groups operated by an army of local volunteers. While naming them all in this Chamber today would probably take up my allotted five minutes, I acknowledge the work of Southlakes Incorporated, Survivor's R Us, Wyee Community Hub, the Salvation Army and the Toronto Community Kitchen. Those local community groups provide so much to support our community, particularly at this time of year.

Recently I have been speaking a lot to these local not-for-profit groups, and what they have been telling me is very concerning. They tell me they have never seen the need in the community to be so great. They tell me that the demand on their services has never been so high. They are telling me that this year it is not only the homeless, the unemployed and pensioners seeking assistance but also a growing number of working families in financial crisis. These working families, after paying rent and bills, have no money left in the bank for food, let alone the little extras for Christmas. Thankfully, our local charities are there to provide some little extra comforts for our community members in need. But our local charities are telling me that this year they are unable to meet the community's demands.

All members in this House are aware of the housing crisis in this State, particularly the lack of public and affordable housing. As at 31 October, there were 708 households in Lake Macquarie on the New South Wales social housing waitlist, with 50 of these being priority cases. The median wait time for social housing applicants in Lake Macquarie in September this year was 25.4 months, which is over two years. For priority applicants, it was 3.7 months. This is unacceptable. The growing demand for social housing has a flow-on effect on the demand for crisis accommodation. It means that there are more people in need of crisis accommodation and needing this accommodation for longer periods. Adding to the challenge, over the summer holiday period in popular tourist areas such as Lake Macquarie many of the properties that would be used for crisis accommodation are rented out as tourist accommodation through short-term holiday letting. This means there is less crisis accommodation available over these periods.

Currently, homeless shelters in the region are full every night. Local charities are providing tents as a temporary housing option and local not-for-profit groups are looking at available private car parks to allow the increasing number of people living in their cars a safer place to sleep and access to basic living facilities. Our local not-for-profit support services are telling me that in 40 years their staff have never witnessed what they are witnessing now. They have accepted that they are no longer able to keep people "safe"; instead they are doing their best to keep people "safer". The right to an adequate standard of living, including adequate shelter, is a universal human right. We are failing to provide this to a growing number of people in our community.

I understand that this issue is one the Government has inherited; it is a complex issue and I acknowledge the steps that the Government has taken to address this problem, including increasing the initial period of temporary accommodation provided. These steps are welcome and helpful, but they do not address the main problem—the lack of available temporary and social housing. I know that tackling social housing and homelessness is a priority for the Government. Getting people into secure social housing absolutely must be a key priority, but these projects take time and we need to find a way to keep people safe, not just "safer", as a matter

of urgency. This may require some creative solutions. There are many local community groups and not-for-profit organisations in my area that are desperate to assist the Government with fast-tracking crisis accommodation projects. They need funding to help them do this. We must take every opportunity to engage with these groups to explore every possible solution to this problem now.

### MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

**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) (20:21):** Australia celebrated a big anniversary this week. It has been 75 years since the first wholly Australian-made car, the Holden FX, rolled off the production line. On seeing the first Holden, then Prime Minister Ben Chifley—a Labor legend who believed in Australian manufacturing—famously said, "She's a beauty!" Those three words spoke to the local skill and ingenuity that not only built the Holden car but also powered a domestic manufacturing sector of the highest calibre that has employed millions over the years and shaped modern Australia.

The manufacturing sector continues to be a leading employer in south-west Sydney. My electorate of Macquarie Fields has the eighth-largest manufacturing workforce in the State. My electorate boasts many locally owned businesses, based largely in the Ingleburn and Minto industrial areas, that specialise in traditional and advanced manufacturing. Arguably the most famous is the Darrell Lea factory at Ingleburn. Darrell Lea is a proud Australian creation whose Ingleburn factory employs 300 people and is the largest manufacturing site for liquorice, rocky road and liquorice allsorts in the world. Earlier this month I was pleased to attend, alongside the Prime Minister and the Federal member for Macarthur, Dr Michael Freeland, the reopening of the newly expanded Ingleburn site, designed to meet the growing appetite overseas for Darrell Lea sweets. What a remarkable achievement for an iconic Australian manufacturer.

There are other manufacturing success stories in the Macquarie Fields electorate. Eilbeck Cranes and Eilbeck Heavy Machining is a fourth-generation family-owned business, currently led by Tom Eilbeck and his son Charlie. The Eilbeck company employs 200 workers across four manufacturing sites in Ingleburn, where the largest crane ever built in Australia was made. When I travel around my electorate and the State as the Minister for Industry and Trade and I see Eilbeck cranes in factories, I take a great deal of pride in the local manufacturing ingenuity. DECO Australia, founded by Ross Doonan, is another local family-owned manufacturing business with a large factory in Minto, which is also expanding. It specialises in timber-look aluminium products. The Prime Minister and I have also visited that factory on a number of occasions. To the Prime Minister's credit, he promised that if he was elected he would come back to DECO and open this advanced manufacturing business. True to his word, he did open it and it is a great boost for local manufacturing.

There are many other businesses that I could talk about if I had the time. The success of these local manufacturing businesses illustrates the enormous potential of the sector, not only in my electorate but also across New South Wales. Most of this potential was lost by the previous Liberal-Nationals Government. The number of manufacturing jobs lost over the past two years should come as no surprise to anybody when the former Government was obsessed with building trains, trams, buses and ferries anywhere but here in New South Wales—and of course many were riddled with defects. The then Liberal Premier insulted our manufacturing workers and businesses by saying that our State is not good at building things. Our State has a proud history of building things and Labor has a proud history of backing domestic manufacturing, as the legacy of Ben Chifley shows. The Minns Labor Government is continuing that tradition with our commitment to building things again here in New South Wales. This is the platform that we were elected on and this is the platform that we are determined to deliver.

Our Government's commitment to backing our manufacturing sector is underscored by New South Wales having its first ever Minister for Domestic Manufacturing and Government Procurement. Through TAFE, we are investing in the skills needed to revive and grow our traditional and advanced manufacturing sectors in Western Sydney, the Hunter and Illawarra. This is about creating jobs, raising wages, growing our economy and empowering small businesses to be bigger businesses. The Government believes New South Wales is great at making things. I see this in my electorate, but as the Minister I see it all across New South Wales. Under a Labor Government, no longer will domestic manufacturing be ignored and abandoned. Because, like Ben Chifley said 75 years ago, we can make some real beauties.

### NORTHERN BEACHES DOMESTIC VIOLENCE NETWORK

**Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (20:26):** Saturday 25 November was the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. It kicked off the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, a global initiative to draw attention to the desperate need to eliminate violence against women. To coincide with this period of advocacy, the Northern Beaches Domestic Violence Network hosted its gala dinner



on Saturday 25 November at the Manly Leagues Club. It was a fantastic evening and brought together the most amazing speakers and many people who work to support women and children impacted by domestic and family violence on the northern beaches.

The primary objectives of the Northern Beaches Domestic Violence Network are to identify the needs, address service deficiencies, and drive projects and issues aimed at enhancing education, awareness, support and services in addressing domestic violence in the northern beaches. This network is a collaborative effort of over 30 organisations. The network model of organisations working together with a shared objective is a real achievement for the sector on the northern beaches. I am told this is not the case everywhere. I am pleased to say that the Northern Beaches Domestic Violence Network will soon be launching its first website, which we had a sneak preview of at the gala dinner. This will be an excellent resource for our community. Over 200 people attended the gala dinner and raised a lot of money. The most moving part of the evening was a procession with 53 candles, each representing a woman who lost her life due to domestic violence in Australia this year, but also a child only one week old.

Each of those individuals loved and was loved and has been robbed of the rich life she could have led. Each one is a tragedy. I acknowledge and particularly thank Rachael Leah Jackson, who organised the event. Rachael is a powerhouse in our community and made an enormous contribution to coordinate the event, which was a huge success. I also thank Narelle Hand, the manager of the Northern Beaches Women's Shelter. She deserves a special shout-out for her formidable leadership over many years. The consistent call of advocates against domestic violence in my electorate is to expand the Staying Home Leaving Violence program run by the Department of Communities and Justice to northern Sydney and across the State.

The Staying Home Leaving Violence program flips the paradigm that the victim must leave their family home to escape abuse by working in cooperation with the NSW Police Force to remove the perpetrator instead. That means the woman can stay with her children in her home and maintain proper connections to schools, family and community. The success of the program has been widely acknowledged, including recently when it received an honourable mention at the Premier's Awards for excellence in service delivery. Unfortunately the Staying Home Leaving Violence program only operates in some parts of the State. It was great to see all sides of the House support the motion I moved last week in the public interest debate, which included calling on the Government to investigate expanding the Staying Home Leaving Violence program. I look forward to following up with the Minister and others in this House on this matter because it can be done.

In correspondence from the Minister, we have been told that over four years, from 2021-22, \$32 million was invested to expand Staying Home Leaving Violence. That investment resulted in Staying Home Leaving Violence expanding its geographic footprint from 33 to 84 locations across New South Wales, which will help support an additional 2,100 women and children. What a worthwhile investment; I want to see it go further. With vexed public policy problems like domestic and family violence, it can be hard to find interventions that work. But in the Staying Home Leaving Violence program we have an innovative model that is effective. The program has been comprehensively evaluated and the evidence shows that it works. The Government should absolutely expand the Staying Home Leaving Violence program.

I thank the Minister's office for their work developing the Domestic and Family Violence Resource Pack for all electorate offices. They have been engaging with my office to get feedback on the document, and when finalised it will be a great resource for all our offices so we can respond to constituents sensitively, direct them to the services and support them where appropriate. I look forward to continuing my advocacy on this vital topic next year, working with every member in the House. We must eliminate violence against women and children and do these people out of a job because, frankly, we can do better. Men are responsible for the problem and we need to do better. We need to lead by example. I thank all members who supported my motion in the public interest debate last week.

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (20:31):** I acknowledge the member for Wakehurst's private members' statement and the public interest debate. In my earlier life I worked a lot in domestic violence, in refuges and in advocacy, and I often puzzle on what else we can do. The statistics of women dying from domestic violence, or murder, are not acceptable. I know it is not an issue of politics; it is an issue of all of us working together. I know all sides do that. What else can we do? We have to be stronger, more vocal and keep working to change attitudes. I thank the member for Wakehurst for lending his voice to the issue. It is important to have lots of voices and important to have the voices of men too.

#### **BREAST CANCER SCREENING**

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (20:32):** Last weekend at Burwood Library we organised a breast screening workshop for members of the Chinese community in partnership with the Cancer Council of New South Wales and the Chinese Australian Services Society [CASS], which is a very active multicultural community association

in my area. The workshop was part of Wellbeing Strathfield, which was our initiative to stitch together a holistic view of wellbeing that includes physical, mental, social, financial, and environmental wellbeing. This was our fourth big Wellbeing Strathfield event. Others included our inaugural Walk and Talk event at Wangal Park; a brain health seminar about healthy aging with special guest Parliamentary Secretary for Health, Dr Michael Holland, as well as brain health experts at the Australian Catholic University campus in Strathfield; a Strathfield budget briefing with New South Wales Treasurer Daniel Mookhey, which was all about economic wellbeing; and a CPR training event in Burwood Park for members of the multicultural community.

I have said a number of times that the community and the residents of my electorate of Strathfield are very diverse. Some 30 per cent have a Chinese background; 20 per cent have an Indian background; 3 per cent or 4 per cent have a Korean background; and there are a range of other diversities and heritages. We wanted to think about how we could leverage the talents of those communities that do things differently, and also try to understand the language barriers, cultural barriers and other barriers that mean people from diverse backgrounds do not understand, do not have access to or do not know about important government services. Cancer screening is one of those services. We know that it is important to catch cancer early and start treatment early. Waiting or not knowing and not detecting cancer leads to a risk that the cancer may spread, worsening the prognosis.

The aim of the breast cancer screening workshop was to raise awareness among the Chinese community of the Strathfield electorate that may not have heard or may not know that the government offers free breast cancer screening services targeted at women between the ages of 50 and 74. It was a really successful event. Over 100 women from the community attended, listening to presentations from Professor Xiaoshu Zhu and her team from Western Sydney University, and the Cancer Council. Importantly, the workshops were simultaneously translated in both Mandarin and Cantonese to make sure women in our community from migrant backgrounds could understand the information. It was great to see the local Federal MP for Reid, Sally Sitou, attend the event.

I acknowledge BreastScreen NSW, which is jointly funded by the State and Federal governments. That is the organisation that provides breast cancer screening services across New South Wales and the country. The website for BreastScreen NSW is available in community languages, including Chinese, Vietnamese and Arabic. The Translating and Interpreting Service can be called on 131 450 free of charge and people can ask to be connected to BreastScreen NSW in order to book an appointment.

This was really important because the research shows that in New South Wales cancer screening rates amongst people from migrant communities are 30 per cent lower than the general population. Making these services available in different community languages is vitally important. But that is not all we can do. It is really important that public health messages, information and support services are translated into different languages and disseminated to media channels that we know reach different multicultural communities. Face-to-face discussions are also very important. I thank the Cancer Council and CASS and my terrific electorate staff for putting on a really important and impactful event.

#### VAUCLUSE ELECTORATE

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (20:37):** As we draw to the end of the year, and on this final sitting day for 2023, I reflect on the many amazing people and organisations in my electorate of Vaucluse. Every day I feel grateful for the opportunity I have been given to represent my community and be their voice in this place. I thank everyone for the warm welcome; I feel so fortunate. We are entering the busy festive period and so I have many people to thank, starting with frontline emergency workers in the eastern suburbs. While many of us wind down towards the end of the year, this can be an incredibly busy period for emergency workers. I thank our firefighters, paramedics, SES volunteers, nurses and doctors for their tireless work to keep us safe and healthy. I know how hard our police in the eastern suburbs, led by Detective Superintendent Jodi Radmore, have worked over the past few months. Many police officers in the eastern suburbs have cancelled leave and worked around the clock. We appreciate that so much.

I thank our teachers for the incredible job they do. As we round out the year, I thank them for their dedication to ensuring that our children are educated well, and for their patience, the endless hours of marking they do and the countless hours of music recitals, sport, debating and all the other co-curricular activities they are involved with. On a personal note, I also thank the three local teachers who look out for my boys for their patience. They probably do a little bit better than I do. I thank the thousands of incredible small and family businesses in the Vaucluse electorate. The past few years have been incredibly tough on small business owners, and we need to recognise that the current cost-of-living crisis and the cost of doing business is hurting many of them. Keep up the great work; we appreciate you. I encourage everyone in my community to support those local businesses. Keep an eye out for hospitality workers at this busy time of year. Many of them are sacrificing time with their families. Be kind, tip well and wish them a merry Christmas—I certainly will.

I acknowledge the local councils in the electorate of Vacluse: Waverley Council and Woollahra Municipal Council. I have had special insight into just how hard they work in every corner of my electorate, and how dedicated they are, because they care about their community. I thank them and look forward to working with them again in the new year. I wish the Jewish community in my electorate a happy Hanukkah, which begins on 7 December and will be marked by the lighting of a candle. Every night another candle will be lit until all eight lights are kindled on the menorah. It is a reminder that a little light goes a long way. It signifies the triumph of light over darkness, and I think there is a lot in that for all of us.

I recognise that the Christmas period is an important time for those of the Christian faith as they celebrate and reflect on the birth of Jesus Christ. I also note that those in the Greek and Russian Orthodox churches celebrate Christmas on 7 January, so the hits keep rolling for all of us. I, for one, like to enjoy all of those special times. However, the biggest chunk of people in my electorate are aligned with no faith. I know it is still a special and blessed time of year for them with their families. In an electorate like mine, the coastline is almost a religion in itself. Enjoy Bondi Beach, the coastline, Parsley Bay and all the other treasures the area has. They are the gifts under the Christmas tree.

I wish the staff in my electorate office a very merry Christmas. I thank Carol, Dylan and Nick deeply. We say every day that we are not in the business of politics, we are community representatives. When we wake up in the morning, the first thing we think about is our constituents, and they are the last thing we think about at the end of the day. We are here for our constituents. They are a great team, an extension of what I do, and a credit to me and my electorate. I thank them. To everyone in my electorate, I say have a safe and wonderful summer. Be around friends and be positive. I am grateful for the job and the opportunity they have given me and I look forward to developing friendships with them even further in 2024. I thank them all.

#### MR MANISH GUPTA

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (20:42):** I deliver a special farewell to a friend of all sides of the political spectrum, the Indian consul-general in Sydney, Mr Manish Gupta, and his wonderful wife, Mrs Nimeesha Gupta. During his time in Australia, Mr Gupta has woven lasting bonds with the Indian community and beyond, fostering connections that extend far beyond diplomatic lines. As someone who represents a large and growing Indian diaspora, I can say with confidence that his work connecting with my community has been invaluable and appreciated. His ability to cultivate relationships with Ministers, politicians, diplomats and dignitaries of all levels has been nothing short of extraordinary. His charm, dignity, diligence, dedication and drive have not only defined his role as consul-general, but also set an unprecedented standard for excellence. Premier Chris Minns recently said to Mr Gupta:

Whoever takes your place will have very big shoes to fill, but you have made such a great place in our hearts, that we warmly welcome the path ahead with your successor.

Regarding the redefined and reinvigorated diplomatic relationship and the strength of bond through Mr Gupta's leadership and efforts, the Premier went on to say:

The ties between New South Wales and India are not just diplomatic; they are threads that weave through the fabric of our shared values and ambitions.

Mr Gupta has undoubtedly made an incredible and indelible mark on all the lives he has touched and all the people he has met here. He was one of the first people to congratulate me on becoming the new member for Riverstone and he inspired me to recently form the Parliamentary Friends of India. In this capacity, I have had the utmost pleasure and privilege to get to know Mr Gupta on a deeper personal and professional level. I share some quotes from him from some of our many memorable meetings and dynamic discussions. He once said:

In forging connections, we build bridges that withstand the test of time, creating a legacy of friendship and cooperation. Diplomacy is not just about dialogue between nations; it's about understanding the shared aspirations that bind us together.

Mr Gupta's tenure as the consul-general has been nothing short of transformative, leaving a dynamic and deep mark on the diplomatic landscape and fostering a legacy that will endure for years to come. From the bustling streets of Sydney to the corridors of power across Australia, Mr Gupta has been a bridge builder, connecting communities and nations in a way that transcends traditional diplomatic boundaries. Under his leadership, the Consulate-General of India has become a hub of cultural exchange: a place where the rich tapestry of India's traditions meets the vibrant multiculturalism of Australia, where *Advance Australia Fair* meets *vasudhaiva kutumbakam*, which means "one world, one family".

In his distinguished tenure, Mr Gupta has demonstrated an unparalleled commitment to fostering bilateral ties between Australia and India. The depth of his engagement has, in many ways, redefined the nature of our relationships. His impact has not only been felt within the Indian community but also resonates across diverse sectors, creating an interconnection of relationships that reflects the strength of unity in diversity. One cannot speak of Mr Gupta's tenure without acknowledging the profound connections he has forged. His ability to build

lifelong bonds within the Indian community and beyond is a testament to his genuine commitment to fostering understanding, respect and cooperation. He has been a familiar face in local communities, engaging in grassroots initiatives that have strengthened the people-to-people ties between our two nations. His charismatic presence and approachability have endeared him to Australians and Indians alike, creating a sense of shared belonging not limited to geographical distances.

Finally, I share one of the most significant and symbolic sentiments that stuck in my mind at one of the first events I attended with Mr Gupta, which truly embodies everything his office and nation represents:

As a Consul General, my role extends beyond the confines of an office. It is about building bridges that connect the hearts and minds of our communities.

I say to my dear friend Mr Gupta that his tenure as consul-general, along with his wife, Nimeesha, has been a chapter of profound significance in the Australia-India narrative. His legacy is one of inclusivity, collaboration and enduring friendship. As he embarks on his new role as the High Commissioner to Ghana, he carries with him the gratitude, admiration and warm wishes of all those who have had the privilege of working alongside him. I wish him and Mrs Gupta the very best in their future endeavours. May their journey ahead be as enriching and impactful as the one they leave behind. I thank them for their unwavering commitment to strengthening the ties between Australia and India. Before they go to Ghana, as the famous Bollywood song goes, "kabhi alvida naa kehna", which means "never say goodbye for good". I hope to see them soon. As a co-founder of the Parliamentary Friends of India, I am sure our paths will cross again, dear dost, in this Parliament and personally.

### NEWTOWN ELECTORATE COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (20:48):** What a year it has been. No matter where members sit in this place, I suspect we can all agree on one thing: This year has come and gone at a relentless pace. It started with an election that delivered a change of government with a minority government in this Parliament, and is drawing to a close with a whirlwind of late-night parliamentary sittings. It has certainly been an incredibly tense year in this place and beyond. As the cost-of-living and climate crises have continued to worsen, our communities have come together to raise their voices and demand that those of us with the privilege of representing them take action. As the member for Newtown for over eight years, I have had the privilege of representing one of the most progressive parts of the State, if not the country. The Newtown electorate is home to a community that continues to show that with a bit of courage, commitment and conviction, we can make the world a better place for all of us.

Our Newtown community cares. From the significant issues facing our local community, such as rubbish collection, streetlights, and local resident parking, to pushing for global action on human rights and climate change and standing alongside marginalised communities, no issue is too big or too small. Together, we continue to work to hold the Government and those in power to account. Where they fail to create meaningful, lasting change, we do that by pushing them and building strong movements for change, locally and globally.

Local residents' action groups like REDWatch, Friends of Erskineville and the Alexandria Residents' Action Group are vital in keeping our community connected and informed of the issues that impact us all. I thank them and all of their volunteers for their tireless work in bringing us all together. But some of the issues that affect us go well beyond the boundaries of the Newtown electorate. Earlier this year, when the transphobic bigotry and harmful anti-LGBTIQA+ rhetoric spiked during Sydney WorldPride, I had the privilege of standing alongside staunch local organisers such as Pride in Protest and Community Action for Rainbow Rights, who were among the first to speak out locally in Newtown.

As both the member for Newtown and The Greens housing spokesperson, I have had the honour of working closely with the growing grassroots movement for renters' rights and housing justice. I thank Action for Public Housing, the Get a Room campaign, Hands Off Glebe and all public housing tenants and housing justice advocates organising to defend and extend the public housing system in the State. We know that the systems that create housing injustice in Newtown and beyond are the same systems that create income and wealth inequality and allow it to fester. I acknowledge Students Against Placement Poverty, who are speaking out against the injustice of unpaid student placements and pushing for change, and Food Not Bombs, who help feed those who need it while highlighting the hypocrisy of a government that can spend billions of dollars on warfare but not provide a reliable social safety net.

I give a shout-out to the Sydney Anti-AUKUS Coalition, who have been doing powerful work to organise our inner-west and inner-city communities against the horrendous AUKUS deal. I thank the many community groups who continue to push the State and Federal Labor governments to act faster and harder on climate change. Students striking and walking out of school for the climate, the Sydney Climate Coalition, Rising Tide and The Greens know that all the challenges our communities have faced this year are interconnected. There can be no housing justice without climate justice; there can be no climate justice without racial justice; and there can be no racial justice without First Nations justice. To this end, I acknowledge and thank the incredibly tireless staunch

activists within Blak Caucus and FISTT, who have this year—amidst horrifically elevated levels of racism against First Nations people and communities in the media and public discourse—continued their intersectional and powerful campaigns against systemic racism and black deaths in custody and highlighted the need for treaty and recognition of sovereignty.

On this note I also acknowledge the courage of those who have been organising to build solidarity with Palestinian people as the situation in Gaza continues to deteriorate, many of whom live, work or study in the electorate of Newtown. We see them, we hear them and we thank them for their unwavering efforts, including tonight's action of raising the Palestinian flag on the grounds of the University of Sydney. I thank all these groups and individuals, and the rank-and-file trade unionists, academics, experts and activists, and the many local Greens members whom I rely on for their guidance and advice. I thank them for all they do to work with us to make the world a better place.

### **SOCRATES DASSAKLIS**

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (20:53):** It is with a deep sense of gratitude and admiration that I pay tribute to an extraordinary individual who has played a pivotal role in shaping the destiny of Tempe High School in my electorate. I speak not only to acknowledge the retirement of a remarkable principal but also to celebrate the dedication and legacy of one of the finest school principals a local member can hope for, Mr Socrates Dassaklis. Socrates arrived at Tempe High School in 2009 as the deputy principal, which was a role he embraced with passion and commitment. Just four years later, in 2013, he assumed the mantle of principal, steering the ship through the challenges of overseeing a school with a selective stream and a student body of nearly 1,000 students. The success and excellence that Tempe High School has achieved over the years are in no small part attributed to Socrates' leadership.

As the local member, I have witnessed firsthand the transformative impact a dedicated and visionary principal can have on a school. While I recognise the hard work of all the school's educators and staff, let us not forget that the essence of a great school lies in the quality of its principal. Education, as we know, is the bedrock of our nation, and the challenges faced by the education system are manifold. Yet, under Socrates' stewardship, Tempe High School has not only met these challenges but excelled beyond expectations. It comes as no surprise to me that Socrates has earned a reputation as one of the hardest working principals in the State, and his dedication has provided the young men and women of Tempe with tremendous opportunities for growth and learning.

Socrates' tenure as the principal of Tempe High School has been characterised by his professional excellence and also by the genuine warmth and admiration he has garnered from the school community. His amiable nature, approachability and unwavering commitment to the wellbeing of both students and staff have endeared him to all who have had the privilege of working alongside him. His personable leadership style, coupled with a deep understanding of the individual needs of those within the school, has created a culture of trust, respect and camaraderie. It is this affability and genuine care that has made him not just a respected principal but a beloved member of the community who leaves an indelible mark on the hearts of all those who have had the honour of knowing him.

No aspect of the running of Tempe High School has been too minute or trivial for Socrates' attention. Be it watering the sunflower seeds he recently planted or raising chooks on site, Socrates has always run a tight ship. In fact, during my most recent visit he even reported to me how many eggs the school's chicken had laid. He made headlines in 2017 for his commitment to maintaining high uniform standards. This attention to detail demonstrates his belief in setting a standard that students can rise to, building self-esteem while also acting as a leveller to foster a sense of unity and shared responsibility amongst the student body. These principles mirror perfectly the role that high-quality education plays in an egalitarian society as the great leveller that opens the door for every child to pursue any future they wish. But no child can prosper with ambition alone and Socrates' outside-the-box initiatives, such as the dedicated student chill-out zone in a repurposed bus, typify not only his willingness to think creatively but also his genuine concern for the mental wellbeing of the students. It is this combination of commitment to academic excellence and a holistic approach to student development that has set him apart as an inspirational leader.

As Tempe prepares to bid farewell to a man who has devoted 14 years of his life to the betterment of Tempe High School, on behalf of our community and New South Wales, I express my heartfelt gratitude and extend a sincere thank you to Socrates for his unwavering dedication, his countless contributions to the education system and the impact he has had on the lives of the thousands of students he has guided and nurtured. His retirement is not just a loss to Tempe High School but a major loss to education, to the community and to our State. As I look toward the future, I do so with both appreciation for Socrates' legacy and anticipation for the continued success of Tempe High School, knowing that the extraordinary foundations he has laid will endure for generations to come. I thank Mr Dassaklis for being a beacon of inspiration, a catalyst for positive change and a

true leader in the field of education. May his retirement be as fulfilling and rewarding as the countless lives he has touched throughout his remarkable career.

### COWRA HOSPITAL

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (20:58):** Exactly one week ago today, I was delivered news that we never want to hear as a local MP. I was told that a much-needed and long-promised investment in the health and wellbeing of not just my community but also of the many communities throughout the entire Central West was being axed. Following advice from the Western NSW Local Health District, the New South Wales Labor Government was no longer going to fund two new inpatient beds for a dedicated Tresillian residential inpatient service as part of the redevelopment of Cowra Hospital. To be honest, I still cannot believe it, and I am very hopeful that once I provide further context around the need for this service to the Minister for Regional Health, he will be open to facilitating a different outcome.

I say this knowing that the Minister has a very real and genuine interest in ensuring that the health needs of those in the regions are met—and I certainly commend him for that. Particularly when it comes to Tresillian, I know that the Minister is a big supporter of the work that it does. I note that in July he was on hand to cut the ribbon at the Tresillian Family Care Centre in Griffith. In a social media post that day, he paid tribute to the essential services it provides:

Tresillian ... do a really phenomenal job providing absolutely vital care and support for young families and I know this new centre will make a huge difference.

I could not have said it better myself. Tresillian does an amazing job and makes such a huge difference in the lives of the people that it helps. While we fought hard and have secured a family care centre for Cowra, there are no Tresillian inpatient services west of the divide in New South Wales. That means that any families who have particular challenges with their newborns and their little ones must travel for hours, far from home, to either Canberra or Sydney to receive those specialised services provided by Tresillian. That sort of upheaval takes a toll on a young family, and it is such a stressful time.

Given that it is a brand new hospital being built in Cowra, the whole idea was to be able to provide Tresillian's critical essential services close to where people live—close to their support network of family and friends—and Cowra, as a location, makes so much sense. It is a highly central location in the Central West—so much so that the councils right across the region all locked in to unanimously support the positioning of the Tresillian inpatient beds at Cowra. That includes Forbes, Parkes, Orange, Bathurst, Lachlan, Upper Lachlan—the list goes on and on. The chair of the Central NSW Joint Organisation of councils, councillor John Medcalf, said:

The Board once again unanimously resolved to provide continued support for a ... Residential Unit to be incorporated in the redevelopment of Cowra Hospital.

For our communities to be afforded the opportunity to have a well-regarded specialist residential service in addition to the day service is absolutely vital.

This made a lot of sense to a lot of people. I have sought an urgent meeting with the regional health Minister, and I hope very much that he will allow me the chance to explain the situation on the ground so that he can be left in no doubt about the consequences of cutting Tresillian from the Cowra Hospital redevelopment. In doing so, I am imploring him to overturn the decision.

I genuinely believe it is absolutely the wrong call. It is one that has been made without any community engagement by the Western NSW Local Health District, despite the fact that we had to go through years and years of community consultation to finalise the clinical services plan to land on the concept for the hospital that we are now building—including the Tresillian inpatient beds. On the eve of the main build commencing, this decision has completely blindsided the mayor, the council and me. Most importantly, it has blindsided the community. It is my very real hope that common sense will prevail, that the vision behind the Tresillian component of the Cowra Hospital project will shine through and that this wrong will soon be made right.

### TRIBUTE TO DR GORUR "HARI" HARINATH, OAM

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (21:03):** Today, with a heavy heart, I remember and honour the extraordinary life of a man who left an incredible mark on the world of cricket, medicine and multiculturalism. Dr Gorur "Hari" Harinath, OAM, was a true legend in every sense. To my family, he was more than the renowned Dr Hari; he was "Dr Hari", a compassionate healer who went beyond the call of duty, providing medical advice and treatment for over three decades in my local area. His commitment to the wellbeing of our family and countless others was a testament to the depth of his character. Beyond the confines of his medical practice, Dr Hari dedicated himself to serving our nation, the game of cricket and the Indian community. His impact on the Indian community in Sydney was unparalleled, and he actively worked towards

fostering closer ties between India and Australia. His vision extended beyond the cricket pitch; it reached into the hearts of those he served, leaving an indelible mark on the multicultural landscape of New South Wales.

Dr Hari's journey began in 1971 when he arrived in Australia from Hyderabad with barely a dollar to his name. His relentless spirit and dedication led him to a highly successful medical career that touched countless lives. Yet, it was his profound connection to the game of cricket that became an inseparable part of his legacy. In 1977 Dr Hari joined the Balmain Cricket Club—later known as Sydney Cricket Club—as its team doctor. His passion and administrative skills soon elevated him to the position of club president, a role that he held for more than three decades. His commitment to the club was unwavering, and his influence extended far beyond the cricket field. In May 2008 Dr Hari made history by becoming the first man of Indian origin to chair Cricket NSW. During his five-year tenure he oversaw transformative projects, securing multimillion-dollar funding grants that revitalised cricket infrastructure across the State. From the revamp of Drummoyne Oval to the establishment of a state-of-the-art facility in Blacktown, his vision and leadership propelled the sport to new heights.

Dr Hari's list of achievements and contributions is nothing short of extraordinary. He held key positions, including chairman of Cricket NSW, member of the Cricket Australia Board, member of the South East Area Health Board, president of the Sydney Cricket Club and member of the New South Wales Centenary of ANZAC Advisory Council. In 2009 he was honoured with the Order of Australia Medal for his outstanding service to cricket and the community at large. Dr Hari's impact reached beyond borders, and in 2017 he was awarded with the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman by the President of India—the highest honour for Indians living overseas. His commitment to fostering inclusivity was further evidenced by his role as chairman of Multicultural NSW, a position he assumed through his extensive involvement and knowledge in the Indian community and dedication to multicultural harmony.

Yet, in the midst of these remarkable achievements, Dr Hari remained a compassionate and caring friend to many. He was not just a doctor to my family; he was a source of comfort and joy. As children, my sons would look forward to their visits to Dr Hari, knowing that he would put them at ease and even offer a gift of jellybeans at the end of the appointments. It was a simple but touching gesture that they never forgot. So much so, when my youngest son grew up and set up practice as a physiotherapist, he, in turn, had the chance to provide Dr Hari with treatment—and, of course, a little bag of jellybeans.

As I and my community reflect on Dr Hari's life, we remember the quiet man whose actions spoke volumes. His legacy will endure in the hearts of those he touched, and his contributions will continue to inspire generations to come. My deepest condolences go out to Dr Hari's family and friends. May they find solace in the memories of a remarkable individual, whose impact will forever resonate in the cricketing world and beyond. Vale, "Hari" Harinath, OAM. He will be dearly missed.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** I thank the member for Heffron and share the House's condolences. Before I call the member for Northern Tablelands, I acknowledge his guest in the gallery, Shannen McDonald. I also acknowledge the President of the Legislative Council, who has found time to come across to the Legislative Assembly. Thank you for joining us, Mr President. I call the member for Northern Tablelands.

#### **NORTHERN TABLELANDS ELECTORATE**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (21:08):** There is no greater honour in life than to be entrusted to represent our community, no nobler pursuit than to serve the community and no greater responsibility than to advocate for the needs and aspirations of the people. On 19 June 2013 I stood in this place to deliver those words. In fact, they were the first words that I uttered in this place in my inaugural speech. I was deeply honoured and beyond excited to get on with the job of representing the fantastic people of the Northern Tablelands. I stand in the Chamber again—albeit on a different side—more than a decade later, still feeling that same enthusiasm, excitement, emotion and passion about representing the Northern Tablelands. I am still incredibly honoured to represent and speak out for that community in this House. What I said then remains true today. The 10-year point of representing the people of the Northern Tablelands is an opportune time to reflect on the work that has been done in partnership with the community and the work that still needs to be done and that remains a priority.

Looking back, a number of achievements stand out that have improved the communities I serve and that stand out from the thousands of wins—both big and small, public and mostly private wins—that have been secured together in the past 10 years. The 2014 construction of the Emu Creek Bridge stands out above all others. The community had fought for that bridge since 1920. I was delighted to work with the Uralla Shire Council and the community of Bundarra to have that bridge built and opened by the then roads Minister, Duncan Gay. The bridge is a real game changer. It is one of the most critical freight routes in the Northern Tablelands, an all-weather access bridge that does not get topped or flooded when it rains. We are looking forward to one of those big floods coming again soon.

The delivery of new hospitals at Armidale and Inverell was a game changer for health services in our region—facilities were over 60 years old and should have been replaced years ago. The new hospitals at Moree and Glen Innes that are underway, or just about to get underway, are exciting for those communities. We provided potable reticulated water for the first time at the village of Biniguy and upgraded supplies at Toomelah, Ashley, and Moree, among many other communities across the electorate. People in many parts of the State take upgrades like that for granted, but they were a godsend for those communities. We delivered the construction of the \$121 million Armidale Secondary College performing arts centre and agriculture campus to revolutionise the delivery of public education in the education city of country New South Wales. We delivered a new police station at Inverell. The Northern Tablelands electorate now boasts three impressive 24-hour police stations at Inverell, Moree and Armidale, which is appropriate for our hardworking men and women in blue.

We delivered new RFS facilities across the electorate; water pipelines; new dams; and the special activation precinct in Moree, locking in thousands of jobs and seeing the economic renaissance of that community half a decade after Copeton Dam was constructed. Moree Plains Shire Council was welcomed into the electorate, Tenterfield Shire Council and Walcha Council were farewelled from the electorate, and then Walcha Council was welcomed back after a redistribution. There are many highlights. In short, over the past 10 years the Northern Tablelands has secured \$2.2 billion in capital investment and there have been nearly 2,000 separate funding announcements, including \$455 million for hospital redevelopments and nearly \$800 million for road works, while 35 brand-new concrete bridges have been built to replace old timber versions. The list goes on.

None of that could have been achieved without working in partnership with the community. I pay tribute to every single mayor and general manager that I have had the pleasure to work with at Tenterfield Shire Council, Guyra Shire Council, Armidale Dumaresq Council, Armidale Regional Council, Glen Innes Severn Shire Council, Gwydir Shire Council, Inverell Shire Council, Moree Plains Shire Council, Uralla Shire Council and now Walcha Council as well. That is quite a few councils in a vast electorate covering 60,000 square kilometres.

My final thanks go to my incredible staff. They are the bulwark, the core and the crux of the operation of the Northern Tablelands machine. I thank Lisa Williams, who is an incredible 20-year veteran of the Parliament. She served my predecessor, Richard Torbay, with great alacrity and loyalty, and she has done the same for me. I would be lost without her. I thank Kaye, Ingrid, Jodie, Julie, Danielle, Lauren, and the inimitable Simon Scott, who travels a lot with me. Lastly, I acknowledge everyone that I have had the pleasure of working with along my journey. It is wonderful to have Shannen in the gallery tonight to share in the 10-year celebration. I thank the people of the Northern Tablelands for working with me and for the past 10 years. They should be proud of what we have achieved together.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** I congratulate the member for Northern Tablelands on 10 years. Before I call the member for South Coast, I welcome Tom Snow back to the gallery.

#### **TERRY SNOW, AM**

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (21:14):** I acknowledge and celebrate Terry Snow, AM, of Bawley Point on the eve of his eightieth birthday. I am honoured to have Tom Snow in the gallery tonight to listen to my private member's statement about his wonderful father. Terry Snow is many things: businessman, forensic accountant, entrepreneur and philanthropist, husband, father, grandfather, and lover of horses and cattle dogs. Terry is the executive chairman of the Capital Airport Group, which contains Canberra Airport and Brindabella Business Park. If members have been to the award-winning Canberra Airport, they will understand when I say that everything that Terry Snow does is exceptional and sets the bar for others to follow, which is especially true for architecture and design.

I first met Terry Snow in June 2016 after our beloved gantry at Bawley Point was washed away during an east coast low that saw many structures along the New South Wales coast demolished by the powerful ocean. The gantry had been standing at Bawley Beach for over 100 years, and it was a rite of passage for local children and holiday-makers alike to get the courage to jump off it. When it washed away, the community was devastated. We all came together at a public meeting to discuss resurrecting our beloved gantry. Terry was sitting a few seats away from me at the meeting. After I had risen to speak on the importance of getting our gantry rebuilt, Terry stood up and stated, "We need a committee and I nominate this woman to be the chair." I am not sure that Terry and I are on the same side of politics, and I am more than certain that neither of us realised at the time that this small action would be the first stepping stone in my career in politics.

Nonetheless, with the generosity of the Snow family and much letter writing and meetings with council by myself, the gantry was rebuilt at Bawley Point so that generations of children and their families can use it for the next 100-plus years. This was the first of many actions of generosity undertaken by Terry Snow that I have personally witnessed, and all for the benefit of others. Terry once told me that he found a love of horses late in life. In 2017 Terry and Ginette opened Willinga Park, an award-winning 810-hectare equine facility in



Bawley Point. Willinga Park was developed to include an equestrian centre, with three Olympic-size dressage arenas, showjumping fields, a campdrafting area, an education centre and now, undeniably, Australia's finest purpose-built vet hospital. If members are visiting the South Coast, they should put Willinga Park on their list. I highly recommend the campdrafting event for a great day out.

While family is paramount for Terry, I have no doubt that of all Terry Snow's many career achievements Willinga Park would be the one he is most proud of. Willinga Park combines the finest equine facilities and stunning architecture with the latest in equine technology and a visitor experience like no other. Willinga Park has received numerous awards, including the Australian Institute of Architects' 2017 National Architecture Awards; the National Award for Commercial Architecture; the 2017 Master Builders Association awards as project of the year; and the 2017 ACT Architecture Awards, at which Willinga Park won the Hayward Morris Award for interior architecture; and the Romaldo Giurgola Award for Public Architecture.

While I became aware of Terry's philanthropy with the rebuilding of the gantry, it was the 2019-20 Currowan fire that showed Terry's true generosity. Terry installed solar-powered automatic generators at our two local RFS stations so that we did not lose communications or water supply when faced with an emergency. The Snow Foundation, under the banner of the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal, has provided rural communities with funds to strengthen the capacity and capability of local people, organisations, networks and systems that help communities to prevent and prepare for future climate-related impacts and recover from existing disasters. I have seen numerous organisations, staff members and initiatives benefit from this program along the South Coast. I know that everyone is the better for Terry's generosity, and we are extremely grateful. Mr Temporary Speaker, may I ask for a short extension of time?

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** The member for South Coast is not able to ask for an extension of time, but she may finish her contribution at the House's indulgence.

**Ms LIZA BUTLER:** I know that there are many other acts of kindness and generosity that Terry has personally undertaken quietly and without any fanfare. I will finish by telling members a story that sums up Terry Snow for me. It was a hot summer's evening and I went to the beach for a swim. The gantry was in the process of being rebuilt and Terry and Ginette were there having a look at the progress. They were accompanied by a couple of cattle dogs. Terry and I were chatting, discussing our dogs and talking about how the gantry was a rite of passage for our children and what was happening at Willinga Park, when Terry turned to me and said, "You know, at the end of the day, it's all about kids and dogs." I wish Mr Snow a happy eightieth birthday. I hope he enjoys his special day with his beloved family. I look forward to seeing him at home in Bawley Point.

### WESTMEAD SOUTH REZONING

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (21:20):** Tonight I place on record concerns many in my community have about the proposed rezoning of Westmead South. That area is an ideal location for higher density, but the way the rezoning has been proposed by Cumberland council and the planning department under the previous Government has not been sensitive or sensible in any way. My concerns start with the area south of the train station, which is where we should be putting the most density. That is where the metro station at Westmead is being proposed. Certainly, I and many in the community are hoping that project will still go ahead, but the proposal by the previous Government was that there would be no units constructed above Westmead station. That station is on both the T1 North Shore and Western Line and the proposed metro line, with a light rail as well.

The previous Government was not going to put any units above it, which is really silly. It lowballed and underpaid the people whose properties it compulsorily acquired. It paid those people what it said was the maximum developable value of the land. Because it was never going to build units on that land, those people did not get a cent more. The plan also excluded from the potential for rezoning and higher density the low-rise units that are now right next to the station. They are outside the area under study, which is also ridiculous. But the planning department has determined that, despite legislative efforts to allow the amalgamation and redevelopment of unit sites, it is all too hard and nothing is going to happen on those sites. A lot of those units are coming to the end of their economic life.

That has also coincided with letters being sent to everybody with kids in primary school in the area alerting them to the fact that from next year—as a result of the poor planning of the previous Government and the failure to deliver needed schools in the area—the boundary for the local catchment of Parramatta High School is moving from Hawkesbury Road to Joyner Street, which is only two streets west of Parramatta High School. Everyone who lives in that area, which is also the subject area of this rezoning, will have to send their kids to Pendle Hill High School, which will take a lot of them an hour to go from door to door. In the geographic centre of Sydney, one would not think that we could suddenly tell people that they will have to take an hour to get to school and then suggest we should be putting more density in that area. It has capacity for more density, but it needs a school, which those opposite never delivered.

I have had a number of conversations with many people in the area about their particular concerns regarding the proposed rezoning. There is a petition to keep the whole area low rise, which hundreds of people have signed. Other people are in the subject area. Three adjoining owners own 6,000 square metres between them but, under the proposed zoning, side amalgamations for higher density would not be allowed on those lots, which is probably a wasted opportunity. Then many others who live in heritage-listed properties have very small site depths. They are only 30 or 40 metres deep and they will be on the south side of six- and eight-storey units, so essentially their entire backyard will be in shadow.

None of those things are particularly sensible or sensitive to the area in question. I am calling on the planning department and the Cumberland council to tear the plan up. They should go back to the very start and put the high-density units next to the station. They should also consider the capacity for site amalgamations of really big blocks of land and consider what is going to happen to the people who own a heritage-listed house but who will not be able to knock it down and redevelop it. Those houses are quite lovely and their owners do not want that, but it will be unpleasant to be in permanent shadow. All those things can be considered in a sensible way that will still deliver a lot more units in Westmead. They should also make sure it coincides with the construction of some new schools because that has been going on for years. It is a real problem.

#### DAVIDSON ELECTORATE

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (21:25):** I speak in the Chamber for the final time in 2023 to give my six-month update to the people of the Davidson community. I note several community wins in the past six months, and I will outline the top three. The first is the confirmation of the cleaning up of graffiti at Forest Way and Warringah Road in Frenchs Forest. By stopping access to the site, people cannot do graffiti. I thank Bruce Johnson, Steven Wright, Lyndall Pearson, James Paterson and Richard Scott for their advocacy to me about that eyesore. As Lyndall told the *Northern Beaches Advocate*, "The standard we walk past is the standard we accept." I know that our community does not accept this graffiti standard. I look forward to Transport for NSW starting and completing the graffiti removal work.

The second is the completion of works at the Killara railway station. That includes three new lifts, extending the overbridge and new canopies. I thank 10-year-old Joy from Killara Public School, who on behalf of the community opened the project in the presence of members of Ku-ring-gai Council: mayor, Councillor Sam Ngai; Councillor Barbara Ward; and Councillor Simon Lennon. I also pay tribute to my predecessor, Jonathan O'Dea, for championing this project. It now means that every Davidson electorate railway station has easy access. That is a win for the disabled, the less mobile and parents with prams.

The third is the completion of stage one and stage two extension works at Lindfield Learning Village in the past financial year. That is our newest local school. The extensions include almost everything from classrooms to theatres and administration. It is on the old University of Technology site. So it is really great that we have been able to keep it as an educational precinct. I thank Principal Stephanie McConnell, all the teachers and the amazing students. But there is still more to do. I am fighting for our community. I am fighting for the \$9.8 million for the commuter car parking at Lindfield that Labor has cut. As I previously told Parliament, that is a kick in the guts for our local community. I thank Support Lindfield, the 416 Group and Ku-ring-gai mayor, Councillor Sam Ngai, for sharing my concerns about this infrastructure cut.

We are fighting to get our fair share of local infrastructure funding at a time when Labor wants to increase housing. I call on everyone to sign the local petition on my website. Together we can fight for our local community. The second thing I am fighting for is upgrades to the intersection at Pacific Highway, Clanville Road and Shirley Road at Roseville. That intersection is an ongoing and serious issue. There have been multiple accidents and near-accidents there almost every day. Transport for NSW advises that a red light camera has been nominated for that intersection on the Pacific Highway. That will help slow down drivers and stop them from running through an orange or red light. I never thought that the populist advocacy in my community would be for a red light camera but there we have it.

A nomination is one thing; the installation is another. So I call on the community to sign my petition on my website and make sure that we get the red light camera installed and help prevent accidents. The third thing is the intersection of Forest Way, Glen Street and Wearden Road in Belrose. I thank Kylie Westren for her leadership in starting a petition, which is now at 1,129 signatures. Given the large amounts of students who walk across the very busy Forest Way, I agree with the petition's suggestions that Transport for NSW construct a large metal fence along both sides of Forest Way and undertake a feasibility study into constructing a pedestrian footbridge connecting both sides of that road. I encourage all residents to sign Kylie's petition. That is also available on my website.

Number four is a development that has occurred in the past week. Wakehurst Football Club contacted me stating that the \$9 million grant to County Road Reserve in Belrose and Nandi Reserve in Frenchs Forest as a part

of the Parks for People program has been cut. I am trying to get to the bottom of this Labor cut, but I encourage the community to sign Wakehurst FC's petition, which is available on my website. I would not be able to do my job without the support of so many people. The first is my community. I said that in my first speech and I will keep saying it until I leave this place. Whether people voted for me or not, I will continue to fight passionately every day for them. I am passionate about your interests and passionate about the public interest, whether it be a strong economy, protecting the environment, investing in infrastructure, promoting integrity or delivering services.

I thank my amazing electorate office staff, Annie Rinaudo, Richard Tilden and Georgia Lowden. I thank my now alumni staffers, Declan Flaherty and Harry Bellamy, who left to take up full-time employment in the private sector. I thank them for their service. I also thank my Liberal Party branch members, led by President Alan Lipman, including Namoi Dougall, Jenny Powell, Brendon Zhu and Sam Ngai. I thank them for their faith in me. Finally, I could not finish without mentioning the love and support of my beautiful wife, Gessika. She is my rock and I believe that she rocks. She brings out the best in me. Thank you. I love you, Gessika.

### **BERRY BYPASS NOISE LEVELS**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (21:30):** As the member for Kiama I am proud to have secured billions of dollars to upgrade roads in my electorate, which has made them safer. Whilst those upgrades have saved lives, I acknowledge that not everyone has been happy with the finished products, not least of which the residents who have been impacted by highway noise. Following the completion of the Berry Bypass project, I received representations from residents who said noise levels had dramatically increased. I was able to convince the then Minister for Roads, Melinda Pavey, to investigate noise levels. She subsequently allocated \$5.3 million in funding to install noise walls in recognition that noise levels had increased beyond acceptable levels.

However, the money allocated did not go as far as it should have, and around 200 residents of The Arbour, a retirement village next to the bypass upgrade, missed out on the noise wall treatment. The new bypass replaced a low-lying, two-lane roadway. A section of the old road adjacent to The Arbour was a 50 kilometre per hour zone controlled by a fixed speed camera, making it a low noise environment. Residents of The Arbour tell me that road noise was not an issue at The Arbour prior to the construction of the Berry Bypass.

As a result of the Berry Bypass, many residents of The Arbour have been exposed to much higher levels of noise. Of particular concern is an increase in peak night-time noise levels, which is making it difficult for residents to sleep. Together with 24/7 noise from the bypass and a general loss of amenity, this has made life very uncomfortable for many residents at The Arbour and, as traffic volumes increase, this is only going to get worse. Despite repeated requests from both Coalition and Labor governments, no credible explanation has ever been provided by Transport for NSW for omitting The Arbour from the noise mitigation program. Whilst I am pleased we were able to secure noise walls to provide relief to residents of Windsor Drive and Huntingdale Park Estate, the plight of those residents is no different than that of the residents of The Arbour, who should not have been excluded from noise abatement treatment.

In 2022 The Arbour commissioned an independent acoustic consultant to conduct a review of the noise mitigation processes utilised on the design and construction of the Berry Bypass. The review and subsequent report highlighted damning shortcomings, errors and omissions in the project's noise mitigation processes. Despite those findings being made by a reputable and professional consultant, Transport for NSW refused to address the report's findings and respond appropriately. Having spoken with many residents of The Arbour, I want to outline some of their concerns.

First, the main source of road noise at The Arbour is from commercial and heavy vehicles travelling at high speed, and this is represented in recorded data as peaks or spikes. The noise data is averaged over a day, and it is that average that is used for compliance purposes, not the maximum or peak levels. Secondly, Transport for NSW has claimed that the bypass has not been significantly realigned. While there have been minimal changes to the road corridor, the new road is significantly higher than the old one and is some four metres adjacent to The Arbour. This has exacerbated the noise problem.

Based on alignment rather than height, Transport for NSW has engaged in a game of semantics and is claiming that the new road is not a new road but a redeveloped road. Believe it or not, different noise standards apply to new roads as opposed to redeveloped roads. I do not accept that this is a redeveloped road. More than half a billion dollars were spent to build a new road. But even if people were to accept the absurd proposition proffered by the department that it is a redeveloped road, why is it that residents impacted by road noise should be treated any differently? I should note for completeness that The Arbour's noise consultant does not accept the proposition that the bypass is a redeveloped road.

Thirdly, one of the arguments used to uphold the proposition that this is a redeveloped road is the bizarre claim by Transport for NSW that the southbound on-ramp adjacent to The Arbour provides, according to the Minister's correspondence, "access to an intersection that was previously inaccessible for that direction". This is simply not true, as the previous intersection was Victoria Street and the Princes Highway. In regard to this on-ramp, Transport for NSW further claims that the motorway is the dominant source of road noise. It seems unlikely that vehicles accelerating uphill from 50 to 100 kilometres per hour would be quieter than similar vehicles cruising at a steady 100 kilometres per hour along the level motorway.

Fourthly, Transport for NSW has made claims and drawn conclusions that require comparison with pre-construction noise levels. The Arbour's consultant has concluded that pre-construction noise level recordings for design modelling of noise levels at The Arbour were not conducted at appropriate locations due to significant differences in topography between the chosen sites and the location of The Arbour. This effectively means that there is no pre-construction baseline noise data against which to measure post-construction noise impacts at The Arbour.

Fifthly, Transport for NSW has ignored the EPA's Road Noise Policy to reflect a different threshold for acceptable noise limits at night. Night-time noise levels are meant to be assessed at 400 decibels as opposed to 550 decibels. Sixth, The Arbour residents have provided information from the project's post-construction report demonstrating that the noise emergence recommended maximum had been exceeded. Page 94 of the Environmental Noise Management Manual requires account to be taken of maximum noise levels. I call on the Government to meet with me to discuss those matters so that I can pursue the issues on behalf of residents.

### DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (21:36):** I draw the attention of the House to the current 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence initiative. I am pleased to see that the shadow Minister for Women, and shadow Minister for Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault is in the House tonight. The annual campaign started this year on 25 November, which is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. The 16 Days of Activism extend up until 10 December this year, which appropriately is Human Rights Day. This campaign started in 1991 when the women at the inauguration of the Women's Global Leadership Institute called for the elimination of violence against girls and women. We need such activism because, on average, one Australian woman is killed by a man they know every 10 days. This violence is not just an issue for women; it is a whole-of-community problem.

It is a disgrace that intimate partner homicide is this country's most common form of homicide. In New South Wales, over 80 people have been killed in family violence homicides in the past five years. The 16 Days of Activism are also about survivors of domestic and family violence. In Australia, one in four women have experienced violence at the hands of an intimate partner after the age of 15, and one in five women experience sexual violence during their lifetime. Tragically, Bureau of Crime Statistics data shows that the rate of domestic and family violence has not decreased in the past 12 years. As members of Parliament and as a society, we clearly need to do more. As members who have been around for a while know, I am very passionate about this issue and about advocating for victim-survivors and their families.

I know that my passion to assist the many victim-survivors of domestic and family violence is shared by many members across both sides of the Chamber, but we could always do with more help from all levels of government. It is the shared responsibility of local, State and Federal governments. It is timely that this year's 16 Days of Activism campaign calls on governments around the world to share how they are investing in gender-based violence prevention. I assure the women and girls of New South Wales that the Minns Labor Government is committed to a reduction in gender-based violence.

I am pleased to report to the House that earlier this month I toured the site of the future Illawarra Women's Trauma Recovery Centre, currently under construction in Shellharbour City Centre. It is a world first, a fully publicly run and owned trauma recovery centre. The centre fit-out is being funded by the New South Wales Government. On behalf of all women in the Illawarra, I give my heartfelt thanks to the Minister for Health, and Minister for the Illawarra, Ryan Park, for his amazing support. I also thank the Federal Government for supporting the trauma recovery centre with ongoing operational funding.

The centre will provide specialised, dedicated and individualised wraparound support for women recovering from the trauma of domestic and family violence. I congratulate Sally Stevenson, Jessica Koot and the entire team from the Illawarra Women's Health Centre for banging on doors—including mine—for many years to make this happen. The Illawarra Women's Trauma Recovery Centre will not only be able to address long-term impacts of trauma but will also work towards breaking the cycles of abuse and trauma. This new trauma recovery centre is important not only for those in the Illawarra but also the entire country. Once established, it will set the scene for many such centres to be rolled out across New South Wales and beyond.

Before I finish, I thank the organisers and everyone who attended the Empty Shoes vigil in Martin Place yesterday. It was tragic to see the loss that occurs every year in this country. Those in attendance honoured and remembered victims of domestic and family violence. I end with a clear message to every member of this Parliament from UN Women Australia: "Women and girls should be Safe. Everywhere. Always."

### PORT MACQUARIE ELECTORATE STUDENT LEADERS

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (21:41):** Before I begin my private member's statement, I commend my colleague the member for Shellharbour for her private member's statement. As the shadow Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, I have had many conversations with the member and I know she is incredibly passionate about the issue. Tonight it is with immense enthusiasm and gratitude that I congratulate the 2024 student leaders from across the schools of the Port Macquarie electorate. These students have shown such incredible leadership capacity prior to their selection by putting themselves forward and participating proactively in their school's democratic process. It takes courage and commitment to stand before your peers and seek election. I welcome all of the students that have been elected. I wish to also acknowledge and thank every student across our schools who took part in the process. You are all an absolute credit to your schools.

Students who hold leadership positions have high expectations from all members of their school community—staff, parents, caregivers and, most importantly, their fellow students—to perform their duties with integrity and inclusion. Our new student leaders also take on these roles with their own high hopes and beliefs of how they will provide behaviours reflective of the values our society. It is a learning curve for them in stepping up to act responsibly and respectfully, and to show compassion and care when communicating and making decisions. This experience can be the foundation for our young leaders in building their capacity and practices for a lifetime of learning and service. However, it does take a unified and collaborative approach to ensure leadership success. In saying this, I acknowledge the school communities that provide the scaffolds and support processes for their student leaders to succeed.

I congratulate the following student leaders on their election and appointment to this significant role: from Hastings Public School, Annabelle Siviour, Gus Allen, Harvey Jensen, Jacob O'Dea, Josie Weatherby, Nick Thawani, Nixon Huens, Ollie Bell, Primrose Layne, Quinten Welsh, Tom McGrath and Zoe Menzies; from Kendall Public School, Kade Prowse, William Smith, Jai Saliba, Ilukah White, Lily Bell, Makayla Green, Lila Iveli and Isabelle Job; from Hannam Vale Public School—one of our small schools—there were Emily Baker, Odette Newby, Joseph Neilson and Myra Ziebell; from Port Macquarie Public School, Kade Saad and Jade Hoolahan; from St Agnes' Primary School, Joe O'Brien and Emily Lonergan; from Moorland Public School, Jane Rawson-Beard, Riley Bakewell and Dylan Anderson; from Hastings Secondary College, Westport campus, Daniel Hutchison, Brin Fullerton, Anthony Hooper and Riley Newton; and from St Joseph's Regional College, Alaska Webber, Jamie Vinod, Zoe Copelan and Aryan Vaishnav.

Other student leaders to be elected were, from Heritage Christian School, Amelia Bussell and Lily Oehlman; from Camden Haven High School, Eden Kaminski, Vincent Miller, Brock Wilson and Bailey Asbury; and from Hastings Secondary College, Port Macquarie campus, Sophie Buttsworth, Isaiah Monteleone, Aleyna Portakaldali and Jack Lewis. From St Columba Anglican School, secondary leaders will be Sarah King, Michael Vadoros, Sarah Young and Ned Bylsma, while the primary leaders will be Hazel Dunn, Finn Brunsdon, Andi Suitor and Archie Bylsma. Student leaders elected elsewhere were, from Herons Creek Public School, Ben Formica, Logan Meager and Halley Parkins; from Mackillop College, Maeve Kinchington, Archie Kay, Jiya Jamu and Jack O'Connell; from St Joseph's Primary School, Gemma Cooper, Mariele Obeid, Hannah Tony, Hayley Ylias, Rhys Cutler, Lenny Dixon, Santi Isaacs and Sunny Stapleton; and from Newman Senior Technical College, Maddie Cotterell-Dormer, Isaiah Quinlan-Whyman, Hayley Purkis and Bayden Connerty. All of you have begun such a new and exciting journey as we move into the 2024 school year. I have every faith that every one of you will take this opportunity to help make the new school year a time of achieving high standards in learning and harmonious relationships by working with and for each other.

### WINSTON HILLS ELECTORATE

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Winston Hills) (21:45):** I discuss the fantastic electorate of Winston Hills and wish its many wonderful community organisations, sporting groups, parents and friendly committees and constituents a very merry Christmas. I have been fortunate to represent a large portion of the Winston Hills electorate for over eight years and have developed many relationships with community groups during this time. I begin by acknowledging a number of community organisations and their executive members who serve the community across a number of roles.

Some of these include the Northmead Bowling Club, which holds regular fundraising events, community engagement days and its well-known bowling tournament. Particularly, I thank club president Trevor Oldfield and the board members, who I recently met to discuss their future plans for the club. I also acknowledge a number of other clubs and their executive teams for the community work they do throughout the Winston Hills electorate. Some of these are the Toongabbie Bowling Club executive, director John Burgess and chairman David Nugent; the Seven Hills-Toongabbie-Wentworthville RSL Club executive Barry Wilson; and the many individuals participating in the Kings Langley and Winston Hills Neighbourhood Watch groups.

Over the past couple of years I have had the pleasure of visiting many of the faith organisations across the electorate, including the Toongabbie Anglican Church, the Lalor Park Anglican Church and St Paul the Apostle at Winston Hills. I have inspected a number of projects funded through grant programs of the New South Wales Government. Some of these include a brand new carpark, new playground spaces and even electronic signs. These churches are the heart of these communities. I thank the pastors at these churches—Mike Hastie, Mark Tough, and the new priest at Winston Hills, Father John Paul—for all the work they do.

There are many local councillors and mayors across the Winston Hills electorate from its three council areas of Blacktown, Parramatta and the Hills. I thank a number of councillors, particularly Georgina Valjak, Ange Humphries, Sameer Pandey, Phil Bradley, Julie Griffiths, Michael Stublely and Frank De Masi from the Hills, who I have worked with throughout the year. I also thank the three mayors, being Tony Bleasdale, Pierre Esber and Peter Gangemi, for the work they do for their local communities. I acknowledge and thank the Northmead Men's Shed for the great work it does connecting local men and women to woodworking activities. The shed is run by a number of community members, but particularly I acknowledge chairman Geoff Holgate, secretary Peter Gibbons and organiser Kevin Weik. The Winston Hills electorate is home to many other organisations that provide fantastic service to all my constituents—places such as the Country Women's Association, our Rotary clubs and our Lions Club.

I recognise the Toongabbie branch of the Country Women's Association for providing a space for women to gather and participate in meaningful service to our community and to those far and wide, such as flood-affected victims. I acknowledge Amanda and Caroline and thank them for their work and leadership. A central part of life for many families in Winston Hills is sport. I pass on the best of the season to Winston Hills Little Athletics, Kings Langley Little Athletics, Lalor Park Kookas Rugby League Club and the Glenwood Redbacks Soccer Club. The constituents of Winston Hills electorate are serviced by outstanding electorate staff. I thank the staff I work with and wish them the very best for Christmas. I thank Alison Sievwright, Eamon Marlow and Flynn Broom for all their dedicated work this year.

As many in the Chamber know, the role of an effective local member can only be performed with the sacrifice and support of one's family. On this note I say a big heartfelt thank you to Petrina, Seronique and Finley, and of course my number one supporter, Oakley, the two-year old cavoodle. I thank the many individuals, clubs, organisations and volunteers in the Winston Hills electorate for their relentless advocacy and for the support that they give our community. I wish all residents a very merry Christmas.

#### **ROZELLE INTERCHANGE**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne) (21:49):** The Rozelle interchange opened on Sunday. Tonight I speak of the unacceptable and downright ridiculous traffic gridlock we have seen this week. It is a nightmare, and something must be done immediately to ease congestion. Transport for NSW must be held accountable for this, the Government must be held accountable for this and, most of all, we need to see real and dramatic improvements fast. Two major pinch points have emerged this week: motorists coming down Victoria Road heading east, and motorists travelling to the Anzac Bridge via the City West Link, with lanes squeezed down to one. It beggars belief that this congestion was not adequately modelled or planned for.

This week during question time we heard the Deputy Premier say it will take six months for congestion to ease. That is totally and completely unacceptable. Tomorrow, commuters cannot be stuck at a standstill for the fifth day in a row since the interchange opened. I have heard from many of my constituents who are fed up, calling the roads confusing and chaotic. It is a mess. Even Rebel Wilson joined the conversation today, telling followers on Instagram, "Thanks Rozelle interchange for now making a 15-minute trip into the city 90 minutes via Victoria Road." The incompetence of Transport for NSW is astounding. I place on record that on Monday 27 November I received an email from a senior manager of communications and stakeholder engagement at Transport for NSW. The email was titled "The Rozelle Interchange Opens Sunday 26 November—get ready". A whole 24 hours late. It is diabolical.

I put on record and convey to the Minister for Roads my commitment to work together to address this matter and find a suitable solution. All options should be on the table: a toll-free period for commuters to familiarise themselves with the roads; improved signage; better options for traffic; and, where possible, increased

lanes instead of funnelling multiple lanes of traffic down to one. I will launch a petition calling on Transport for NSW to fix this mess and to do so immediately. I will represent my constituents by listening to ideas about changes that are needed to ease traffic for commuters and bus passengers. I will collect those suggestions and write to Transport for NSW and the Minister's office. We must get the message across that we need change, and we need it immediately.

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (21:52):** I am delighted that the member for Drummoyne raised concerns in relation to the Rozelle interchange. A number of MPs from the Government side of the House have raised the same concerns. I note that 10 years ago this project was announced in some form by the previous Government. It is a project that we inherited. I also observe that Transport for NSW was merged with Roads and Maritime Services NSW. I warned in the House at the time that it would be an administrative or management disaster. However, the Government is pleased to work with local members, like the member for Drummoyne, who sounds genuine in her commitment, to ensure that the problems that we inherited from the previous Government can be addressed not just for people in her electorate but for all people in Western Sydney, who have also been caught by the same problem.

#### MOBILE PHONE DETECTION CAMERAS

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (21:54):** I draw to the attention of the House an issue that I and my constituents are concerned about. Last week I was approached by a Rosebery resident who was provided with a \$387 fine and who lost five demerit points for a mobile phone infringement, allegedly caused by the driver of a vehicle that happened to be the owner's daughter. When the owner of the vehicle, a Rosebery resident, obtained a copy of the photo that I have in my hand—which I am happy to table if I am required by the Government to do so—one can see in the driver's hand a pen or Texta colour, and the phone can clearly be seen in the console of the motor vehicle. This means that the electronic system that the Government inherited contains a substantial failure in detecting people committing these offences. Because I suspect these offences are regularly committed by people who are not always caught, somebody who might receive a fine could inadvertently pay the fine, thinking they may have infringed.

This is not the first time I have brought to the attention of the House the failure of the camera system. A number of years ago my son received a penalty infringement notice for going through a red right-hand turn arrow. When the photo was produced, it was a completely different car and a different number plate. There is something fundamentally wrong with the system. When I raised the matter in the House, the then Parliamentary Secretary, the member for Davidson, apologised to my son on behalf of the Government to the extent that he was authorised to do so. I know my son appreciated that, because when he denied committing the offence, like all fathers, I did not believe him. The first response of a child is, "It wasn't me, Dad." I felt pretty bad disbelieving his denial as well.

When someone receives an infringement notice, it is an accusation that they have committed an offence. The Government's system has to ensure that it is accurate. It was only last week that we enacted legislation to extend the use of cameras to detect people not wearing seatbelts. Obviously, cameras work, because I can see the driver of the vehicle in this photograph is wearing a seatbelt. But in the event the camera system is imperfect, and some sort of artificial intelligence is being used and human eyes are not viewing what is clearly depicted in the photo, there is something wrong with the system. We cannot have machines wrongly accusing citizens of committing offences. I know that camera detection equipment is significantly important for road safety. The statistics indicate that, and I understand the Staysafe Committee has indicated that. I think those within Transport for NSW indicate that, and virtually all members of the House accept that using cameras to deter people from poor driving habits, or alternatively to ensure road safety, is fundamental. But when the Government accuses people of wrongdoing, it has to be right. It cannot be unfair.

If somebody is accused of holding a mobile phone, when the photo clearly shows that they are holding a pen or a Texta, then there is something fundamentally wrong with the system. Why is it that the citizen has to go to their local member? Why is it that the citizen has to write to Revenue NSW? Why is it that the citizen has to go to the court to prove their innocence, when there is a fundamental government mistake? It is not just in this instance; it is related to other instances over a period. Whilst we need to protect the safety of the community and ensure that we have safer roads, we cannot have the Government wrongly accusing people of committing offences, because that virtually makes us like a totalitarian State.

#### CLIMATE CHANGE

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (21:59):** It is fitting that in the final week of the year I believe this Parliament voted on the most significant piece of legislation this year. This week the New South Wales Parliament came together across party lines to legislate some of the most ambitious climate targets anywhere in the world. I was glad to see the Labor Party adopt the Coalition's target of reducing our emissions by 70 per cent by 2035.

Christmas is a time of hope and a time of optimism. It is with hope and optimism that we pass laws that are fundamentally about seeing a better future for our State. As a member of a Coalition government during the worst drought in our history, as the Minister for National Parks during the black summer bushfires and as the Treasurer who provided unprecedented support to help people during unprecedented floods, I have seen too closely the risks that a changing climate poses.

Make no mistake about it, tackling climate change is the challenge of our generation, but it is also our opportunity to leave a better, stronger and more prosperous country for future generations. That is what taking decisive and responsible action on climate change is about: setting up our State for the future. It is about harnessing the great potential of our country. I have said before that we are not just a sunburnt country; we are a sun-blessed country. There is no better place on earth to prosper from global efforts to reduce our emissions. Australia is blessed with some of the best renewable resources in the world. We can be a clean energy superpower and help the rest of the world reduce our emissions and, in doing so, see our country become even more prosperous.

The Government was only able to set the climate targets this week because of the policies the former Coalition Government was able to implement: the cross-party Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap, the most ambitious renewable energy policy in the nation and one that I believe was the turning point in the climate debate in our country; and our nation-leading decarbonisation policies for electric vehicles, hydrogen, agriculture, waste and heavy industry. In all of those areas New South Wales leads the country because of the work of the former Coalition Government. I am not just proud of those policies because of the impact they will have on our natural environment and how they will strengthen our economy; I am proud of the values they represent.

The policies always captured the innovative spirit of our entrepreneurs. They always empowered our businesses and the workers of this State to dream of better possibilities, to test their expertise and to apply their skills to deliver a better, more prosperous future for our State and everyone in it. These policies were delivered not by sowing division but by finding common ground. These policies were not at the expense of our way of life but an investment towards a better future. These policies also recognise the covenant between the generations that no generation of Australians own our country; we merely hold it for the next.

**Ms Karen McKeown:** Point of order—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Penrith rises on a point of order.

**Ms Karen McKeown:** I believe a private member's statement must relate to the member's electorate. I have not heard the member for Hornsby mention his electorate.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** I thank the member for Penrith for raising the point of order. The member for Hornsby is talking about an issue that relates to a concern in his community. I do not uphold the point of order. The member has the call.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** I am proud of these achievements and that these are the values of the Liberal Party at its best. It is a party that believes it is our people not our government that drives this State. It is a party that believes to tackle the challenges of the time, we should have faith in the principles that have stood the test of time. It is a party that believes in the hopes and aspirations and the skills and determination of every citizen in our State. It is a party that seeks to unite the Australian people in confidence and with purpose across the political divide behind an ambitious vision of the very best of what Australia can be. It is a party that, at its best, is the natural custodian of the nation's spirit.

I have always believed politics is not about the positions you hold or the titles you acquire. It is about purpose and, for Liberals, that purpose has always been clear. It has always been about improving the lives of Australians by fighting for our values: opportunity, enterprise, freedom and prosperity. We believe in an Australia where each and every person enjoys the opportunity to be their best and build a better life for themselves and their family, no matter their gender, the colour of their skin, the god they choose to worship or the person they choose to love. We believe in an Australia where our liberties, our rule of law and our democracy are never taken for granted and never taken away. We believe in handing our country to our children in a better state than we found it.

This belief, this purpose, has remained our north star ever since Menzies called a meeting in Albury many years ago. Since then, generations of Liberals have taken up our values and used them to meet the challenges of their times. That has been my approach to my roles as a local MP, as a Minister and as the Treasurer of our State. The truth of our principles may be enduring but the challenges we face continue to change. This week we saw the very best of what our politics can be, and I ask everyone in this House to think about the limitless potential of what the new year can bring. To every member of the Liberal Party, whether they be in Parliament or in a branch, the values we represent are the values that our country represents and when we are at our best, our country is at



its best. That is what I have always sought to do and I have always hoped it can be said that one day the future for my son, Tom, and for everyone's children is better because of the Government I was part of and the Parliament in which I speak tonight.

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (22:05):** I congratulate the member for Hornsby on his leadership speech.

### LEPPINGTON ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (22:05):** Earlier this month Camden and Liverpool councils released draft plans for the Leppington town centre to public exhibition. The plan will see Leppington transformed over the next few decades from rural acreage to a thriving, cosmopolitan and vibrant urban centre with the Leppington railway station as its anchor. The 30-year plan will revolutionise the south-west growth corridor, boasting open park space, community centres, commercial space, sites for schools and medium- and high-density living. That has been a long time coming. The Leppington Major Centre was originally gazetted in 2013 to provide for 3,000 dwellings and between 7,000 and 12,500 jobs by 2036. Following the 2014 announcement of the Western Sydney airport and the 2015 completion of a Leppington railway station, a review into the Leppington town centre was announced by the Department of Planning and Environment [DPE] in 2017.

In November 2019 the DPE then handed control of this review back to Camden and Liverpool councils to complete, with Camden Council taking the lead and delivering the majority of this site in collaboration with Liverpool. In 2020 and 2021, Camden Council conducted analysis, visioning workshops and community consultation to inform its proposal before handing the draft proposal to the local planning panel in August 2022. It was subsequently endorsed by both Camden and Liverpool councils. The proposed Leppington town centre reflects the blueprint of this Government's housing policy. We need to build medium- and high-density housing around established transport links. We have, as the planning Minister has put it, a date with density. I note that, while communities like mine are happy to take our fair share of housing, a lot of the members opposite are not.

I note the member for Pittwater is calling on the Government to exclude B-Line bus stops from our definition of "transport hubs". God forbid a six-storey building would be built in his backyard. The member for Vacluse is famously more invested in preserving a defunct petrol station than tackling the housing shortage in this State. No doubt those objections are fuelled by the fear of the dreaded nimby. While I believe community consultation is critical to the planning process, politicians being beholden to a handful of nimbys is not. Now that the town centre is on public exhibition, I encourage all stakeholders and residents to have their say. This process will define our community for decades to come. It is important that we get this right, and community feedback is integral to that process. Residents can have their say by making a submission using either the Your Voice Camden or Liverpool Listen webpages. The deadline for submissions is 6 February.

### PITTWATER ELECTORATE OFF-LEASH DOG PARKS

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater) (22:09):** As the year draws to a close, I raise an issue that is very close to my heart and the hearts of tens of thousands of doggy-loving families across the electorate of Pittwater. During COVID hundreds of families "gave birth to a puppy child", which brought to bear one of the great frustrations of my local community. Many years ago, before the member for Sydney met his husband, the people of Pittwater were trying to get off-leash spaces for their dogs. In 2005, a plan was first floated to have dogs off leash on Station Beach in Palm Beach. In 2008, a review of the environmental factors surrounding off-leash space on Station Beach was prepared by the former Pittwater Council. Then nothing whatsoever happened for six years. On 17 November 2014, the former Pittwater Council passed a resolution to investigate and progress off-leash locations for dogs, including Station Beach and other locations. Again, nothing happened for another four years.

Due to the hard work of Pittwater Unleashed, champions of the cause like Mitch Geddes and Michele Robertson and their team like Joss Stewart, we know malevolent forces within the public service, the council and State Government were doing everything they could to illegitimately subvert the position and the view of council to progress this proposal. Documents released after a Government Information (Public Access) Act freedom of information request have shown a fundamental abrogation of the public service to implement the will of the people through the then governing body, Pittwater Council. This delayed the cause by a further four years.

During the council election campaign in late 2017, I became a convert to the cause of allowing the community to have their say about off-leash dogs on parts of beaches at certain times. In July 2018, the proposal for an off-leash space for dogs on Station Beach was again put out for community exhibition and the process commenced. At that time, the process for providing an off-leash space for dogs on Mona Vale Beach south and North Palm Beach—which are desolate at most times of the day, without any human use—to share with families also commenced. It took some months for the public exhibition to occur. As a current and longstanding councillor

of quite some repute, the member for Drummoyne would know that when proposals are put out they are often opposed by people who come out in force to say no, like the nimbys who my friend the member for Leppington was talking about before. The proposal attracted 3,560 submissions and received 89 per cent community support.

Notwithstanding that, the trial nearly began before proceedings commenced but it was put on pause. Bizarrely, the Land and Environment Court—and I do not seek to impugn its decision—banned the trial for reasons that were not put forward by either the applicant or the defendant, which was the council. In July 2020, the Mona Vale south and North Palm Beach proposals were formally approved by council. They went on public exhibition and received about 87 per cent and 89 per cent community support respectively. The council was then told there needed to be a review of environmental factors. The council prepared that proposal, but after nearly 12 months the review came back to council. It was told that the review of environmental factors needed to be amended.

In August this year, some five years after the initial proposal for the off-leash space had been floated, the council and community were told that the plans of management needed to be amended because they were never approved by Ministers decades ago. We now have to go through a convoluted process involving the plans of management legislation to amend those plans. That will take at least 12 months, and that is before the plan of management will be sent to the department for approval. The system for managing Crown lands is fundamentally broken. I thank Minister Kamper and his chief of staff, Ed McDougall, for hearing me when I spoke with them about the issue. They can have no doubt that I will be knocking on their door when council finishes that process.

The council has been delaying this process since before I could legally drink. I can say to the council that if this matter is not expedited with as much haste as possible, I will do everything I can to pressure the council to commence the trial. If that means knocking on doors or moving private members' bills to amend the Act to streamline the process or embarrassing the council into action, then that is what I will do because the process has taken far too long.

### SILICOSIS

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (22:14):** I speak on the dramatic increase in cases of silicosis and silica-related diseases in our nation, particularly as a result of engineered stone. Silicosis is caused by the inhalation of silica dust, which embeds in the lungs and causes scarring. It is a progressive disease with no known cure. Engineered stone has become a popular material since the 2000s in our homes as a cheaper alternative to naturally occurring stone for kitchen benchtops. In 2022, engineered stone represented about 55 per cent of the kitchen benchtop market by volume, far beyond its closest competitors of laminate at 29 per cent, porcelain at 5 per cent and granite at 4 per cent. This market is largely driven by residential building. As such, many new homes in my electorate of Leppington feature engineered stone benchtops in their kitchens, bathrooms and laundries. However, the high silica content—up to 95 per cent—of those composite stone materials poses an unacceptable silicosis risk to our tradesmen due to the fine crystalline silica dust it releases.

Despite representing only 2 per cent of those exposed to crystalline silica at work, engineered stone workers make up a majority of silicosis cases. Nearly one in four engineered stoneworkers employed in the industry before 2018 has already developed silicosis or similar silica dust-related diseases. The first half of the 2019-20 financial year saw a 70 per cent rise in silicosis cases. Silicosis is quickly emerging as asbestos mark two. Safe Work Australia recently handed down its report after undertaking analysis and consultation regarding the continued use of engineered stone. The report considered three options: a blanket prohibition on the use of engineered stone, a prohibition on stone with more than 40 per cent silica content and an accompanying licensing scheme for tradies working with engineered stone with less than 40 per cent silica content. Having considered all three options, the conclusion was clear: We must ban the use of all engineered stone. The report concluded:

There is no scientific evidence for a 'safe' threshold of crystalline silica content in engineered stone.

It went on to assert that "permitting work with lower silica engineered stone may encourage even greater non-compliance with WHS laws" by the sector, mostly comprised of "small businesses with few barriers to entry and a lower understanding of WHS laws". To arbitrarily declare engineered stone safe at a lower threshold of silica content would be as unsafe as it is unscientific. The report from Safe Work Australia was unequivocal. The only way forward is a blanket prohibition of this deadly engineered stone. It is the only way we can protect workers. Any half measures on this issue will only continue to put stoneworkers at risk of silicosis. Unions have long held that this was the only way forward.

Recently, major retailers Bunnings and IKEA announced that they will stop selling this killer stone. I note that those moves follow years of advocacy by the Australian Council of Trade Unions and the Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union, as well as health groups such as Lung Foundation Australia, Cancer Council, the Australian Institute of Occupational Hygienists and the Public Health Association of Australia. However, relying on the goodwill of retailers will not adequately protect stoneworkers. Policymakers

in this place and throughout the nation must take it upon themselves to institute an airtight ban on engineered stone. This is best done by national agreement, and I hope that State and Federal governments can negotiate an acceptable standard soon.

I was disappointed that a decision on a ban was deferred at the most recent Work Health and Safety Ministers' Meeting. We cannot afford to let this continue. I note that New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland are all in favour of a national ban. I urge other States across the country to come to the table in support of our stoneworkers, who are facing unacceptable risks from the continued use of this product. I welcome the commitment of the Government and the Minister for Industrial Relations to ban engineered stone. I agree with the Minister when he said, "We need to get this right at a national level." We must act now to avoid those tragic health impacts escalating any further.

#### **NORTHERN BEACHES SECONDARY COLLEGE BALGOWLAH BOYS CAMPUS**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (22:18):** It pains me to have to speak on this issue again, but it is one that I will speak on every sitting day until I get a satisfactory resolution, and that is the upgrade of the Northern Beaches Secondary College Balgowlah Boys Campus in the Manly electorate. Next year the school's year 7 intake will be the biggest it has had in over three decades. Balgowlah Boys Campus is a crown jewel in the public school network. It is one of the only all-boy public schools that consistently scores outstanding results in its English program. In spite of its surrounds, it has managed to thrive as an educational institution.

About a decade ago, the school was close to closing but, through the dedicated hard work of its principal and faculty, it has turned itself around. Over the past couple of years, it has had significant investments in its infrastructure. However, the building has reached the end of its life and, prior to the last election, was slated for an upgrade. After the election, there has been a change of heart within government on the upgrade of the school. I will not go into the views about how and why that has occurred. What I will say is that on 20 September I wrote to the education Minister seeking a meeting to talk about the proposed upgrade to Balgowlah Boys Campus.

I have not received a response, and nor have the other written requests and letters to the Minister from the P&C and myself. We will continue to relentlessly seek information to understand how the upgrade to Balgowlah Boys is progressing. Having met with the P&C last month made up of Colin, Anita, Sandy and the team there—passionate parents who simply want the best for their kids—I can say we are not going to stop until we get a fair answer and some insight from the Minister. The Minister cannot say in Parliament, "We are going to invest in schools across New South Wales", and choose to do that only in certain schools. If a school stacks up in terms of its educational output and the requirements for needing an upgrade, it should get fair consideration. Balgowlah Boys was on the list to be upgraded. It was not an election commitment; it was done six months out from the election. Post election, things have changed.

We will continue to prosecute the case as to when the upgrade will occur, and what needs to be done in the lead-up to that. All I am asking for at the moment is for the education Minister to respond to my letter of 20 September seeking a meeting. I will continue at every opportunity to advocate for the parents and the students of Balgowlah Boys Campus until I get a response. Members know that I am quite measured and respectful, but it is disrespectful to not respond to a member of Parliament who is seeking information about a school that deserves an upgrade.

This is a simple request for a response to a meeting request. It is not only for my sake to be able to communicate to parents what is going on, but it also shows respect to the students and the parent community at Balgowlah Boys Campus. Madam Temporary Speaker, I wish you a very merry Christmas. You are a terrific Temporary Speaker and have done a great job. It is late in the evening, and all members of this place have been working incredibly hard this year. No matter what side of the Chamber we sit on, we are all trying to do the best for our communities. I hope Santa is kind to everyone.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** I thank the member for Manly and wish him a merry Christmas.

#### **PENRITH ELECTORATE CHRISTMAS CARD COMPETITION**

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (22:23):** Like many members in their electorates, this year in my electorate of Penrith we ran a Christmas card competition in our local schools. It being the first time we have done this, we were blown away with the number of entries we received. The quality of the cards and the artistic abilities of some of our young people was really a sight to behold. It was with delight that I wrote to the school to announce who the winner was. We had a very close runner-up from another primary school in our area, and we awarded an encouragement award for that design that was submitted as well. When the school presented the letter to the student, she was apparently over the moon and bounced all the way home. Her mum phoned our office and said

she had one excited daughter who had just come home from school having won our Christmas card competition. She is from Cambridge Gardens Public School, and her name is Allegra.

Last Friday afternoon, Allegra's whole family came into the electorate office. It was my pleasure to award her with a framed copy of her design and a certificate of appreciation. Over the coming weeks—as I am sure many other members will do in their electorates—I will go to her school to present her with a small token of appreciation for having put her design forward. Other members have mentioned kookaburras and kangaroos featuring in their competitions, but this was an abstract Christmas card so it really did stand out. It was unique.

Rather than the member or the staff in the office picking the winner, we asked the people coming through our office which application for the competition was their personal favourite. It was basically the residents who made the call, which is a novel way of doing it. We had a few children through the office as well, and this one was the clear winner every time. It was an absolute delight to present the certificate to Allegra and to meet her lovely family. I will go to her school shortly and present the all-rounder award there. The runner-up was from Leonay Public School. Time permitting, because these awards often overlap in schools, I am hoping to get to Leonay Public School to present in person the runner-up award and the encouragement award.

I mention a project at the park behind Cambridge Gardens Public School that the Penrith local council has just finished. Minister Scully came for the plaque unveiling, as it was co-funded by council and the State Government. The project was instigated by a local called Brock, who wanted skating facilities, a pump track and a climbing wall. Some consultation on a park design was done with the money that was kicked in from both council and the Government. We were able to deliver a park for the little ones that has swings and an all-accessible facility too to cater for all abilities. It also has a pump track, a climbing wall and a flying fox. The unveiling was a great day, with all of year 6 coming out of their classrooms for the presentation. The park is also situated behind a childcare centre, so I know it will get a lot of use in the future.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** Private members' statements having concluded, in accordance with the earlier resolution of the House, I shall now leave the chair until the ringing of one long bell.

*[The Temporary Speaker (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua) left the chair, pursuant to resolution, at 22:28 on Thursday 30 November 2023.]*

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Friday 1 December 2023

*Continuation of sitting of Thursday 30 November 2023.*

*[The bells having been rung, the House resumed at 01:11 with the Speaker (The Hon. Gregory Michael Piper) in the chair.]*

### *Bills*

## **INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AMENDMENT BILL 2023**

### **Messages**

**The SPEAKER:** I report receipt of the following message from the Legislative Council:

The Legislative Council desires to inform the Legislative Assembly that it has this day agreed to the following resolution:

- (1) That this House notes that the schedule of amendments referred to in the Legislative Council's message to the Legislative Assembly of 30 November 2023 in relation to the Industrial Relations Amendment Bill 2023 was in error in that it included an amendment that was negated on division.
- (2) That this House send a message to the Legislative Assembly forwarding a revised schedule of an amendment to the Industrial Relations Amendment Bill 2023, agreed to by the Legislative Council, in which the concurrence of the Legislative Assembly is requested.
- (3) That the terms of this resolution of the House be communicated in the message to the Legislative Assembly.

The message will be considered forthwith. I call the Leader of the House.

### *Business of the House*

## **SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: BILLS**

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (01:13):** I move:

- (1) That standing and sessional orders be suspended to rescind forthwith that portion of the earlier resolution this day in which the House agreed to Legislative Council amendment No. 2 on the schedule of amendments to the Industrial Relations Amendment Bill 2023, referred to in the Legislative Council's message of 30 November 2023.

- (2) That the Legislative Council's revised schedule of an amendment to the Industrial Relations Amendment Bill 2023 be agreed to.
- (3) That a message be sent to the Legislative Council advising of the above.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will come to order. I am sure that no member wishes to be removed from the Chamber. The sooner the Leader of the House concludes his contribution, the sooner we can all go home.

**Mr RON HOENIG:** If members are named, they may be gone until May. I inform the House that a message has been received from the Legislative Council confirming that an administrative error led to the inclusion in the schedule of amendments to the Industrial Relations Amendment Bill 2023 a second amendment that had not been passed by the Legislative Council. The purpose of the suspension motion is to rescind the portion of the resolution taken by the House to agree to the amendment. That means the bill as passed by this House earlier on 30 November 2023 will remain in the same form, with the exception of amendment No. 1 on the Legislative Council's schedule of amendments.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (01:15):** Just when we think an absurd evening cannot get more absurd, we are now having to deal with another mistake from the Legislative Council. But, relevant to the so-called signature piece of legislation by the Labor Party, it is important that we consider a statement on behalf of the Supreme Court of New South Wales about this piece of legislation. The Supreme Court issued a statement earlier today as follows:

In the course of debate in the Legislative Assembly concerning the *Industrial Relations Amendment Bill*, earlier this week, Hansard records the Minister for—

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. The Leader of the House rises on a point of order. The member for Wahroonga will resume his seat. I will hear the point of order.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** The Manager of Opposition Business is raising the same issue that was attempted to be raised by the Leader of the Liberal Party in the other place. It is not relevant. As much as I would like to comment—

*[Opposition members interjected.]*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** As much as I would like to comment on the Chief Justice's observation, I would—

*[Opposition members interjected.]*

**The SPEAKER:** Members will come to order. We need to get through this. If members continue to interject they will be removed from the Chamber for a limited time under Standing Order 249A. Members will allow the Leader of the House to finish taking his point of order.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Such a comment is not relevant to the narrow or confined issue before the House, which really is whether or not the Liberal Party amendment that was carried in the other place should remain in this bill.

**The SPEAKER:** I am happy to hear more from the Manager of Opposition Business, but I direct him to be mindful of the terms of the motion that is before the House.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** It is relevant to the piece of legislation that is the subject of the suspension of standing orders. It would be quicker to just let me deal with my four minutes and read the statement, which is a matter of public record. The Attorney General should really be reading this.

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will restart the clock. The member for Wahroonga may continue.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** There is a statement by the Supreme Court on the very legislation that is the subject matter of the suspension of standing orders, and it should be put on record in *Hansard* that the Supreme Court has taken exception to the accuracy—

**The SPEAKER:** I will not allow the Manager of Opposition Business to proceed. We are not relitigating an issue that has already been debated in the other House. We are here to deal with the issue of correcting the record, not to relitigate. It might seem like a good opportunity to do so, but it is not. Members are getting a bit testy—me included. I will not tolerate that line of argument.

The question is that the motion be agreed to.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Bills***CRIMES AMENDMENT (PROSECUTION OF CERTAIN OFFENCES) BILL 2023****Returned**

**The SPEAKER:** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the bill with amendments.

**Consideration in Detail****Consideration of the Legislative Council amendments.***Schedule of amendments referred to in message of 30 November 2023***No. 1 LDP No. 1 [c2023-200A]**

Page 2, clause 2, line 5. Omit all words on the line. Insert instead—

- (1) Subject to subsection (2), this Act commences on a day or days to be appointed by proclamation.
- (2) Schedule 1[1A] commences 2 years after the commencement of Schedule 1[1].

**No. 2 IND No. 1 [c2023-198]**

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.

**No. 3 LDP No. 2 [c2023-200A]**

Page 3, Schedule 1. Insert after line 4—

**[1A] Section 93Z(4)**

Insert after section 93Z(3)—

- (4) A prosecution for an offence against this section is not to be commenced without the approval of the Director of Public Prosecutions.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (01:21):** I move:

That the Legislative Council amendments be agreed to.

I will be brief. The bill was discussed at length in the other place. The Government welcomes that.

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

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** Section 93Z of the Crimes Act 1900 is one of a number of provisions on the statute books that seek to ensure that the respectful and harmonious society in which we are privileged to live in New South Wales remains that way. I will not go into detail of what section 93Z says because that has been discussed at great length in the past couple of days. But it is an important provision against threats or incitement of violence on the basis of a person's race, religion or other attributes. When amendments to important provisions like this one are discussed at great length and with passion in this Parliament, the Government welcomes that. We all care deeply about and want to preserve and improve upon the values that underpin our strong and harmonious community in New South Wales.

Amendments have been carried in the other place, but the core effect and purpose of the bill in the form in which it will commence on proclamation is as the Government intended—that is, to remove a potential fetter and to ensure that matters can be prosecuted by the police without the approval of the Director of Public Prosecutions. I take a moment to explain the effect of the amendments. The Government's bill proposed a very simple amendment—to remove section 93Z (4) of the Crimes Act so that the approval of the DPP would not be required to commence prosecution under section 93Z.

In the other place, the Hon. John Ruddick moved amendments, which were opposed by the Government but ultimately carried, that will reinsert the current section 93Z (4), word for word, into the Crimes Act 1900 two years after the commencement of the bill. Figure that. In addition, the Hon. Mark Latham moved an amendment on behalf of the Hon. Rod Roberts, which again was opposed by the Government but ultimately carried, the effect of which will be to remove the entire current section 93Z (4) and insert a new section 93 (4) into the Crimes Act that provides that prosecution for an offence against section 93Z may be commenced only by the Director of Public Prosecutions or by a police officer.

The effect of the amendments moved on behalf of the Hon. Rod Roberts is that prosecutions for an offence against section 93Z will only be able to be commenced by the DPP or the police and, further, the police will not require the approval of the DPP. However, on my reading of the bill as amended, it appears to me that, two years after the commencement of the bill, the effect of these amendments together will be that there will be two section 93Z (4)s that will have the effect that prosecutions under section 93Z can only be commenced by a police officer or the DPP, and a prosecution for an offence against section 93Z will not be able to be commenced without the approval of the DPP. That is what we have ended up with. That is what members opposite agreed to.

As I said before, the intention of the Government was to remove the requirement for the approval of the DPP to commence prosecutions, responding to concerns raised about the operational effects of this requirement. Ultimately, the bill that will commence on proclamation will do that because it will enable the police to commence prosecutions without DPP approval. A statutory review of these amendments will be completed within 12 months of the commencement of the bill. There will be ample time as part of that process to properly consider the full effect of the amendments that will commence in two years. On that basis, I commend the amendments to the House.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (01:26):** I will be brief. I do not agree with the Attorney General's interpretation of what happened in the other place. As I read the amendments, they do the very thing that I asked the Attorney General to do on Monday night in a bipartisan fashion, which he did not agree to then but accepts now—that is, to ensure that section 93Z specified that the DPP or the police could initiate prosecutions. We suggested those amendments so that there could not be private criminal prosecutions under this section. That is the decision that has been made by the upper House and that is the decision that the Attorney General now accepts was offered to him on Monday night.

We could have spent an hour's less time in this Chamber last night, and we could be spending less time now, if the Attorney General had accepted that offer of a bipartisan, non-political amendment to the bill. The Legislative Council has put a sunset clause of two years on the amendment. There are not two different provisions that have been agreed to by the Legislative Council, as suggested by the Attorney General. There is one change and one section 93Z (4), and it will last for two years. Unfortunately, the Attorney General has been working late again tonight and has missed the point of the amendments. On the basis that what is now being proposed—at least for the next two years—is the very thing that we raised with the Government on Monday night, we agree to the amendments.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (01:28):** Given the discrepancy over where the Opposition and the Government stand in relation to the bill, The Greens stand by our position and wish that we had been able to send the bill to an inquiry. Vilification laws are a serious consideration for many in the community. It is absolutely critical that we get this right. It is disappointing that we are at this point in the evening, and we have disagreement between the Opposition and the Government as to the interpretation of the bill. We are about to pass it though this Chamber and we are not in a situation to allow it to go to an inquiry in the upper House to consider the ramifications of this. The Greens just want to put that on the record tonight.

**The SPEAKER:** The question is that the Legislative Council amendments be agreed to.

**Motion agreed to.**

## THOROUGHbred RACING AMENDMENT BILL 2023

### Returned

**The SPEAKER:** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the bill with amendments.

### Consideration in Detail

#### Consideration of the Legislative Council amendments.

#### *Schedule of amendments referred to in message of 30 November 2023*

##### No. 1 Selection process for new members of Racing NSW

Page 3, Schedule 1. Insert before line 3—

##### [1] Section 7 Selection Panel

Insert after section 7(1)—

- (1A) A Selection Panel must be established by the day (the *relevant day*) that is 6 months before an appointed member's term of office will be completed if—

- (a) the vacancy referred to in subsection (1)(a) or (b) will arise because the appointed member will complete the member's term of office, and
- (b) the appointed member has not been reappointed before the relevant day.

**Note-** Under section 6(4), a person is not eligible to hold office as an appointed member for more than 12 years in total, whether or not involving consecutive terms.

**[2] Section 7(2A)**

Insert after section 7(2)—

- (2A) In preparing a list of persons recommended for appointment as members of Racing NSW or for appointment as the Chairperson or Deputy Chairperson of Racing NSW, the Selection Panel must have regard to diversity in the membership, including gender diversity.

**No. 2 Review of Act**

Page 3, Schedule 1. Insert after line 21—

**48 Review of Act**

- (1) The Minister must review this Act to determine whether-
  - (a) the policy objectives of, and oversight mechanisms provided by, the Act remain valid, and
  - (b) the terms of the Act remain appropriate for securing the objectives.
- (2) In conducting the review, the Minister must consult with relevant stakeholders.
- (3) A review under this clause must be undertaken—
  - (a) as soon as possible after the commencement of this clause, and
  - (b) at intervals of 5 years after the first review.
- (4) A report on the outcome of each review must be tabled in each House of Parliament—
  - (a) for the first review—within 12 months after the commencement of this clause, and
  - (b) for each subsequent review—within 5 years after the last report was tabled.

**No. 3 Long title**

Omit 'Racing NSW.'. Insert instead 'Racing NSW; and to provide for statutory reviews of that Act.'.

**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) (01:32):** I move:

That the bill be laid aside.

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

**Mr DAVID HARRIS:** An amendment to the bill was agreed in the other place to insert increased ministerial direction and control—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Kiama will come to order. All members will come to order.

**Mr DAVID HARRIS:** Seriously, we all want to go home.

**The SPEAKER:** We all understand—

**Mr Adam Crouch:** Well, we don't.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I direct the member for Terrigal to remove himself from the Chamber under Standing Order 249A for two minutes.

*[Pursuant to standing order the member for Terrigal left the Chamber at 01:33.]*

**Mr DAVID HARRIS:** An amendment to the bill was agreed in the other place to insert increased ministerial direction and control for the purposes of accountability to the Parliament, provide for Racing NSW financial reports and statements to be subject to audit by the Auditor-General, and extend the scope of the bill to cover for improvements in transparency and integrity. The Government did not support the Opposition's amendments, as they appeared to be inconsistent with the Act and its intent. The Act has created Racing NSW as independent of Government, including independence in the way Racing NSW controls, supervises and regulates horseracing in New South Wales. Despite what has been claimed by some in the other place, Racing NSW is not a government entity. Section 5 of the Act expressly states that Racing NSW does not represent the Crown and is not subject to direction or control by or on behalf of the Government.



The extent of government interaction with Racing NSW is the Minister's power to appoint members to the board. The Government maintains that the insertion of provisions that intend on making Racing NSW the subject of parliamentary or Auditor-General scrutiny appear to be inconsistent with the Act. Racing NSW is already accountable to the Parliament through requirements in the Thoroughbred Racing Act to report annually to Parliament on its work and activities and its financial statements. Its annual report to Parliament must include a progress report on the implementation of its business plan, as well as a strategic plan for the horseracing industry. Those reporting requirements provide transparency of the key activities and plans of Racing NSW and its finances.

The legislation also requires that Racing NSW financial statements be audited by an independent auditor. The purpose of that audit is to confirm that the financial statements are prepared in accordance with accounting standards. That is also the function of the office of the Auditor-General. Amending the Act to require Racing NSW financial statements to be audited by the Auditor-General is unnecessary duplication. The parliamentary accountability and Auditor-General oversight provision would hamper the ability of Racing NSW to enter commercially sensitive agreements. Beyond that, there could be a range of unintended effects from this amendment. There has not been sufficient time to consider all the possible ramifications of removing the full independence of Racing NSW from government.

The approach proposed by the Opposition raises a range of important questions about the regulatory framework. The scope of the impacts of the accountability of bodies such as Racing NSW to the Parliament does not seem to be well understood. For example, just some of the issues to be explored include any implications under the Government Sector Audit Act and the way Racing NSW accounts are reported on procurement, property expenditure and provision of prize money. This type of amendment would need much more thorough investigation of all the potential implications before it is something we could consider seriously. It makes no sense to burden Racing NSW with those additional requirements and risk making it uncompetitive with other racing jurisdictions to fix a problem that is not the subject of this legislation.

Racing Victoria, for instance, is a company limited by guarantee in accordance with the requirements of the Corporations Act. While the Victorian Minister has a role in the appointment of directors of Racing Victoria and the Victorian racing legislation confers functions and powers to Racing Victoria, its governance is otherwise controlled by the constitution of Racing Victoria and not the Victorian Parliament. The successes of Racing NSW over the past decade are undeniable. Racing NSW has gone from strength to strength in terms of prize money, participation and training. That success has not been at the expense of animal welfare but has actually contributed to ensuring animal welfare is at the highest standards in New South Wales.

In proposing the extension of the term of appointment for the current chair, the Government set clear public expectations for the board of Racing NSW, including those in relation to increased transparency around welfare and rehoming, greater support for provincial racing and continued commitment to supporting a responsible, sustainable and competitive racing industry. The Opposition amendments achieve none of those aims but instead hinder the ability of Racing NSW to effectively oversee and deliver commercial success for the New South Wales thoroughbred racing industry. Hampering it with those unnecessary requirements risks making Racing NSW uncompetitive with other Australian racing jurisdictions. The Opposition's amendments do not address the purpose of the Government's bill, which is to ensure Racing NSW retains the corporate knowledge and expertise to position for further success. That is why the Government cannot support the amended bill from the other place.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (01:38):** I will try to keep the volume of my voice up because the Minister was certainly putting the member for Coojee asleep during that very fascinating speech. What a great last day of Parliament for the year. Until this morning, the Coalition had not won one division in this Parliament since the election. Today we won three, including the division on the amendment to this bill. I will tell members one thing, nobody told the Labor Party members in the Legislative Council that the comedy routine was last night in Strangers and not tonight in the Legislative Council. When the Minister just said the Government did not support the amendments, was he not watching the biggest hit in history tonight on the live stream of the Legislative Council? It was the best show in town. Talk about a rabble. What happened in the Legislative Council—the former Premier has lost it just thinking about it.

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

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** Mr Speaker, you may not have had the benefit of watching the live stream. To recap, the Government Minister in the upper House moved that the bill with amendments be agreed to. Then on the voices, all of the Labor members in the Legislative Council agreed with that position and the bells rang. In the dying minutes of the bells, some directive came from a faceless operative in the Labor Party saying that they needed to go over to the other side. So like crabs on a rock, they scurried across to the other side.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Wahroonga has disturbed the repose of the member for Epping. He needs to tone it down a little.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** I am sorry, Mr Speaker. I apologise. So after they scurried to the other side and voted inconsistently with the way in which they voted on the voices, the Hon. Chris Rath pointed out that it was against the standing orders of the Legislative Council. The President of the Legislative Council ruled that they had to vote in the same way that they voted on the voices, and then there was a walk of shame back across the Chamber. They took their original position and voted for the bill as amended.

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** Can members believe it? About 40 minutes later, they are now voting the other way again. They have had four different positions and only two in favour against one, if they get up now against the bill. Really, on the balance, it is a two-one and they should be supporting the bill as amended.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Summer Hill will come to order.

**Ms Jo Haylen:** Your problems are much bigger, Alister.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** Just sort out your traffic issues, will you?

**The SPEAKER:** I draw to the attention of members that Hansard has difficulty reporting the debate when there is this level of interjections in the Chamber.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** I am no expert on Labor Party rules, but my understanding is that if you vote against the caucus position, then you get kicked out of the Labor Party. So either the Labor members in this House are kicked out or the Legislative Council members are kicked out, but they cannot have two different positions on the same bill within 40 minutes without a caucus meeting—and no-one has suggested that this drunken rabble were actually having a caucus meeting in the past 40 minutes. I think that the level of—

**Mr Edmond Atalla:** Point of order: I take offence at the shadow Minister calling us "this drunken rabble" and I ask him to withdraw the comment.

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

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** I withdraw it. I rely on the principle of *res ipsa loquitur*. We now have four different positions on the amendments and half of the parliamentary Labor Party that has to be expelled because of the activities of today. But it gets better. The amendments that were put in the bill by the Opposition were all about integrity. I remind the House of the statements by the then Leader of the Opposition, now Premier, on 8 August 2022 in his opinion piece on integrity. The Premier said:

... as a member of the New South Wales Labor Party I have seen with my own—

**Mr Michael Daley:** Point of order: It is 1.45 a.m. We have allowed the shadow Leader of the House to engage in some extended accidental humour. He is not very good at it. It will be funny tomorrow, when he sees the front pages. This is a pretty narrow motion that the Thoroughbred Racing Amendment Bill 2023 be laid aside. We have given the member some latitude. He is now going back to quote statements by the Premier. I ask that you draw him back to the leave of the motion.

**The SPEAKER:** I will do my best. The Manager of Opposition Business will return to the leave of the motion.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** The amendments are about integrity, and I am quoting the Premier on integrity.

**The SPEAKER:** I understand that. But if the member—

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** The Premier said that—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Manager of Opposition Business will not just ignore me.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** Sorry.

**The SPEAKER:** Do not do that.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** I was not ignoring you.

**The SPEAKER:** I will let the member proceed. However, he will be mindful of the breadth of the motion. As the Attorney General pointed out, it is a very narrow motion.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** I am speaking against the motion, and I am entitled to say why the Opposition supports the bill in its amended form. That is what I am talking about.

**The SPEAKER:** Yes, and I asked the member to be mindful of the leave of the motion.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** That is what I am talking about.

**The SPEAKER:** So do that.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** I accept it would seem that people say one thing when they are in opposition and do another when they are in government—at least they do in the Labor Party. The then Leader of the Opposition said:

... as a member of the New South Wales Labor Party I have seen with my own eyes – inside my own party – what happens when a government loses the will to place integrity at the centre of everything they do.

I have seen the drift and the grift, the dramas and the scandals, the self-obsession and self-aggrandising that consumes a government from within when they decide to put their own political hopes and dreams ahead of the public good.

What we sought to do was simply add some measures about ministerial accountability and the ability of the Auditor-General to look at Racing NSW. That is all the amendments do. They are simple, basic integrity measures. They fall fairly within the remit of what the Premier said in his opinion piece last year. But we have seen tonight this incredible flip-flopping by Labor members on these amendments—sometimes they are for it and sometimes they are against it, then they are back for it and now they are against it. I must say that it is—

**Mr Warren Kirby:** Put it in a podcast.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** Ha-ha, very funny. The amendments to the bill were supported in a strong numerical fashion by those in the upper House and then by an even bigger majority when the bill was voted on, with the Labor Party coming on board with the amendments we put forward. That means the bill as amended should be supported in this House and should become law in New South Wales. I do not want to see those members get kicked out of the Labor Party. I am sure those opposite do not. Why does Labor not just support the bill? Why do we not have a little consistency from this mediocre minority Government? Why do we not get something a little better than what we have seen tonight? What we saw tonight was farcical and comical. Labor members need to listen to the words of the Premier when he was in opposition. They should be supporting the bill as amended and not taking yet another position tonight that is inconsistent with the positions that have been taken previously.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS:** I move:

That a message be sent to the Legislative Council informing the Legislative Council that the Thoroughbred Racing Amendment Bill 2023 has been laid aside.

**Motion agreed to.**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with the earlier resolution of the House, the House now stands adjourned. I thank members and wish them a merry Christmas and safe new year. I look forward to seeing them next year.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to resolution, at 01:51  
on Friday 1 December until Tuesday 6 February 2024 at 12:00.**

*Written Community Recognition Statements*

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

**HSUAN WEN "SHEN" CHEN**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I wish to recognise Hsuan Wen "Shen" Chen for her remarkable contributions to the Orange community. Shen, who migrated from Taiwan in 2019, learned to swim through a multicultural swimming program at the Orange Aquatic Centre and has since become an instructor at the same facility. Despite limited early swimming experience, Shen embraced the sport's significance in Australian culture. After completing the program, Shen now teaches swimming, a skill she views as crucial for safety and enjoyment, particularly in a country like Australia. Her work is not only about teaching swimming but also about giving back to the community, helping people to enjoy and feel safe in the water. The program, run by Orange City Council, is vital for migrant safety and integration, teaching them to be confident in water. With about a quarter of Australian drowning victims born overseas, these lessons are a significant step towards safety and social inclusion. Shen's journey from a participant to an instructor is inspiring, symbolising the power of resilience and adaptability in a new country. Her efforts are commendable, as she helps others gain confidence and skills in swimming, enriching the community and enhancing the Australian experience for migrants.

### **DONNA RILES**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the outstanding 40-year musical career of Donna Riles, a force behind Orange's Regional Conservatorium of Music. Orange is on the cusp of a new age in musical tuition and performance with its proposed \$32 million state-of-the-art regional hub for music to begin construction soon and Donna has been instrumental in making that happen. Since joining the 'Con' over 10 years ago she has nurtured enormous growth in musical education in Orange, striving to make it accessible to everyone - to the point the Con's home in Hill Street is bursting at the seams with 1,900 students. That's led to some bold, forward thinking by the Conservatorium's connections, guided by Donna, in partnership with Orange City Council and an innovative centre of excellence will be the result. Prior to becoming Music Director at the Con in 2014, Donna served as Head of Keyboard and Academic studies where she touched the lives of hundreds of students by maintaining the Con's link with schools. Donna announced her retirement in October this year. I thank her for her amazing commitment to the growth of musical expertise and wish her well.

### **DR RICHARD DRAPER, AUSTRALIAN GP OF THE YEAR**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—Speaker, I wish to congratulate Dr Richard Draper, who was named the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners' GP of the Year. A Parkes local working in the Central West for 29 years, Richard and Forbes' Courtney Hodges set up their Medicine and Mind practice about five years ago to address gaps in the health system in the district. The partners found there was a strong mental health aspect to people's lives, through drought, COVID lockdowns and flood - and their clinic was not immune, having been inundated in the November flood event. Providing support for the community through these floods, Richard and Courtney battled their own flood fatigue to continue service delivery. During that time the couple leaned heavily on the community, which rallied to ensure the practice continued in temporary, rent-free digs. Part of Richard's vision, with Courtney's support, is providing mental health services to rural areas, working collaboratively with other providers to secure the wellbeing of his patients. I congratulate Richard on his recognition from the RACGP and thank Richard, Courtney and their staff on their commitment to their community.

### **LIVERPOOL MENS SHED**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)**—I recognise the Liverpool Mens Shed, which allows men to develop their DIY skills and give back to our community. Numbering over 1200, Mens sheds across Australia are vital social enterprises that help promote men's health and healthy ageing and provide a vehicle for social connection and collaboration. The Liverpool Mens Shed brings attracts men from across south west Sydney and allows members to leverage their own unique skillset though work on different projects. The shed caters for disciplines such as carpentry, wood and metal turning, metal fabrication and even computer skills. It was great to meet with Alvan Freeman and Bob Gosling, who invited me to tour the shed earlier this month and see some of the fabulous works they have underway, including a Santa sleigh and chair for Bunnings. I thank all those who support the Shed's work, and I look forward to seeing what they come up with next.

### **PASIFIKA WOMEN IN TRADE PROGRAM**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)**—I rise to acknowledge the achievements of Pasifika girls at Miller TAFE, who recently completed the Women in Trade starter course. The Women in Trade starter course encourages young Pasifika women to immerse themselves in non-traditionally female pathways in carpentry and stonemasonry. Over the four-day program, students experience the ins-and-outs of each trade in two-day blocks. At the end of the course, students receive a certificate of attainment to account for their experience. The program is delivered by TAFE NSW and is a partnership between the Pacific Women's Professional and Business Network, J.P. Morgan, Verto and the NSW Department of Education. It was a pleasure to attend the graduation ceremony at Miller TAFE earlier this month, where certificates were presented to the 15 girls who took part in the most recent workshops. I laud the initiative of Loau Donina Va'a and Seini Afeaki from the Pacific Women's Professional Business Network, and I acknowledge all those who have enabled the program's success.

### **BLUE RIVER CHOIR**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)**—I acknowledge the Blue River Choir, a unique musical ensemble composed of female refugees from Bosnia and across the Balkans. The Blue River choir began in 1997, when choir conductor Sladjana Hodzic sought to showcase the vibrancy of the Balkans and Bosnia to audiences in Australia. The choir's repertoire includes traditional Bosnian Sevdalinka, arias from world operas and popular folk songs. A testament to the choir's inclusivity, the group incorporates Australian, Jewish, Arabic and other music styles into its performances and has a no-audition policy, which enables a diverse variety of members to join the ensemble. The choir has received a number of prestigious accolades, such as third place in the Australia Music Play for Life competition, as well as many media appearances highlighting the group's unique story and tremendous talent. I had the pleasure of seeing the choir perform earlier this month, where I got to meet

its diverse ensemble and enjoy its riveting music. I extend my congratulations to Sladjana Hodzic and her members for their success over many years.

#### **CLIFTON OLD BAR**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to congratulate Clifton Old Bar on their well-deserved win at the Caravan and Camping Industry Association [NSW] Awards of Excellence. The ceremony, held at Crown Sydney Barangaroo, celebrated the achievements and contributions of outstanding individuals and businesses within the industry. Clifton Old Bar has been honoured with the "Land Lease Community of the Year Award," a testament to their commitment to creating a lifestyle resort that stands out among the best. Old Bar, being the first community developed by Clifton, this award is a significant acknowledgment of their vision to creating a thriving and unparalleled living environment. Congratulations on your recognition, Clifton Old Bar.

#### **FORSTER TUNCURRY CHURCH OF CHRIST COMMUNITY BRUNCH PANTRY**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to recognise Tamara Clarke, the driving force behind the Forster Tuncurry Church of Christ Community Brunch & Pantry. Having had the privilege of attending the Community Brunch & Pantry, I witnessed firsthand the incredible work the church is doing to support those in need in our community. The Community Pantry recently celebrated their 2nd anniversary, while this isn't something to celebrate, the non-judgmental and warming atmosphere the church has created is. People are coming together, sharing a meal, and building connections during hard times, with 100 people attending the community pantry weekly. It currently costs around \$1300 a fortnight to keep the pantry stocked and the Community Pantry relies on donations from church members, locals & businesses. Thank you, Tamara and other church members, for your dedication to helping those in need and making a difference in so many people's lives.

#### **WINGHAM PRESCHOOL**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to congratulate Wingham Preschool on the official opening of their third classroom. 40 guests attended the opening, including myself and Sam Faraway, along with previous and current Wingham Preschool board members. The highlight of the opening were the performances of 60 very excited students, who sang and played musical instruments to songs including Taba Naba. The students also helped with the presentation of the seven-year journey that has led to the opening. The new room caters for an additional 29 students; however, it provides more than simply another classroom. It encompasses a multipurpose functional space - housing parenting education courses, a place for children to work with therapists, and a playgroup area allocated for two mornings a week. It will provide a base for the Flying Fox mobile preschool which, along with another vehicle acquired by the school, allowing it to expand its services from five to nine different venues. Congratulations Donna and thank you for the dedicated efforts of your educators, management team, and board members. Their commitment, fundraising and vision have paved the way for bright future for Wingham Preschool.

#### **VALE GEOFFREY FORSHAW OAM**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—Vale Geoffrey ("Geoff") Forshaw OAM, who passed away this week aged 80. Geoff was a highly respected member of the life saving community after more than 50 years of service. At the time of his passing Geoff was Patron of Surf Life Saving Sydney, where he formerly served as President, and Patron Emeritus of the Cronulla Surf Life Saving Club. After joining Cronulla aged 17, he held numerous roles including President and was a Life Member for 45 years. Geoff had success in boat rowing during the 1960s and 1970s winning medals at branch, state and national level and during the 1980s and 1990s he was heavily involved as the Sydney branch went through organisational change and a revolution of innovation with the introduction of helicopters, new lifesaving techniques and training. His leadership included time as Chair of the helicopter rescue service. Geoff's contribution to surf life saving as a lifesaver, administrator, official and competitor saw him awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the 2023 Australia Day honours. I extend my sympathy to Geoff's wife Irene, along with his wider family, friends and the surf life saving community.

#### **NATHAN WAUGH**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I recognise Nathan Waugh for his dedicated service to the Cronulla-Sutherland District Junior Rugby League (CJRL) as he steps down as Chairman. The CJRL celebrated its 60th anniversary on 20 October 2023 with a gala dinner which I was delighted to attend at Doltone House Sylvania Waters. The event brought together all 13 clubs, life members and the current executive committee to celebrate six decades of the CJRL in the Sutherland Shire. The event farewelled Nathan, who has served as Chairman for the past five years, General Manager for two years before that, as well as stints as a referee and player. He has been a great asset to the junior league in this area and he will be missed for his enthusiasm and

love of the game. There are big shoes to fill as Nathan finishes in the role. I acknowledge his service to rugby league wish him the very best for the future.

#### **THE HILLS SES MEMBER RECOGNITION NIGHT**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—I would like to recognise The Hills Unit of the New South Wales State Emergency Services. The Hills SES Unit recently held their Annual Presentation Ceremony on Wednesday 22 November. Congratulations the following recipients for various awards. George Hayes, Sylvia Chan, Martin Dalmazzo, William Agiomamitis, Andrew Williams, Andrew Turner, Phillip Matthews, Joseph Vurchio, Peter Reid, Dawn Francis, Sally Butler, Lois Perry, Emmanuel Camilleri, Danielle Boulton, Grant Simms, Stacy Duggan, Andrew Turner, Andrew Williams, Aurea Leung, John Hill, Nicola Hill, Laurence Rappo, John Leotta, James Wilson, Margaret Hilton, Julie Aspinall, Matthew Stone, Evelyn Lester, Delma Parker, Roy Care, Tim Randall, Greg Wilkinson, Andrew Kinch, Colin Fitton, Malcolm Liston, Ray Marvin, Damian Hofman, Neil Gall, Alison Besley, Laurence Rappo, Guy Guan, Nevill Inglis, Faulkner Macdonald, Mark Yates, Andrew Kinch, Carly Kirk, Ray Marvin, Caitlin Mitchell, Margaret Hilton, Blake Crawford, Danielle Boulton, Matthew Stone, Nicola Hill, Sally Butler, Ryan Barton, Paul Biscoe, Aurea Leung, John Hill, Robert Wallis, Kenneth McWhinney, Peter Reid, Damian Hofman, Lois Perry, Tim Randall, Malcolm Liston, Colin Fitton, Leanne Pereira, John Ha, and Daniel McGovern. Thank you to all 177 member who serve the community through the Hills SES Unit.

#### **HINDU COUNCIL REMEMBRANCE DAY SERVICE, CHERRYBROOK**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—On 19 November, I attended a Remembrance Day service to honour the sacrifice Anzac soldiers of Indian origin during World War I. The service was the sixth annual Anzac Jawan Remembrance Day service. The event is hosted by the Australia India Cenotaph Committee, a project under the Hindu Council Australia, and with the Hornsby RSL sub-Branch. NSW President of the Hindu Council of Australia, Mr. Suresh Vashist, welcomed attendees, followed by George Main, President of the Hornsby RSL Sub-branch. We were fortunate to hear stories of remembrance from Indian Army veteran, Colonel Virender Sahni, and from ex-servicemen. The tone of the event was one of remembrance and reflection, moving all who attended. Among heartfelt tributes, representatives from various organisations laid wreaths to remember and honour those who served. The service was marked by a moment of silence, and the Last Post was played. I would like to recognise the Hindu Council Australia and the Hornsby RSL sub-Branch who organised the Remembrance Day service. Thank you to all those who attended to remember and pay tribute to those who served, and for the strong community character displayed through this moving event of solemnity.

#### **GLENHAVEN CAROLS, 10 DECEMBER 2023**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—Glenhaven Carols By Candlelight is a free community event that takes place every year in December. It is a great opportunity to get into the Christmas spirit and enjoy some festive cheer. This year Glenhaven Carols by Candlelight will take place at Glenhaven Oval on 10 December 2023. Now in its 23rd year, the annual Glenhaven Carols by Candlelight is a much-anticipated community fixture at Christmas. Glenhaven Oval will be filled with thousands of residents to celebrate the festive season. There will be rides, amusements, food trucks, Rural Fire Service, State Emergency Service, Police, and great carols. Fit Kidz Foundation will provide a sensory breakout area for Neurodivergent children. The event will start at 4.00pm. The night will conclude with a grand fireworks finale starting at 9.00pm. The Glenhaven Carols is organised by a dedicated group of volunteers. I recognise and thank the Glenhaven Carols Committee for service to the Glenhaven community. The members of the Committee are: Louise Hedges, Donna Fraser, Kaye Amies, Radha Shah, Rory O'Connor, Sarah Didsbury, Barry Phillips, James Langan and Mitchell Blue. I encourage the community to support the fantastic Glenhaven Carols by Candlelight.

#### **CIVIC DISABILITY SERVICES- EMPLOYER OF CHOICE**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I congratulate CIVIC Disability Services based in Caringbah on being selected as an Employer of Choice in the 2023 Australian Business Awards. The awards recognise organisations that develop workplaces that maximise their full potential of their workforce. CIVIC Disability is a proud not for profit community-based organisation with over 60 years of supporting people with a disability. CIVIC has an impressive permanent workforce of 75.5% that outstrips the industry average, reflecting the work done to build a progressive company that has 140 people with disabilities employed in its workforce of more than 850 people. CEO Annie Doyle says the award demonstrates the unwavering commitment CIVIC has to its employees and the continuous effort to enhance their experience at work. I congratulate Annie, Chair Dunstan De Souza, and the whole CIVIC team on this great achievement and for the positive impact the organisation has in our community.

### NSW VIETNAMESE ELDERLY FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—I had the privilege of attending the monthly meeting of the NSW Vietnamese Elderly Friendship Association on the 3rd of November 2023. The NSW Vietnamese Elderly Friendship Association is a large Vietnamese Australian elderly association in NSW with thousands of local members. I recognise the enormous contribution of the Association to the senior community in my electorate over the past three decades. I commend the leadership team including the President Mr Chung Duong and Vice President Mr Hanh Tieu, the advisory team and all the volunteers for their efforts, especially in providing the senior members of migrant and ethnic backgrounds with tailored programs such as English classes, or cultural programs to help these constituents with greater social integration as they call Australia home. I am grateful for the opportunity to actively participate in conversations with the Association's leaders and individual members about how we can work together to help elevate the quality of life and well-being for the senior constituents and their family in my electorate.

### KHMER KROM COMMUNITY

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—On Sunday 17th September 2023, I had the honour of visiting the Khmer Krom Cultural Centre of NSW in Cabramatta, alongside the Honourable Steve Kamper MP, Minister for Multiculturalism. I deeply appreciate the invaluable contributions made by the Khmer Krom Cultural Centre of NSW in promoting diversity and multiculturalism through their exceptional services and support in community language schools, religious and cultural activities. The centre has been within my Electorate of Cabramatta for more than 2 decades, offering language classes to enrich the Australian Khmer Krom community's cultural and linguistic heritage. They also organize cultural, religious events and activities for both children and seniors. I extend my heartfelt thanks to: Mr. Son Lam, President; Mr. Reach Siv, Former President; Venerable Abbot Por, and other Monks and Spiritual Leaders of the Temple; Sawathey Ek OAM of Australian South East Asian Network [ASEAN]. I congratulate them for their wonderful work with the local community. Their dedication to fostering cultural understanding and unity is truly commendable.

### FAMILY DAY

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—On the 25 November 2023, I had the honour of attending the Family Day organised by the NSW Vietnamese Elderly Friendship Association. Every year we celebrate Father's Day, Mother's Day, Grandparent's Day, and this special event was to celebrate Family Day the basic unit of society. This event reminded us all of the importance of family, a place where we find security, support and importantly unconditionally love. I thank the President of the NSW Vietnamese Elderly Friendship Association Mr Duong Van Chung and the Vice President Mr Tieu Hanh and all the Executive Members for the invitation and congratulate them on successfully organising a very important day. We also opened the space which will be used to teach English classes to their members. The modern computers and equipment in this space were purchased with the kind support of our local Cabra-Vale Diggers Club. I thank the President of Cabra-Vale Diggers Club Mr Walter Robinson, Vice President Mr Ronnie Moore and the General Manager Mr Michael Foulkes for their support of this event and of the organisation.

### DENISE CLUNE

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to congratulate Denise Clune, from Warilla High School, on her upcoming retirement at the end of the 2023 school year. Denise is a much loved and respected personal development, health and physical education (PDHPE) teacher and has been at Warilla High School since 2008. Denise will be having her retirement dinner this weekend and will be sorely missed by her colleagues and students next year. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour community, I would like to express our thanks to Denise and wish her well for a long and enjoyable retirement.

### JACK GIBSON

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to congratulate Jack Gibson, from Shell Cove, for finishing 1st in the NSW/ACT Super Sprint Championships as well as winning the NSW Billigence Series. He won gold in the Australian All Schools Triathlon Para and the Australian All Schools Para Relay. Jack was also selected in the Able-Bodies NSW Team for Australian All Schools, which has never been done before by a Para Athlete. In the pool, Jack has gained 8 Gold throughout the season. He competed in the NSW Country Swimming Championships, National Country Swimming Championships, Australian Age Swimming Championships and more recently the Australian All Schools Swimming Championships. Jack also won the NSW All Schools Cross Country this year. Jack continues to grow in confidence and is truly committed to his sporting career. The sky is the limit for Jack, and we are excited for what the future holds for him. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour community, I would like to express our congratulations to Jack and wish him all the best in her future sporting endeavours.

**LUKE WHIDDETT**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to congratulate Luke Whiddett, who has just graduated from Warilla High School, for being presented with an Excellence Award in VET Hospitality. Luke also won the VET Encouragement Award at the Illawarra Excellence in Vocational Education Training Awards held on 14 November 2023 at The Grange Function Centre in Kembla Grange. The Illawarra Schools Excellence in Vocational Education & Training Awards recognise and reward outstanding achievement by VET Students as well as the major contribution made by local businesses to the success and achievement of VET students. They are proudly brought to you by Workplace Learning. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour community, I would like to express our congratulations to Luke and wish him all the best in his future endeavours.

**RISING STARS MAKING WAVES ON THE WATER**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to extend my congratulations to three outstanding individuals who have showcased extraordinary talent whilst representing Australia on the global stage in water-skiing; Lara Butlin aged 18, Lochie Butlin 17 and Wagga Wagga's Callan Ashcroft 20. Lara, Lochie and Callan have recently returned from the United States, Mexico and Chile where they represented Australia at the Water Ski World Championships. I am particularly pleased to highlight Lara's achievements as her world-class result has also opened the doors to a wonderful opportunity. Lara has earned a well-deserved scholarship from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, where she will pursue her studies in nursing while proudly representing her ski team next year. Equally commendable are the achievements of Lara's brother Lochie, who showcased his skills in the Under -17 World Championships in Chile earlier this year, and Callan who demonstrated his prowess in the Under 21s-World Championships in Mexico and the Opens Championships in Florida. Well done Lara, Lochie and Callan for your achievements. We are proud to have you as sports ambassadors for our community.

**FANNY'S THRILLING ARIA**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to extend my congratulations to Fanny Lumsden of Tooma, who achieved a remarkable feat of winning as the Best Country Album for 'Hey Dawn' at the ARIA Awards, which were held on 15 November in Sydney. Whilst in the midst of strong and deserving competition, Fanny's talent shone through. What elevates the significance of these accolades is the honour of having country music icon Dolly Parton personally announce Fanny as the winner. This triumph is not unfamiliar to Fanny, who previously won the same award in 2020 for her outstanding album 'Fallow'. I wish Fanny all the very best for the Country Music Awards in January, where she has been nominated for four Golden Guitar awards for 'Hey Dawn'. Fanny, may you continue to bring to the world your much loved music.

**WILLOW'S PANTRY AT ST MARYS NORTH PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney)**—St Marys North Public School runs a great initiative called 'Willow's Pantry.' In collaboration with Foodbank NSW & ACT and Little Helpers on the Run, St Marys North Public School provides free food hampers to school students and their families. This initiative has been very successful. Willow's Pantry ensures that the school community at St Marys North Public School eat well and don't go hungry. Subsequently, this ensures that children and adults are receiving a healthy and nutritious serving of fruits and vegetables. I would like to acknowledge the great work of St Marys North Public School and commend their efforts to care for and nourish our local community. Keep up the great work St Marys North Public School!

**TIN HTA NU**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I rise to recognise and congratulate Tin Hta Nu on her selection as one of three finalists in the Seniors category of the 2024 Australian of the Year Awards. Tin was nominated by the Mid North Coast Refugee Support Group [MNCRSRG] which Tin founded in 2011 aimed at raising awareness about asylum seekers. Before migrating from Myanmar as a political refugee in 1991, Tin was an academic who witnessed others incarcerated and murdered for their pro-democracy views. Tin uses her skills and experiences to give tirelessly to so many facets of the Kendall community. She founded the Kendall Community Garden, a community cafe at Kendall Hall and the Hastings Buddhist Group. Tin is also an educator at The Camden Haven Community College. Some of Tin's other accomplishments include establishing the Kendall-Kadaw Friendship School project and being an active member of the Kendall CWA, the Kendall Community Op Shop, the Kendall Garden Club and the Camden Haven Community at 3. Tin is grateful to be living her life in Australia and now dedicates her time to supporting others who are disadvantaged. On behalf of our community thank you Tin for your selfless service.



### **HOLLY KEHOE- SHAPE 2024 NOMINATION**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Congratulations to Camden Haven High School Year 12 student Holly Kehoe on being shortlisted for consideration in the highly esteemed SHAPE 2024. SHAPE is an invitation for HSC students to showcase their Technologies Exhibition and Shows at the Walsh Bay Arts Precinct in Sydney. Holly Kehoe is studying Textiles and Design by Distance Education. She recently received notification that her works were shortlisted for the NSW Department of Education's SHAPE 2024 Exhibition for her Major Textiles Project titled 'Windows to Haven'. Holly's stunning handmade quilt depicts a 12 square attic window featuring a land, sea and sky scene of her favourite Australian beach destination, North Haven. Several splashes of colour showcasing waves, sand, sunsets and native wildlife were encased in her quilt using machine embroidery, applique and hand dyeing of fabric to resemble the changing landscape of the beach. Holly should be honoured on to receive this nomination and it is a reflection of her artistic and creative talents. I wish Holly every success in her future endeavours and congratulate her again on being recognised with a nomination for SHAPE 2024.

### **FAYE O'BRIEN AUSTRALIAN VETERANS GOLF UNION CHAMPION**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Congratulations to Port Macquarie golfer Faye O'Brien on winning the Ladies Stableford at the Australian Veterans Golfers Union Championship held in Canberra in November 2023. The Australian Veterans Golf Union (AVGU) is an umbrella for state based veteran golf associations and aims to promote friendship and camaraderie around golf, as well as the management of the annual AVGU Championship. The AVGU has more than 33000 male and female members across all areas of Australia with regular events organised at local and regional levels. Travelling members can pack their clubs and experience a warm welcome at a veterans group in the area they are visiting. Faye is a member of the Emerald Downs Golf Club in Port Macquarie and plays with a handicap of 21. In playing at her first national championship, Faye played the 54 hole championship across three courses in Canberra and Queanbeyan. Faye took up golf recently and, having moved to the Port Macquarie area, golf and the Emerald Downs Golf Club has been a great way to meet locals and make new friends. Congratulations Faye and I hope you keep enjoying your golf.

### **MS GIOVANNA YOUNIS**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—I extend my heartfelt congratulations to Ms. Giovanna Younis, age 16, for being recognised as Australia's Local Hero of the Year in 2023. Giovanna's unwavering support for communities with disabilities, particularly at Holroyd School in Merrylands in my Electorate, is exemplified by her generous donation of time and resources. Her efforts have significantly impacted the mental health of the local community in the Granville and Prospect electorates. She has made substantial contributions to the mental well-being of the children at Holroyd School, demonstrating her unwavering belief in their abilities despite their disabilities. Moreover, she has played a pivotal role in transforming the outpatient department of a local hospital into a sensory-friendly environment for children. Furthermore, she has consistently contributed to the support and cultivation of a local community garden, fostering community spirit and promoting the ecological transition towards a just and sustainable future. Her tireless efforts and dedication to serving the community have positively impacted the lives of many. I wholeheartedly congratulate her on this well-deserved recognition of her lifelong commitment to community service.

### **KAPITBAHAYAN COOPERATIVE**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—I was delighted to celebrate Christmas at the Kapitbahayan Cooperative Ltd Christmas Party on 26 November 2023 in Merrylands. KCL is a registered housing co-operative that provides affordable and stable rental accommodation for families and individuals who are unable to acquire their own homes. KCL is managed by its tenant-members who are trained, organised, and participate in various management and organisational functions. KCL promotes the ideals of co-operativism, including democratic decision-making, equitable sharing of resources, and social awareness and involvement. The Masters of Ceremonies, Marie de Luna and Ryan Agcaoili, set the stage for an evening filled with camaraderie and inspiration. KCL Founding President Ruben Amores welcomed everyone with warm remarks, embodying the cooperative's ethos. The highlight of the evening included an Oath Taking Ceremony officiated by the Hon. Laurie Ferguson, witnessed by guests, including Philippine Consul General Charmaine Rowena Aviquivil, and Member for Auburn Lynda Voltz. The evening transitioned seamlessly into fellowship, featuring a KCL Socials Dance Number, and lively dance performances, including the "Cha Cha". The Christmas Party was a marvellous celebration and showcased the strength of community bonds and cooperative spirit. Thank you for the invitation, and Merry Christmas.

### **AUSTRALIAN HINDI INDIAN ASSOCIATION DIWALI**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—I was delighted to represent the Premier at the Diwali celebration hosted by the Australian Hindi Indian Association on 4 November 2023. Diwali is a significant festival for Hindu, Sikh,

Jain, and Buddhist communities, symbolising the victory of light over darkness, good over evil, and knowledge over ignorance. Diwali celebrations are becoming more prevalent and more popular in NSW as the country welcomes more skilled migrants from the subcontinent. The Australian Hindi Indian Association has been serving the Hindi and Punjabi-speaking community for nearly 30 years, offering various support services to seniors, including health, legal, and yoga sessions. Community groups like the Australian Hindi Indian Association play a vital role in reducing social isolation and improving the well-being of residents. The spirit of care and compassion embodied in Diwali celebrations aligns with the core values of Hinduism. Thank you for the invitation to attend and I extend my warmest wishes for a happy Diwali to all.

#### **DUBBO SPORTS AWARDS**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker, I would like to recognise the many sportsmen and women who were successful at the Annual Dubbo Regional Sports Awards. The awards saw over 100 athletes, coaches and administrators being recognised for their achievements. As a proud sporting community, it is no surprise to see such a variety of sports being celebrated on the evening. Basketball, Football, Touch Footy, Swimming, Athletics, Physical Culture, Dragon Boating, Cricket, Bowls, Karate and Ranch Sorting, are just some of Dubbo's sporting cluster. I would like to mention just a few award recipients to showcase the prowess of athletes in the Dubbo region. Congratulations to Sophie McAneney for her achievements in winning Bronze medals in the 50m and 100m Breaststroke event at Australian All Schools Championships. Well done to Clancy Henderson who represented Australia at the Ranch Sorting National Championships World Finals in Texas and finished the year Australia's National Champion in her age division. I would also like to extend a congratulations to Dennis Valentine on the recognition to his contribution and involvement in everything aquatics for over 60 years. Well done to the all-award recipients. You should be tremendously proud of yourselves.

#### **DR NIRO**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker, I would like to congratulate Narromine General Practitioner Dr Niroshini Wickramasinghe on her recent acknowledgment with the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine's Distinguished Service Award for 2023. After migrating to Australia with her family in 2012, Dr Niro started as a trainee GP in Narromine, and now finds herself as the Practice Principal at the Narromine Shire Family Health Centre. Alongside providing high quality healthcare to the Narromine region, Dr Niro dedicates herself to supervising international graduates, helping them accomplish the skills to provide the excellent healthcare that she has set the bar so highly for. When asked what inspired her to supervise future rural generalists, Dr Niro says it was the encouragement of her incredible team in the welcoming and close-knit community. As well as her team, Dr Niro's husband Romesh and her daughter Tharushi are also some of her biggest supporters, enabling her to work with her patients as well as making time for her to teach our up-and-coming medical practitioners. Congratulations Dr Niro! This recognition of your hard work and commitment to outstanding healthcare in our regional communities and fostering the careers of our junior doctors is incredible.

#### **CAMPBELL WATTS**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker, I would like to recognise Dubbo man, Campbell Watts on winning the Apprentice and Trainee of the Year, at the Dubbo Business Chamber's 2023 Rhino Awards. At only 19 years of age, Campbell works as a violence prevention officer with Connecting Community Services, a community based, not-for-profit organisation, who works with our communities and utilises services and support for a wide range of needs. When asked about the appeal of his job, Campbell said that he likes having a problem in his face so that he has to solve it. Campbell also works with our region's First Nations community, particularly with men and the younger generations. He develops and delivers programs for people coming in and out of the court system as well as re-engagement programs back into the community, with a focus on socialising. Currently, Campbell has been working with his mentors to deliver a new program with the Department of Communities and Justice called Leaving Footprints, which explores the impact that lateral violence and domestic violence has on participant's communities and their lives. Congratulations Campbell! Keep up all of the great work you're doing for our community.

#### **SOUTH EVELEIGH SPORTS COURTS**

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)**—On behalf of the Newtown Electorate, I acknowledge the significant efforts of local residents and grassroots sports groups who ensured the free community courts at South Eveleigh were kept for community use. The South Eveleigh sports courts are used by so many local sports groups in our community - with basketball, tennis and futsal courts all available to book at no cost. As such, we were concerned to hear that a commercial sports organisation had been allowed to charge \$660 for a 6-week competition at the courts, inhibiting local grassroots sports groups from using the courts. Free access to facilities like the South Eveleigh Sports Courts is so vital to our community as it promotes inclusivity and diversity by providing equal

opportunities for everyone regardless of their socioeconomic status or background. Thanks to the hard work of our local residents and grassroots sports groups, the decision to privatise this community facility was reversed. We acknowledge the tireless efforts of those who pushed to bring the South Eveleigh Sports Courts back into community's hands - this is a great local win!

#### **PETERSHAM PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENT LEADERS**

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)**—On behalf of the Newtown electorate, I would like to recognise the 2023 Petersham Public School Student Leaders and their contribution to the school community. The 2023 Student Leadership Body are Kate Byrne and Ariadna Diaz as the School Captains, Louis Cheung and Jacob Duong as the School Vice-Captains, and Clementine Bellamy, Arlo Hawkins, Oliver Sceats and Isla van der Merwe as the School Prefects. It has been wonderful to have Petersham Public School community become part of the Newtown electorate this year. I thank them for the great work they have done, for the work they will continue to do, and for the difference they will make to their school's community and beyond. Becoming a representative for your school is a highly rewarding way of contributing to the strength and connection of our community - whether at school, in our neighbourhoods, or around the world.

#### **NEWTOWN NORTH PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENT LEADERS**

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)**—On behalf of the Newtown electorate, I wish to recognise the Newtown North Public School 2023 Student Leaders and their contribution to the school community. The 2023 Student Leadership Body includes Archie Wu, Frances Errington, Poppy Rodger, Evie Tangye, Liberty Tarling and Finn Brown as Student Leaders, and Kai O'Riordan, Eloise Smith, Jesper Svenson, Saachi Williams and Thomas Pearson as House Captains. The Student Leaders at Newtown North run the school's fortnightly assemblies and lead key events for the school, including Education Week, National Day of Action and the NAIDOC Week Assembly. These students also participate in Student Representative Council Meetings. This year, they successfully organised a fundraiser for playground equipment at the school. The House Captains lead their Houses in sporting and other events, run House Meetings and help organise the Athletics and Swimming Carnivals. They ensure House members understand how the days will run, bring necessary equipment and know the House Chants. For NAIDOC Week, the House Captains hosted running games played by First Nations students. I acknowledge the Newtown North Student Leadership Body, and thank them for their contributions to the school, their community and beyond.

#### **MULTI-AGENCY FLOOD RESCUE SYMPOSIUM**

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith)**—It was quite a thrill earlier this month at the Penrith Whitewater Stadium where Minister Dib and I saw flood rescue experts from around Australia and around the world, in action at the NSW State Emergency Service Multi-Agency Flood Rescue Symposium. It was hard not to be impressed by these operators knowing they will be using these skills in even more hazardous flooding situations where they will also be navigating debris and pollution, with lives on the line. This is difficult and demanding work, it's great to see the best in the business getting together to share their skills, learn from each other, and making connections with partner agencies. It was a true multi-agency event, led by the NSW SES. Multi-agency cooperation is one of the most exciting trends in emergency management. We saw so many agencies working side by side through both recent fires and floods. Behind the scenes, agencies like the NSW SES have been reaching out to their partners to share their skills and make connections. As weather-driven disasters continue to intensify, multi-agency cooperation will become an increasingly important tool in saving lives and property and keeping communities in New South Wales safe.

#### **NEPEAN MENS SHED**

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith)**—I recently had the pleasure of attending the Nepean Men's Shed at Orchard Hills at the invitation of President, Ross Dundas. They are a really dedicated group of enthusiastic members providing a place where men from all walks of life can come together in a safe, caring and socially nurturing environment. They offer a wide range of activities that will stimulate the mind while allowing your creative talents to blossom. The Mens Shed has created a warm, friendly place where you can work on a project or simply sit and read in the library or potter in the vegetable garden. It is also ok to simply enjoy a great chat with people who have similar interests. They have the best range of wooden toys and do make to order. The train room is a train model room that showcases the skills of these talented men, this is just a sample of the activities you can involve yourself in at the Shed. They believe that your health and wellbeing are the most important things that they can contribute to and so, offer a vast array of interests, hobbies and 'work' to fill your day and stimulate your mind.

### WORLD TEACHERS DAY

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith)**—World Teachers Day was Friday 27 October. I attended together with many of my Parliamentary colleagues and the Deputy Premier the Teachers' Guild of NSW 2023 Awards for Excellence in Teaching and World Teachers' Day Awards evening at the The William Inglis Hotel, Warwick Farm. Our Government has made a very significant commitment to Education through a number of its initiatives, including raising the wages cap and awarding teachers their largest boost in pay and work arrangements in over a decade. On the night, the Teachers' Guild honoured teachers who have made a significant contribution to their respective schools and communities. The following 2023 Awards were. Awards for Teachers in their Early Years of Teaching; the Research Award ; the World Teachers' Recognition Awards, and Honorary Fellowships of the Teachers' Guild of New South Wales. I was delighted that a number of teachers from my Penrith electorate were award recipients on the night. I congratulate them all for their success so far. These Awards recognise the outstanding professional contribution to education made by our teachers. On these important occasions we celebrate and acknowledge the achievements of our teachers in an increasingly complex, multicultural and technological society.

### FRED KEARNEY- THE ARMIDALE SCHOOL

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise Fred Kearney of the Armidale School [TAS] for taking the opportunity to share his personal story at the TEDx Croydon Youth Program, which was held in Sydney recently. Fred will be one of six speakers to share their stories with hundreds of others, with the aim of the event being to give youth a voice. This year's program will explore questions as to who the youth of today are and what they want to be. I congratulate Fred on this achievement and for adding another feature to his bow, following the 2023 Lions Australia Youth of the Year accolade he won earlier in May. I commend the teachers and staff at TAS for supporting and enabling Fred make the most of this valuable opportunity.

### LOCAL LIVESTOCK AGENT WIN AT NETWORK AWARDS

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise Ray White Livestock Guyra/Armidale for their nomination and being award winner at the Ray White Rural and Livestock Awards held at Brisbane recently. The awards celebrate high achieving offices and individuals throughout their network. I congratulate Director Sam Sewell, sole operator of Ray White Livestock, Guyra/Armidale, on being named the number one livestock office in terms of settled commissions. I also congratulate Blake O'Reilly for taking out the prestigious Charlie Maher award. Blake was awarded this accolade for his outstanding approach to his clients and the network, through his unsurpassed commitment and support. I commend each of the staff at the Guyra/Armidale office for this outstanding achievement – it takes a great team effort and commitment to be a leader in industry.

### OSCAR BLOMFIELD WINS SCHOLARSHIP

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise the achievements of Calrossy student Oscar Blomfield, who has been awarded an Air Force sponsored Gliding Scholarship. This scholarship provides Oscar with four weeks of training at the Australian Defence Force facility in Bathurst, to assist him in obtaining his Glider Pilot Licence. I congratulate Oscar on completing his first session of training, which included both practical flying sessions and theory. This has followed years of passion and Oscar being involved in Australian Air Force Cadets [AAFC] since year 9 at school. I commend Oscar for taking up this wonderful opportunity and I would like to thank the Calrossy School and AAFC for supporting Oscar to reach his full potential and pathway to his personal goals.

### LUCY COLOGNA

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I would like to take the opportunity to recognise Lucy Cologna. Lucy is a Year 10 student studying at Rosebank College in Five Dock. As part of her studies in Commerce, Lucy joined my team and I in the Drummoyne Electorate Office for a week of work experience. I would like to thank Lucy for her hard work and dedication. She is a bright young woman and I hope that she was able to learn something new and experience what it is like to serve our community. My staff have told me that she was a star in the electorate office, willing to lend a hand, getting involved in day-to-day tasks and visiting Parliament to watch Question Time. Lucy told us that she is interested in a career in politics and hopes to make a lasting impact on her community and that she hopes to inspire others - she has already inspired me. As 2024 approaches, Lucy will begin the senior years of her schooling. I wish her all the very best for her studies. I have no doubt that she will reach her goals and excel in the future. Dream big Lucy!

### GEORGIA RODILOSSO

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I would like to take the opportunity to recognise Georgia Rodilosso. Georgia is a Year 11 student at Marist Sisters College Woolwich. As part of her studies and

required work placement, Georgia joined my team and I in the Drummoyne electorate office for a week of work experience. I would like to thank Georgia for her hard work and dedication. She is a bright young lady and I hope that she was able to learn something new and experience what it is like to serve our community. Georgia told me that she has hopes to study nursing at university post-school and I have no doubt that she will reach her goals and excel in the future. As 2024 approaches, I wish Georgia all the best for her Higher School Certificate. Georgia has a promising future ahead of her and I wish her all the very best in her future endeavours.

### **YOUNG MATILDAS**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—The Matildas set the country aflame with their 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup—their impact was so massive that "Matilda" is the Australian Word of the Year! The next generation of Matildas is set to include some Charlestown electorate-grown talent, with recently-graduated Hunter Sports High student Lara Gooch and alumna Milan Hammond named to the Young Matildas squad. Both women play for the Newcastle Jets. Lara, who has overcome an injury-plagued off-season to star for the Jets in every game so far this season, recently scored her first A-League goal in the Jets' match against Melbourne Victory. She missed out on the most recent Young Matildas camp because she was finishing her HSC. Milan, who achieved a long-term dream when she made her A-League debut for the Jets in October, is a 19-year-old Wiradjuri woman who was a member of the Future Matildas program. She attained a university placement with HSHS's "Big Picture" program, a non-ATAR pathway to higher education which allows for a balance between academia and athletics. Congratulations, Lara and Milan.

### **PROFESSOR RODNEY SCOTT**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—For more than twenty years, Professor Rodney Scott has been researching inherited forms of cancer. A Charlestown electorate local and mainstay at the University of Newcastle's School of Biomedical Sciences and Pharmacy, the research Professor Scott was involved in first focused on the identification of genes associated forms of colorectal cancer and breast cancer which can be inherited. This helped to set the scene for our current understanding of how genes can impact on malignancy. Now Professor Scott has been awarded a grant of more than \$2.7 from the Medical Research Future Fund's Genomics Health Futures Mission. Professor Scott's grant-funded research will investigate ways in which genetic mutations make certain patients more susceptible to toxicity from some anticancer drugs. This research has the potential to save lives and make the treatment of cancer more effective. The University of Newcastle's world-class researchers have contributed a great deal to our scientific understanding, and I am so glad to see that Professor Scott's outstanding work is being supported in this way.

### **BEAU BOETTCHER**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—Congratulations to Whitebridge High School year 9 student Beau Boettcher, who is making waves in the sport of water polo. Beau represented the Hunter last week in the open New South Wales Combined High Schools water polo championships, helping his team to win silver after a hard-fought match against the competition's eventual winners, Sydney North. It's a fabulous achievement for a young athlete, and Beau gives back to the sport by serving as a referee, coach and official. On December 6, Beau will be awarded a Sporting Blue to acknowledge his water polo achievements—a well-deserved accolade for a talented young player! Beau has been named in the NSW side to participate in the Australian titles, which will take place in Noosa in August 2024. I wish Beau and his teammates all the best in that upcoming competition, and I'm sure we'll see much more from this young man as he pursues this sport. Congratulations, Beau.

### **PLAN B- ST IVES HIGH SCHOOL FEATURE FILM**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—As the Greens NSW Education spokesperson I want to wish all of the stellar cast and crew of St Ives High School a huge congratulations on their cinematic release of their full length feature film "Plan B". The original 70 minute high school movie musical centres around the character Bea (performed by Mary Peter) and her choir friends who are told they can no longer sing through the Covid-19 pandemic, and the novel ways they find to perform and find their voices. Mirroring real life, the film was shot as an alternative to staging the school's annual musicals through the pandemic and was a collaboration of more than 100 students as well as teachers, parents and alumni. With an incredible original script and musical score from parent and highly acclaimed musical director Sean Peter, the film delights with fabulous music and performances and is a poignant reflection of the impact of the pandemic on the Arts and young people.

### SHARRON LARGE – 40 YEARS OF TEACHING

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—I would like to congratulate Sharron Large from Cootamundra Public School as she recently celebrated her 40th year as a teacher. Sharron commenced her teaching career in the mid-1980s at Finley Public School before attending Galong Public School shortly after. Remarkably, Sharron then spent thirty-seven admirable years at Cootamundra Public School from 1988 onwards until she recently retired. A function was held at the Cootamundra Country Club with an estimated ninety guests to celebrate Sharron's lengthy career and achievements. I cannot begin to imagine the changes to the educational system that Sharron has experienced during four decades of teaching, including curriculum changes and technological advances. Sharron has a demonstrated passion for literature, including helping students develop their reading and writing skills. She has taught various classes and year groups from Kindergarten to Year 6 throughout her career. Notably, Sharron was also the Assistant Principal at Cootamundra Public School. I thank Sharron for her long service to her local community and wish her well for her retirement.

### LEUKAEMIA FOUNDATION FUNDRAISING

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—I would like to recognise three young women committed to raising vital funds for the Leukaemia Foundation's World's Greatest Shave. Hannah Gordon of Canowindra, Nina Cuddly, and Emma Haslam of Cowra stepped forward to shave their head, raising funds to fight blood cancer. Collectively, Hannah, Nina, and Emma raised an impressive total of \$6,107.29 to donate to the Leukaemia Foundation. Each day, 53 Australians are diagnosed with blood cancer. Regrettably, 16 individuals succumb to this relentless disease each year; the Leukaemia Foundation was established to provide emotional and practical support for blood cancer patients and their families. Recognising the urgent need for collective action to help fund leading-edge research, translating to life-saving new treatments and rapid access to clinical trials, Hannah, Nina, and Emma had no hesitation in supporting the Leukaemia Foundation in their endeavours to ensure zero lives are lost to blood cancer by 2035. These young women are an inspiration and commend their passion in assisting the Leukaemia Foundation.

### NARRANDERA NAIDOC AWARDS

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—I stand to congratulate the award winners of the 2023 Narrandera NAIDOC Awards. Yvonne Ingram was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award for her significant leadership, mentoring, and advocacy efforts. Yvonne was the first Aboriginal midwife at Narrandera Hospital, where she worked for over 30 years. Yvonne is an asset to the Narrandera Community and is also well known for her work in First Line Emergency, Obstetrics, and Early Childhood Teaching. My congratulations are further extended to the Black Business Achievement Award winner, Windamere Concrete and Construction. Winners of the Yulang Award were Aunties Leanne Higgins and Wendy Lyons. The winner of the Innovation Creative Talent award was Lillardia Briggs Houston. Winner of the Female Elder of the Year award was Aunt Jennifer Johnson. Joy O'Hara was awarded the Education Award. Winner of the Caring for Culture and Country award was present to Uncle Roley William. The winner of the Male Elder of the Year was Uncle Michael Lyons. The winner of the Sportsperson of the Year award was Kye Longford, and the Community Person of the Year award winner was Cherry Johnson. Congratulations again to all the winners.

### NSW EDUCATION SERVICE RECOGNITION - UPPER HUNTER RECIPIENTS

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter)**—I want to acknowledge several public high school teachers who have educated our Upper Hunter Electorate students and were recently recognised by NSW Education. The Service Recognition Dinner held at Parliament House thanked those who have completed 50 years with the Department. Congratulations Kathleen Prudence, Head Mathematics Teacher at Singleton High School, who continues to be a classroom practitioner. Ms Prudence's career commenced in 1967, arriving at Singleton in 2005 as a relief head teacher before becoming Graeme O'Brien's successor when he retired. Kathleen told Singleton Argus journalist Louise Nichols, "my job has never been a chore and I still love teaching children no matter the challenge." Congratulations also to Graham 'Bear' Hudson, described by former Dungog High School colleagues as a 'Mathematics teacher and education legend'. Graham, who grew at Gresford, dedicated 53 years to teaching and along with brother Leo, a Toronto High teacher, the pair posted a combined 103 years of service to education. Dungog High Relieving Principal, Tina Pratt, notes in this week's school newsletter – "This is a testament to their passion, commitment, and the lasting impact they have had on countless students throughout the years."

### SINGLETON COUNCIL – AR BLUETT AWARD REGIONAL WINNER 2023

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter)**—Congratulations Singleton Council on being the rural/regional category recipient of the 2023 AR Bluett Award at this month's Local Government NSW Annual Conference in Sydney. This is the second time Singleton has won the prestigious honour after winning the Municipal category

in 1977. Upper Hunter Shire Council was the electorate's last recipient receiving the Shire honour in 2010. Singleton Council General Manager, Jason Linnane, said the award was due recognition for a small regional council and the result of hard work by the staff and the elected officials. Singleton's award submission outlined Council's focus on delivering outcomes, programs and projects that enhance Singleton's liveability and how the organisation is moving to meet the future head-on. It's written submission and subsequent presentation to the AR Bluett Board of Trustees told the story of how Council, the staff and the community are working together to shift the paradigm from the here and now to the future. Singleton Council's achievement is even more noteworthy given the challenges resulting from the July 2022 Hunter Valley floods which submerged the village of Broke and damaged roads and infrastructure across the local government area.

#### **PATRICK BEACH**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I am delighted to acknowledge and celebrate Patrick Beach, a Glenmore Park local, for his remarkable debut as goalkeeper for the Olyroos in their recent match against Qatar in Saudi Arabia. Patrick's performance was nothing short of exceptional, contributing significantly to a thrilling 2-1 victory for his team. His skill and composure under pressure were evident throughout the game, showcasing the talent and hard work that have led him to this point in his sporting career. Off the international stage, Patrick is a valued member of Melbourne City in the A-League, where he continues to demonstrate his exceptional abilities as a goalkeeper. His success is a source of great pride for our community and serves as an inspiration to young athletes in Glenmore Park and beyond. On behalf of our community, I extend my warmest congratulations to Patrick Beach on his impressive debut and wish him continued success in his future endeavours both in Australia and on the international stage.

#### **JODY PRESTON**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I rise to honour a distinguished member of our community, RFS Captain Jody Preston, who was recently recognised for his exceptional service during an award ceremony in Penrith. Captain Preston received the prestigious Humanitarian Overseas Service Medal with the British Columbia II Clasp, an honour bestowed by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. This medal is awarded to those who have provided humanitarian service in hazardous circumstances outside Australia. In 2017, Captain Preston was deployed to Canada to assist with the devastating wildfires. His commitment and bravery in facing such challenging conditions exemplify the spirit of selflessness and dedication that characterises our emergency services personnel. His efforts not only aided in the immediate crisis but also strengthened international bonds in firefighting and disaster response. This recognition is a testament to Captain Preston's outstanding service and dedication to humanitarian causes beyond our shores. On behalf of our community, I extend my deepest gratitude to Captain Preston for his remarkable contribution and for representing the values of courage and compassion that we hold dear.

#### **KIARA DE DOMIZIO - WINS A-LEAGUE CONTRACT**

**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 Kiara De Domizio on securing her first professional football contract with Melbourne Club, Western United in the A-League Women's competition. At the age of 22, Kiara, a former St Felix Bankstown student, is living her dream and reaping the benefits of her hard work. She has accomplished a major goal to reach the A-League competition level and continues to do what she is passionate about. Renowned for her exceptional athleticism, Kiara has thrived in all athletic competitions since a young age and has been involved in a range of sports, from football to track and field to OzTag. Her talent and prowess have seen her playing as a natural attacker, who with her explosive turn of pace can play on the wing or striker positions. She made her debut at the age of 17 when she was selected to play for Sydney Olympic Club. Earlier this year she trained with Western Sydney Wanderers and was hopeful of getting a run this season when the call came from the Melbourne Club. Once again, I wish Kiara all the best and good luck with her football career.

#### **BANKSTOWN RSL SUB-BRANCH REMEMBRANCE DAY**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—I would like to thank Bankstown RSL Sub-branch for their Remembrance Day tribute. Remembrance Day is a day when we honour and remember the sacrifices that were made by our brave servicemen and women who have selflessly defended our freedom. Congratulations to Bankstown RSL Sub-Branch President Terry Corcoran for the hard work and dedication that he has put into protecting our community and nation. On this day, we reflect upon the profound impact of war and conflict, acknowledging the profound loss experienced by families and communities. We stand together in solidarity, fostering a spirit of remembrance that transcends generations. May the sacrifices of those who served, and those who continue to serve, be eternally engraved in our collective memory. Together, we express our deepest gratitude

to the veterans and active-duty military personnel who have dedicated their lives to safeguarding our freedom. Their bravery and resilience inspire us to uphold the values of peace, justice, and compassion. On this Remembrance Day, we pledge to honour the legacy of those who have served by fostering a community that values the principles of unity, respect, and gratitude. Let us not forget.

#### **CANTERBURY BANKSTOWN CHAMBER OF BUSINESS TOY DRIVE**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—Canterbury Bankstown Chamber of Commerce has launched its 2023 Christmas Appeal in conjunction with the Entertainment Park located next to Bankstown Airport. Christmas is always a time of joy and giving to others. However, during the Christmas break when most of us focus on family, it is also a time to spare a thought for those in our community who are struggling to make ends meet. This Christmas, the Canterbury Bankstown Chamber of Commerce is inviting businesses and residents to join in making a difference in the lives of children who are facing family challenges. The 'Toy Drive for Hope and Happiness' will also support women in shelters and Bankstown Women's Health Centre. This Christmas, bring a toy, or a hamper donation, and let's spread happiness to children and families at our local women's shelters who have experienced domestic violence. A simple toy can be a source of comfort, hope, and happiness for a child who has witnessed hardship. My Electorate Office in Punchbowl will also be a drop-off point for anyone who wishes to help and donate a toy this Christmas. Once again, an excellent initiative by CBCC.

#### **SYDNEY PSYCHOLOGY CENTRE**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I wish to bring to the attention of the House the Sydney Psychology Centre's Creative Works Showcase. Organised by KidsLink, the event celebrated the artistic endeavours of neurodivergent children and adolescents from the local areas of Gladesville, Ryde, Epping, and Lane Cove. KidsLink, a social skills program for those diagnosed with Autism, ADHD, and other neurodivergent conditions, focuses on art therapy conducted by professional Art Therapists. This showcase was the culmination of a year's hard work, where participants displayed their creativity and progress in social skills and emotional management. Attendees of the showcase included children, families, and local community leaders, emphasising the importance of communal support and recognition for these young creators. The artworks, ranging from paintings to sculptures, were not only visually impressive but also reflections of the participants' personal journeys and growth. It was a heartwarming display of community spirit and the achievements of these children, who have worked diligently throughout the year. I acknowledge the CEO Emma Spencer and Managing Director Dr Clayton Spencer for their work throughout the year, and congratulate them on such a successful event. I wish them every success for an even bigger 2024!

#### **STREET FOOTBALL**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I wish to bring to the attention of the House the 2023 Street Football World Cup Tournament held at Meadowbank Park on 19 November. The event drew thousands, including players and spectators, creating an electrifying atmosphere that resonated through the streets of Ryde. It was a celebration of football, where the local clubs of Ryde, along with some from surrounding areas, showcased their talents, embodying the spirit of friendly competition and unity. The success of this event can be largely attributed to the commendable efforts of Julie Crane, President of Melrose Park FC, and Sonja Clement. Their dedication and organisational skills were instrumental in bringing this event to life. Julie's leadership and deep involvement in the local football scene were evident in the seamless participation of the clubs. Sonja's exceptional management of the event logistics ensured a smooth and enjoyable experience for all attendees. Their combined efforts not only elevated the tournament to a spectacular level but also significantly contributed to fostering a sense of community. The Street Football World Cup Tournament, under their guidance, became more than just a sports event; it became a landmark occasion, celebrating the unifying power of football in West Ryde.

#### **RYDE NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I wish to bring to the attention of the House the wonderful work of Ryde Neighbourhood Watch, which stands out for its exceptional community engagement and dedication to safety. This volunteer-driven organisation plays a pivotal role in fostering a secure and connected community, and I acknowledge the executive team led by President Philip Brown, Vice President, Mike O'Reilly, Treasurer, Artin Etmekdjian, Assistant Treasurer, Stuart Reid, Secretary Mark Homeming and Minute Secretary Sally Rickards. The team, supported by its committee of Robert Gamble, Carmel Reilly, David Samuelsdorff, Warren Smith, Mary Walker and Janette Watson coordinates widespread newsletters to the community and popular events to promote safety and awareness. A recent national survey highlighted the thriving nature of our local community's Neighbourhood Watch program compared to other regions in Australia. This achievement is a testament to the commitment and hard work of volunteers like Phil and his team, who go above and beyond to maintain the safety and well-being of their local community. Their efforts in organizing events, managing communications, and



coordinating at various levels demonstrate a proactive approach to community safety, setting a commendable example for neighbourhood watch programs nationwide. Thank you to Ryde Neighbourhood Watch!

#### **GERRINGONG GOLF CLUB**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises the Gerringong Golf Club. On Friday 24th November 2023, Gerringong Golf Club hosted its Green Day Out (3-Person Ambrose) event. I would like to acknowledge Mr Geoff Manning, the President of the Gerringong Golf Club. I have also been proud to support and sponsor this event and I also acknowledge Geoff and his committee's dedication to coordinating this event, and I acknowledge and thank the Gerringong Golf Club for the important and pivotal role which they play in the local Gerringong community. Gerringong Golf Club is well regarded and well known as having some of the best holes and best par five holes in the state of New South Wales, attracting many golfing professional and amateur players for the challenge which Gerringong Golf Club offers players. The Gerringong Golf Club also has a popular women's competition who will be hosting a women's end of season fun day on Thursday 7th December 2023, along with a regular Medley competition, Men's Monthly Medal and Stableford competition. Once again, well done and congratulations to Gerringong Golf Club on their excellent community activities and events.

#### **KIAMA BOWLING CLUB**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises Kiama Bowling Club. I acknowledge Wayne Richardson, the President of the Kiama Bowling Club. The club boasts a diverse group of bowlers, ranging from energetic twenty-somethings to seasoned and very experienced members. Kiama Bowling Club offers a wide range of bowls programs to cater to various interests. These include: Women's Bowls on Tuesday mornings: A dedicated session for women bowlers. Social Bowls (Open Gender) on Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday afternoons: A relaxed and inclusive bowling experience. Barefoot Bowls: Perfect for those looking for a more casual and fun game. High School Students: Encouraging the younger generation to enjoy the sport. Men's Social Bowlers: A designated time for male bowlers. Club Championships: Competitive events for those seeking a challenge. Tournaments and Pennants: Exciting competitions against other clubs. The Thursday Social Pairs highlight the club's relaxed atmosphere when participants wear casual clothes and a game goes for three enjoyable hours. If you are interested in lawn bowling, Kiama Bowling Club welcomes you. Contact the Club at (02) 4232 1176 to get started. Additionally, free coaching sessions are available, provided by experienced bowlers like Bronwyn Campbell and others.

#### **KIAMA SURF LIFESAVING**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises the six Kiama locals involved in a lifesaving rescue at Surf Beach Kiama on Saturday 19th November 2023. These local legends, all aged between 12 and 15 are Max Laird, Braith Davidson, George Griffin, Harrison Smee, Alex Norris and Zach Marsden. All these champions are members of the Kiama Surf Lifesaving Club. They heard cries for help from the surf and even though they had finished patrolling for the day, they leapt into action. A flash rip had taken an entire family out to sea, a mother with her three children and two teenagers. The nine-year-old boy was completely underwater with only his hand visible by the time they reached him. Because of the training, dedication and quick actions of our local lifesaving heroes, six people including two young children aged eight and nine, are alive today. Our community is so proud of the six brave young men. This should serve as a timely reminder leading into the Christmas and New Years' period for all swimmers to only swim at patrolled beaches and always swim between the flags.

#### **WAHROONGA ELECTORATE ROTARY LEADERS**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga)**—The Wahroonga Electorate is home to the Wahroonga, Turramurra and Ku-ring-gai Rotary clubs. Each year, the Presidents of each club pass the baton to a new leader during their annual changeover dinner. This year I attended the Turramurra and Ku-ring-gai Changeover Dinners. I congratulate Ku-ring-gai Rotary's 2023-24 Joint Presidents Ted Price and Malcolm Braid, and I thank former President Chris Lewis for his leadership. Likewise, I joined Turramurra Rotary's annual changeover dinner and I congratulate the new President Dallas Booth and also wish former President Ian Spencer all the best and thank him for his leadership. I was regrettably unable to attend Wahroonga Rotary's changeover dinner this year but I congratulate the new President Mentie Knowles and thank former President Peter Kirkwood for his efforts as a Rotary President. Leadership is a special trait that very few possess, and I have no doubt that the new leaders will thrive in their roles using their experience in Rotary and long-standing service to the community.

#### **WARRAWEE BOWLING CLUB**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga)**—An esteemed group of 26 bowling clubs from the Upper North Shore and Northern Beaches recently competed in the 2022-2023 Pennant, an annual bowls competition.

Pleasingly, Warrawee Bowling Club in the Wahroonga electorate took first place in the Grade 7 Men's section organised by the Sydney Northern District Bowls Association. This is a significant achievement for the club, as their last victory in this competition was secured in the 1938-1939 season. The club has also transformed recently introducing new concepts to stay ahead. Patrons can now enjoy Stan Sports on Friday and Saturday nights, a range of new culinary options, and even place orders via MenuLog, Uber Eats or DoorDash. Congratulations to the team at Warrawee Bowling Club, Director Peter Armstrong and Manager Kevin Mund.

#### **IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY KILLARA, 60TH ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—On Sunday 26 November 2023, I attended the 60th anniversary of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church in Killara. The anniversary was marked with morning mass officiated by Diocese of Broken Bay Bishop Anthony Randazzo, and parish priests, Colin Blayney and Thomas Alackunnel. Over 300 parishioners of all ages made the 60th anniversary celebration a joyous and uplifting occasion for all. The celebratory mass was followed by a gathering that included an official cake, sausage sizzle, barista coffee, beer and bubbles. There was also face painting and balloon craft, which kept both the young and the young-at-heart entertained, well-fed and thankful to be part of such a happy occasion. The Killara Parish is a part of the Catholic Parish of Lindfield-Killara, that includes the Catholic Primary School Holy Family at Lindfield. It is a truly wonderful community of love, family and inclusiveness.

#### **DAVIDSON CHRISTMAS CARD COMPETITION 2023**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—As we enter the season of Christmas, I will be proud to send out the Davidson electorate Christmas card. Earlier this year I invited local students in years 3 and 4 to participate, simply giving them the theme of 'Christmas in Australia'. I was overwhelmed with the response of 220 entries. Judging a winner was undoubtedly the hardest job I have experienced as a Member of Parliament. The imagination, creativity, ingenuity and talent of our local eight- to ten-year-olds was incredible. I would acknowledge all the schools who encouraged their young students to participate: Holy Family in Lindfield, Roseville Public, Wakehurst Public in Belrose, Corpus Christi in St Ives, St Martin's in Davidson, Kambora Public in Davidson, Covenant Christian School in Belrose, Cromehurst School in Lindfield, and Lindfield Public. Congratulations to highly commended entries from Zara, Kenta, Ryan, Theodore, Koby, Gabriela and Lottie; and congratulations to the winner, Albert from Roseville Public, with his quirky depiction of a koala and crocodile who both appeared to have enjoyed their Christmas dinner. Merry Christmas everyone!

#### **KILLARA MUSIC CLUB 2023**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—I am pleased to recognise the Killara Music Club for another stella year of bringing people together to share quality music. First established in 1932, it has grown to be the largest music club in Sydney. They are affiliated with the Federated Music Clubs of Australia. The club meets six times a year for concerts at Ravenswood in Gordon. In 2023 concerts included violinist Anna Da Silva Chen with pianist Lee Dionne, pianist Nadia Koudasheva, soprano Anna Stephens with pianist Benjamin Burton, pianist Paul Cheung, violinists Amanda Chen, Seamus MacNamara and Benjamin Haire, and celloist Reena Oh, the Ku-ring-gai Male Choir, and the Gilbert & Sullivan Opera Company of Sydney. This is an amazing line up! I recognise and say thank you to President Cheryl Szatow, Music Director John Middleton, Secretary Jill Tuffley and Treasurer Warren Martin. I am excited to present this Community Recognition Statement made in the Parliament of NSW to the Killara Music Club's President Cheryl Szatow on Sunday 3 December 2023 at the annual Christmas Lunch at Pymble Golf Club. Thank you, Cheryl, for inspiring us with your continuous public service contribution.

#### **FAYE ANDERSON**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—Every community has quiet achievers who work behind the scenes to make life better for others. All are worthy of acknowledgment but few more so than Regional Development Australia's Skilled Migration Officer Faye Anderson, who has just retired after more than 18 years of service in this role to our community. Ms Anderson has previously been recognised as a finalist in the Premier's Multicultural Community Medal and honour roll. Ms Anderson has been a guiding light to employers and the migrant community in our region. Regional Development Australia Riverina Chair, Dianna Somerville, has described Ms Anderson as a mentor and a friend to countless individuals seeking to establish themselves in this region. Ms Anderson has applied a personal touch to guiding newcomers not only through paperwork but also towards employment, communities, and the joys of settling into a new home. She has gone above and beyond her role, using her time and regional knowledge. In doing so, she had helped to make the Wagga Wagga electorate a more diverse, culturally enriched community.

#### **COMMITTEE 4 WAGGA WAGGA**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—Congratulations and thank you to the Committee 4 Wagga for its efforts to tackle a serious housing problem in Wagga Wagga at the recent Designing a Future event. Facilitated

by housing advocate and media personality Tim "Rosso" Ross, the breakfast gathering brought together leading community members and agencies to not only identify our city's housing challenges but also to find ways of solving them. Among the potential solutions flagged were build-to-rent and modular homes, public/private partnerships, community-based land initiatives, asset re-purposing, infill development options, urban design principles, overhauling the planning system and support of local governments for infrastructure assistance. Special mention for their tireless efforts should go to the committee's executive team, Adam Drummond, Scott Sanbrook, Michelle Ford, and Sophie Uden. Speakers included DevCore managing director Paul Thompson, Wagga City Council director regional activation John Sidgwick, The Building Supply Company and Housing Industry Association (HIA) Wagga committee member Tony Balding, and Regional Development Australia Riverina research officer Melanie Renkin. Not content to rest on its laurels, the committee is now working to implement the suggested solutions and planning a forum on inner-city density scheduled for mid-2024. Well done to all involved.

#### **HMAS PARRAMATTA II**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)**—On the 26th of November, members of our Parramatta Community gathered to mark the 82nd anniversary of the tragic loss of HMAS Parramatta II. She entered service in 1940 performing a multitude of roles in the Red Sea and the Mediterranean. Her most famous service was operating as an escort to allied supply runs for our besieged forces in Tobruk. This gallant earned the nickname the 'Tobruk Ferry Service' and helping supply the legendary defence of the city by the 'Rats of Tobruk'. Tragically on the morning of 27 November 1941, HMAS Parramatta was torpedoed by a German U-boat off the coast of Libya and was lost. 138 Australian Servicemen were lost that day with only 24 surviving. It is important that our community gather to honour the sacrifice of those men aboard a ship proudly named in honour of our community. I would like to thank all those involved in ensuring the marking of this occasion in particular the Naval Association of Australia Parramatta Memorial and the City of Parramatta RSL Sub-branch. Thank you for keeping the memory of those who sacrificed everything for their country alive. Lest we forget.

#### **LITTLE INDIA DIWALI**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)**—Diwali, Deepavali is the festival of lights. A joyous and vibrant occasion celebrated across our Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist and Jain communities. Diwali also marks the beginning of the Hindu New Year. On Saturday 18 November, the businesses and residents of Little India came together to host a Diwali street festival. On the 18th and during the Festival of Lights Little India was shining bright and fully deserving of its reputation as Australia's centrepiece of Indian culture. Little India in Harris Park was on spectacular display for the whole community to enjoy highlighting the multicultural harmony and diversity that characterises the Parramatta electorate. I would like to recognise event organisers of Vipin Punia, Michael Velu, Ritesh Duggal, Dr Neeraj Duggal, Gurmeet Tulli, Parag Shah, Little India Australia and the Little India Australia Foundation for enhancing the wider community's understanding of Diwali. I would also like to thank the City of Parramatta Council and Cumberland Police Area Command for assisting these generous local organisations in creating a beautiful event for the community to enjoy.

#### **GLENAEON FAMILY FAIR**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—I would like to commend Glenaeon Rudolf Steiner School in Castlecrag for their annual family fair. The Glenaeon Family Fair is one of the festive highlights of the year for the Willoughby community, attracting families and friends of the school community, as well as local residents and visitors from far and wide. Hosted by Glenaeon's parent community, the Fair offers an entertaining weekend of delicious food, fabulous art and craft, wholesome family fun and lively entertainment. It is also an opportunity for the School to showcase the benefits of its Steiner education to visiting members of the public who can view students' work and talk to teachers about the School's unique curricula and activities. The quality of the entertainment, food, art and craft at the Glenaeon Family Fair was a real credit to the talent and hard work of all in the school community who made this event a great success.

#### **THE HOUSING CONNECTION**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—It's a delight to see another project in my community come to fruition with the Housing Connection of Chatswood recently redeveloping their William Street building. The Housing Connection is a disability service provider that serves the needs of adults with intellectual and other disabilities, helping them to live valued and rewarding lives in the community. Since its founding in 1981, the Housing Connection has sought to foster empowerment, facilitate social inclusion, and promote socially valued roles for people living with a disability in our community. Representing the best of private enterprise, the Housing Connection is a community-driven organisation, dedicated to building an inclusive and supportive community. Visiting their William Street property on Monday 27 November 2023, it was so gratifying to see the redevelopments completed. The Housing Connection's William Street site is so important as this gives its people

the independence of their own home yet with access to 24/7 support when needed. I applaud the work the Housing Connection does to help people and community and I thank Nicola Hayhoe, Doug Talbert and Anne Louise Hickey in particular for their leadership.

### ACY SECURITIES

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—The community of Willoughby including the great financial and retail centre of Chatswood is a thriving hub of private enterprises. Today, I acknowledge ACY Securities as one outstanding example. ACY Securities is one of Australia's fastest growing multi-asset online trading providers, offering outstanding trading, execution, account management and market analysis. ACY is dedicated to building its business on the pillars of transparency, client-focus and technology. As a customer-centric business, ACY is committed to providing an efficient, robust, safe and secure trading environment for its clients, adhering to the best practices in the trading industry. ACY recently celebrated its 13-year anniversary and I congratulate it on all it has achieved for not only the trading industry, but also for my community of Willoughby as a large employer in the Chatswood CBD. I would also like to acknowledge its founder, Jimmy Ye, a progressive fintech entrepreneur with a passion for financial markets. The success of ACY is a tribute to his vision, drive and enterprise.

### ARIANA W - CEO FOR A DAY

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone)**—I rise today to extend my sincere congratulations to Ariana W from The Ponds High School for her participation in the 'CEO for a Day' program with School Infrastructure NSW. Ariana's dedication to seizing this unique opportunity reflects not only her individual commitment to personal and academic growth but also showcases the spirit of excellence fostered at The Ponds High School. During the event, Ariana had the privilege of delving into the intricate workings of Schools Infrastructure NSW, gaining insights from notable figures such as Adam Taylor, Dean Whittle and CEO Anthony Manning. Ariana's engagement with professionals in the field, including a valuable session with Susana from Shake Up Architecture, exemplifies her unique commitment to understanding the complexities of design planning and risk management. Ariana's project focus on creating more shaded areas and shelters in schools not only demonstrates her keen awareness of environmental considerations, but also showcases a proactive approach to problem-solving. Her exemplary participation in the 'CEO for a Day' program reflects not only her individual achievements but also highlights The Ponds High School's commitment to nurturing outstanding students. Congratulations Ariana, excited to see where you go in the future!

### JAYZ ART CLASSES AND EXHIBITION

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone)**—I rise to congratulate the Jayz Art Classes community on the resounding success of their recent exhibition, showcasing the extraordinary artwork crafted by talented children from Riverstone. It was a wonderful experience to witness the vibrant colours, imaginative strokes, and unique perspectives brought to life by these young artists. The exhibition not only revealed the creativity of the children but also highlighted the invaluable role Jayz Art Classes plays in our community. Their commitment to nurturing creativity, fostering a love for art, and providing a platform for self-expression has undoubtedly left an indelible mark on the lives of these budding artists. The showcased artworks spoke volumes about the transformative power of art education. It was evident that beyond the strokes of paint and sculpted forms, these children have imbibed essential life skills such as collaboration, perseverance, and a keen sense of innovation — a testament to the holistic impact of the art school environment. The recent celebration was the 10th anniversary of Jayz Art — for playing such an invaluable role in our community, I commend you and I am sure that the community that has formed around you appreciates your dedication to our children.

### JEMIMA DREDGE AND JULIE PARK - CURE BRAIN CANCER FUNDRAISER

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone)**—I stand to proudly acknowledge and commend Jemima Dredge and Julie Park for their outstanding efforts in organizing the annual 'Cure Brain Cancer Fundraiser' at The Ponds High School. On Friday, November 10, the Social Justice portfolio, under the dedicated leadership of Jemima and Julie, orchestrated a remarkable fundraising event for the Cure Brain Cancer Foundation. The team demonstrated exceptional dedication and creativity. By encouraging students to wear a splash of purple, the colour associated with the foundation, they not only raised awareness but also fostered a sense of community within the student body. The sale of purple-themed snow cones and fairy floss for just \$3 was a resounding success, with huge student uptake. Jemima and Julie's leadership ensured a smooth and orderly event, with the team efficiently managing crowds, allowing everyone to contribute to this vital cause without undue delay. Another thank-you to Jemima Dredge and Julie Park for their inspiring leadership, dedication and commitment to supporting the Cure Brain Cancer Foundation. Their initiative has not only raised crucial funds but has also heightened awareness of the importance of brain cancer research within our school community.

**NORTHERN BEACHES MUM - NICOLE GAMA**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—I acknowledge Northern Beaches Mums, a wonderful community service connecting and supporting mums across our community. The Northern Beaches Mums website was started to help busy local mums find activities to entertain and engage their kids, as well as connect them with quality services. The website has expanded to include a business directory, tradie guide, activities guide, events calendar, jobs board, product review and articles about everything from finances to health. But Northern Beaches Mums is more than just a website filled with resources, it's a community. The Northern Beaches Mums Facebook group has 30,000 members, it's a place where parents in our community can ask each other questions, seek advice, get recommendations, share suggestions and information, and generally support each other. The kids and parents in Pittwater are so fortunate to have access to Northern Beaches Mums. Thank you to editor, Nicole Gama, for your ongoing passion for supporting parents in our community. Your work and contribution enriches our community. I am pleased that acknowledgement of Northern Beaches Mums is now preserved in the records of the oldest parliament in our nation.

**UN WOMEN AUSTRALIA - TESSA BELL**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—I recently had the opportunity to attend the launch of Chain-FS an Australian, patented solution putting people impacted by domestic violence in control of their critical data. Nansen Forensics, in partnership with UN Women Australia and New South Wales and Victorian agencies, is running a six-month pilot program beginning in December 2023 to test this ground-breaking technology. Domestic violence is a scourge on our community. It is paramount that we do more to support victim-survivors and I commend all involved in the launch of this pilot. I particularly wish to acknowledge Pittwater local, Tessa Bell, for her work with UN Women Australia, supporter and partners in the launch of Chain-FS. As partnerships manager, Tess works tirelessly to further the work of UN Women. By facilitating UN Women's work with community leaders and governments, UN Women shape conversations and policies. UN Women's areas of focus include: working towards seeing more women in leadership positions, ending all forms of violence and discrimination against women, ending poverty through women's economic empowerment, and building peace and resilience. Thank you, Tessa, for the important work you do and example you set for the next generation of female leaders and advocates.

**PHILIP CORBETT**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—I congratulate Philip (Phil) Corbett on 15 years of service to the NSW Parliament. Over the years, many members have been fortunate to have had Phil as a member of their team. His background as a journalist has made him a valuable asset to each electorate office he has worked in. Phil has served the communities of Davidson, Manly, Tamworth and Pittwater. I am particularly grateful to Phil for his support as I started my journey as Member for Pittwater earlier this year. Phil's wealth of knowledge and experience was so helpful as I set up my office, and my current electorate office team are so thankful for his assistance. Phil is truly one of the most caring and thoughtful people I have met. Electorate offices are often where people turn in their times of need and Phil is someone who goes above and beyond to help every person who walks through the door, sends an email or gives us a call. Thank you, Phil, our Parliament, and our state are richer for your service.

**TRIBUTE TO LIEUTENANT MAXWELL NUGENT**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga)**—It is with a heavy heart that I inform the House of the passing of Lieutenant Maxwell Nugent, who sadly lost his life at only 24 in a military exercise alongside three other Servicemen. Max was born in Wahroonga in 1998, attended West Pymble Public School and Barker College. He was also a member of the Australian Army Cadets. Becoming an officer in the Army was a long-held dream for Max and in 2018, his dream became reality when he was appointed an officer in the Australian Army. Deciding that aviation was the place he wanted to be, Max earned his pilot's wings and qualified on helicopters at HMAS Albatross, then converted to the Taipan at Oakey. It was during this time that his technical inclination came to the fore, knowing the complex aircraft front to back, inside and out. I attended the service at Barker War Memorial Chapel on 19 August. The service was well-supported with a large turnout, a reflection of Max's deep impact on many in his community and strong values of integrity and honour. I extend my deepest condolences to the family including Daniel, Marianna, Sami and Chadine. Vale Maxwell Nugent.

**TWEED PALLIATIVE SUPPORT**

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed)**—This year Tweed Palliative Support celebrates 25 years of service to the Tweed community. A community-run charity organisation, Tweed Palliative Support provides free services for people living with a life-limiting illness – from a hospice-at-home service, transport assistance and providing loans of equipment such as electric beds, wheelchairs and other aids, to an advocacy service and access to cancer support groups and bereavement support groups. Lead by President & Volunteer Coordinator Meredith Dennis

OAM and supported by wonderful volunteers and committee members, Tweed Palliative Support has helped many Tweed residents, their carers and families at a time when they need it most. Thank you to everyone at Tweed Palliative Support for 25 years of service to the Tweed. The contribution you have made, and continue to make, to our community cannot be underestimated. You have touched the lives of many in an invaluable way. Thank you also to everyone who has financially supported Tweed Palliative Support over the past 25 years. The heart of the Tweed community shines through organisations such as Tweed Palliative Support and I congratulate all involved on a quarter of a century of service.

#### **RICHMOND TWEED REGIONAL LIBRARY 50TH ANNIVERSARY**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I was privileged to be invited to be guest speaker at the 50th anniversary of the Richmond Tweed Regional Library (RTRL) recently. The RTRL network started in November 1973, when Lismore City Council and Ballina Shire Council agreed to provide a joint library service. Soon the Tweed, Byron, and Mullumbimby Councils joined the successful model which went on to become one of the largest regional library services in NSW. The RTRL network currently serves more than 200,000 Northern Rivers residents through its 12 branches and a mobile library. At the anniversary lunch retiring Regional Library Manager, Lucy Kinsley, regaled us with entertaining stories of the RTRL over the years, and told how the library network has developed, survived despite some threats, and thrived. In recent years the RTRL adapted to the covid lockdowns with a click and collect service. Then when the Lismore Library and Mobile Van were wrecked in the 2022 floods, pop up libraries were set up and a mobile service operated from the back of a station wagon. I congratulate the RTRL staff and volunteers past and present and also acknowledge the council members who serve on the RTRL committee.

#### **NIMBIN TOURISM WINS GOLD**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—Well done to local eco-tourism accommodation business Contained in Nimbin, which won the Gold award for New Tourism Business at the NSW Tourism Awards on 8th November. The business is the brainchild of husband-and-wife team Nick and Nicole Lindner, who moved to Nimbin six years ago in search of a more sustainable lifestyle and a peaceful place to raise their young family. Contained in Nimbin offers two private and fully self-contained eco-sensitive cottages situated on the Lindners' 4 hectare permaculture farm on the banks of Goolmangar Creek. The cottages are just a three-minute drive to Nimbin, the centre of the North Coast's famed alternative culture, and are within an easy drive to Wollumbin (Mt Warning), the Border Ranges and many other scenic locations. Nicole tells me that running an accommodation business was never part of their original plan until one day the thought suddenly popped up while they were walking around the farm. The cottages then took 16 months to build and they have been open since mid-2022. Contained in Nimbin is now in the running for the Australian Tourism Awards on 15th March 2024, and I wish them the very best of luck.

#### **PEACE POLES FOR NORTHERN RIVERS SCHOOLS**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—In the midst of troubled times it's morale-boosting to see our local Rotary Clubs sponsoring the installation of Peace Poles at two Northern Rivers schools, one at Sathya Sai College primary campus in Murwillumbah and the other at Sathya Sai College in Dungay. Planting a Peace Pole is a practice that began in Japan in 1955 following the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in World War 2, symbolising the need to bring people together peacefully in our increasingly conflicted world. Just like the other 250,000 Peace Poles installed in some 200 countries around the world, each of the Poles carries the message 'May Peace Prevail on Earth' in different languages on its four sides – in this case, in English, Japanese, Hindi and Bundjalung. Representatives from Murwillumbah Central Rotary Club and Rotary Nomads Club attended both ceremonial openings on 22nd September along with students and teachers. Congratulations to both Rotary Clubs and their many hard-working members, in particular the respective Presidents Graham McCrae and Patrice Robinson.

#### **CATHERINE HILL BAY SURF CLUB**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)**—Speaker, I rise to congratulate Catherine Hill Bay Surf Club on its 100-year anniversary. Catherine Hill Bay is a beloved local community organisation with local families connection to the club spanning generations. So many of us have grown up on Catho beach whether that be as part of the nipper's program or surfing its famous break. For all these years the volunteer surf life savers of Catherine Hill Surf Club have kept the community safe and continue to do so. On its 100th anniversary, I thank all the surf life savers over the years who dedicated their time to serving the community. On behalf of the community, congratulations to Catherine Hill Bay Surf Club and here is to many more years.

**VIV JAYACHANDRAN**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)**—Congratulations to Viv Jayachandran, the well-deserved recipient of the Student Entrepreneur of the Year award at the University of Newcastle's Employability Excellence Awards. As a Bachelor of Software Engineering student, Viv took part in a 12-week placement at The Melt in Warners Bay, which inspired him to start up his software business, Jaegersoft. Viv and his team at Jaegersoft, predominantly made up of University of Newcastle students and alumni, provide innovative software solutions to industries such as mining, heavy industry, advanced manufacturing, and engineering. Viv's outstanding achievements in establishing Jaegersoft truly exemplify the spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship. I commend Viv for his entrepreneurial spirit and commitment. His success is not only a testament to his individual accomplishments but also a reflection of the university's dedication to fostering a dynamic learning environment. I extend my congratulations to all those recognized at the awards for their contributions to the intersection of education and industry.

**NOUVELLE COSMETICS**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)**—Congratulations to the fabulous team at Nouvelle Cosmetics on winning the 2023 Outstanding Beauty Services category at the Hunter Local Business Awards. Nouvelle Cosmetics work day in and day out to keep the people of my electorate feeling confident in themselves, with a range of cosmetic services from treating broken capillaries to remedying volume loss. The clinic prides themselves on providing a patient-centred care, ensuring everyone who walks through their door is comfortable and receives the best care for them as an individual. With 9 years of experience in cosmetic nursing and decades prior to as a general nurse, Nouvelle Cosmetics Director Jane O'Brien has led her team to great success, having won also in this category in 2019. I hope in 2024 you score a hat trick, well done Nouvelle Cosmetics.

**BLUE MOUNTAINS WRITERS FESTIVAL**

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains)**—The written word creates a platform for the sharing of ideas, philosophies, memories and stories – real or imagined – and the annual and vibrant Blue Mountains Writers' Festival provides an opportunity for us to connect with all that and more. Visitors were treated not only to the delights of the event but also, a chance to explore our beautiful Blue Mountains World Heritage National Park. The Festival brought the community and visitors together to celebrate great Australian authors, poets and playwrights. An incredible array of distinguished writers and speakers were showcased, such as David Suzuki, Richard Glover, David Marr, Craig Foster, Madison Godfrey, Nevo Zisin and Omar Sakr, just to name a few. I applaud Veechi Stuart, Amy Sambrooke, Maeve Marsden, Jaala Hallett and the amazing team at Varuna, the National Writers' House, along with the scores of fabulous volunteers who make this event possible, all working tirelessly together to realise their vision of elevating and inspiring readers to "new levels of curiosity and intrigue, whilst celebrating the unique qualities of Australia's literary landscape." Congratulations to the Festival team. We look forward to another successful and inspiring event in 2024!

**BUNMARRA DAY AT HAZELBROOK PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains)**—I was delighted to attend Bunmarra Day at Hazelbrook Public School recently. HPS has taken great pride in being custodians of the Bunmarra since local Dharug Elder, Auntie Jacinda Tobin gifted the school a carved emu egg featuring the image of a blue tongued lizard in 2009. In 2010, Bunmarra Day was established and each year since the school holds a special Knowledge Sharing Ceremony where the Year 6 students pass on their knowledge of custodianship of the Bunmarra to their future leaders, the Year 5 students. This year the school was honoured to have over 150 guests join in the celebrations for this special day. School Principal, Natalie Bourke said the 2023 Bunmarra Day was a culmination of 14 years of ongoing custodianship and embedding of culture and sharing of knowledge between the school community and local Elders and Aboriginal people. This day is significant for many reasons – not least because I proudly taught at Hazo Public for a few years and participated in teaching the Kindy classes our 'Bunmarra dance'. The connection with community and honouring our indigenous heritage, caring for country - and - students supporting one another, is precious.

**LAURA COWELL**

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)**—I would like to recognise the work of Laura Cowell, a Sutherland Shire resident in my electorate of Holsworthy. Laura wears multiple hats – she was elected to Sutherland Shire Council in 2021 as a Councillor in E ward, is the Chief Executive Officer of Australian Operations for Tender Loving Care (TLC) Disability Services, and most recently appointed as the President of the Sutherland Shire Football Association (SSFA). I have had the privilege of working with Laura since I was elected, including being part of the opening celebrations of TLC's newest centre in Liverpool, as well as fighting for upgrades to local soccer fields in the Shire. Laura is not only a dedicated to her role but has a passion for helping those who need it

most. Being on Council is such a thankless task and all the work she does outside of public life is dedicated to the service of others. I wish her all the best into the future, particularly in her new role at the SSFA and looking forward to working closely with her into the future.

#### **1ST TROOP AUSTINMER**

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote)**—For 100 years, the 1st Austinmer Scout Troop has been serving the community on the South Coast. It all started on November 16, 1923, when the troop was officially established. Meetings were often held in the old timber Surf Club at Austinmer before moving to new premises in Moore Street in 1927. It proved to be a great move for the local troop as it was the first scout and guide hall on the entire South Coast. Thousands of people have stepped inside the hall since its opening – a testament to the longevity and popularity of the local scout troop. There is no doubt that scout groups play a wonderful role in teaching young people vital life skills. Whether it be construction, general survival skills or leadership, the wealth of knowledge that young people can tap into whilst at scouts is endless. Congratulations to the 1st Austinmer Troop on a monumental milestone. I can't wait to witness the incredible work the 1st Austinmer Troop undertakes in the coming years.

#### **LA PETITE MAISON DES ARTS**

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote)**—Anyone who knows me knows I love art. And we are so lucky to have so many talented artists located throughout the Heathcote electorate. I was excited to learn that a new art gallery had opened its doors in the town of Bundeena. Located in the Royal National Park, Bundeena is one of the most popular destinations in the Shire during the warmer months of the year. However, there is no doubt it will be popular with artists all year round as well now following the opening of La Petite Maison des Arts. The first formal exhibition, Bundeena à Moi, opened in mid-November. Joe Meagher is the owner of La Petite Maison des Arts, which adjoins the Little French Heart store – owned by his partner Kim Cotton. I have had the pleasure of visiting both. Congratulations to Joe and everyone who have been involved with the establishment of La Petite Maison des Arts. And as an art appreciator, thank you for opening up another gallery in the Shire.

#### **GEOFF WHITE**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I believe that Mens Sheds are some of the most important local institutions within any community. I am grateful for the opportunity to recognise an incredibly valued member of the Bayside Men's Shed today, Mr Geoff White. I recently held the 2023 St George Community Awards, which has been recognising the contributions of individuals, community groups and businesses within my local area for 13 years. It was a privilege to award Geoff with a Senior Volunteer Achievement Award, for all his hard work over the last couple of years. I believe he perfectly embodies the spirit of inclusivity, resilience and of course, 'giving-it-a-go'. As a retired tech teacher, Geoff brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the Bayside Mens Shed. Geoff never hesitates to help anyone with any assistance they require, which I'm sure the other members appreciate greatly. I'd like to recognise the importance of community-driven initiatives like the Bayside Mens Shed, who provide local volunteers with a space to help others. I wish Geoff all the very best in his future endeavours and thank him for his continued contributions to the Bayside Mens Shed.

#### **KEVIN REID**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I rise to thank and congratulate Mr Kevin Reid for all the hard work he does within our local area. Kevin is currently the Community Fair Chairman of the Lions Club of Lugarno, and I must say, he does a wonderful job. Kevin recently received a Senior Volunteer Achievement Award at my St George Community Awards, which I believe reflects his contributions to not only the Lions Club of Lugarno, but the entire local community. Kevin joined the Lugarno Lions in 1994 and in his 29 years of service to the club, he has willingly contributed a great deal of personal time and effort into ensuring that the Lions Club adds value to the community. He is tasked specifically with the smooth operation of the Lion's Community Fair – a flagship event within my local area, which takes place every year in September. Whilst I unfortunately was not able to attend this year, I was told that it was a smashing success as always. I would once again like to thank Kevin for his dedication to the Lions Club of Lugarno as well as our entire local community. I wish him the very best.

#### **SIMI TIATIA**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I rise to congratulate a fantastic individual in my local community, Mr Simi Tiatia. The work he has been doing within my community across the last four years has been second to none. Simi recently received an Individual Volunteer Achievement Award at my St George Community Awards, a reflection of his relentless and untiring contributions to our local community. Simi is a current Member of Lions Club of Lugarno, who contributes to a range of local, national and international community projects. Simi has held several executive positions within the Club over the years, including 2nd-year director, social media



specialist, and 1st-year director. During this time, Simi exhibited exceptional leadership qualities and has always stepped up when his community needed him most. He has continued to steer the Lion Club of Oatley towards greater success, even during difficult times like the COVID-19 pandemic, when members were not able to meet. I'd once again like to thank Simi for his continued efforts and wish him the very best moving forward into the future. I look forward to supporting both him and the Lions Club of Oatley over the coming years.

#### **PADSTOW ROTARY'S DEDICATION TO POLIO ERADICATION**

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills)**—I would like to recognise the fourteen dedicated Padstow Rotarians who recently united to raise funds for the eradication of polio worldwide. While Australia has been fortunate to be polio-free for several decades, Rotary's tireless commitment to the fight against this disease remains unwavering. Polio, a disease that can infect a person's spinal cord and lead to paralysis, continues to pose a global threat, and Rotary is at the forefront of the battle to eliminate it. Padstow Rotary President Charles Mille and his group embarked on the annual train ride to end polio, demonstrating their commitment to the cause. It traversed the entire Sydney rail network and their efforts are part of a collective endeavour that has seen over \$550,000 raised across Australia in the past five years. I was visited at Parliament by Kevin the Koala from the Padstow Rotary promoting District 9675's 'End Polio' initiative. The dedication of Padstow Rotary and their counterparts across the country highlights the enduring commitment of Rotary to helping those where the battle against polio still exists. I applaud the Padstow Rotarians for their dedication and commitment to a polio-free world.

#### **PICNIC POINT HIGH SCHOOL LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP**

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills)**—I would like to knowledge the great work done by the Picnic Point High School Junior leadership team in delivering a workshop about leadership. Their initiative in organising and delivering such a workshop reflects a strong commitment to developing and fostering leadership skills among younger students. Student reached out to the local primary schools, in doing so they have not only shared their knowledge and reflections but also acted as role models, inspiring the next generation of leaders. Leadership is the compass that guides us through challenges, inspiring others to achieve shared goals and fostering a sense of unity and direction. It empowers individuals to embrace responsibility, make impactful decisions, and create a ripple effect of inspiration and progress within their communities. Whether in the classroom, on the sporting field or in the local community, leadership plays a vital role in shaping individuals and teaching this concept to young people through workshop learning is invaluable. Again, I would like to thank the Junior leadership team at Picnic Point High School and encourage them to continue their fantastic work in sharing their experiences with the younger ones.

#### **SMALL BUSINESSES OF EAST HILLS ELECTORATE**

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills)**—I acknowledge all the businesses in the East Hills electorate who contribute positively to the community, whether it be through their service delivery or supporting local jobs for our thriving local economy. Over the last few months, I've visited many local small businesses including Piccolo Me, My Guardian, Revesby Seafood, Souvlaki Warehouse and Note Café to name a few. I extend a warm welcome to Note Café, which just opened in the heart of Revesby. During my recent visit, I had the pleasure of meeting with owner, Mary Muhammad. Her concept of filling her café walls with uplifting messages from anyone who walks in, represents a heartfelt effort to infuse our community with optimism and positivity, creating a sense of community spirit. Small businesses form the backbone of a strong local economy, fostering entrepreneurship and community development. Our local businesses reflect the unique character and identity of our community and make a strong contribution to the overall cultural richness of our community. In celebrating the diverse and vibrant contributions of these small businesses, let us continue to show our appreciation and support for their invaluable role.

#### **MIRANDA CHRISTMAS DRAWING COMPETITION**

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)**—I acknowledge the winners of the Miranda Christmas Card Drawing Competition for 2023. Each year primary school aged students are invited to enter an electorate-wide drawing competition, with the winners to feature in my Christmas card. The year's theme was 'the most wonderful time of the year' and with such talented children in the Miranda electorate, it was hard to pick just four from the hundreds of entries. I congratulate this year's winners, namely Elliot Hervy of Como West Public School, Veronica Poloziuk and Chloe Noakes of Miranda North Public School and Matilda Robinson of GyMEA North Public School. Elliot's colourful interpretation of this year's theme depicted Christmas morning with brightly wrapped presents under the Christmas tree. Meanwhile, Chloe had some fun with the theme, drawing Santa and his reindeer enjoying a day at the beach. Veronica used colour to capture a Christmas dream with an adorable puppy in a Christmas stocking. Finally, Matilda demonstrated what makes Christmas special to her - Christmas puddings and deserts, presents,

Christmas trees and bon bons, surrounding beautiful text. I thank all students for their enthusiastic entries and wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and happy and prosperous 2024.

### **OBSESSED - SOUTHERN SYDNEY COLLECTORS**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I acknowledge the talented group of art enthusiasts whose collections are being showcased in the Hazlehurst Arts Centre's exhibition – Obsessed: Southern Sydney Collectors. The Obsessed: Southern Sydney Collectors is showcasing private collections from southern Sydney including art, ceramics and surfboards, along with the special stories behind them and their owners. Amongst those whose collections are on display is Michael Vardakis of Illawong who has provided his Disabled Soldiers Pottery collection crafted by returned servicemen. Michael began his pottery collection 16 years ago with the purchase of a teapot at a local market. Michael has gone on to organise the Australian Pottery Market Day in Gymea which highlighted a range of unique pottery works including a Kookaburra bowl made by the renowned potter Grace Seccombe. Also loaning part of his collection of more than 200 surfboards is Adam Scard of Gymea. Amongst Adam's impressive collection is his prized and rare Richo-shaped Quill surfboard, estimated to be one of only 20 such boards and personally signed by the great Australian board maker Terence Richardson. I thank Michael and Adam for sharing their cherished treasures with our community and wish them well as they continue building their collections.

### **NICOLE SOUTHWORTH**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I congratulate talented local artist Nicole Southworth of Oyster Bay for her recent solo exhibition at the Hazelhurst Arts Centre titled "The land on which we live". From an early age Nicole knew that she had a love of art, carefully honing her skills until she started exhibiting her predominately landscape oil paintings in prominent galleries across Sydney at age nineteen. By twenty-one, Nicole hosted her first solo exhibition and has since turned her painting into a career. Nicole has had work commissioned by groups including the Spanish Embassy, Inaburra School and Australian Consulates in Toronto and New York City. Nicole's current "The land on which we live" exhibition showcased a selection of her landscape artworks that reflect the beautiful pockets of calm within the Sutherland Shire and greater Sydney. Expertly capturing the light, colour and movement of the natural environment, Nicole's pieces highlight the beauty of the Shire from the Taren Point shoreline to the Como Pleasure Grounds and of course, Cronulla's beaches. I acknowledge the success of Nicole's recent show and extend my best wishes for the future as she continues capturing the natural beauty that surrounds us.

### **LITHGOW LIBRARY**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—Congratulations to the team at Lithgow Library who won Outstanding Community Organisation at the Energy Australia Black Rose Excellence in Business Awards recently held in Lithgow. The Lithgow Library and its branches in Portland and Wallerawang offer the community a wide range of services including traditional books, e-resources and vital services such as computer access, WIFI, printing and scanning. The library is completely dedicated to providing an excellent standard of customer service to its patrons and visitors and over the years has developed into a vibrant community hub. For the youngsters, they provide weekly Baby Bounce and Story Time sessions, monthly Outreach services to the local preschools and for school aged children they celebrate book week annually with school and library visits and they offer special craft sessions for events like Halloween and Christmas. They also run comprehensive school holiday activities. For the elderly and housebound patrons, the library has a much-loved Home Library Service and they also provide digital literacy classes through the provision of Tech Savvy Seniors classes when required. The team at Lithgow Library are passionate about what they do and are worthy recipients of the Outstanding Community Organisation award.

### **JO ELMS**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—Jo Elms has been a dedicated educator for Family Day Care in Bathurst for an astounding 30 years. Opening her heart and home to children, Jo has been part of Family Day Care since the early years of its inception. Bathurst Family Day Care provides a unique form of home-based childcare which Jo has nurtured children through play and exploration. Jo has formed genuine lasting bonds with the children she has cared for including James. James was Jo's first enrolment and to this day they still keep in contact, a testament to the lasting impact of Jo's care. Jo's unwavering passion and dedication to the growth and development of children in our region has paved a way for the next generation to have fond memories of childhood and the skills to lead successful lives. Congratulations Jo on achieving this milestone. Thank you for your service to our community.

### **STEVE FRY**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—A local young man in Bathurst has successfully created a thriving career for himself in the cleaning industry. Steve Fry is the proud manager of The Bathurst Cleaning Company. From a

part time car dealing role, Steve has climbed his way through the ranks of Vivability to reach a management position. Steve's commitment to his work and passion for doing a job well done has served him well in carving a rewarding career for himself. The skills he has learnt as manager have been transferable to his other leadership positions in NSW Scouts. Steve has had to climb more mountains than most suffering a brain injury at 11 years of age. With a lot of hard work and perseverance, he has become an inspiration to his family, friends and colleagues. Steve is a role model manager that his staff look up to and he has taken every challenge in his stride. Congratulations Steve, your positive outlook on life and dedication to your work is an inspiration to all.

#### **DIOCESAN MEDAL OF HONOUR - NEIL MILGATE**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—Congratulations to Neil Milgate, on receiving the Diocesan Medal of Honour on 1st November, presented by the Rev. Bishop Vincent Long OFM at St Patrick's Cathedral. Neil Milgate has been a parishioner of St Anthony of Padua Parish, Toongabbie for over 40 years. A pillar of leadership, Neil became warden of the Mass in the early 2000s, a role he continues today. Neil served on the Parish Pastoral Council and organised a visit of the relics of St Anthony of Padua to the Parish. His sincere commitment to helping others was evident during the Covid-19 pandemic, when he ensured our Parish could safely come together to share the message of Christ. The Diocesan Medal of Honour is awarded for outstanding contributions to the Diocese of Parramatta. Seven members of the Diocese were recognised for their selfless service to the faith community. Nominated by their peers and parishioners, these recipients are following the example of Christ, who gave his life for others. Thank you Bishop Vincent, the Parramatta Diocese and the St Anthony of Padua Parish for your ongoing care and stewardship of our community. Congratulations again, Neil, on this meaningful Award.

#### **AMCHAM ALLIANCE AWARDS**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—It was great to join the United States Studies Centre and The Hon Natasha Maclaren-Jones MLC, Co-Chair of the Parliamentary Friends of the US at this year's AmCham Alliance Awards Gala. Held on Wednesday 25th October, this wonderful occasion recognised important collaborations between Australia and the United States. The AmCham Alliance Awards celebrate industry pathfinders that will shape future economic collaboration between Australia and the United States. The Awards acknowledged incredible feats of innovation in artificial intelligence, biotechnology, digital economy, energy and clean technology, quantum, and space. The American Chamber of Commerce in Australia has been integral to strengthening the ties between Australia and the United States for more than six decades. Sharing common values and the exchange of ideas, talent, trade, research and development, the opportunities forged by AmCham's business community are creating vibrant economic opportunities to shape our modern world. Thank you to US Studies Centre CEO Dr Michael Green, Engagement Coordinator Evelyn Richards and the AmCham Alliance for welcoming me to this wonderful event. Congratulations to AmCham CEO April Palmerlee, Chair Dr Larry Marshall and all the dedicated members of the AmCham Alliance for your commitment to a productive friendship between our two nations.

#### **ST JOHN AMBULANCE - BLACKTOWN DIVISION**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—It was an honour to present a new vehicle to the St John Ambulance – Blacktown Division, with my colleague Stephen Bali, Member for Blacktown, on Wednesday 4th October, 2023. The Blacktown Division of St John Ambulance fosters community spirit throughout Western Sydney. Spending countless hours volunteering, members of the Blacktown Division ensure the safety and enjoyment of our families at community events. They train enthusiastic people, from as young as eight years old, to administer vital first aid. For 140 years, through fire, flood, and pandemic, the St John Ambulance has supported our communities. Striving to offer every person in NSW access to responsive healthcare and wellbeing support, they are helping to building safer and more cohesive and resilient communities. St John Ambulance empowers our individuals of all ages with the skills and confidence to save lives. St John is there when and where we need them, keeping us safe. Thank you to Superintendent Keith Avery OStJ, 2IC David Lam MStJ and the dedicated Blacktown Division members for caring for our community. Thank you as well to St John Ambulance CEO, Dominic Teakle for advocating for St Johns integral role in NSW.

#### **ROSS BOWEN**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—I would like to sincerely thank absolute True Believer, Ross Bowen for his two decades of service in official roles to the great NSW Labor Party. Ross has served in official roles in the Umina-Ettalong Branch, LGC, SEC (for Peats and in more recent years for the Gosford electorate) and the FEC. He served with Kevin Parish, Bill McGillchrist and Jamie Clements alternating in the roles of President and Secretary of the SEC and enjoyed the period of Government with Marie Andrews as member and then endured the period of opposition. Alongside these local legends, Ross has been a key contributor to the excellent functioning of the SEC alongside both Marie Andrew's and myself. As the proud father of the Australian Minister

for Climate Change and Energy, Ross has a comprehensive understanding of the responsibilities of an elected representative and Labor Party processes and protocols and has always been a great source of expertise and support. As Ross steps away from nominated positions in both his Umina-Ettalong Branch, LGC, SEC or FEC due to personal health reasons, I sincerely thank him for his very generous contribution, his wisdom and commitment to creating a better life for all Australians.

#### **WE CARE CONNECT**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—It warms my heart to give a shout out to a beautiful community organisation on the Central Coast today – the much loved We Care Connect. Their name says it all, they care and they connect pre-loved or brand new essential children's items with families who need them the most. We Care Connect is a charity that is driven by volunteers, who have the most heart-warming aim – they want to change the story on childhood poverty together. Together we make a difference; together we support thousands of kids in crisis and together we can remove the barrier of childhood poverty. You can help support We Care Connect by donating items like clothing, nappies, baby monitors, bottles, blankets, prams, car seats, high chairs, as well as toys and craft. I'm proud to say that my office in Woy Woy is a collection point for We Care Connect, especially their fabulous Christmas drive and I'm always delighted when I see the generosity of locals as they bring in preloved or brand new items. Thank you to the amazing team at We Care Connect, looking after our community. Together let's change the story on childhood poverty.

#### **ORANGE GROVE PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)**—Today I bring to the attention of the House the excellent work of the Orange Grove Public School community for their efforts making the Family Fun Day at the beginning of this month. The Colour Blast Fun Run was a great way for the school to come together to raise funds and celebrate everything that makes OGPS great. Thank you to Stephanie Bardsley, Prue Trollope and Syrie Wonkaew particularly for all your great work making the event happen and to all the volunteers and sponsors for your involvement.

#### **CHRISTMAS IN PYRMONT**

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)**—Today I bring to the attention of the House the wonderful community celebration Christmas in Pyrmont, an annual fair organised by Pyrmont and Ultimo residents to raise funds for local charities. Christmas in Pyrmont has become a local institution that celebrates the creativity and generosity of our community. With a full program of local entertainers and over 60 market stalls, this year's festivities were a truly special way to mark the holiday season. I want to thank everyone involved in making this event happening year after year and fundraising recipients Barnardos, Pyrmont Cares, Ultimo Public School and Uniting Harris Community Centre for the work you do supporting our community.

#### **BALMAIN COMMUNITY**

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)**—Today, on the last day of NSW Parliament for 2023, I would like to acknowledge the community that supports and empowers my work in the Balmain Electorate. As the Member for Balmain, I am so grateful to have the support of residents and community organisations who are all behind our vision for a community-driven future for Balmain. This includes my caring, passionate, and hardworking electorate office staff: Ned Cutcher, Rochelle Flood, Lucy Murray, Jen Barron, David Lewis, Hamish Lewis, Anastasia Radievska as well as the former Member for Balmain Jamie Parker. I would like to also recognise the dedicated local Greens members who shape my work, the thousands of community members who have supported our petitions and community campaigns in 2023 as well as the volunteers who have made every campaign possible. It is an honour to be working with this incredible community to create real change and I look forward to continuing our work in the years to come.

#### **CENTRAL COAST AERO CLUB 50TH ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—I would like to congratulate The Central Coast Aero Club which has recently celebrated its 50th Anniversary here on the Central Coast, the first aircraft landing at the freshly created Warnervale Airfield in 1973. Since humble beginnings, the club has grown to be a very busy, full Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) accredited flight training provider, and a not-for-profit organisation providing multiple services for the local community, schools, and other organisations. As part of the celebrations, the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) was there to present the club with the 2022 "Aero Club of the Year" award which part of their annual Wings Awards. What a fantastic accolade. Those fortunate to attend the 50th Anniversary celebration including myself, experienced a special Runway Dinner under the stars and entertainment by Central Coast local singer, Ella Powell, a formation flypast and aerobatic display, and presentation from the CASA CEO, Pip Spence. Congratulations again to this wonderful aero club which continues to grow from strength to strength becoming a premier flight training organisation and wonderful community asset.

### TERRIGAL MARINE RESCUE

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Marine Rescue Central Coast on receiving official endorsement by the State Rescue Board of NSW to once again be a stand-alone Marine Rescue NSW unit. It was my pleasure to attend the unit in Terrigal and meet with Unit Commander Shaun Smith and the Zone Manager for the Central Coast Dan Dummer & Hunter and Marine Rescue NSW Hunter Central Coast Zone Duty Operations Manager, Inspector Steve Raymond. In 2017 the Terrigal unit amalgamated with the neighbouring Central Coast unit however over time it became evident of the need for Terrigal to return to a stand alone rescue base. The reestablishment of the Terrigal unit provides boaters in the area with reassurance in the event they need assistance. The Terrigal unit has 40 locally based volunteer members and a 10-metre Naiad rescue vessel with offshore capability up to 30 nautical miles ensuring swift deployment for rescue missions. Congratulations to Unit Commander Shaun Smith, Deputy Unit Commander Darren Wright and Training Officer Adrian Nicholas who have been instrumental in working with Marine Rescue NSW to gain this stand-alone endorsement for the Terrigal unit.

### LALIE CONWAY

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—I would like to recognise one of my younger constituents, Lalie Conway who has just turned 13 and recently competed in the Australian Tennis Championships PWII event held in Melbourne last week. Lalie is a passionate tennis player and loves her sport, giving her very best in all that she does. Lalie has Autism and some impairments which means she has faced many challenges both on and off the tennis court. Lalie continues to face these challenges head on with the backing of her biggest supporter Mum Nicole, family and friends. Whilst Lalie has only played tennis for 2 years, she enjoys it so much and trains hard with multiple weekly sessions. The hard work has paid off with Lalie playing in tournaments interstate in tournaments with a for Person with an Intellectual Impairment (PWII) or Para category, Special Olympics Central Coast, and some mainstream tournaments. At only just 13 years Lalie was up against much older, higher ranked experienced players in both her singles and doubles matches. Lalie had an amazing tournament and was crowned Champion in the II-1 Women's singles division two event. Congratulations Lalie for everything you have achieved so far. Keep chasing your dreams.

### COAST CLUTCH AND BRAKE

**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)**—Coast Clutch and Brake located in Gosford have been awarded the prestigious title of Business of the Year for Outstanding Automotive Services and finalists in Youth of the year at the 2023 Central Coast Business Awards. The award recognises the incredible achievement and the firm commitment of excellence and customer satisfaction through the business. The business was founded by Patricia and John Lawson Snr. in 1967 and their sons Daniel and Matthew carry forward the family legacy. In the past last 8 years Coast Clutch have sponsored the Wyong Rugby League Rugby League Club and have been heavily involved with the club and sport. Also sponsored Channel 10 Kids Cancer Christmas Party every year since the mid-1990s, NRMA Careflight and TAFE NSW. Coast Clutch and Brake will continue to improve and provide their customers with the highest quality products and services. Congratulations to the owners and staff who showed dedication and passion each day to win the Outstanding Automotive Service award.

### NORAH HEAD SPORTIES AND BOWLING CLUB

**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)**—The hidden gem, Norah Head Sporties & Bowling Club located at Norah Head are recognised in the 2023 Central Coast Local Business Award for the category, Outstanding Event Services held at Mingara Recreational Club, Tumby Umbi. Chief executive Krystle Hatcher saved the club from closing 2 years ago, enhancing the venue with a refurbished bar, gaming, Saltbush bistro and exciting weekly sporting and entertainment for the community to enjoy. The new renovations improved the venue's turnover over in the last 2 years, with the focus on the renovations and improved functions the venue's turnover over in the last 2 years received an impressive result of 12 months booked out for functions. Also, the community social circle is popular with weekly social bowls and surfing events, recreational activities indoor and outdoor. From 10 staff members and now today employing 30 staff including human resources manager, head chef, events supervisors, and night supervisors. Congratulations to Krystle Hatcher and staff members for this amazing achievement, working as a team to earn the Outstanding Event Services Award.

**ABBIE MCTEARE**

**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)**—Gorokan High School student Abbie McTeare is recognised in the 2023 Nanga Mai Awards for Outstanding Achievement in Sport, announced at Darling Harbour, 27 November. The 18th Nanga Mai Awards recognise outstanding achievement in Aboriginal education, and more than 2 dozen students, staff and community members are announced for their outstanding contribution in NSW public schools. The young talented athlete Abbie is a proud Dharawal woman, and has a strong passion for nutrition and health and is currently completing a Certificate IV in Fitness, while also training for her boxing career. Abbie recently won the gold medal at the Australian National Championships in Adelaide in the under 19s women's 60kg division. Abbie now has her eyes set on securing a place at the upcoming World Youth Championships. Congratulations to Abbie for receiving the Outstanding Achievement in Sport Award, 2023. I wish you all the best in the upcoming championships and sporting career.

**STEVE CANSDELL**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I would like to congratulate the Former Member for Clarence Steve Cansdell on achieving a new world record. As some members might recall Steve was the Member for Clarence between 2003 and 2011 and before that a champion boxer. Steve recently broke the world record for the highest number of punches on a boxing bag for a male over 65 in one hour. The former record was 15,089 but I can report to the House the new record set at Roches Hotel in Grafton is 15,890..... in one hour. In Cansdell style.....it was a fundraiser for 17-year-old Tamsyn McConnell, who was critically injured in a car accident in September 2022 on a back road near Glenreagh. The really good news is that Tamsyn now gets out of bed, assisted and is learning to drive her electric wheelchair. The event looks like it will raise \$10,000 which is a great effort. Get well soon Tamsyn and congratulations to Steve on the fundraising and the new world record.

**GULMARRAD SWIMMERS - JETT BURKE, HAYDEN WHYTE AND CHASE BURKE**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I would like to recognise three members of Maclean's Manta Ray's Swim Team, who represented the Clarence Valley at the Sydney Olympic Park Aquatic Centre, in September this year. Jett Burke and Hayden Whyte both swam at the 2023 NSW Senior State Age Short Course Championships, while Chase Burke competed in the 2023 NSW Junior State Age Short Course Championships. Their hard work and dedication, along with many years of training has paid off as all three talented swimmers placed in their events and achieved some personal best times in the water. The boys have been swimming since they were six and seven years old and train nine sessions per week, between Maclean and Grafton during the winter and summer seasons. Well done to you all and I wish Jett, Hayden and Chase all the best and much success for their upcoming competitions.

**ICOPE - ILUKA**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I congratulate ICOPE of Iluka, for being awarded NSW Reconstruction Authority-Community Awards-HIGHLY COMMENDED. What an outstanding achievement for this local committee having the initiative and foresight into planning for and raising awareness to effectively respond to emergencies during times of natural disasters. The initiative came about by a small group of Iluka residents in September 2022, who were concerned about the isolation that Iluka and surrounding residents had experienced during past fires and floods, particularly the 2022 floods. The initial focus was on establishing a Community Managed Evacuation Centre that would provide a safe place for Iluka and surrounding communities during emergencies. ICOPE now encompasses community capacity building with an emphasis on empowering Iluka and surrounding communities in developing resilience, strength and connectedness. I commend everyone involved in the development of ICOPE and their efforts in building an inclusive, caring and more resilient community, better prepared to face and recover in times of emergencies or disasters.

**LOCAL BUSINESS AWARDS**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Congratulations are in order for the outstanding businesses in Maitland, as they emerge victorious in the 2023 Local Business Awards. The Maitland community proudly recognises these winners for their exceptional dedication to providing top-notch goods and services within our local communities. Amidst a field of exceptional finalists in the Maitland electorate this year, seven businesses distinguished themselves as true standouts. Frangipani Living at Riverside Plaza secured the coveted Outstanding Fashion category, while Peace Warrior claimed victory in the Specialised Retail Business category. Prouds the Jewellers in Riverside Plaza earned the title of the best Jewellery Store, alongside Rover Pet Products for Pet Care, Telarah Butchery for top Butcher, The Barber Shop in the Barber Shop group, and The Vault Bookkeeping in Professional Services. To all our esteemed Maitland winners, a heartfelt

well-done. These awards serve as a testament to your remarkable contributions. Your unwavering commitment reflects positively on our community, and we take great pride in your achievements.

### **50 YEARS OF RUTHERFORD MEDICAL CENTRE**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—On 24 January 2024 Rutherford Medical Centre will mark an impressive 50 years of delivering preventive medical services to the Maitland community. Established in 1974 by Dr. Sanjoy Chatterjee and Dr. Sambhu Mukherjee in Brooks Street, Telarah, the Rutherford Medical Centre has been a pillar of support for patients in Maitland and the surrounding areas. Following four decades of dedicated service, Dr. Sanjoy Chatterjee and Dr. Sambhu Mukherjee retired in 2014. The current practitioners, including Dr. Rajiv Ahuja, Dr. Srikanth Sakrepatna, Dr. Nagy Ghandour, and Dr. Sanoj Joseph, continue the legacy of compassionate care. On behalf of the Maitland and neighbouring communities, heartfelt gratitude is extended to the entire Rutherford Medical Centre team, including past and present staff, for decades of unwavering commitment and service to our Maitland community.

### **BOB WATSON - 145 YEARS ON**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—I would like to take this time to recognise the enormous community impact of the late Robert Fletcher 'Bob' Watson. November 2nd marked 145 years since Maitland legend and champion sprinter, Bob Watson won the 1878 Championship of Australia in the former Louth Park Racetracks. When the race was won, Bob was greeted by a crowd of over 6000 adoring Maitland fans, carried upon the shoulders of two men and escorted by a band. Leading a crowd of thousands through Devonshire Street and up to High Street, Maitland. The race itself was 200 yards of makeshift uneven grass track in which Bob finished with a time of 19.5 seconds, beating rival John 'Jack' Aplitt, and winning a prize of roughly \$60,000 in today's money. The second of November was Bob's final – but most historic – race. However, he remained active in the Maitland sporting community until his death in 1937. Bob was survived by 7 children, with his great nephew and Greta local, Bailey Terence remaining in the Maitland area to this day, and Bob's granddaughter, Robin in Northern Sydney.

### **ALFRED STREET BRIDGE**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)**—It was an honour to be joined by Minister for transport Jo Haylen and Lord Mayor Pierre Esber for the official opening of the Alfred Street Bridge. The Alfred Street bridge is a stunning new gateway across the Parramatta River for active transport users and a crucial compliment to Parramatta Light Rail stage 1. The bridge provides a convenient, safe and scenic connection to the growing CBD. With \$11.65 million provided by the state government. The construction of the bridge has been a key partnership between the NSW government and City of Parramatta Council and represents the state governments continued investment in Western Sydney. The construction of the bridge has supported local jobs, utilising around 280 tons of Blue Scope Steel to fabricate the deck and arch in Western Sydney at S&L steel 4.5 metres wide and spanning 200 metres. This is Australia's first truly diagonal bridge with a striking curved archway which is illuminated of an evening and doubles as a public art piece. The bridge signifies Parramatta's status as a cutting-edge city providing a much-needed active transport connection from the northern to the southern side of Parramatta River at the eastern end of the city.

### **ONE MEAL NORTHERN BEACHES**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)**—Mr Speaker, I rise today to congratulate One Meal Northern Beaches who for 4 years has been providing food relief to the less fortunate in my community. One Meal Northern Beaches is largely made up of volunteers who obtain food, prepare meals and deliver hampers and personal care packs to individuals and organisations on the Northern Beaches. One Meal Northern Beaches also provide Community Meals direct to individuals on a Sunday evening at a local park and to a social housing complex in Manly. One Meal's reputation is one of integrity and professionalism and are supported by local businesses who provide them with donations to assist with their food preparation. In 2022 One Meal Northern Beaches was awarded the NSW Volunteer Team Award in recognition of the 900 volunteers who serve up some 9000 meals every week to those who are doing it tough in our local community. I am proud that One Meal operates out of Brookvale in my electorate of Manly and I look forward to their amazing work continuing for years to come.

### **REMEMBRANCE DAY 2023**

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping)**—It was a privilege to attend the Remembrance Day service at the Boronia Park cenotaph with veterans, members of the RSL and our local community of Epping. We gathered to commemorate the fallen soldiers of Australia, as well as to recognise the contributions that all veterans have made towards defending and shaping the ideals of our great country. The event was organised by the Epping RSL Sub Committee, and I would like to take a moment to convey my appreciation for the outstanding support they have given and continue to provide to our veterans. I extend my appreciation to the RSL Epping Sub Branch

Committee and Brian Swan AM, sub-branch President, for their leadership in the Remembrance Day commemorations at Boronia Park. This ensures an enduring legacy of honouring all those who have served is passed to future generations. Lest We Forget.

#### **BEECROFT LAWN TENNIS CLUB**

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping)**—Our local sports clubs offer our communities opportunities to keep physically active and provide a place for camaraderie and friendship to flourish. On Sunday 19 November I had the pleasure of attending the 125th anniversary of Beecroft Lawn Tennis Club. From humble beginnings in 1898, the club expanded, from gravel courts to lawn and synthetic courts. The club offers coaching, hosts various singles and doubles competitions for a variety of ages, and participates in local tournaments. With a history that spans well over a century, the Beecroft Lawn Tennis Club has stood the test of time. Their spirit of service has been on full display, particularly during the world wars, when they raised money for the War effort. Clubs like the Beecroft Lawn Tennis Club cannot flourish without the dedication and selfless support and generosity of its members. To that end I would like to thank Club President, Geoff Childs, Val Pike and all members over the last 125 years for their valuable service to our local community.

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