



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Eighth Parliament
First Session**

Tuesday 6 February 2024

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 6 February 2024

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

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.

DEATH OF THE HON. MICHAEL EGAN, AO, FORMER MEMBER FOR CRONULLA, MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND MINISTER OF THE CROWN

The SPEAKER (12:03): I advise members of the death of the Hon. Michael Egan, AO, a former Minister of the Crown, on 31 January 2024. On behalf of the House, I extend to his family the deep sympathy of the Legislative Assembly for the loss sustained.

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

Business of the House

SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (12:03): I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended this day to:

- (1) Permit members of the Legislative Council to attend in the Legislative Assembly Chamber to hear an address at 4.30 p.m. from Her Excellency Ms Yuriko Koike, Governor of Tokyo.
- (2) Alter the routine of business so that:
 - (a) at 4.00 p.m., business is interrupted with the Speaker to leave the chair;
 - (b) at the conclusion of the joint meeting, the Speaker to leave the chair until the ringing of a long bell; and
 - (c) on the ringing of a long bell, the public interest debate will proceed.
- (3) That the following message be sent to the Legislative Council:

MISTER PRESIDENT

The Legislative Assembly invites the members and officers of the Legislative Council to be present in the Legislative Assembly Chamber at 4.25 p.m. on Tuesday 6 February 2024, to hear, at 4.30 p.m., an address by Her Excellency Ms Yuriko Koike, Governor of Tokyo.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (12:04): The Opposition agrees to the motion.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bills

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AMENDMENT BILL 2023
EMERGENCY SERVICES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2023
CENTENNIAL PARK AND MOORE PARK TRUST AMENDMENT (CAR PARKING) BILL 2023
BUILDING LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2023
STRATA LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2023
CASINO CONTROL AMENDMENT BILL 2023
CRIMES AMENDMENT (PROSECUTION OF CERTAIN OFFENCES) BILL 2023
CLIMATE CHANGE (NET ZERO FUTURE) BILL 2023
ENERGY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2023
TRANSPORT ADMINISTRATION AMENDMENT (TAHE) BILL 2023
ROAD TRANSPORT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (AUTOMATED SEATBELT ENFORCEMENT) BILL 2023
GREATER CITIES COMMISSION REPEAL BILL 2023
24-HOUR ECONOMY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (VIBRANCY REFORMS) BILL 2023
24-HOUR ECONOMY COMMISSIONER BILL 2023
ELECTORAL FUNDING AMENDMENT BILL 2023
BIOSECURITY AMENDMENT (INDEPENDENT BIOSECURITY COMMISSIONER) BILL 2023

Assent

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

Members

MEMBER FOR MAITLAND
MEMBER FOR PARRAMATTA

The SPEAKER: I acknowledge a number of birthdays. How could we miss the member for Maitland's birthday? I am so sorry about that. I am sure she enjoyed the card from the Speaker and I hope others were equally, if not more, generous. I know the card was very well considered. I also acknowledge the member for Parramatta. Happy birthday to each of those members. I hope that they have had wonderful birthday celebrations.

*Question Time***NEW SOUTH WALES SENIORS**

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (12:08): My question is directed to the Minister for Seniors. Does the Minister agree with the statements by the Minister for Youth that "it's older generations who are too lazy and careless to show up on platforms that young people inhabit and engage with them"? If not, what action is the Minister taking to repair this insult to seniors who have helped build our tolerant, vibrant communities?

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (12:09): I thank the member very much for the question. What a bizarre question! Members on this side of the Chamber actually understand that there are people in New South Wales who are seniors and there are also people in New South Wales who are youths. We aim to listen to everybody's issues. One of the things that members opposite do not understand is that the cost of living is affecting both seniors and young people, and people right across the spectrum.

Mr Dugald Saunders: Point of order: It is under Standing Order 129, relevance. The question directly asks whether the Minister agrees with the statement and, if not, what she is doing to support seniors.

The SPEAKER: The question could be answered more directly. I bring that to the attention of the Minister.

Ms JODIE HARRISON: Mr Speaker, we are one minute in. I think it is important that the Minister for Youth represents her constituency—

Mr Dugald Saunders: Do you agree?

Ms JODIE HARRISON: —and that I, as Minister for Seniors, raise the issues that I wish to with my Cabinet colleagues.

Mr Dugald Saunders: Do you agree?

Ms JODIE HARRISON: Every Minister and all MPs in this space, particularly on this side of the Chamber, are fighting very well—

Mr Alister Henskens: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! I will hear the point of order from the Manager of Opposition Business. Opposition members are out of order. I will start calling members to order if they continue to behave in that manner.

Mr Alister Henskens: Mr Speaker, part of the problem was that the Minister was not speaking through you, but speaking across the Chamber and inciting argument. The question is does she, as the Minister for Seniors, agree with the Minister for Youth that seniors are too lazy and careless? That is what we want to hear from the Minister for Seniors.

The SPEAKER: I appreciate that restating of the question, but the Minister understands the question. There is no point of order.

Mr Ron Hoenig: To the point of order—

The SPEAKER: I have just ruled that there is no point of order, but I will hear from the Leader of the House.

Mr Ron Hoenig: Under the standing orders involving direct relevance one does not have to say yes or no to a question that proposes, "Do you agree?" A Minister is allowed to explain their position without a yes or no answer.

The SPEAKER: I appreciate the counsel of the Leader of the House. I have ruled that there is no point of order. I am sure that the Minister and I have the situation under control. The Minister has the call.

Ms JODIE HARRISON: Unlike members opposite, members on this side of the Chamber can walk and chew gum at the same time. [*Extension of time*]

This Government can walk and chew gum. We are quite happy and we are up for the job of making sure that we deal with all of the issues that are in front of us. I will talk about a few of the things that we have done in the seniors space. We have a genuine commitment to seniors across the State. I regularly hear from the Ministerial Advisory Committee on Ageing about its concerns, and I am quite happy to continue to listen because it is a really important reference group for me. The Ageing and Disability Commissioner is doing amazing work in making sure that people who are ageing and people with a disability are safe in their homes and that they are well represented. Every Minister in this Government is focused on how the Ageing Well in NSW: Seniors Strategy 2021–2031 affects their portfolios. We can walk and chew gum at the same time. We can deal with the big problems that those opposite have left us, and we will.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (12:14): My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier please update the House on how the New South Wales Government is beginning to address the housing crisis in New South Wales? Are there other policies?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:14): This is an important question from the member for East Hills. As the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces says, housing affordability is a massive challenge that affects constituents of all ages across New South Wales. The Government is taking decisive action. We have introduced one of the biggest tax cuts the State has seen for first home buyers. Five out of six first home buyers in New South Wales will pay no stamp duty or a reduced amount. I am happy to say that in the last financial year 18,000 young Australians took advantage of that first home buyer scheme, paying no stamp duty or a reduced amount on properties under \$1 million.

The Government is also pursuing transport-oriented developments, which will see 47,000 new homes around eight accelerated precincts across metropolitan Sydney, and an additional 138,000 homes over 31 stations in the next 15 years. Yes, that is a long horizon, but it is for appropriate levels of development for our community

when one considers that Sydney is the 800th densest city on earth. By any objective measure it is one of the most expensive places to live and raise a family on the entire planet. We need to do something about housing affordability. The Minister for Planning and Public Spaces is also pursuing changes to low- and mid-rise houses, which will see capacity increase by an additional 110,000 homes by the end of 2029. If we add these together—

Ms Robyn Preston: With no community consultation at all.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I am interested in your views, actually. Put these together and, as a result, for the first time in 10 years we see a Government actually dealing with the challenges of first home buying for young Australians living in this State. No longer will we see the New South Wales Government closing the door on those who desperately want to grab their part of Sydney's future. For the past 10 years they were locked out comprehensively by those opposite; we are taking decisive action. I note there is opposition to it, however, and a lot of that is being led by the member for Wahroonga.

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS: *The Sydney Morning Herald* stated:

Shadow attorney-general Alister Henskens, the Liberal MP for Wahroonga, attended the meeting and told residents the opposition would fight the changes. "This is going to be a devastating impact on our community," Henskens said. "It will completely ... change the character of the area."

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS: He gave a radio interview on 2GB and the host Chris O'Keefe asked, "But isn't the idea that you build more housing and you put downward pressure on price?" That is certainly what the Productivity Commission had said. It is a reasonable question. [*Extension of time*]

The member for Wahroonga said, "Well, it's not about building in this area. I can tell you it is about building in other parts of Sydney." That was his contribution. He said, "What Labor seems to be ignoring is because they won't build in their communities because that is where Labor members of Parliament are from." But he neglected to say that of the 39 transport-orientated developments, 26 are in Labor electorates, three are in Independent electorates, one is in a Greens electorate and just nine are in Liberal electorates. He went on to say this on 2GB. It is very interesting. The member for Wahroonga was talking about heritage, raising every single red herring he possibly could to stop young people from having their share of Sydney's future.

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS: In the same interview, he said, "You're going to have people like, I suspect, J. J. Bradfield's house, the great father of infrastructure in Sydney, being knocked down for apartment buildings."

Mr Jihad Dib: What a scare campaign.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: It is a scare campaign; the member for Bankstown is absolutely right. He said that J. J. Bradfield's house is going to be knocked down. I said to myself—

Mr Dugald Saunders: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr Dugald Saunders: I am wondering about relevance. We waved away relevance a long time ago. The relevance is lacking.

The SPEAKER: The Leader of The Nationals will resume his seat. Government members will come to order. The Premier is being relevant to the question.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: He said, "What about J. J. Bradfield's own house? That could get knocked down." I thought, "Why is he mentioning that house?" He failed to disclose that he lives right behind that house. He did not say that. He was saying, "Not in my backyard." He is worried about heritage if it is on his street block. He is happy for development to take place in Sydney if it is not in his community. He could not care less about the next generation of young Australians.

TRANSPORT FOR NSW EMPLOYEE WORKPLACE SAFETY

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes) (12:20): My question is directed to the Minister for Women. Will the Minister support an urgent investigation into allegations that a New South Wales Labor Government staffer implied to crossbench MP officers that Transport for NSW executive Rochelle Hicks, who complained about being threatened by a male co-worker, was "mentally unstable"?

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (12:20): I think Opposition members have just woken up and realised that there are seniors and women in the community.

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order. The Minister will be mindful of her comments. Her opening remarks were not helpful. Members on both sides of the House will come to order. Regardless of whether members like the nature of the question, it is an important matter. The Minister has the call.

Ms JODIE HARRISON: I am incredibly concerned about the allegations. I condemn the behaviour at the centre of the allegations, as the relevant Minister has on a number of occasions in this place. I express my support and sympathy for Ms Hicks. Everybody deserves to feel safe at work, whether that is a construction site, an office or a retail location. People deserve to be safe in every single workplace.

Ms Robyn Preston: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The question is will the Minister support an urgent investigation into the allegations?

The SPEAKER: I uphold the point of order. The Minister has considerable time to complete her answer.

Ms JODIE HARRISON: I have spoken to the relevant Minister, and I know that a safety incident investigation was conducted. A number of actions have been taken to improve and support how those particular workplaces can manage the risk of incidents of the allegations related to Ms Hicks. I also know that the relevant Minister has instigated a separate internal review into how Transport for NSW responded, and preliminary findings have been made. I am sure that the Minister will be able to report on them.

Mr Matt Kean: Point of order—

Ms JODIE HARRISON: I have finished my answer.

TEACHER WORKFORCE

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (12:23): My question is addressed to the Minister for Education and Early Learning. Will the Minister update the House on the action the New South Wales Government has taken to rebuild the public education system by addressing the teacher shortage crisis across the State and ensuring that New South Wales families have access to free and quality education?

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (12:24): I certainly can answer the fantastic question asked by the hardworking member for Shellharbour. Before I do, I point out three special people in the gallery. They are students who sit on an important body that advises the Government on student voice, the Department of Student Voices in Education and Schools. We call them our DOVES. I welcome them to Parliament and promise that we will try to behave. They know how much we value their contribution as students. They are amazing ambassadors for our wonderful public education system.

To start off this year as we ended the last, this New South Wales Labor Government will always stand up for public education in this State. The question goes to the heart of how the Government is approaching the repair of the public education system in this State and the workforce crisis that it found upon coming to government. There is a shortage of teachers in our classrooms. The number one thing we can do is fix the teacher shortage crisis and make sure there is an adequate amount of wonderful, qualified teachers in front of students, no matter where they are walking into classrooms. Upon coming to government, we faced a situation where the wages of teachers were suppressed, there were record resignations and there were more than 3,000 merged and cancelled classes in schools every day.

But we are starting to see some green shoots and progress because of the historic, landmark interventions that this Government made upon coming to office by giving teachers the highest pay rises they have received in a generation and restoring confidence in the community's most important profession, the profession that starts all others—the teaching profession. The Government has made more than 17,000 teachers and support staff permanent, which means that teachers and support staff are able to make teaching their life's work. More than half of the teachers that received the historic pay rise are in regional and rural New South Wales. I know that is significant to many members in this Chamber and to the people that we represent in this Parliament. Last night I met many teachers at a special reception for beginning teachers who are first walking into the classroom this year. For the first time ever, we were able to say to those teachers, "You are now the highest paid beginning teachers in Australia." [*Extension of time*]

Making sure that teachers are well paid is about more than just a salary; it is about respect. I have spoken about that in this Chamber many times. I can report to the House that the Government is throwing absolutely everything at this. The Government is not only getting young teachers in and making them the highest paid

beginning teachers in Australia but also reaching out to teachers who have retired over the past five to 10 years who felt that they were not respected and supporting them to get back into the classroom. But we are keeping the member for Bankstown in here.

Last week I was at a staff development day at a great public high school in Cecil Hills, in the member for Liverpool's electorate, led by a wonderful principal, Andrew King. We were standing in the staffroom, where the English faculty was getting ready for the year ahead, and one of the new teachers said to me, "Prue, I have to tell you I had retired last year. I was sick of it. But when I got a call from the department urging me"—the Teachers Re-engage Program we are calling it—"to come back, I thought, I'm finally going to be respected in my profession. I am going to come back." He is now travelling from Wollongong to Western Sydney every day to teach English to those year 7 to year 12 students in Western Sydney.

We are coming at this crisis from both ends because it is the most important job of this Government to restore confidence in the public education system—this is also a cost-of-living measure—and to make sure that every parent in New South Wales knows that there is free, quality public education available for their kids and that in every suburb we can offer the best quality public education. We will build the skills that are needed and will have the teachers that are needed so we can do the life-changing work that public schools do.

PICTON BYPASS

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (12:29): My question is directed to the Premier. Last year I was elected to deliver a major project, because my community is fed up that the Picton bypass has not been started. With report after report, it is like having a table set each time for dinner but when you sit down there is no food. It is pretty simple: How much will the Picton bypass cost and will the Premier support its funding in this year's budget?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:29): I thank the member for Wollondilly for her question. I do not have a final costing for the Picton bypass. However, I think it is important that the House know that it is hundreds of millions of dollars. It is not small.

Mr Alister Henskens: You spent all the money on wage increases.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: You're opposed to that? That's an interesting intervention.

The SPEAKER: Opposition members will come to order and allow the Premier to answer the question.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: In any event, I cannot give a precise figure. With the Commonwealth Government, we have committed \$18 million to fund a business case in addition to about \$70 million between the Federal Government and the State for upgrades on Picton Road, but I do not have numbers for the final cost of a bypass for the member's community. Part of the reason is that when we were elected in 2023—obviously, you go back to see what reports had been commissioned by the previous Government to determine whether you can bypass business cases and whether there are off-the-shelf solutions to complex transport projects—we did note that in 2018 the member's predecessor was able to secure just \$3 million to investigate options but, after four years, no information was provided to government. We do not know what they did with the money. I am not sure what that inquiry uncovered, but it did nothing to alleviate the stress on the bridge or add money to the Picton bypass project.

We know that is a major issue for the member and her constituents as a result of structural problems on that bridge. We have spoken about it personally in the past. We need a solution for south-western Sydney. You cannot have a major centre like Picton cut off from the rest of the community. I want to work with the member to make sure that we have funding allocated to bring on the business case so we can all have a good sense of how much that project is going to cost. But I have to say that this is a perennial issue for the incoming Government: 12 years of lack of investment, particularly in infrastructure for Western Sydney—

[Opposition members interjected.]

Am I wrong? She knocked off your bloke. This is great. I will come back to this tomorrow. I did not realise it was going to get such a big reaction. I generally thought that was agreed fact.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Dubbo will come to order. The member for Hawkesbury will come to order. The member for Terrigal will come to order.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I did not realise those opposite opposed my supposition there. In any event, I am happy to speak further with the member about it. I know it is an important issue. There is a lot of mirth during question time, of course, but this is an important issue. The Government wants to sit down with the Independent member to get a solution for her community. After all, it is a genuine question about infrastructure for her community. Opposition members have had two months to come up with questions and what are we seeing in this question time? Lift your act. Come on!

HEALTHCARE WORKERS

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (12:33): My question is addressed to the Minister for Health, and Minister for Regional Health. Will the Minister update the House on what action the New South Wales Government is taking to rebuild the New South Wales healthcare system by addressing healthcare staff shortages across the State?

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (12:33): I thank the member for Cessnock for his question and for his work on the parliamentary committee into regional, rural and remote health care with a number of other colleagues and the member for Wagga Wagga, as chair. I thank him for the work he is doing as a part of that committee and for being a terrific advocate for Cessnock since 2011. Members who engage with their local health districts and local hospitals might understand that the biggest challenge we face at the moment in the provision of healthcare services, whether it is in metropolitan, regional or rural areas or in remote New South Wales, is the provision of healthcare staff. It is not so much about the infrastructure itself, although that is important. We all understand that it plays an important role. The biggest focus for this Government is to improve and increase the number of essential healthcare workers we have in our system, and we are doing that in a number of ways.

One of the ways we are doing that is through the health study subsidy program. I was recently at Liverpool Hospital with the Premier and the member for Leppington. We talked to Bernadette Brady, a clinical physiotherapist, and Kelly Paddock, who is a nursing manager there. Both of them talked about the importance of the program to attract healthcare professionals to the sector and retain them. We have a global crisis and a global shortage of healthcare workers. We are in a very competitive market. That is why one of the first things the Premier did was remove the wages cap. That is why, at the end of last year, we delivered a landmark pay increase to our frontline paramedics. It was the first of its kind in history, because it was the first time they had appropriate professional recognition.

Like those incentives and payments, the regional and the study subsidy program are all about attracting and retaining those staff. It will mean that for 12,000 students over the next few years up to \$12,000 can be allocated to enable them to more easily go through university and get their qualifications. We have a healthcare crisis and a significant cost-of-living crisis at the moment, and we know that to solve those challenges we have to focus on our essential healthcare workers and staff. We know that we have to make sure we have the incentives in place to not only attract the best and brightest from our beginning staff in our healthcare professions, but also, importantly, retain those staff. [*Extension of time*]

The program has two boasts. The first is for those coming into healthcare profession degrees—things such as allied health care, nursing, occupational therapy, physiotherapy and obviously the medical areas like dentistry and medicine. That is up to \$12,000. We are also recognising those people who have already commenced their degree—they will be eligible for up to \$8,000. That is on top of the significant wage increases that we are providing to our frontline paramedics, the removal of the wages cap—particularly important for professions like nursing—and our determination to rebuild our health system by increasing the numbers of frontline essential healthcare staff by attracting and retaining them. We need a pipeline of healthcare professionals, but we also need to retain what we have.

The Government will continue to have a laser-like focus. We make no apology for putting essential healthcare professionals at the forefront of what we are doing in health care. If we do not get that right, we cannot deliver the healthcare services the communities that each of us advocate for right across New South Wales—regional, rural, remote or metropolitan—expect and deserve. The Minns Labor Government is focusing on the delivery of more healthcare staff by attracting the best and brightest, by retaining the hardworking professionals we have such as Bernadette and Kelly, and by making sure we are doing everything possible to properly resource and staff our hospitals and healthcare services.

BACK TO SCHOOL VOUCHERS

Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (12:38): My question is directed to the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Education and Early Learning. On 15 January, the Premier said, "Back to School vouchers haven't been changed." Did the Minister forget to tell the Premier that she has cut Back to School vouchers or will the Minister inform families in New South Wales how they can access their Back to School vouchers?

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (12:38): I can certainly answer the member for Vaucluse's question. I want to be really clear and get the facts on the record. It was made very clear by the previous Government, at the time, that these Back to School vouchers were a one-off voucher. Let us quote in this Parliament, it was a one-off voucher.

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

Ms PRUE CAR: Instead of rewriting history, let us deal in the facts here. The facts were clearly stated by the shadow Treasurer, who is recorded in the *Hansard* of 21 June 2022 as saying:

... a one-off \$150 back-to-school subsidy for every child ...

A "one-off". But even if we are not to believe *Hansard*, the formal record of things said in the Parliament, in the media release announcing the program the Treasurer at the time, Matt Kean, stated that the program would run from 1 January to 30 June. It is very, very clear.

Mr Alister Henskens: Point of order: My point of order relates to direct relevance. The question is about the Premier's statement and how the vouchers can be accessed. It has nothing to do with the matters that the Minister has been—

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The member for Wahroonga will resume his seat. I am sure the Minister will be directly relevant by the time she completes her answer.

Ms PRUE CAR: If Opposition members are earnestly concerned about the cost of living, they should pay attention to what is a serious answer about this program. In that media release, it was very clear that it was a one-off program and that it would come to a conclusion. The previous Government simply did not budget any more money for the program. They have not read what their commitment was. They are in the business of rewriting history.

The SPEAKER: The member for Terrigal will come to order. The member for Hornsby will come to order.

Ms PRUE CAR: But let us deal in the current facts by going to a fount of much knowledge in New South Wales. I speak, of course, of Ben Fordham. Recently, on 2GB, he asked Mark Speakman, the Leader of the Opposition, "The vouchers are back if you're in power?" And what was the Leader of the Opposition's response? He said, "Three years down the track, I don't know what the budget's going to look like." They are not even committing to bringing the vouchers back, so let us be genuine about this.

Mr Alister Henskens: Point of order—

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

Mr Alister Henskens: Mr Speaker, we are hearing comments by everyone other than the Premier, which is what the question is about.

Ms PRUE CAR: This is a disingenuous political attack when people are struggling.

Ms Kellie Sloane: Mr Speaker—

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

Ms Kellie Sloane: I seek an extension of time. The answer is very unclear.

The SPEAKER: An extension of two minutes is granted.

Mr Alister Henskens: My point of order relates to direct relevance. The question is directly related to the Premier's statement that "Back to School vouchers haven't been changed" and how families can access them. That is what the question is about. The education Minister, who is not—

The SPEAKER: The question was asked in a rather ironic manner and I will not entertain any further points of order on it. The member for Wahroonga will resume his seat. The Minister may continue.

Ms PRUE CAR: The vouchers have not changed because the previous Government did not budget for it. It was a one-off program.

Mr Dugald Saunders: Why didn't you budget for them, Prue?

Ms PRUE CAR: They have not changed. You did not budget for it.

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

Ms PRUE CAR: I am genuinely answering, in detail, the question about this program that the member for Vacluse has asked. It is a disingenuous attack, a political attack, when people are struggling. We are doing more for the free public education system than members of the Opposition could have even dreamt of doing and they know it.

[*Opposition members interjected.*]

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

Ms PRUE CAR: They presided over a teacher shortage crisis and then they come in here and disingenuously try to attack us about a program that they did not budget for. Operate in the truth. Those opposite said it was a one-off. They committed to it being a one-off. They cannot come in here and try to pretend to the people of New South Wales that they care at all about schools in this State, because their record is very, very clear.

Ms Felicity Wilson: Point of order—

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

Ms Felicity Wilson: Mr Speaker, as one of those parents of new students, I would like to understand this answer. Would you please ask the Minister to address her comments through the Chair instead of continually haranguing me and my colleagues on this side of the Chamber?

The SPEAKER: The member for North Shore will resume her seat.

Ms PRUE CAR: I apologise if the member for North Shore feels harangued. I am attempting to answer the question that she is representing her constituents about and that I earnestly believe the member for Vaucluse is representing her constituents about. Your Government did not budget for it and that is the truth, even if you can't handle it. [*Time expired.*]

SYDNEY METRO WEST AND HOUSING

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (12:44): My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport. Will the Minister please update the House on the Government's plans to reset Sydney Metro West to support the Government's commitment to build more well-located homes near transport infrastructure?

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (12:45): I thank the member for Parramatta for her question and for her interest in our Government's plans around Sydney Metro West to deliver housing next to public transport. That is what we are about. I am incredibly proud of our commitment to deliver a bigger and better Sydney Metro West for the people of Sydney. We took a responsible and considered approach. We utilised the expertise of our independent review team to make sure that the country's largest public transport project will become far more than just a fast train between Parramatta and the CBD. Our plan means that the people of Sydney will get the greatest public benefit for their significant investment. This is a public transport project that will double rail capacity between Parramatta and the Sydney CBD, transforming our city for generations.

But it is not just about a fast new train, because our Government is going to make sure that Sydney Metro West is a catalyst for new housing across Sydney, which future generations will desperately need. Our Government is doing what the former Liberal Government forgot to do. We are using public transport to deliver both housing and transport for the people of Western Sydney. We have had discussions with the Australian Turf Club about a proposal to relocate Rosehill Racecourse and build tens of thousands of new homes. The homes will be surrounded by green space, the supporting infrastructure and services that people need and, most importantly, a brand-new Sydney Metro West station.

Housing is the biggest single cost pressure that families are dealing with right now. Mortgage payments are up and rent payments are up. Families are struggling with those costs. We cannot afford to miss an opportunity to increase the supply of housing across our city and our State. We cannot afford to make the mistakes that those opposite made. The Sydney Metro North West is a very good metro line with a very high level of reliability and passenger satisfaction, but the former Government missed the opportunity to deliver it in a way that would truly shape the future of our city and deliver the housing that we need. Our Government's strategy is to make sure that when we build public transport we build housing too—to deliver for the families that need it right now and for future generations who want to get their foot onto the property ladder and to have a place to call their own. Under our Government, Sydney Metro West will not just transform the way we travel between Parramatta and the Sydney CBD, it will also deliver better public transport across Sydney. [*Extension of time*]

It will ease crowding on the T1 and T2. It means we will have more capacity in the west, in places like the Blue Mountains. It will cut crowding in stations like Strathfield, Redfern and Burwood. It will be a better integrated public transport system for people across the city. The Government's announcement on Sydney Metro West was probably the most highly anticipated announcement of 2023. When we finally made that announcement, in December, it was a big moment. You would think that those opposite would have had something to say about it. The shadow transport Minister in the other place, Natalie Ward, had nothing to say. In a very lengthy press release there is not a single line from the shadow Minister. I guess her colleagues know that she has nothing to say about public transport. That is the reality. What was really curious—

Mr Alister Henskens: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Minister will resume her seat while I hear the point of order from the Manager of Opposition Business.

Mr Alister Henskens: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. On no reading of the question is there a centimetre of room to attack the shadow transport Minister. The question was will the Minister update the House on the Government's plans to reset Sydney Metro West to support the Government's commitment to build more well-located homes near transport infrastructure. The fact that the Government has re-announced what the Opposition was doing on the Sydney Metro West anyway cannot possibly give rise to the Minister's line of answer.

The SPEAKER: The member for Wahroonga has overstepped the mark on what constitutes a point of order. He will resume his seat. I was going to uphold the point of order but now I will not. The Minister has the call.

Ms JO HAYLEN: The Manager of Opposition Business sucked up the time because the Leader of the Opposition blamed immigration for the housing crisis.

HEALTHCARE WORKERS

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (12:50): My question is directed to the Minister for Health. On 1 February the Government axed the free parking scheme for the healthcare workforce at New South Wales hospitals, including our hardworking nurses, a decision described by the Health Services Union as outrageous and morally bankrupt. When the Minister negotiated the recent pay deals with nurses, did he inform them that he would be giving with one hand while taking away with the other?

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (12:50): Let us talk about car parking. I will talk about a few things. We have delivered on our commitment to extend free car parking to regional and rural hospitals. That was our election commitment. We have already delivered that. It was incredibly quick, in my view. We also got feedback from patients and family members about not being able to access car parks, particularly in busy areas. As health Minister, I must balance the needs of staff in and around those areas as well as the needs of—wait for it—patients and their families. This is not *Yes Minister*; it is not hospitals without patients. I understand that, for media opportunities, it was "don't look here" and there were vast distances of zero beds and zero patients. But that is not how hospitals work. They have these individuals called patients, and every now and again those individuals have a family member who may want to visit them. So we have tried to achieve a balance. I understand and I have been reading through—

Mr Matt Kean: Point of order: My point of order is on relevance under Standing Order 129. This is the Minister who presides over palliative care wards with no staff.

The SPEAKER: The member for Hornsby knows that that is not a point of order.

Mr RYAN PARK: I will get to palliative care in a minute. Don't panic.

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

Mr RYAN PARK: We need to get a balance between making sure we have space available for our staff and making sure our patients and visitors can access our hospitals. The other day that fantastic Sharks supporter in the gallery, Clinton Maynard, said to the member for Hornsby, "A commitment from you, Matt Kean: If you are elected—and election term cycles come around quickly—in three years time, will you lift parking fees at hospitals?" The response was, "We won't be putting a tax on our health workers during Christmas."

Mr Alister Henskens: Point of order—

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

Mr Alister Henskens: The question was did he tell the nurses he was giving with one hand and taking with the other. The Minister has not even got close to that.

The SPEAKER: The Minister's time has expired. I know the member for Wahroonga is very disappointed.

BUILDING INDUSTRY

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (12:54): My question is addressed to the Minister for Building. Will the Minister update the House on action the Minns Labor Government is taking to restore trust and integrity in the New South Wales building sector?

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields—Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Innovation, Science and Technology, Minister for Building, and Minister for Corrections) (12:54): I thank the member for Granville for her question and her interest. She understands the importance of trust and confidence in the building sector and the work that has been done, given the significant challenges the Government inherited not only in housing supply but also in the quality of those suppliers. The Government is committed to addressing two main challenges: delivering more homes, which are quality built, and giving home buyers confidence in the biggest purchase of their lives—for most of us, unless you are a tech billionaire, buying a home is the biggest financial investment we will make in our lifetime.

Standing up the Building Commission NSW is a testament to our commitment to ensuring that we never sacrifice quality for quantity. Those two cues must go hand in hand. Not only did we promise to stand up the Building Commission NSW, but we are acting and we have delivered. The Building Commissioner is transforming the sector, with laser-like focus on residential housing. With the establishment of the Building Commission NSW, staffing has gone from 35 to more than 400 dedicated public servants, who are zeroing in on the legacy we have inherited in the quality challenges of the residential building sector. We are making sure that homes built in New South Wales are safe and people have confidence that the financial investment that they make is sound. We are making sure that homes that are built are of the highest quality. The New South Wales Government promised at the election that we would do that, and we have.

As of 1 December, the Building Commission NSW was established. We put down a \$24 million down payment to establish the commission in order to scale up and enhance the work of the Building Commissioner. It is a single, centralised body, tasked with the licensing, regulation and oversight of the entire construction industry. The commission has kicked off with a big bang. Since December we have issued 18 building work rectification orders to force builders to fix their poor-quality work. We have also issued two stop work orders to prevent dangerous building practices from continuing. That will make sure that people have confidence in their homes. Unsurprisingly, such orders often make the news, but that is a feature, not a bug, of the Building Commission NSW. It is doing its job, sending a clear message that we want better and higher quality buildings in the sector, and trying to overturn the big ship we inherited, where perhaps quality was not at the forefront. *[Extension of time]*

The Building Commissioner is a game changer, with oversight of the entire housing sector, both class 1 and class 2 buildings. We have already seen the impact of the Building Commissioner's work on apartment buildings. We have supercharged his powers to cover freestanding homes in class 1. The Building Commission will help the New South Wales Government oversee critical reform in this sector, including enhancing capability with sophisticated data and analytics, clamping down on bad behaviour through inspections and licensing, proactively regulating and working with the industry at large, and leading the policy development changes that are required.

This change is more than just an update to the office stationery. This legislation comes in with new teeth. The new laws have improved compliance and enforcement systems across the industry. There are new measures to prevent and penalise the shameful practice of phoenixing so we can cancel and refuse licences. There are new responsibilities about building products to ensure that supply chain people are responsible. We are on a mission to make sure that homes in this State are built to be safe and reliable for our people. The Building Commission is a crucial tool as part of our reforms to restore trust and confidence in the sector. Trust and confidence are what make markets work better by ensuring there is continuous supply that will put downward pressure on rents and downward pressure on housing affordability.

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition frontbench members are speaking far too loudly.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: The Building Commission's work will prevent defects by proactively monitoring compliance and enforcement. The sector is changing continually. New South Wales has not had a building Minister in the past. New South Wales has not had a building commission in the past. New South Wales has not had a government that is focused on the housing sector to ensure that quality and quantity go hand in hand. We are proud to make these unprecedented changes and nation-leading reforms to transform the sector to deliver the quality houses that our community deserves.

HOUSING SUPPLY

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (12:59): My question is directed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. Following the Premier's statement in his interview on 17 January 2024 that he was reneging on his commitment to build 75,000 new homes each year, will the Minister confirm that no promise made by the Premier can be relied on by the people of New South Wales as he reserves his right to renege on any commitment at any time?

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (13:00): This is the quality. We are six or seven questions into question time for 2024. The Opposition has had three months to come up with questions and poor old James has been sunning himself on a beach so long he could not even come up with something sensible. That is the biggest load of rubbish question I have heard in my time in this place. This is a government that is absolutely committed to keeping its election promises.

[An Opposition member interjected.]

Don't worry, mate. I will come to you in a minute.

Mr Alister Henskens: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! I need to hear the member's point of order.

Mr Alister Henskens: My point of order relates to Standing Order 130. The Minister is debating the question—

[Members interjected.]

The SPEAKER: It is mainly the member's colleagues who are interjecting.

Mr Alister Henskens: The Minister is debating the question, not answering it.

The SPEAKER: It is very early in the answer. The question was heavily loaded and the Minister is entitled to make some introductory comments. He is not out of order. I do not uphold the point of order.

Mr PAUL SCULLY: If the Manger of Opposition Business does not like the way that questions are being answered, perhaps he should ask better questions. He should spend a bit longer in tactics before the nimby-in-chief comes in here and tries to block housing. People can absolutely rely on what the Premier says, not only about election commitments, not only about housing, but also about making sure there are more well located, well designed and well built homes throughout Sydney and New South Wales. Why? Because the Government embraces the ambition of people to get into a good home in a well located area, to get into a good home near jobs, to get into a good home near transport and new opportunity.

We have the Minister for Transport, and the Minister for Roads in the other place, dedicating themselves to making sure that people have good access to transport. As we have just heard, we also have the Minister for Building dedicating himself to making sure that New South Wales has 400 staff and the Building Commissioner—tough cops on the beat—making sure we are delivering quality. We have a pattern book arrangement to make sure there is good design. I might add that the pattern book arrangement was fully backed in by no less than the Opposition spokesman for planning, who said, "The option of an accelerated approval pathway for low-rise and medium apartments in suitably areas could potentially lead to the delivery of more homes sooner and is supported by the Opposition."

Mrs Leslie Williams: Point of order: The Minister is deliberately being—

The SPEAKER: The Minister's time has expired. The question contained language that was ironic and argumentative. Therefore, I allowed the Minister more latitude in answering it.

ROAD SAFETY

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (13:03): My question is addressed to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads. Will the Minister please update the House on how the Government is encouraging safer driving on New South Wales roads?

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (13:04): I thank the member for Blue Mountains, who is a really good advocate for her community. She has always been very strong on issues of road safety, particularly in her beautiful electorate of Blue Mountains. Thousands of drivers across New South Wales saw their demerit points on their licences going up with no real impact on road safety outcomes following the removal of mobile speed cameras by members opposite. We know that when we want to change driver behaviour, it has to be done at the point of the action and not by a piece of paper that comes in the mail three weeks later. That was just a blatant cash grab. Labor supported the former Government when it put those signs back. In fact, Labor pushed it to do so. This Government is also looking at encouraging drivers to drive more safely.

There are more than 1.7 million eligible drivers for our demerit scheme, which will reward drivers who might have done the wrong thing in the past and give them a chance to have a point restored to their licence. We know that more than 1.24 million people actually managed to do that. They went the whole of last year without infringing any road rules.

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

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: This Government's approach is not just pocket pinching to take people's money.

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

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: We want to improve road safety in New South Wales. There are five things that all of us can do to improve road safety in our communities: Don't drink or use drugs and drive; don't speed; don't drive when fatigued; don't use your mobile phone; and always click-clack front and back. This Government is saying to drivers that they might have done the wrong thing in the past, but they will be rewarded by having a licence point restored if they continue to drive safely. Seventy per cent of drivers who had demerit points are changing their behaviour. They are the people we want to access. We want them to change their behaviour. It is no good going to people who have a perfect driving record and saying, "Drive better", because they are already driving better. We want to get to people who are systemically poor drivers. There are 108,000 people in our State who have 10 or more demerit points. That is way too many people who think it is okay to get in a car and speed, drink drive or use their mobile phones. That is what the Government is doing. *[Extension of time]*

This is about prioritising road safety, not taking away signage from mobile speed cameras in the middle of a cost-of-living crisis. Other things the Government is doing in road safety are really important. Last year we introduced legislation to ensure that mobile phone detection cameras will also pick up seatbelts not being used. On average, over the past five years, 29 people lost their lives by not wearing a seatbelt.

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

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: The Government is spending \$2.6 billion on road safety initiatives. We are improving regional roads. We have committed more than \$700 million in the 2023-24 budget. Most concerning for me is that in January I went to the Far West, the far north-west and the far south-west corners of the State and asked councillors and other people I met with how many times they had ever seen a mobile speed camera. There are people in some places in far western New South Wales who have not even seen a mobile speed camera. Our road toll in the regions is very bad. It is 70 per cent of the New South Wales toll, and it is increasing. We are very concerned about it. But members opposite were just about revenue. They put the cameras where they got the cash and not where they stopped the fatalities, and that is a disgrace. Those opposite—

Mr Matt Kean: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129, about direct relevance. The Minister is not being remotely relevant. The reality is that the road toll is the worst it has been since 2016. The Minister has failed the simple task she had, which was to reduce the road toll.

The SPEAKER: The Minister has been relevant and answered the question directly.

DAVID BERRY HOSPITAL

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (13:09): My question is directed to the Premier. I have a letter from his Government which indicates that he intends to stop palliative care and rehab care at David Berry Hospital by 2025. Given that the letter is tantamount to a termination notice for this hospital, will he personally intervene to stop the closure of the services and give an undertaking, as the former Government did, to not sell off David Berry Hospital?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (13:09): I am happy to take the member's question on notice.

CENTRAL WEST FLOOD RECOVERY

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (13:10): My question is addressed to the Minister for Emergency Services. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is supporting the Central West in its post-flood recovery?

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (13:10): I thank the member for Gosford, the hall-of-famer, for the question. I am very happy to update the House on what is happening around the Central West. The 2022 flood there was pretty disastrous, and it was one that was not noticed as much. Obviously, people were busy with Lismore. This came on a few months later, but its impact was unbelievable. For survivors, the event is all too real. Minister Scully and I share the Reconstruction Authority and have visited the areas of the Central West a number of times. We witnessed firsthand what it has been like. I take the opportunity to thank the member for Orange for his invitation and for taking us around. I acknowledge the Federal member, Andrew Gee, who has been a member in this place, and the local mayors. Late last year, the Minister and I visited a number of places in the area with the member for Orange, speaking to mayors and community groups. We went there, as we

had in the Northern Rivers a little bit earlier, and said that we wanted potentially to listen and to get a better understanding of their needs.

The SPEAKER: There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. Members will come to order.

Mr JIHAD DIB: We promised that we would take on board their suggestions and not come back empty-handed. I am incredibly proud to announce that this Labor Government, in working with the Federal Government, put together a package of \$100 million for the Central West community, which will make an enormous difference. We have learnt from what happened in the Northern Rivers and other natural disasters in talking about a community-led recovery: building a sense of what the community needs, what the community decides and how governments can work with it to make sure that everything required is done.

To that end, of that \$100 million towards recovery and rebuilding is \$40 million for housing, which can be used in the way that works for the community, as decided by the community. There is \$32 million for transport resilience: the repairing of roads, bridges and flood crossings. There is \$25 million for community assets, things that are important and bring communities together, such as parks and playgrounds, where communities can gather and have a focal point within a local area, as well as libraries and money for legal aid and other programs. The Premier and I visited the Central West last week and again spent some quality time with the excellent member for Orange, Mr Donato. We wanted to send a message and demonstrate clearly that when we said that we were there for that community we were there for the long haul, for the entire run, not just for the photo opportunities. *[Extension of time]*

The SPEAKER: There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. It is unacceptable and disrespectful to the Minister.

Mr JIHAD DIB: We went there to make sure that the community knew we were with them for the long haul. We made that commitment. It is a commitment that works for the community, with decisions by the community. That means that there will be a community leaders forum. It will be chaired by the member for Orange but will also include all the local surrounding mayors of the Central West, Federal and State MPs, and government agencies. We know that the Reconstruction Authority will be able to learn and do what the community requires.

It is always about people, which is a reminder of what we are here for. On the trip we met a couple of inspiring people, Max and Kate Jones, two pensioners who live in Eugowra, which is a very small, tight-knit community. "Salt of the earth" would be a great way to describe the people of Eugowra and the Central West. They lost their home when waters rose by over a metre. They took what they could, their cars and a few prized belongings, and left. Coming back to their home, they found that it had been tilted on a 45-degree angle to their swimming pool. Remember that I said they were pensioners.

They were able to use some of the grant money to do repairs on their home. At the same time, the Reconstruction Authority had them living in a pod with their son. The Premier, Mr Donato and I visited them in their new home, and their unbridled joy at not having to leave their community reminded us of what it is all about. It is not about just rebuilding communities. It is about building them better and making them more resilient, listening to what the local community wants and making sure that we do not ever lose that spirit, because people do not want to leave their homes. They just want to return to the place they know. Sitting in a room with them was humbling and a reminder of the important work we all do in rebuilding communities better than how we found them.

Joint Meeting

HER EXCELLENCY MS YURIKO KOIKE, GOVERNOR OF TOKYO

The SPEAKER: I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council accepting the invitation of the Legislative Assembly for members and officers to attend in the Legislative Assembly Chamber at 4.25 p.m. on Tuesday 6 February 2024 to hear, at 4.30 p.m., an address by Her Excellency Ms Yuriko Koike, Governor of Tokyo.

Documents

LAW ENFORCEMENT CONDUCT COMMISSION

Reports

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 132 of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Act 2016, I announce receipt of the report of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission entitled *Operation Mantus*, dated December 2023, received on 11 December 2023. I order that the report be printed.

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

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 23 (1) of the Law Enforcement (Controlled Operations) Act 1997, I announce receipt of the report of the Office of the Inspector of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission entitled *Controlled Operations Annual Report 2022-2023*, for the year ended 30 June 2023, received on 15 December 2023. I order that the report be printed.

NSW TREASURY**Reports**

The SPEAKER: In accordance with section 3 (3) of the COVID-19 and Other Legislation Amendment (Regulatory Reforms) Act 2022, I announce receipt of the report on the Statutory Review of COVID-19 and Other Legislation Amendment (Regulatory Reforms) Act 2022, received on 21 December 2023. I order that the report be printed.

INDEPENDENT PRICING AND REGULATORY TRIBUNAL**Reports**

The CLERK: In accordance with section 89 (2) of the Water Industry Competition Act 2006, I announce receipt of the report of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal entitled *Licence compliance under the Water Industry Competition Act 2006 (NSW): Annual Compliance Report to the Minister*, dated October 2023, received out of session on 30 November 2023 and authorised to be printed.

In accordance with section 234A of the National Energy Retail Law (NSW) No 37a of 2012, I announce receipt of the report of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal entitled *Monitoring NSW energy retail markets 2022-2023 - Annual Report - Appendix*, dated December 2023, received out of session on 15 December 2023 and authorised to be printed.

In accordance with section 31 of the Sydney Water Act 1994, I announce receipt of the report of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal entitled *Sydney Water 2023 compliance audit: Report to the Minister*, dated December 2023, received out of session on 17 December 2023 and authorised to be printed.

ATTORNEY GENERAL**Reports**

The CLERK: In accordance with section 45 of the Surveillance Devices Act 2007, I announce receipt of the report of the Attorney General according to section 45 of the Surveillance Devices Act 2007 for the period ended 30 June 2023, received out of session on 12 December 2023 and authorised to be printed.

AUDITOR-GENERAL**Reports**

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

- (1) Special Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *Members' additional entitlements 2023*, dated 6 December 2023, received out of session that day and authorised to be printed.
- (2) Financial Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *Planning and Environment 2023*, dated 14 December 2023, received out of session that day and authorised to be printed.
- (3) Performance Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *Procurement of services for the Park'nPay app*, dated 14 December 2023, received out of session that day and authorised to be printed.
- (4) Financial Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *Transport 2023*, dated 15 December 2022, received out of session that day and authorised to be printed.
- (5) Financial Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *Treasury 2023*, dated 19 December 2023, received out of session that day and authorised to be printed.
- (6) Financial Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *Health 2023*, dated 19 December 2023, received out of session that day and authorised to be printed.

CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN**Reports**

The CLERK: In accordance with section 97 (1) of the Electoral Act 2017, I announce receipt of the report of the Children's Guardian investigation into child protection declaration made by elected members of the

New South Wales Legislative Assembly, dated October 2023, received out of session on 1 December 2023 and authorised to be printed.

OFFICE OF TRANSPORT SAFETY INVESTIGATIONS

Reports

The CLERK: In accordance with section 46D of the Passenger Transport Act 1990, I announce receipt of the report of the Office of Transport Safety Investigations entitled *Rail Safety Investigation Report – Rail Worksite Protection in NSW - Report 1 Picton, 16 August 2022*, dated December 2023, received out of session on 11 December 2023 and authorised to be printed.

OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR OF THE LAW ENFORCEMENT CONDUCT COMMISSION

Reports

The CLERK: In accordance with section 242 (6) of the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002, I announce receipt of the report of the Inspector of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission entitled *Criminal Organisation Search Warrants*, dated October 2023, received out of session on 19 December 2023 and authorised to be printed.

In accordance with section 242 (3) of the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002, I announce receipt of the report of the Office of the Inspector of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission entitled *Report under section 242 (3) of the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002 for the period ending 28 May 2023: Covert Search Warrants*, dated September 2023, received out of session on 21 December 2023 and authorised to be printed.

PREMIER'S DEPARTMENT

Reports

The CLERK: In accordance with section 138 of the Rural Fires Act 1997, I announce receipt of the *NSW Bushfire Inquiry 2020 Progress Report: Implementation of the NSW Government's response to the NSW Bushfire Inquiry: Reporting Period July to September 2023*, received out of session on 21 December 2023 and authorised to be printed.

Committees

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Inquiry

Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ: As Chair: In accordance with Standing Order 299 (1), I inform the House that the Legislative Assembly Committee on Transport and Infrastructure has resolved to conduct an inquiry into critical transport infrastructure supporting the Western Sydney international airport and Western Sydney Aerotropolis, the full details of which are available on the committee's home page.

Documents

INDEPENDENT COMPLAINTS OFFICER

Reports

Mr ALEX GREENWICH: In accordance with clause 7 of the resolution establishing an Independent Complaints Officer agreed to by the House on 29 March 2022, I table the report of the Independent Complaints Officer of the New South Wales Parliament to the Legislative Council Privileges Committee and the Legislative Assembly Parliamentary Privileges and Ethics Committee for the period 1 September 2023 to 30 November 2023. I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

Committees

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Reports

Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ: As Chair: I table the report of the Legislative Assembly Committee on Transport and Infrastructure entitled *Report on the Sydney Metro West project*, dated February 2024. I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Reports

Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ: As Chair: I table the report of the Legislation Review Committee entitled *Legislation Review Digest No. 9/58*, dated 6 February 2024. I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

Inquiry

Mr JASON LI: As Chair: In accordance with Standing Order 299 (1), I inform the House that the Public Accounts Committee has received a referral from the Minister for Local Government to conduct an inquiry into the assets, premises and funding of the NSW Rural Fire Service, the full details of which are available on the committee's home page.

Petitions

PETITIONS RECEIVED

The SPEAKER: I announce that the following ePetition signed by more than 20,000 persons has been lodged for presentation:

Random Breath Testing

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to improve the visibility of policing and increase rates of random breath testing, received from **Mr Philip Donato**.

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

The CLERK: I announce that the following paper petition signed by fewer than 500 persons has been lodged for presentation:

Parramatta Police Incident

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to cancel a penalty notice issued in Parramatta on 3 November 2023, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

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

Mudgee Health Service MRI Machine

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to urgently deliver an MRI machine for Mudgee Health Service, received from **Mr Philip Donato**.

Far West Alcohol and Drug Rehabilitation Service

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to fund a community-based alcohol and other drug withdrawal, detoxification and rehabilitation centre for Far West New South Wales, received from **Mr Roy Butler**.

Automated External Defibrillators

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to make automated external defibrillators mandatory for businesses with public access, received from **Mr Paul Toole**.

Single-Use Coffee Cups

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to introduce legislation to ban single-use coffee cups in New South Wales, received from **Mr Richie Williamson**.

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

Westmead South Land Zoning

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to keep Westmead South zoned for low-density development, received from **Ms Julia Finn**.

Kalaru to Bega Shared Path

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to prioritise and fund a shared path from Kalaru to Bega, received from **Dr Michael Holland**.

Wollongong Hospital Car Parking

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to continue providing free parking at Wollongong Hospital, received from **Mr Gareth Ward**.

Central Coast Child Care

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to take immediate action to provide extra child care services on the Central Coast, received from **Mr Adam Crouch**.

RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

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

The Hon. Jenny Aitchison—Regional Seniors Travel Card—lodged 21 November 2023 (Mr Adam Marshall)

The Hon. Jenny Aitchison—Molong Flood Mitigation—lodged 22 November 2023 (Mr Philip Donato)

The Hon. Jenny Aitchison—Great Northern Railway—lodged 23 November 2023 (Mr Adam Marshall)

The CLERK: I announce that the following Ministers have lodged responses to ePetitions signed by 500 or more persons:

The Hon. Ron Hoenig—Upper Hunter Shire Council—lodged 21 November 2023 (Ms Kobi Shetty)

The Hon. Jo Haylen—Companion Animals and Public Transport—lodged 21 November 2023 (Mr Alex Greenwich)

The Hon. Tara Moriarty—Shark Meshing—lodged 21 November 2023 (Mr Adam Crouch)

The Hon. Tara Moriarty—Rodeos and Animal Welfare—lodged 28 November 2023 (Dr Michael Holland)

Business of the House

BUSINESS LAPSED

The SPEAKER: I advise the House that in accordance with Standing Order 105 general business notices of motions (general notices) Nos 601 to 960 have lapsed.

[Notices of motions given.]

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua): I shall now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.30 p.m.

Bills

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT (DE-AMALGAMATIONS) BILL 2024

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Ron Hoenig, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (14:32): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Local Government Amendment (De-amalgamations) Bill 2024, which sets out the Government's policy for de-amalgamations. The bill removes a statutory roadblock to de-amalgamations that lingered unresolved for two years under Opposition members when in government, leaving those councils and communities that want to de-amalgamate in limbo. More importantly, the bill provides a vastly improved pathway to enable any previously amalgamated council across New South Wales, together with its community, to make an informed choice about whether it is in the community's best interest to de-amalgamate. The bill does this by

providing a council-led, democratic, fair, transparent and robust process that requires community consultation up-front, independent scrutiny and a majority yes vote on a de-amalgamation constitutional referendum prior to the de-amalgamation proceeding.

The previous Government's forced council merger policy was a policy failure that proceeded after Labor in opposition warned clearly of the likely negative consequences. It was, in fact—as I have told the House on a number of occasions—a breach of faith with the people of New South Wales as the Liberal Party and National Party promised in writing that there would be no forced amalgamations. If required to, I am happy to produce and table in this House the letters signed by the then Liberal leader, Barry O'Farrell; the then National Party leader, Andrew Stoner; and the member for Bathurst, who forced the amalgamation of those councils as local government Minister.

By my estimation, this broken promise was smoothed over with more than \$600 million in tied and untied grants to councils being amalgamated. Even after all this money came pouring into the 20 councils that amalgamated, nine of them had to seek special rate variations to cover their costs. And yet, at the end of the process, communities with merged councils had lower service standards that were far less effective and efficient than they were before they merged.

It is time we put an end to this disappointing chapter in the history of local government in New South Wales by enshrining a permanent and effective pathway so that councils that wish to demerge are able to do so. There is no doubt that we need to find a way forward to fix the current legislation that is preventing councils from de-amalgamating. The Government recognises the right for local councils and communities to explore a demerger voluntarily and decide their future using a de-amalgamation constitutional referendum. However, the current provisions prevent me, as Minister, from being able to recommend a proclamation to the Governor to give effect to a de-amalgamation process under section 218CC of the Local Government Act 1993. This has created a situation that has left councils and their communities waiting for the opportunity to assert their democratic and legal right to have a say in determining their own identity and future through a de-amalgamation process.

I acknowledge that a private member's bill has been put forward in the other place in an attempt to resolve these issues. However, the Government opposes that bill and has instead put forward this superior bill. That private member's bill in the other place is fundamentally undemocratic and, if passed, has the potential to create legal, policy and financial difficulties long into the future. The bill I bring forward today is similar to what I flagged in November last year. It is a vast improvement on the existing provisions of the Act and on the private member's bill. It addresses existing deficiencies in the Act and allows a fully informed council and community to vote on whether it is in their best interests to de-amalgamate.

Importantly, the council members themselves, as elected representatives of the community, will decide how de-amalgamation will be brought about and what the two new councils look like. It is not the proper role of the State Government to go into a council and divide up its assets and liabilities. That is properly the role of the elected councillors themselves as civic leaders. Elected councillors hold in their hands the hopes and aspirations of the communities that they are elected to represent. The bill provides for that. It also mitigates risk and uncertainty to local councils and communities by ensuring that de-amalgamation proposals demonstrate that, once de-amalgamated, the affected councils will be financially sustainable and will be able to continue to deliver the much-needed services and infrastructure that local communities expect. It is critical that communities have a say in the local democracies that represent and serve them. As a matter of equity, it is the Government's policy that any council formed by the amalgamation of two or more former areas should be entitled to seek to de-amalgamate, not just those councils that were forcibly amalgamated in 2016.

The Government's bill recognises the importance of democracy and the role of councils in shaping the future of their local government areas. The bill requires that any de-amalgamation proposal must be led by the council elected by their community. It also requires the council to prepare and consult on a business case that informs the community of all consequences, including financial impacts, of a proposed de-amalgamation. This business case must include details about how the de-amalgamation will occur and how two or more viable councils will be created. It must include details of the estimated financial impacts of the de-amalgamation; how the amalgamated council will finance the de-amalgamation; an estimate of the rates and charges that the councils for the de-amalgamated areas may make and levy; and any further details, such as the division of assets and liabilities and electoral ward boundaries, reasonably required to bring a demerger about.

This will ensure the State can be assured that the business case creates two or more viable councils. It also ensures the community are informed about any likely increases or decreases in their rates before they go to vote. It is essential that any decision to de-amalgamate must be considered and supported by the community. It would be simply undemocratic to allow anything otherwise. The alternative idea in Dr Cohn's bill that a single group of electors could effectively dismantle the council, with the only requirement being a community plebiscite

supported by half of the voters within one former area of the council, is unfair to the rest of the community and is a flawed process.

I will provide an example. Urana Council was amalgamated with Corowa shire to create Federation Council in 2016. At the last election in 2021, Federation Council registered 7,400 formal votes. Roughly 900 of those votes came from the former Urana shire. Under the private member's bill in the other place, 10 per cent of the electors of one former council can petition for a plebiscite, which is automatically granted. For Urana, that is around 90 people. Then a plebiscite is held, again, only in the Urana half of Federation Council. It is conceivable that 400 people may vote. It is conceivable that 150 people may vote, with 100 people in favour and 50 people against. That small group of people could have a dramatic impact on the entirety of Federation Council, and almost 6,000 electors would have not had a say.

Under that bill there has been no independent process to ensure the resulting council will not fall over. The provision proposed in the other place is therefore unworkable. A framework that allows de-amalgamations to occur in those circumstances without any appropriate safeguards, such as scrutiny by an independent boundaries commission, has the real and worrying potential to result in unsustainable councils that are unable to deliver local government services to their local communities. We all know how badly a failing council impacts upon our local communities. By contrast, the bill I present today enshrines local democracy in the de-amalgamation process. It ensures that a de-amalgamation constitutional referendum is held and a majority of electors across the council area support the de-amalgamation proposal before it can proceed.

The bill also requires compulsory voting in the referendum for electors on the electoral roll. Within the context of local democracy, however, is the concept of local accountability. In the context of local democracy, decision-making and financing, it is inappropriate for a responsible State government to finance a local issue such as council de-amalgamation and pass those costs to other communities. The bill removes a section of the Act that would by implication suggest that the State has some financial liability for State council demergers. As a consequence, councils themselves must fund any expenses they choose to incur through the de-amalgamation process.

Given the significant consequences of any de-amalgamation, it is critical that the legislative framework provides a clear and robust process that has appropriate safeguards in place. One such safeguard set out in the Government's bill is the requirement that the council consults with its community on a council-developed business case that sets out the financial impacts and service delivery implications of a de-amalgamation, which must then be supported by council resolution. We will ask councillors, as the local experts in how their communities should be run, to put together the blueprint for why their council should demerge and what the new councils will look like. Then we will ask the New South Wales Local Government Boundaries Commission to ensure that the viability of the de-amalgamation proposal—and by extension any future councils created—is consistently and independently assessed.

While a public inquiry is an optional part of the boundaries commission process, there will be no requirement mandating a public inquiry for de-amalgamation proposals because of the extensive community consultation that will have occurred prior to the boundaries commission receiving the business case and proposal. By contrast, the bill introduced in the other place does not create a role for the independent boundaries commission in de-amalgamations. That creates an unacceptable risk to the community, council and Government of a potentially unviable de-amalgamation proposal failing in the future.

I now turn my attention to the bill. Schedule 1 [4] repeals the flawed section 218CC and item [5] sets out a new section 218CD of the Act relating to proposals for de-amalgamation. Section 218CD provides that amalgamated councils must develop and consult with their local communities on a business case for de-amalgamation, which will need to include information about the financial impacts of the de-amalgamation and how these will be addressed, long-term strategic plans, future sustainability and service delivery capacity. This will ensure the consequences of the de-amalgamation are well known and understood by the community.

Having been supported by council, as evidenced by a council resolution, the council will submit the de-amalgamation proposal, including the business case, to the Minister for Local Government. The Minister will then refer the business case and de-amalgamation proposal to the Local Government Boundaries Commission for review, providing a mechanism for consistent, independent and impartial assessment of the viability of the proposal. The boundaries commission will examine the business case and proposal, having regard to factors currently set out in the Act, and will report to the Minister on its findings. Following consideration of the boundaries commission's report, the Minister will determine whether to approve the council proceeding with a de-amalgamation constitutional referendum—the keystone component of the Government's framework that ensures whole-of-community support for de-amalgamation.

Before approving the holding of a referendum, the Minister must consult with the Electoral Commissioner. The Minister must also consult with the council if the boundaries commission has recommended a different de-amalgamation proposal be supported. The de-amalgamation constitutional referendum will require a majority of electors across the entire current council area—not just voters of one former council area who turn out to vote on the day—to be in favour of a de-amalgamation for the question seeking de-amalgamation to be carried.

If the de-amalgamation constitutional referendum achieves the required majority vote in support of the de-amalgamation proposal, the Minister will then determine whether to recommend to the Governor that the de-amalgamation proposal be implemented via proclamation. If the constitutional referendum does not achieve the required majority vote in support of the de-amalgamation proposal, the proposal will not progress further. New section 218CD also provides definitions relevant within the section and to a new schedule 10 in relation to the de-amalgamation process.

Item [6] of schedule 1 to the bill provides for local government elections to be postponed for councils that have an area subject to a de-amalgamation proposal that is under consideration by the boundaries commission. This ensures sufficient time to conduct a referendum and give effect to it prior to a council election. Item [7] provides for transitional arrangements in relation to the legislative amendments and specifically ensures that the new provisions will apply to de-amalgamation proposals submitted to the Minister before the commencement of the amendments. This covers existing proposals that the Minister has received from Snowy Valleys Council and Inner West Council, with subclause 3 (b) of item [7] providing that the regulations may make further provision in relation to these existing proposals.

Substantial effort has already been made by Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council in support of its proposed de-amalgamation. Once the current boundaries commission process for the Cootamundra-Gundagai proposal has concluded, the de-amalgamation of that council will be implemented via the alternative provisions of the Act, as for any other boundary change process. By allowing Cootamundra-Gundagai to proceed down the current path, I expect that the Governor will have the ability to proclaim two viable councils much faster than if it is required to proceed via a referendum. Item [8] introduces new schedule 10 to the Act, which sets out further provisions about de-amalgamation proposals and business cases, de-amalgamation constitutional referendums and operational elements of de-amalgamations. Following a list of relevant terms in part 1, part 2 of schedule 10 requires councils to consult with the community on the de-amalgamation business case and pass a council resolution in support of the de-amalgamation proposal before submitting it to the Minister. It also sets out the matters that must be included in the business case and provides that the regulations may specify other matters.

Part 3 sets out the provisions for de-amalgamation constitutional referendums, including the requirement for the de-amalgamation business case to be made available to the community before the referendum, as well as the conduct of the referendum, which follows relevant existing elections provisions. Importantly, voting at a de-amalgamation constitutional referendum will be compulsory for electors on the residential roll, recognising the importance for residents to participate in the decision-making process for the de-amalgamation of their local area. Given the importance of the issue at hand, the referendum will be administered by the Electoral Commissioner, who will report the result of the referendum to the Minister. The question will be carried if a majority of electors vote in support of the de-amalgamation.

Finally, part 4 of schedule 10, along with items [1], [2], [3] and [4] of schedule 1 to the bill, provide for additional statutory or operational matters to give effect to the Government's policy for de-amalgamation, including clause 9 of part 4 of schedule 10, which provides regulation-making powers in relation to de-amalgamations. The bill will commence on proclamation to provide time for regulations to be prepared in support of the bill's provisions. I also call out clause 11 of part 4, which extends chapter 11, part 6 of the Local Government Act to de-amalgamations to ensure council staff are protected during and after de-amalgamation proposals. Amongst other things, this means that there are to be no forced redundancies of staff during a proposal period, that staff transferring to a new council keep all of their entitlements and, importantly, that there are no forced redundancies of non-senior staff for three years after the de-amalgamation takes effect.

There is no doubt that the Government has inherited a flawed process for de-amalgamating councils that the Opposition failed to resolve when in government. There is no doubt that the communities of Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council, Snowy Valleys Council and Inner West Council—and any other amalgamated councils in New South Wales—deserve certainty on a democratic way forward to progress de-amalgamation proposals, should it be in the community's best interest to do so. And there is certainly no doubt that the Government strongly supports the democratic and legal rights of local councils and their communities wanting to de-amalgamate voluntarily.

The bill provides for a council-led, democratic, fair, transparent, consultative and robust de-amalgamation process prior to any council and community taking such a fundamental step. Importantly, the bill provides for this via a simple, efficient, fair, transparent, effective and robust process to make sure that councils that do

de-amalgamate will be financially viable now and into the future. By establishing the process in the bill, including the requirement for a de-amalgamation constitutional referendum and independent scrutiny by the boundaries commission, we can make sure that councils, in consultation with their communities, make the right decisions so that they can continue to provide much-needed services and infrastructure to their local communities into the future. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

SHERIFF AND COURT SECURITY AMENDMENT BILL 2023

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 18 October 2023.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (14:55): I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Sheriff and Court Security Amendment Bill 2023. I begin with an acknowledgement of the tremendous work of the Sheriff's Office during the 2019-20 summer bushfires. As the Parliamentary Secretary to the Attorney General, the member for Prospect, noted in his second reading speech on 18 October 2023, the NSW Sheriff's Office assisted the New South Wales fire services at that time by providing over 80 staff and completing over 120 separate deployments across New South Wales in a variety of areas. The member also praised the NSW Sheriff's Office for its agility in moving from its regular operations to providing 24-hour emergency support to the people of New South Wales. The Opposition agrees that should be acknowledged and commended.

The Opposition welcomes the provisions of the bill that work towards the streamlining of arrangements so that all New South Wales services are able to cooperate in an emergency. I note, however, that this streamlining should not extend to a blurring of roles between separate services that have distinct functions within our society. The Opposition is happy to support those provisions in the bill that will empower the Sheriff's Office to enter into arrangements with other agencies and assist them during emergencies such as bushfires. The approval of the secretary is required for those arrangements, which is an appropriate management mechanism. To support officers while engaged in these functions, the bill provides that while the Sheriff's officers are engaged in lawful functions under any Act, they will be protected from liability, which is appropriate. It is an important safeguard for situations that can often arise during emergencies where an officer is performing duties outside of their regular scope of employment.

The remainder of the bill is concerned with the more usual operations of the NSW Sheriff's Office and the functions of the officers of the Sheriff. Insofar as the provisions of the bill speak to the streamlining of the officers' functions and build on the effectiveness of their work, the Opposition is happy to support them. The first of those provisions establishes in the Sheriff's Act 2005 the rank structure or system of leadership adhered to by the Sheriff's officers. It provides that the Sheriff may recommend the issuing of a commission by the Governor to a Sheriff's officer in recognition of the seniority of that officer. The purpose of that amendment is to allow the Sheriff to recognise the achievements of senior officers and their operational role, experience, knowledge and training. It is important that such officers receive recognition and that the Sheriff is able to make best use of the experience and knowledge of senior officers. I am happy to support that provision, though I must also ask the Government what the cost of establishing the rank structure will be. It is important that the State be able to account for and anticipate all spending.

The bill clarifies the role of the Sheriff's officers as being responsible for the security of courthouses and judicial officers, as well as all those in the court precinct, including witnesses and members of the legal profession. That is uncontroversial and we agree with the Government in proposing the provision. However, one aspect of the bill is more controversial and requires further scrutiny. The bill introduces a formal protective security function for Sheriff's officers and crucially extends those functions beyond court premises. That provision is novel. The Coalition is committed to the secure operation of the courts and the administration of justice. We support much of the bill, so we will not oppose it in this House.

A story about some of the difficult work that sheriffs have to perform was recently brought to my attention. Immediately after the Second World War, Sheriff's officers had to evict someone from their home, but they recognised that the occupant was a returned serviceman and they would not evict him from his home until they were sure he had another home to go to. The Sheriff's officers have to deal with a wide range of difficult matters. They do so in a very professional manner, and the Opposition is happy to support a bill that will facilitate the proper functioning of their work.

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (14:59): I make a brief contribution in support of the Sheriff and Court Security Amendment Bill 2023. The bill aims to make several amendments to the Sheriff Act 2005 as well as the Court Security Act 2005 to guarantee the law aligns with the functions of the Sheriff's Office. The bill outlines the importance of the Sheriff and their staff and demonstrates the role they play in the administration of

justice in New South Wales. The bill amends the Sheriff Act 2005 to assign the responsibility of safeguarding courts and tribunals across New South Wales to the Sheriff's officers. That covers any individuals who interact with the court system, including legal professionals, victims of crime, witnesses and jurors. The bill will update the functions and roles of the Sheriff's Office by clearly defining the functions outlined in the Sheriff Act 2005. The roles include ensuring the safety and security of courts and tribunals, effective management of the jury system, civil law enforcement duties, provisions of protective security services to judicial officers and other tasks assigned to the Sheriff under the Sheriff Act or any other relevant law.

The bill clarifies that the Sheriff's Office has a specific role to provide protective security services to judicial officers. To assist that function, the bill empowers a Sheriff's officer to provide protective security services to judicial officers for their safety outside court premises. The provision of that service is subject to an agreement between the Sheriff and the head of the court of which the judicial officer is a member. The bill further notes that for the purpose of this section, the terms "court", "court premises" and "judicial officer" carry the same meaning as is in the Court Security Act 2005. The purpose of that specification is to ensure that those terms remain consistent and uniform across relevant legislation. The bill will empower the Sheriff to enter into an agreement with the head of another public service agency to enable Sheriff's officers to assist that agency in relation to an emergency. That agreement can only be acted out once it has been approved by the Secretary of the Department of Communities and Justice, who administers the Sheriff Act 2005.

The bill makes adjustments to the Act to ensure that when a Sheriff's officer is engaged in lawful functions under the Sheriff Act 2005 or other relevant Acts for the purpose of keeping people safe or minimising security risks and threats to courts, tribunals or the judiciary they will be protected from personal liability. The bill establishes a rank and structure system of leadership for Sheriff's officers as outlined in the Sheriff Act 2005. That allows the Sheriff to recommend the issuance of a commission by the Governor to a Sheriff's officer as a recognition of seniority. That recognition is based on factors such as the officer's operational role, experience, knowledge and training. Furthermore, it permits the Sheriff to publish a rank structure for Sheriff's officers on the *New South Wales Government Gazette*.

The bill amends the Court Security Act 2005, acknowledging the essential role of Sheriff's officers in supporting and assuring police and custodial officers within the New South Wales courts. It authorises a security officer to provide reasonable assistance to a police or custodial officer when requested during incidents that affect court security on court premises or in their immediate vicinity. The security officer must follow the directions of the attending police or custodial officers. A security officer can be the Sheriff or someone appointed by the Sheriff under the Act. Further, the bill grants security officers the authority to pursue and arrest a person without a warrant if that person is attempting to escape lawful custody. That power of arrest is only applicable if the security officer chases the individual from court premises without any interruption and the pursuit finishes with an arrest.

The overall purpose of the bill is to improve the functioning and security of New South Wales courts by empowering Sheriff's officers to work closely with law enforcement agencies and to enable officers to take appropriate actions in various situations, particularly when ensuring the safety and efficient operation of the courts. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill) (15:06): I contribute to debate on the Sheriff and Court Security Amendment Bill 2023. As a former member of the Police Force, a former police prosecutor and a former lawyer, I have had a lot to do with the Sheriff over many years. They do an absolutely wonderful job in the role of the Sheriff, not only in respect of court security and assisting magistrates but also in relation to their execution of judgements and their enforcement. I have had a lot to do with them regarding writs and the service of documents too, having worked in debt recovery areas where we sent a lot of writs to various people for enforcement. I have a great respect for members of the Sheriff's Office. The wonderful member for Wahoona mentioned how hard they work. I certainly agree with those observations and bring some of the additional work of the Sheriff's Office to the House's attention.

A 14 August 2023 article from the *Law Society Journal* spoke about the Sheriff. At that time the Sheriff was—and I believe she still is—Tracey Hall, a former member of the NSW Police Force, and her father, like my own, was a police officer. Like me, the Sheriff was also a lawyer and a member of the police prosecutive branch. I seem to have a lot in common with the Sheriff. The article from the *Law Society Journal* gives some indication about the work they do and the training that the Sheriff operates. I put that on record because of the respect that we have, and the need for us to make sure that the rules, regulations and legislation that we pass in this House protects the Sheriff's officers. The article—taken from the Sheriff's information—indicates that every Sheriff's officer has to go through a 10-week intensive program at the Sheriff and Justice Academy at Parramatta, where they learn about the 60 or so Acts under which they operate and go through tactical training engagement. A lot of the training focuses on de-escalation and communication skills. The article notes that everyone who is at court, whether as a victim, an offender or a support person, has heightened anxiety. That is important to understand when

Sheriff's officers are at courts dealing with the public. The proposed legislation gives the Sheriff's officers the power to arrest a person who has attempted to escape custody from court premises. The article gives an example of the difficult situations Sheriff's officers may face when they attend court. It states:

Occasionally, a prisoner attempts to escape. When prisoner Ali Chahine was denied bail at the Downing Centre in 2015, he overcame two Corrective Services officers, jumped out of the dock, ran from the courtroom and dashed out through a fire exit and into the street. "Right outside the exit is a bus stop," says Hall. "He jumped on the bus and the bus left and went down to Central railway station." Sheriff's Officers flagged down a passing car and went off to search for Chahine, but he was not recaptured until police tracked him down to a unit in Alexandria ...

It is the case that Sheriff's officers have been and will be involved in attempts to recapture and arrest people. It is sensible to give them some power of arrest, provided that appropriate training is incorporated into their 10-week training course. The member for Wahroonga recounted a story highlighting the difficult job that Sheriff's officers do. The article quotes Sheriff Hall:

We go to places when people are at their most vulnerable Our officers sometimes drive four hours into the country and tell somebody, "We are evicting you from the premises." They can be volatile situations. Many people in country areas have firearms.

Describing what may well be the matter that was referred to by the member for Wahroonga, Hall continued:

People do get anxious and can sometimes react badly. Only a week and a half ago, two of my officers went to an industrial premises in Preston. They were serving a document, and the guy just lost it, came out with a hammer and started attacking one of my officers. He got smashed in the head with a hammer and put his hand up to protect himself—and he got his hand smashed as well.

Members of our Sheriff's department face real difficulties on a day-to-day basis. The Opposition supports the bill. We have concerns with respect to giving the Sheriff's Office the responsibility to protect judicial officers outside of court premises. I know that will be looked at another time. Those are my comments on the bill.

Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (15:11): I speak in support of the Sheriff and Court Security Amendment Bill 2023. I commend the Attorney General for his work in this space. The bill aims to amend the Sheriff Act 2005 and the Court Security Act 2005 to ensure that the law accurately reflects the contemporary functions of the Sheriff and the powers of Sheriff's officers. The office of the sheriff is one of the oldest continuing offices in English law, with its history extending back to the Middle Ages. The NSW Sheriff's Office was established in 1824. It will celebrate 200 years of service in our State in May this year.

To ensure that the law reflects the contemporary role of the NSW Sheriff's Office, the bill clarifies and updates the role, function and structure of the office. It introduces amendments to support operational improvements and the continued safety and security of New South Wales courts, tribunals and judicial officers. First, the bill will amend the Sheriff Act 2005 to clarify and update the role and functions of the NSW Sheriff's Office. Sheriff's officers play an important role in supporting the New South Wales justice system and are responsible for the safety and security of courts and tribunals across New South Wales.

Items [3] and [5] of schedule 1 to the bill authorise a Sheriff's officer to provide protective security services to a judicial officer, for their protection, outside court premises in accordance with an agreement between the Sheriff and the head of the court of which the judicial officer is a member. Protective security is necessary to ensure the judiciary can fulfil its role free of fear, threat and intimidation. This Government recognises the crucial role the Sheriff's Office has played in coming to the aid of the people of this State in times of emergency. Given this, item [5] will broaden the capacity of the Sheriff to enter agreements, with the approval of the Secretary of the Department of Communities and Justice, with other public service agencies to assist in connection with an emergency. That amendment will ensure that the Sheriff's Office is best positioned to provide prompt assistance in emergencies, as defined in the State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989, such as a fire, flood, storm or earthquake.

The bill also extends the exclusion of personal liability provided to Sheriff's officers under the Sheriff Act 2005 to functions exercised by Sheriff's officers under other Acts and provides that the Sheriff may recommend the issuing of a commission by the Governor to a Sheriff's officer, in recognition of that officer's seniority. The amendment will enable the Sheriff to recognise the achievements of senior officers and better reflect their operational role, experience, knowledge and training. Concerning the Court Security Act 2005, the bill permits a security officer to provide reasonable assistance to a police officer or custodial officer, upon request, during incidents affecting court security in or in the immediate vicinity of court premises.

Furthermore, item [2] of schedule 2 gives security officers the authority to pursue and arrest a person, without a warrant, if that person is attempting to escape lawful custody by absconding from court premises. The amendment resolves a practical limitation in the existing power of arrest, ensuring that security officers can appropriately respond to incidents that may directly impact the safety of New South Wales courts and court users. Developed in consultation with key stakeholders, including the NSW Sheriff's Office, Corrective Services NSW, the NSW Police Force and heads of jurisdiction, the bill supports Sheriff's officers in performing their duties

effectively. I acknowledge their work and express my appreciation and thanks. In recognition of the critical role Sheriff's officers have in keeping our courts and communities safe, I commend the bill to the House.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (15:15): On behalf of Mr Michael Daley: In reply: I make this speech in reply on the Sheriff and Court Security Amendment Bill 2023 in my capacity as Parliamentary Secretary, on behalf of the Attorney General. I thank the following members for their contribution to debate on the bill: the member for Wahroonga, the shadow Attorney General; the member for Mount Druitt, the Parliamentary Secretary for Police and Counter-terrorism; the member for Fairfield; and the member for Castle Hill.

The Sheriff and Court Security Amendment Bill 2023 makes several amendments to clarify and update the role, function and structure of the NSW Sheriff's Office. It also makes amendments to support the continued safety and security of New South Wales courts, tribunals and judicial officers. The bill authorises Sheriff's officers to assist police and custodial officers upon request and establishes a process through which the Sheriff may enter into an agreement to assist other public sector agencies in an emergency.

I briefly address some matters raised during debate on the bill. I thank the member for Wahroonga for his observation that in 2019 the Sheriff of New South Wales entered an agreement with the Commissioner of the Rural Fire Service in accordance with the Rural Fires Act 1997, which facilitated the statewide deployment of Sheriff's officers to assist in vital incident management support roles. The bill will facilitate the Sheriff establishing an agreement in accordance with legislation and allow Sheriff's officers to render assistance to law enforcement and emergency services quickly and effectively. There will be no costs associated with the implementation of the bill.

I thank the member for Mount Druitt for his contribution. To support the effective operation of our justice system, it is essential that judges are able to fulfil their crucial role free of fear, threat and intimidation. To achieve this, the judiciary may require a protective security service. Protective security will primarily include the provision of services such as patrolling, protecting or guarding a judicial officer or the location of that officer. The Sheriff's Office is well placed to provide protective security services to the judiciary, and the amendment explicitly authorises the Sheriff to do so. While the bill does not define "protective security services", the particular services to be provided will be outlined in an agreement between the Sheriff and the head of the court of which the judicial officer is a member. That agreement is a powerful safeguard in determining the types of services Sheriff's officers are resourced and permitted to perform. The agreement will be drafted to ensure flexibility and adaptability in the provision of protective security to judicial officers. Importantly, the agreement will provide that Sheriff's officers liaise with the NSW Police Force in the provision of protective security services, where appropriate.

Effective cooperation with law enforcement officers is essential to the provision of court security. If there is an incident in court, Sheriff's officers are well placed to provide immediate support to police or custodial officers when requested. As a key function of the Sheriff's Office is to provide for the safety and security of courts, Sheriff's officers are appropriately trained and well positioned to respond to court incidents. The amendment does not allow Sheriff's officers to provide generalised support to law enforcement officers. Rather, it is limited to an incident affecting court security and applies only in circumstances when the officer is asked to provide assistance. The types of incidents that are considered to require support might be crowd control, additional security in an evacuation or additional support in the court premises when taking people into custody. I thank the member for Castle Hill and support his comments on the important work contributed by the NSW Sheriff's Office.

With respect to the powers of arrest, the Sheriff appoints appropriately trained officers to support the secure and orderly operation of courts and tribunals in accordance with section 21 of the Court Security Act 2005. While the powers of arrest in the Act apply to security officers, in practice, the safety and security of courts and tribunals is primarily provided for by Sheriff's officers. When executing powers under the Court Security Act, security officers must comply with safeguards outlined in section 20 and provide relevant identification, a name or badge number and the reason for the exercise of the power. The power of arrest outside court premises authorised in item [2] of schedule 2 is limited to circumstances where the person has absconded from the court premises in an attempt to escape lawful custody and the pursuit of that person was not stopped or interrupted at any time before the officer arrived at the premises for the purpose of arresting the person.

To become a Sheriff's officer, a person must take an oath or affirmation of office; undertake comprehensive criminal records checks, including fingerprinting; complete a 10-week intensive training program conducted by the NSW Sheriff and Justice Academy; and complete a 12-month probationary period. All Sheriff's officers are trained in both theoretical and practical exercises, including perimeter security training, defensive tactic skills, managing mental health, communication de-escalation and practical training in court premises. The training program includes various scenario-based exercises, including responding to emergencies and de-escalation, as well as learning about relevant policy and legislation, including the Court Security Act 2005, the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002 and other relevant legislation. Sheriff's officers are specifically trained to

provide protection and security to the court and judiciary, and to respond in an emergency when called upon. I also thank the member for Fairfield for his contribution to the debate.

In conclusion, the bill makes several miscellaneous amendments to the Sheriff Act 2005 and the Court Security Act 2005 to clarify the role and function of the Sheriff and Sheriff's officers. The amendments will support the effective operation of the Sheriff's Office and ensure the continued safety and security of New South Wales courts, tribunals and judicial officers. I commend the bill to the House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

Third Reading

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT: On behalf of Mr Michael Daley: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

INSTITUTIONS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2023

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 29 November 2023.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (15:23): I make a contribution to debate on the Institutions Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. Latin maxims are still sometimes used in the law because they can, in a confined way, explain important principles. One of those, well known to lawyers, is *expressio unius est exclusio alterius*. It means, roughly, that the express mention of one thing indicates the absence of other things. It is relevant to the bill, yet another of the Government's many legal housekeeping bills. From the relative volume of minor housekeeping bills that indicate no broad agenda, we can only conclude that the focus on, and express mention of, housekeeping matters indicates that the Coalition and its former Attorneys General left our legislation in such good shape that little more than tidying up around the edges is required.

The agenda of the bill is sensible and makes necessary changes to assist the continuing functioning of a number of statutory bodies. Housekeeping is good and necessary, and it is good to see that the Government is engaged in that task, which will maintain the comprehensive legislative structure that the Opposition established and maintained when in government. We are happy to support all the changes proposed by the bill. The bill makes changes to four separate statutory bodies: the Legal Aid Commission, the Legal Profession Admission Board, the Personal Injury Commission and the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children.

With respect to the Legal Aid Commission, Legal Aid review panels will be constituted to hear appeals against refusals to grant aid. That is a sensible change that should improve outcomes for litigants, streamline operations for Legal Aid and provide a degree of reasonable oversight for what can be very important decisions for individuals about whether they are granted legal aid. At the Personal Injury Commission, the term of acting deputy presidents will be extended to allow for continuity, and acting division heads will be able to be appointed. That will ensure that the important work of the Personal Injury Commission is as efficient as possible.

The bill recognises that the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children is now known as NextSense, and amends the objects to more accurately capture the current scope of its operations. Importantly, it clarifies that the institute has all the powers of a statutory corporation and allows for greater continuity by extending the possible period of service of directors. The bill makes important clarifications with respect to the Legal Profession Admission Board, which, in its former life, was separated into the Solicitors Admission Board and the Barristers Admission Board. They then became one board that administered both arms of the profession and was renamed the Legal Profession Admission Board. The bill will clarify the powers of the board and remove any doubt about its ability to run the Diploma in Law course, to make binding rules for students-at-law, and to set fees for those students.

In New South Wales we should be very proud of the Diploma in Law course taught by the University of Sydney for students of the board. That course provides an accessible and affordable pathway to obtain legal qualifications and thus a more diverse legal profession to assist the people of New South Wales. It has a tremendous heritage, and the board's exams count as graduates of the course people as diverse as Banjo Paterson; the Hon. Justice Michael McHugh, AC, former High Court judge; the Hon. Justice Carolyn Simpson, AO, the second woman to be appointed to the Supreme Court of New South Wales; and, from recollection—somewhat randomly—the former President of the New South Wales Bar Association, Arthur Moses, SC.

We all want an inclusive legal profession and an accessible pathway to enter the profession, and we should be proud of the work that the legal profession's admission board does. Its teachers and its predecessors have been providing this pathway for generations and continue to do so. Indeed, when I was first considering a legal career, it was very common for people to work in a legal office as a law clerk and do either the Solicitors Admission Board course or the new Macquarie University external law course, a BLegS. For many generations, that was a common way for people to legally train and it was certainly something I contemplated.

I was fortunate enough to go to the University of Sydney, but that is certainly an avenue that will give people a very good legal education. It is something that has occurred and has supported many very good practitioners in the profession, including our family solicitor, George Bilbie, who was still practising at 100 years of age, such was his energy. He grew up as the son of an underground coalminer, but because of his glasses and thin build he was not able to go down to the mines. He became a legal secretary and then did the solicitors admission course. He practised as a solicitor for over 70 years.

Dr Hugh McDermott: Even the current Attorney General.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: And the current Attorney General, the Parliamentary Secretary informs me. With those few extempore additional observations, the Opposition supports the bill.

Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (15:30): I support the Institutions Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. I commend the Attorney General for his work in this space. The changes made in the bill provide updates to enable the work of the respective bodies to be conducted efficiently and appropriately, reflecting development in their practices. The bill updates the legislation governing the Legal Aid Commission of NSW; the Legal Profession Admission Board; and the Personal Injury Commission and Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children, which is now known as NextSense. The bill was developed as part of an essential function of this Government to review and update legislation to ensure it is fit for purpose.

I turn to the detail of the bill. I note that schedule 1 amends the Legal Aid Commission Act 1979 to provide a more flexible, modern and streamlined mechanism for the review of decisions relating to legal assistance by Legal Aid NSW. Item [5] enables the board of the Legal Aid Commission to establish Legal Aid review panels to hear and determine appeals about the provision of legal aid. This will replace the administratively burdensome process for establishing a Legal Aid Review Committee and will enable faster outcomes for applicants seeking an appeal. The amendment will reduce delays in courts and tribunals where matters may be adjourned pending the outcome of Legal Aid NSW appeal decisions. The provisions will also enable Legal Aid NSW to establish the policies and guidelines that will inform the establishment of review panels.

Schedule 2 to the bill introduces amendments to the Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Act 2014. These changes clarify the role and functions of the Legal Profession Admission Board and its explicit regulation-making powers. The amendments work together to decrease the operational burden for the board by making processes more efficient across various areas. For instance, item [1] of schedule 2 expands the board's delegation power to a member of the staff of the board and a person or class of persons prescribed by the regulations. Further, the board's existing power to delegate to a committee of the board is also expanded to allow a committee exercising delegated functions to subdelegate the functions to a subcommittee of the committee. This measure mitigates the operational burden of the board, requiring a separate delegation to a subcommittee to assist its parent committee.

With respect to the Personal Injury Commission, schedule 3 [1] amends the Personal Injury Commission Act 2020 to extend the maximum term of an acting deputy president of the commission from 12 months to three years. At the same time, item [2] enables the Attorney General to appoint the president, a deputy president or a principal member of the commission to be an acting division head during the absence of a division head or a vacancy in the office of a division head. Those amendments aim to alleviate the administration burden associated with yearly reappointments and ensure a person appointed as an acting division head has the appropriate power to carry out the division head's functions.

Finally, schedule 4 amends the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children Act 1998. On 22 March 2021, the institute changed its name to NextSense, registering it as a trademark. NextSense is a not-for-profit organisation that provides a range of services for people who are hearing-impaired or vision-impaired and their families. Item [2] amends the Act to change the legislation title to the NextSense Act 1998 to reflect the renaming as well as its expanded remit and functions. The amendments also modernise administrative arrangements for its governing structures.

Overall, the bill is wideranging in effecting the provision of legal assistance and education to vulnerable people—from the determination of the eligibility of people seeking to be admitted as lawyers in New South Wales to operational and administrative improvements to our personal injury dispute resolution system, and assistance

and services for people who are deaf or blind. Each of the four institutions impacted play a distinct and vital role in our State. Therefore, the legislation that underpins those organisations not only must be efficient but also must reflect current needs and practices. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (15:34): I support the Institutions Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. I acknowledge the Opposition supports the bill. Sometimes bills of this type may seem rather dry, but they are very important because they update legislation. The bill is an important mechanism to ensure that the legislation is fit for purpose and fit for the four institutions that are the subject matter of the bill. The bill amends four Acts and we have heard contributions from other members as to what those organisations are about. I note that the bill provides updates to the Legal Aid Commission Act 1979 to provide a more flexible, modern and streamlined mechanism for the review of decisions relating to the grant of legal aid by Legal Aid NSW. Things change within society and it is always important to keep updating, particularly in the crucial area of legal aid.

The bill updates the Personal Injury Commission Act 2020 to extend the acting period of the acting deputy presidents from 12 months to three years and allow for the appointment of an acting division head. That adds better functionality for that commission. The bill also updates the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children Act 1998 to reflect the institute's new name of NextSense, as well as its expanded remit and functions. The amendments also modernise the administrative arrangements for all its governing structures. That has to happen on an ongoing basis anywhere. Even with all the traditions of this place, we do that here. We always have to ensure that we update. The bill amends the Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Act 2014 to provide clarification to the role and functions of the Legal Profession Admission Board and to make very explicit regulation-making powers. I am reasonably familiar with that Act; it is quite exacting to work through it. It is really important that the regulation-making powers are very explicit.

The bill has been developed as part of the Government's very important regular program of legislative reviews and improvements. There was quite wide consultation with stakeholders, the people, organisations and agencies one would expect, such as the heads of jurisdictions—the Supreme Court, District Court, Children's Court, Chief Magistrates, NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal, Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, Legal Aid Commission of NSW, court services, NSW Police Force, Corrective Services NSW, Victims Services, Youth Justice NSW, New South Wales Crime Commission, NSW Trustee and Guardian, the Cabinet Office, Treasury, Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT) Limited, Law Society of New South Wales and the NSW Bar Association. All of those organisations are important, but the last two mentioned are particularly important in this area.

Obviously there was detailed consultation with all of the affected institutions, and the amendments to the Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Act were consulted on with interstate law commissions and the Crown Solicitor's Office. I note the Legislation Review Committee's contribution in *Legislation Review Digest No. 9/58*. I will not go through all of it. The committee stated, in part:

The Committee generally prefers that broad delegation powers which may impact a person's ability to undertake a profession be specified and clearly limited ...

Broad delegation powers are in some of these amendments. The committee concluded:

It also recognises that there are avenues for applicants to seek reviews of decisions by those exercising the Board's functions regarding admission to practice. In these circumstances, the Committee makes no further comment.

I commend the bill to the House.

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (15:40): I support the Institutions Legislation Amendment Bill 2023, which amends a series of establishing legislation for four separate institutions. In combination, the amendments provide updates to enable the work of those bodies to be conducted efficiently and appropriately, and to reflect developments in their practices. As other members mentioned previously, legislation like this can seem quite process orientated, but it is quite important. It means that the laws under which our community lives are the most appropriate, the most up to date and reflect the reality our community lives in.

Specifically, the bill amends the Legal Aid Commission Act, the Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Act, the Personal Injury Commission Act and the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children Act. I will focus on two of those institutions in particular. First, the Legal Aid Commission. Under the amendments, the board of the Legal Aid Commission can establish Legal Aid review panels to hear and determine appeals about the provision of legal aid. As many members would know, Legal Aid has a very important role within our community. A fundamental tenet of our system is that those who are unable to afford or access legal advice in any other way be able to do so fairly through the system of legal aid.

The amendments seek to ensure that people within our community who seek review of decisions can do so more effectively and more in line with their current reality. Just last week I was at an event for some vulnerable

people within my community, and I was pleased to see that Legal Aid NSW had a presence at that engagement activity and was able to provide support, advocacy and advice through that mechanism. In that way, the amendments seek to ensure that more people within our community can be protected and are aware of their rights and responsibilities and the opportunities that Legal Aid NSW provides to them, and should provide to them, through our system.

The other institution I highlight is the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children, now known as NextSense. The changing of the name is one aspect of bringing it in line with the current state of play. The amendment of the object of the institute reflects the current approach towards dealing with those with disabilities. I was particularly pleased to see that the inclusion of carers and support services across the life span is part of the object. Under the amendment, the object would read:

- (1) The object of the Institute is to provide support and services to the following—
 - (a) persons living with hearing or vision loss,
 - (b) the families of persons living with hearing or vision loss,
 - (c) persons or bodies involved in providing care, support or other services to persons with hearing or vision loss.

That is incredibly important, as we, as legislators, as a community and as a society, grapple with the impact on those living with disabilities and the supports required right across their life span. Including those in the object of the institute importantly brings the legislation in line with the reality lived by people within our community. The amendments also seek to change the administrative arrangements for its governing structure. As many of us would be aware, service provision and the institutions that support this area need to have strong and robust governing regulations, which is exactly what this seeks to do. For all of those reasons, I commend the bill to the House. I also thank the Attorney General and his staff for ensuring that these important amendments are made.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (15:45): On behalf of Mr Michael Daley: In reply: I thank members for their contributions to this very important debate: Firstly, the member for Wahroonga, and shadow Attorney General; the member for Fairfield; the member for Lismore, and Parliamentary Secretary for Disaster Recovery; and the member for Liverpool. The regular review and updating of legislation to ensure that it is fit for purpose is an important part of good governance. It extends also to reviewing and updating legislation enabling the operation and functions of statutory organisations. In making amendments to their respective constituting Acts, the bill supports the operation of the Legal Profession Admission Board, Legal Aid NSW, the Personal Injury Commission and NextSense, which was formerly the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children.

I briefly address some matters raised during debate by different members. The member for Wahroonga noted the role of the bill in improving the efficiency of the Legal Aid review process, which it does by amendments to streamline the process and increase efficiencies to manage appeals from refusals to grant aid, while not changing the eligibility guidelines for grants of aid or the current means test. I join the member for Wahroonga in acknowledging the important work done by the Personal Injury Commission, NextSense and the Legal Profession Admission Board.

I take the opportunity to address matters raised by the Legislative Review Committee. The Legislation Review Committee's *Legislation Review Digest No. 9/58* comments on the provisions confirming the power of the Legal Profession Admission Board to delegate its functions under the Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Act 2014. The committee noted its general preference, which is that broad delegation powers be specified in primary legislation. However, as the committee further notes, this amendment appropriately facilitates the effective functioning of the Legal Profession Admission Board and avoids operational burden while maintaining the existing review avenues. Noting this, the committee chose to make no further comment.

In conclusion, the statutory bodies affected by this bill each perform important functions for the people of New South Wales. It is appropriate that they be supported through updates to their constituting legislation to ensure that those statutes are fit for purpose and reflect the current functions and needs of the organisations. That is precisely what the bill achieves. I commend the bill to the House.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li): The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

Third Reading

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT: On behalf of Mr Michael Daley: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

CRIME AND CRIMINAL PROCEDURE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2023**Second Reading Debate**

Debate resumed from 18 October 2023.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (15:49): Not everything we do in this place involves the high drama of question time. The operations of Parliament and the processes of managing the affairs of New South Wales often require small legislative changes, and doing things in a small and simple way is well suited to this Government. Housekeeping bills are, in general, uncontroversial and it benefits all of us in the House to focus not on opposing everything but on ensuring the smooth running of government. That being said, I emphasise that the Crime and Criminal Procedure Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 is yet another in the series of small legislative changes from what can only be described as a housekeeper government. The Opposition is happy to see that the Government is taking care of small changes to ensure the smooth running of New South Wales, but it would be refreshing, as a sign of good government, if Government members could lift their eyes to the bigger picture and introduce legislation that spoke of an agenda and more than tidying up existing legislation and proudly dusting the mantelpiece during their entire time in government.

The changes within the bill that allow the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission to apply for a digital evidence access order in connection with a search warrant bring the powers of the commission into alignment with those of the ICAC, and the Opposition is happy to support them. Similarly, the amendments to the Children (Detention Centres) Act 1987 are important in that they rectify an issue that can cause incorrect discharges. Under the proposed amendment, a juvenile offender who is being released on parole may also be the subject of early discharge provisions.

The bill makes several changes to the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999. The first change permits an inmate to request a delayed release, which is typically to allow them to arrange housing, transport and so on. That works towards providing the best outcomes for inmates being released and thus reduces the chance of recidivism. The second change permits a governor of a prison to refuse a transfer of a prisoner from the Australian Capital Territory. Before the Australian Capital Territory had its own prison the New South Wales Government, by an arrangement, provided correctional services. However, since the opening of the Alexander Maconochie Centre in 2008, the Australian Capital Territory has its own correctional facility and therefore it is no longer necessary to impose a mandatory requirement upon Corrective Services NSW to accept a full-time detainee from the Australian Capital Territory into New South Wales custody.

Finally, the third change allows any person, but not a victim, who can demonstrate that their life or safety is reasonably endangered because of their connection with an offender to be listed on the Victims Register as an interested person and receive the same notifications. That is a way of providing protection to a person who might be in a situation where the offender has a history of mental harm or physical violence against the person, where the offender had a domestic relationship with the person or where the person was a witness in proceedings against the offender. The Opposition is happy to support those provisions. Proposed changes to the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007 strengthen procedural protections for victims and apprehended violence orders, which, again, allows the legislation to operate as best intended.

There are changes within the bill to the Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act 1985 that correct the legislation to more accurately reflect the process of analysis and certification of drug and plant matter within laboratories. This is important as the certificate that is given as a result of the process is prima facie evidence for legal proceedings involving the prohibited plant or substance. The Opposition supports those changes, as well as the change that authorises police to provide drugs to persons authorised by the secretariat of the Ministry of Health. It is simply a legislative change to empower the police to provide those substances that are not unlawful for the person to process under the Act, provided they have been authorised by the Ministry of Health. The Opposition also supports the consequential amendment to the Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 2022, which will ensure that the amendment in the bill to section 25 carries over once the Medicines, Poisons And Therapeutic Goods Act 2022 commences.

I said earlier that housekeeping bills are uncontroversial and that it benefits all of us to focus not on opposing everything but on ensuring the smooth running of government. It is also our responsibility, especially as the Opposition, to be sure that the legislation passed in this House serves the people of New South Wales in the best manner possible. In that spirit, the Opposition proposes an amendment to the bill to delete schedule 4. Schedule 4 contains changes to the Criminal Appeal Act 1912 that will allow SafeWork NSW and the NSW Resources Regulator to bring appeals against sentences in the Court of Criminal Appeal in their own action without the current need to get approval from the Attorney General or the Director of Public Prosecutions. Both of those appellants often have a financial interest in the case because they are often given a moiety of the penalty so they are not an independent and dispassionate appellant.

The Opposition appreciates the expertise of work health and safety regulators, which the Attorney General referenced in introducing the bill, and the goal to ensure that sentence appeals from work health and safety prosecutions are conducted in a timely and efficient manner. However, the change, in the Opposition's opinion, is out of step with the rest of the Criminal Appeal Act, which invests the right of appeal generally in the Attorney General and the Director of Public Prosecutions. The legislation will thus create the possibility of inconsistency within the policy and administration of the criminal law by removing the oversight of either the Attorney General or the DPP in the case of criminal appeals by those regulators. The oversight is important and our law, to work well, needs to operate as a cohesive system and the Attorney General, as the first law officer, has an important role to play in maintaining the cohesion of the system.

The oversight also assists in ensuring efficient use of court time by imposing an additional layer of consideration before matters are raised in the Court of Criminal Appeal. I have seen firsthand as a barrister, prior to entering Parliament, how proceedings in the Court of Criminal Appeal can be undesirably conducted by government lawyers not from the DPP on an appeal from a criminal prosecution in the Land and Environment Court. It would be undesirable to expand that practice. I should note that my client was successful in the appeal so I am making that observation not as a disgruntled losing party but as a successful party, who saw that the matter was not conducted in accordance with best practice as required by government litigants.

The Opposition is not persuaded by the reasons offered by the Government that the change should be made. It has not indicated that the present system is burdensome or creates difficulties for either SafeWork NSW, the NSW Resources Regulator, the Attorney General or the Director of Public Prosecutions. I should note that in the example I gave the government entity was a respondent to an appeal rather than the appellant. Without the provision of any good reasons to support the change there appears to be no reason to risk the continuing cohesion, continuity and consistency of the criminal law. So the Opposition will be seeking to amend the legislation to remove the provision. As I have indicated, the Opposition does not support the change and proposes its deletion from the bill, which otherwise contains useful legislation that will keep New South Wales law running optimally.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (15:56): As Parliamentary Secretary to the Attorney General and member for Prospect, I support the Crime and Criminal Procedure Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. I thank the Attorney General and the Department of Communities and Justice for their work preparing the bill and collaborating with a range of stakeholders, including the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal, New South Wales Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, Legal Aid NSW, NSW Courts and Tribunals, NSW Police Force, Corrective Services NSW, Victims Services, Youth Justice NSW, NSW Crime Commission, Aboriginal Legal Service, Women's Legal Service NSW, Law Enforcement Conduct Commission, Law Society of New South Wales and, of course, the New South Wales Bar Association.

I now turn to the bill. The Crime and Criminal Procedure Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 will amend eight separate Acts relating to crime and criminal procedure. The amendments enhance operations by providing greater clarity, correcting inconsistencies and reinforcing legislative and policy frameworks to support agencies across the criminal justice system. Law must evolve with the needs and values of our community. It is crucial that this process is applied to criminal justice law to ensure that legislation effectively protects community safety. The bill was developed as part of the Minns Labor Government's regular legislative review mechanisms.

The bill makes several amendments to the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999. Firstly, items [1] to [7] of schedule 2 to the bill introduce an amendment to provide that the release of any inmate from custody can be delayed at the inmate's request or with their consent. Under section 8 (2A) of the Act, the release of an inmate can be delayed for up to four days, if sufficiently justified. Currently, that provision applies only to convicted inmates whose sentences are about to expire. Why do we need such a reform? Inmates subject to unscheduled release may not have access to immediate support such as transport, accommodation, medication or food, which leaves them in a vulnerable position and increases the risk of them engaging in criminal activity and going back to prison.

The amendment ensures that any inmate, including inmates on remand, inmates released under mental health orders and inmates who successfully appeal a custodial sentence, can request or consent to have their release from custody delayed. Additionally, item [8] of schedule 2 amends the Act to provide discretionary power to the head of a New South Wales correctional centre to accept or refuse a transfer from the Australian Capital Territory.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li): It being 4.00 p.m., in accordance with the earlier resolution of the House debate is interrupted. I set down resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a later hour. I remind members that there will be an address to Parliament by Her Excellency Ms Yuriko Koike, Governor of Tokyo, at 4.30 p.m. Please take your seat in the Chamber from 4.20 p.m. and be seated by 4.25 p.m. There will be no long bell prior to the address. In accordance with the earlier resolution of the House, I shall now leave the chair.

*Joint Meeting***HER EXCELLENCY MS YURIKO KOIKE, GOVERNOR OF TOKYO**

The SPEAKER (16:31): Before I begin the formalities, I will just say what an extraordinary event this is. Looking out across this Chamber today, I see something very special. I acknowledge the Gadigal people, who are the traditional custodians of this land, and I pay my respects to Elders of the Eora nation both past and present. I extend that respect to other Aboriginal people who may be present.

Your Excellency Ms Yuriko Koike, Governor, Tokyo Metropolitan Government, konnichiwa. On behalf of all members of the New South Wales Parliament and the people of New South Wales, I warmly welcome you and your accompanying officials to the New South Wales Parliament. I acknowledge the presence of the President and members of the Legislative Council. It is most uncommon for both Houses to come together in this Chamber, and I wish you all a very special welcome to the Legislative Assembly. Thank you for gathering here for this important event.

Your Excellency, it would not be an overstatement to say that Japan and the Japanese people hold a very special place in Australians' hearts. Those Australians who have experienced your nation's unique culture and the friendship afforded to visitors forever hold warm thoughts and memories of your country. Those who have not visited will know of the amazing industrial, manufacturing and technological prowess of Japan, which has been world leading for many years. I know that Japan enjoys more than just our natural resources and that Australian food and wine, for example, are greatly appreciated—as are our tourists, who increasingly visit to experience world-class snow skiing and then are drawn to the beauty and unique culture of Japan. But our two States' relationship goes beyond economic and trade ties and people-to-people links. We also share a common commitment to democracy and its principles.

Governor, we appreciate your visit as a reminder that we have a strong ally and friend who shares similar values. We thank you for your continued support for our sister statehood since your election as Governor of Tokyo in 2016. I am also pleased to inform Your Excellency that you are the first foreign dignitary to visit our Parliament following the restoration of the facade of this building to its original stone colour from the early 1800s. We are very proud of this building. Once again, welcome. Thank you, Your Excellency, for gracing our Parliament with your presence. I hope you enjoy your visit to New South Wales and our Parliament.

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (16:34): To our Japanese guests here today, konnichiwa. It is my great pleasure to welcome Her Excellency the Governor of Tokyo, Governor Koike, to the New South Wales Parliament. Governor, Tokyo is not just one of the great cities of the world; it is also one of the friendliest. I hope you are feeling just as welcome here in Sydney as hundreds of thousands of Australians feel when they visit Japan. You have travelled here to celebrate a significant milestone between our two people: the fortieth anniversary of Tokyo and New South Wales standing side-by-side as sister states. That is 40 years of friendship and cooperation, all secured on a lasting foundation of peace.

When we signed that agreement back in 1984, the Premier on our side of the table was a man named Neville Wran. Soon afterwards he made a point of visiting Japan to christen the deal. Two noteworthy things happened on that trip. The first was that he experienced an earthquake in downtown Tokyo, which was a reminder of the danger and the adversity that people in your city face on a regular basis. The second was a happier event: He attended a koala wedding at the Tokyo zoo. For our Japanese guests in the audience, I want to be clear: This is not a regular event for Australians. We do not tend to spend our weekends attending koala weddings—or kangaroo birthdays, for that matter—but in this case we were sending a delegation of koalas to Japan so Neville Wran was there to see them reunited.

Koalas sleep for about 20 hours a day, so it would not have been the liveliest of wedding receptions. But as an act of marsupial diplomacy it clearly did the trick, because for 40 years now our relationship has gone from strength to strength. The agreement was set in motion by trade and commerce. It was deepened by our shared global interests, but in the end it is the ties between our people that have allowed the relationship to blossom. We are now people who know each other on a personal level; we enjoy each other's company.

There was an article recently in *The Australian Financial Review* that asked the question: Why are all your friends in Tokyo right now? It is not just anecdotal; the numbers back it up. According to data from Expedia, Tokyo recently overtook Bali as the most popular tourist destination for Australian travellers. Of course, Japan is our largest export market and our second largest two-way trading partner—a trading relationship worth more than \$46 billion a year. Ever since Robert Menzies opened up trade with Japan in 1957, our economies have complemented one another. Australian resources have fuelled Japan's industrialisation, which in turn has supplied Australian consumers with essential goods.

It has been a winning model for more than 65 years, and right now we have a chance to update that model for the twenty-first century—to give it new meaning in light of new challenges and new problems. The renewal of our sister state agreement presents that opportunity not only to reaffirm the initial principles but also to modernise them. Both our States share a vision of net zero powered by clean energy. Between us we have the brains, the resources, the knowledge and, I believe, the willpower to get there. I applaud the Governor for the role she has played in Japan's transition to renewables. It is an area where we can help each other, supporting our mutual efforts to build a cleaner, cheaper energy system. For that and many other reasons, I am happy the Governor has travelled across the world to be with us this week.

Governor Koike is a formidable leader. She was the first ever female defence Minister of Japan and then the first female Governor in the history of Tokyo, steering a city of 14 million people through COVID while at the same time opening and running the Olympic Games. As the largest provinces in our respective countries, each with a major city at its heart, we have much to learn from one another. Meetings like this can only help us to do that. As I said, this relationship has flourished because of the connection between our people: visiting each other, working together and offering help when needed. In that spirit, I offer our State's deepest condolences to the victims of the recent tragedies that have been experienced in Japan. The Noto earthquake claimed 240 lives across your country.

It is important that we acknowledge these recent natural disasters because four years ago our State was experiencing the worst bushfires in living memory. Whole communities were fleeing for their lives, towns were burning to the ground and many people in our State were in grave danger. But from a distance of almost 5,000 miles, the people of Japan heard the call, sending more than 80 military and civilian personnel to Australia, bringing masks and medical supplies to the front line and coming in with lifesaving equipment wherever assistance was needed. The captain of the Japanese mission told the Australian media, "We took on this mission in gratitude for the support we received from the Australian forces that were dispatched to Japan in the Great East Japan earthquake." That is what friendship looks like, and that is what the relationship between our two peoples means. That is how far we have come. Thank you, Governor, for visiting our State. You are very, very welcome here.

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (16:40): On behalf of Mr Mark Speakman: I join the Premier in welcoming and extending our very best to Your Excellency as Governor of Tokyo. Your presence here today is much appreciated. I think everyone present would extend the genuine hand of friendship to you and yours. Most of us can relate in some way to Japan and some of the products we all enjoy, whether it is a local Toyota dealer or maybe sushi at a local sushi train. As the Premier also alluded to, it is fitting we meet today at our nation's oldest Parliament, here in Sydney, to celebrate this fortieth anniversary of the New South Wales-Tokyo Sister State Agreement. It is an agreement that we know has deepened the ties between our State and your very vibrant metropolis in Tokyo.

Governor, I hope you have enjoyed your first visit to New South Wales so far. Despite the cloudy weather—it has been a bit muggy lately—the Parliament is looking exceptional as it is being returned to its former glory. I hope you are enjoying that. As we reflect on those four decades of friendship and collaboration between Tokyo and New South Wales, it is essential to acknowledge the significance of these sister state ties: the fourth of 12 that the Tokyo metropolitan authority now has across the globe. Additionally, Australia and Japan have six state-prefecture agreements and 102 local government agreements, which really highlights the strength of Japan's connection with every corner of our country, whether it is the coast or inland, cities or the bush—which is where I am from. We are very proud that that connection exists.

The New South Wales-Tokyo Sister State Agreement, which was initiated 40 years ago, has now grown into a robust alliance that goes beyond mere diplomatic formalities, as I think you would agree. It was strengthened by visits in 2015 by then Premier Mike Baird and in 2022 by then Premier Dominic Perrottet. In 2015 the Japan-Australia Economic Partnership Agreement also came into effect, making Australia the first significant agricultural producer to have a meaningful trade agreement with Japan. That is so important. The agreement gave preferential access to Australian exporters, which has delivered strong outcomes for our businesses.

The agreement supports growth in two-way investment and underpins a strong relationship for many years to come. On full implementation, which is expected to occur in 2034, around 98 per cent of Australia's merchandise exports to Japan will receive that preferential access or enter duty free, along with exports of our resources, energy and manufactured goods. Japan is our State's second largest two-way trading partner, and the value is around \$46.5 billion. In 2022 it was also Australia's third largest source of foreign direct investment, valued at \$133.8 billion. Those are significant numbers.

New South Wales residents use Japanese products every day, as I alluded to, from motor vehicles to high-tech consumer goods and precision manufacturing. As a result of Premier Perrottet's visit in 2022, Hitachi became the first private sector tenant for the Bradfield City Centre, establishing its Kyoso Centre—the collaborative creation—alongside the advanced manufacturing research facility. Beyond fostering a cooperative

trade environment, the sister state agreement has allowed us to share our cultures with one another. That has certainly enriched our communities, both in the city and in regional New South Wales.

We are seeing the effects of this in regional areas, including Cowra in the member for Cootamundra's electorate, where the Cowra Japanese Garden and Cultural Centre is located. It is the largest authentic Japanese garden in the Southern Hemisphere, and it was established with the support of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government. As member for Dubbo, I am also lucky enough to say that we have a significant Japanese garden in my area and a great relationship with our sister city of Minakami.

The sister state agreement has allowed collaborations in various fields, including sport, education, urban development, technology, trade and tourism. Japan, as mentioned, is now the fourth most visited destination for Australians. It is definitely on my list of places to see, as I am sure it is for many people here today. The agreement has opened doors for business, scholars and artists and benefited many people across New South Wales and in Tokyo. This anniversary provides us with an opportunity to reflect on our achievements but also to set our sights on a future of even greater collaboration and success, including possible future collaboration on hydrogen supply chains as part of our respective transitions to reliable, secure and renewable energy sources.

Your Excellency, we are truly honoured to have you here with us today to mark this milestone. As we look ahead to the next chapter in our sister state relationship, let us reaffirm our commitment to building bridges of friendship, understanding and shared prosperity. Together let us continue to explore new avenues of cooperation and innovation that will benefit the citizens of both New South Wales and Tokyo. May the next 40 years be filled with even greater achievements, strengthened ties and enduring friendships between our two great regions.

The SPEAKER: It is now my honour to invite Her Excellency the Governor of Tokyo to address this Parliament.

Her Excellency Ms YURIKO KOIKE: The Hon. President and Speaker, Deputy President and Deputy Speaker, and members of the Parliament of New South Wales, thank you very much for this extraordinary opportunity to speak before you today. Just for your information, I am a lover of Australian wine and your beer. I have visited Australia many times, and one very memorable place is Cowra in New South Wales. Cowra is the site of a great tragedy that occurred 80 years ago. However, our predecessors did not let it stop at that. Through their relentless efforts, our two countries are now deeply, strongly connected, both socially and economically. Our common pillar of society—our foundation of society—is based upon democracy, freedom of speech and rule of law.

The lovely Japanese garden on the hill in Cowra serves to always remind us of our enduring bonds. The 40 years of friendship between Tokyo and New South Wales is also a page in this history carefully cultivated by our two countries. It is an extreme honour for me to stand here before you in this milestone year. The Premier has already mentioned the koalas. We should have coordinated before the speech! In Tokyo we operate a zoo called Tama zoo. Tama is in the western part of Tokyo, where four million people live, and is rich in greenery. One very popular resident there is the koala. Koalas are so cute, and they are one of my favourite animals. Valentine's Day is just around the corner. That makes me want to compare the koala to Cupid, since koalas help forge the bonds between our two governments. According to our records, following strong advances made by Tokyo, two koalas were presented to the Tama zoo after the signing of the communiqué. The bonds formed by these adorable creatures have grown into the close relationship we enjoy today—so Cupid's arrow found its mark.

The environment currently surrounding us is vastly different than that of 40 years ago. We are now at a major turning point in history. The war in Ukraine is becoming prolonged, and turmoil is deepening in the Middle East. The most imminent challenge faced by Japan and Australia is probably the growing geopolitical risk in the Indo-Pacific region. As a former Minister of Defense, I'm pleased to see that our two countries are deepening cooperation and our special strategic partnership.

Another big challenge, the climate crisis, is intensifying across the world. I also served as Minister of the Environment. In Tokyo we had heatwaves exceeding 40 degrees Celsius and record-breaking rainfall that caused rivers to overflow. Torrential rainfall and forest fires have caused extensive damage in your State as well. I have the greatest respect for the strong steps you are taking to recover from such disasters. The situation is now such that extreme weather is not the exception but the norm. Whether it be the international situation or the climate crisis, we must never forget that it is our citizens and their livelihoods that are directly impacted.

The twenty-first century is the age of cities. Cities are where issues appear in extreme form, and cities must take the lead in resolving them. What we do in steering our cities has more decisive meaning for the future of each and every one of our citizens than ever before. Today there is one thing I wish to impart to you all, and that is how extremely important it is for cities to work together in these uncertain times. In order to solve common challenges

facing cities and to benefit our residents, I hope to further strengthen the exchanges that we have fostered for 40 years.

I met with Premier Chris Minns, and we signed a future-oriented MOU that included the further utilisation of hydrogen technology. We will share each other's expertise, while engaging in positive competition. New innovations should emerge from this. Under the concept, in the year before last, Tokyo launched a new framework for intercity collaboration. I thank you very much for your support. From the end of this coming April to May, we will host an international event, SusHi Tech Tokyo 2024, which will bring together leaders from cities around the world. We look forward to deepening cooperation and creating new connections. You might be wondering what SusHi Tech means. SusHi Tech is a combination of the words "sustainable" and "high technology", which becomes "SusHi". It is a concept to create sustainable new values by utilising Tokyo's diverse ideas and cutting-edge technologies. I hope you will come to Tokyo to not only learn more about SusHi Tech but also enjoy our delicious real sushi. I look forward to seeing you.

The end of the joint communiqué that was signed between us in 1984 states that Tokyo and New South Wales, acting in concert on behalf of citizens of each region, affirm their determination to strengthen, enhance and preserve the close bonds of friendship between them. Forty years have passed since then. The times have changed and so has the importance of the role of cities; however, the aspirations held dear by our predecessors have not changed at all and will always live on. Dear honourable members of Parliament, interaction gives birth to trust, and trust gives birth to more interaction. The bonds we have built should endure for the next 40 years, 100 years and many more years beyond that. We all hold the same thoughts and aspirations. Together, let us continue to take steps forward to ensure a bright future for our citizens and their happiness and wellbeing. Thank you very much for your kind attention. Arigato gozaimashita.

Members and officers of the House stood and applauded.

The SPEAKER: Once again, Your Excellency, thank you for that well-crafted, generous speech. It was very insightful. I now invite the President of the Legislative Council, the Hon. Ben Franklin, to formally thank our honoured guest for her attendance.

The PRESIDENT (The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN) (14:56): Thank you, Governor Koike, for your thoughtful and inspiring words to us all today. You honour us with your presence, Your Excellency. I hope that you have enjoyed your visit to our State and found it both informative and beneficial. You are the first foreign head of government to join us in the newly renovated Parliament House, and I believe there could not be a more appropriate visitor. In this newly refreshed setting, we seek to reflect on and reaffirm the strong and enduring relationship between our two great States. The relationship between New South Wales and Tokyo is deep and longstanding, the cornerstone of which is the New South Wales-Tokyo Sister State Agreement signed in 1984. Forty years on, those strong bilateral ties continue to underpin our mutually beneficial trading relationship. But it is not just an economic partnership or a diplomatic formality; it is a living, breathing alliance formed upon strong people-to-people connections and a genuine desire to share our culture and knowledge with each other.

It is that deep connection between our peoples that elevates both of our respective States, and it is truly something to celebrate and cherish. I am joined by honourable members of both Houses in my optimism about the future of our bilateral ties. It is my hope that as Her Excellency returns home to Tokyo, she will look upon her visit to New South Wales fondly, imbued with a renewed vision of our enduring friendship and the immense benefit that it brings to us all. I invite all honourable members to join me in thanking Governor Koike for her visit and address here today. May this joint meeting formally mark the beginning of another 40 years of friendship and cooperation between our two great States.

Members and officers of the House stood and applauded.

The SPEAKER: I declare the joint meeting closed.

[The Speaker left the chair at 16:59. The House resumed at 17:30.]

Public Interest Debate

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (17:30): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that the best way to address housing affordability is to increase housing supply.
- (2) Notes the Government's First Home Buyers reform means that five out of six first home buyers pay no stamp duty or a concessional rate.

- (3) Notes the Government's Transport Oriented Development Program will deliver 47,800 new homes around eight accelerated precincts and an additional 138,000 new homes around a further 31 stations over 15 years.
- (4) Notes the supportive comments from mayor of Hornsby Shire Council, Phillip Ruddock, on 1 February 2024 welcoming the Government's Transport Oriented Development Program.

It is important to have this debate on housing supply. Housing is a very important issue that this State will grapple with over the coming years. Looking at affordability in different councils and how much of the heavy lifting they have already taken up, in the 2023-24 financial year my local council in Blacktown determined 573 development applications, taking an average of 82 days—under the New South Wales average of 110 days—to assess them. In 2016-17 a five-year housing target was set for Blacktown council, which it has exceeded by 3,811 dwellings. About 17,761 dwellings have been built in the local government area.

I recall that in 2012 the Institute for Sustainable Futures released a report projecting that Blacktown's population, which was 313,000 at the time of the 2011 census, would be 380,000 by 2021 and by 2036 would be 480,000. By 2021 the projected 380,000 had become an actual 400,000, and the projection for 2036 is at least 540,000, passing Tasmania's population. Yet Alister Henskens, the member for Wahroonga, said the other day that the Government seems to have abandoned the idea that it will build in Western Sydney. Looking at all of the local government areas—obviously I have just highlighted mine—I do not know how anyone could say the Government is abandoning building in Western Sydney when the city of Blacktown alone will pass Tasmania's population in the next 10 years or so. What is driving all of this? Compare that to North Shore council areas. What Northern Beaches Council will achieve in growth over 25 years equals 2½ years of growth in Blacktown. North Sydney Council's 25-year growth will be achieved in Blacktown in 1½ years. Waverley Council's four- to 25-year growth will be achieved in Blacktown in just under five months.

The member for Wahroonga seems to think that building on top of transport nodes will be the end of civilisation as we know it. Last year—or two years ago now—former planning Minister Rob Stokes was identifying, protecting and enhancing public-owned land for parks and public spaces. The problem is that Minister Stokes, while he was planning Minister, demanded Blacktown council remove \$112 million from the section 7.11 contribution plan, resulting in fewer sporting fields, parks and gardens in a growth area. Why? I also note that 18,000 people have benefited from Labor, supported by The Greens, bringing in the new stamp duty. This is a broader program allowing more young people to at least have some type of first step up, rather than being locked out of the property market.

The Government wants to build communities and deliver infrastructure where it is needed. In question time today the member for Wollondilly asked what is happening with the Picton Road upgrade. After 12 years the previous Government put away \$3 million in 2018. It turns out there is still no report. But in the past nine months or so of the New South Wales Labor Government plus the Federal Government, \$18 million has been set aside for the business case and \$70 million for upgrades. We need to also support the infrastructure within the community if we are going to meet housing targets.

Alister Henskens also said it worries him that building more apartments on the North Shore, for example, is not going to put very many 20-, 30- and 40-year-olds in new properties. The problem that he has missed is that right now there is a better chance of having housing affordability at the transport nodes and the metro stations that are being created, with innovative property proponents working with unions. For instance, out of 400 units being built at Crows Nest station, 100 will be donated to Evolve Housing, I believe, who will be working with the unions to make sure that nurses, teachers and police who are working on the North Shore are right next to the North Shore Hospital et cetera.

Phillip Ruddock said that he welcomed the New South Wales Government's Transport Oriented Development Program. According to the Hornsby council website, he said he was cautiously welcoming the plans unveiled by the New South Wales Government to supply housing in the State by rezoning land around eight railway stations, including Hornsby, providing an opportunity to enhance progression of council's recently adopted Hornsby Town Centre Masterplan. The important aspect in all of this is that the New South Wales Government wants to work with all the local councils and the community in delivering housing where there is transport and support in the community to deliver better communities.

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (17:38): I move:

That the motion be amended so that it reads:

- (1) Notes that the best way to address housing affordability is to increase housing supply and ease the pressure on demand.
- (2) Notes the NSW Liberals and Nationals First Home Buyer Choice policy meant the vast majority of first home buyers either paid no stamp duty at all or had a choice between upfront stamp duty and a small annual fee.

- (3) Notes that increasing density along transport corridors is appropriate, but only with sufficient community consultation and the appropriate provision of infrastructure to attempt to meet ambitious housing targets and that each community deserves to be consulted about planning in their local area.
- (4) Notes the comments from Mayor of Hornsby Shire Council Phillip Ruddock on 1 February 2024 welcoming the Transport Orientated Development Program, and the importance of close consultation with local communities.
- (5) Notes Inner West Mayor Darcy Byrne states about Labor's planning policy, "the timeline the Department of Planning has given for new zonings to be implemented across Sydney within a couple of months is unrealistic and won't happen".
- (6) Notes the Labor Mayor of the Blue Mountains, Mark Greenhill, has requested the Blue Mountains be exempt from the policy, and the Labor Mayor of Burwood, John Faker, has opposed the inclusion of Croydon as a TOD site.
- (7) Notes that Labor-controlled City of Parramatta Council has threatened legal action against the New South Wales Government over its housing policies.

I noted with interest in question time today Labor members, supporting the Premier, saying that they wanted more affordable housing across New South Wales. Listening to them, one would think they are the champions of building more supply and delivering more housing in this State. But the problem is, they come into this Chamber and say one thing and then go back to their electorates where they are champions for nimbyism. Let us highlight their hypocrisy. The member for Summer Hill has been a great champion for nimbyism in her electorate. In 2018 she said in opposition to a proposed development:

... this was the wrong plan for our suburbs. Together we've won the argument that the people should always come before profit when it comes to planning.

They are not my words. They are the member for Summer Hill's plans. She does not want development in her electorate, but she wants to foist it on everywhere else without consultation. But she is not the only hypocrite sitting opposite—take the member for Parramatta, who is encouraging her community to oppose development in the Parramatta electorate. She is writing letters and getting petitions signed. She is out there coaching members of her community to oppose development. She is like the nimby in chief. She is telling people to write letters opposing proposed storey heights. She is out in her electorate complaining about development.

It is a classic move out of the nimby playbook. In 2021 she opposed the North Rocks Village plan, which would have delivered an extra 1,000 dwellings. She said, "The response to this plan must be a flat 'no'." She does not want more housing and nor do most of those opposite. I was listening to the Premier's comments in question time about how we need development, how we need more affordable housing. I did a bit of googling and found an article by Jim Gainsford in the *St George & Sutherland Shire Leader* about a development proposal for a 40-room boarding house in English Street, Kogarah. I was shocked to read who was leading the charge against this development. Who was it? It was the king of nimbyism himself, Chris Minns. He was the one opposing it. He was so opposed to it that he got it reduced from 40 dwellings down to just 18. And what did he do next, after opposing that development? He bought a house in the same street.

It was too much for Chris Minns to have development in the well-manicured suburb that he lived in, but it is not too much for him to foist it on the rest of the community without consultation. Those opposite cannot be trusted. They come into this Chamber and proclaim to be for more housing supply, but they go out into their communities and lead the charge for nimbyism. They are hypocrites. It should be called out. They are a government with no ideas, no policies and no plans.

Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (17:43): I make a small contribution to today's public interest debate. The Transport Oriented Development [TOD] Program will deliver much-needed housing around 39 transport hubs in Greater Sydney, Newcastle, the Central Coast and the Illawarra. We know that putting homes near planned and existing public transport will help to improve the development pattern of our cities by reducing urban sprawl. This means that people will be able to live within walking distance of supermarkets, restaurants, open space and be near public transport to get them where they need to go. We have seen this in my electorate of Riverstone, where we have taken far more than our fair share of development. The member for Hornsby talked about hypocrisy. That is simply not the case in Riverstone, where we have taken the burden of most of the property development that has occurred in the Sydney Basin over the past 10 years.

Tallawong is a great example. It is the end of the metro line. However, as the member for Hornsby noted, housing development requires community consultation and infrastructure. The streets in Tallawong do not have kerbs and gutters. There are no schools. The next metro station along is Rouse Hill, a suburb which has also seen massive residential uplift. There is no hospital within the area. Property growth under the previous Government was completely out of control and focused in areas that were not in its backyard. Our Government made an election commitment to rebalance population growth around the infrastructure, because we simply cannot afford to continually expand the outer suburbs of Sydney.

There will be eight precincts based around key transport hubs. There will be new planning controls, infrastructure investment and more certainty around development assessments, which will fast-track new homes

being built. I mentioned Tallawong and Rouse Hill around the metro stations. The next station along the line is Kellyville metro station, which has seen virtually no residential uplift at all. In fact, there are vacant blocks all over the place. At Bella Vista, the next stop along the line, again, there has been no residential uplift. Further down the line, Macquarie Park has had no residential uplift. These are three of the eight station areas identified for significant residential uplift and development has not been even remotely close to that in Riverstone.

We are in a race to deliver housing. Cost-of-living pressure is affecting everybody and housing is one of the key drivers. The only way to address it in a meaningful way is for more affordable housing supply. But without infrastructure, we are absolutely restricted. This has to come with the development. The TOD is the only reasonable solution to provide the Australian dream. By providing this supply, the Government is acting to make sure that inclusionary zoning will be established within these eight precincts, meaning they will have up to 15 per cent of new homes as affordable housing held in perpetuity. Not only are we dedicated to increasing housing supply in Greater Sydney, but also right across New South Wales. We are also dedicated to making sure that affordable housing is part and parcel of that supply.

A TOD State environmental planning policy will be implemented across 31 sites. It will apply within 400 metres of 31 stations through amendments to planning controls aimed at boosting housing supply in local areas. In total, this will create the capacity for 138,000 new homes that will increase the supply of diverse and affordable mid-rise housing options, not just homes affordable for only the very few. We are not the party of nimbyism. We are the party of everybody taking their fair share. That is something that we did not see under the previous Government. Their entire philosophy was, "Not in our backyard. Western Sydney can take all of that."

As the member for Blacktown pointed out, his electorate has taken most of the development burden over many years. That has to change. This Government knows that the community deserves well-designed suburbs that are close to schools, health care and shops, and which have adequate transport options, parks and job opportunities. The previous Government failed to deliver that. In my area it was residential development after residential development. The Minns Government will make sure that houses are built where people want to live, with the facilities that they need for their families.

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne) (17:48): I make a contribution to debate on the motion moved by the member for Blacktown. I support the amendment moved by the member for Hornsby. On this side of the House we take a measured and sensible approach where we support the principle of providing a diversity of housing close to high-frequency public transport—but it must be done right and delivered in consultation with local communities. That is a stark contrast to telling communities and councils to get out of the way, like this Labor Government has done. The reality is that Labor has no plan to support communities like mine with increased infrastructure in line with population increases.

It is interesting that this Government promised a fresh start for New South Wales last year, but it is just the same old Labor Party—poorly executed policies that it simply cannot deliver. It is the very Labor Party that, when last in government, cancelled the Rozelle metro after around \$500 million—half a billion dollars—of taxpayer money was spent without even laying a track. It is the same Labor Party that, in December last year, announced that it will be delaying the opening of Sydney Metro West, pushing it out by at least another two years, to 2032. It cannot be trusted to deliver infrastructure, and that is important because infrastructure and population increase go hand in hand.

An area of the Drummoyne electorate forms part of part one of the Transport Oriented Development [TOD] Program, and North Strathfield is included as a site in part two of the TOD Program. I would like to know how the Government can justify its policy of increased density when there is no talk of delivering infrastructure for our growing community. In the Drummoyne electorate, we have one public high school. Will the Government expand capacity for Concord High School? Will it build a second high school for the Drummoyne electorate to account for the increased density, and when? And there is silence on the upgrade of Concord hospital. There is nothing in the budget for an upgrade to Concord. How will this Government support increased density with infrastructure? Like now, we hear crickets. If the Government delivers homes, it must deliver infrastructure, and it does not have the capacity or the plan to do that.

Opposition members believe in working with local communities to set housing targets, allowing communities, in partnership with councils, to formulate and have their say on local planning controls. They should not be gazumped at the first step, as this Government is doing. It is possible to deliver housing with community participation, and there is precedent for that. During the last five years in government, the Coalition delivered 57,000 homes a year on average, and nearly 73,000 were delivered in 2018. Those figures were achieved with the proper planning and delivery of more than 40 priority growth areas and precincts, in consultation with councils and the community, delivering more homes, supported by additional infrastructure and jobs.

I thought it was a curious choice for the member for Blacktown to quote the good mayor of Hornsby in his motion, so I looked at what else had been said. The lack of dwelling numbers and targets in the Government's policy "makes it difficult to understand precisely what is being proposed. While acknowledging the urgency of the supply problem, the time line the department has given for new zonings is unrealistic and won't happen." Who said that? Was it a Liberal mayor? No, it was not, and it was not Mayor Philip Ruddock either. It was inner west Labor mayor, Darcy Byrne. In *The Sydney Morning Herald* article "'Put up or shut up': Labor mayors take Minns to task over housing crisis", Waverley Labor mayor, Paula Masselos, said, "Councils have to be at the table. Taking councils out of planning decision-making is a serious problem."

So far, we have the inner west mayor, the Waverley Labor mayor, the City of Parramatta Council on the record threatening legal action and Mayor Mark Greenhill of the Blue Mountains saying that this policy is "an abuse of the State Government's centralised planning power, overriding local controls and dismissing the views of local communities". We have the ultimate smackdown in the Burwood mayor petitioning his own Government. Labor cannot be trusted, and it needs to deliver infrastructure.

Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (17:53): I speak in support of the motion of the member for Blacktown and reject the amendments of the member for Hornsby. One of the things that this public interest debate seeks to do is reflect our Government's commitment at the election to rebalance population growth around infrastructure. The effect of not doing that can be seen more in Camden than anywhere else in New South Wales. Camden was the fastest growing local government area in not only 2018-19 but also 2021-22. In 2016 there were 78,218 people in Camden. In 2021 that rose to 119,000. Camden Council estimates that by 2026 Camden will increase by over 63,000 people to 183,000 people, which is an annual average growth rate of 8.83 per cent. So, personally, I find the idea that we are suffering from nimbyism a little offensive.

We have done more than our fair share. We have taken hectares and hectares of land. The former Coalition Government was quite happy to submit Camden, what was previously the market garden of Sydney, to development. There are now houses as far as the eye can see in suburbs like Oran Park, Gregory Hills, Gledswood Hills and Leppington. The idea that the Coalition supported that development with infrastructure building is, to be honest, a bit of a joke. I have two stations within half an hour of my electorate: Campbelltown train station, which is 20 minutes away, and Leppington train station, which the Carr Labor Government planned, designed and funded. So in the 12 years that the former Coalition Government was in power, the amount of rail and public transport infrastructure it built to support the development in Camden was exactly zero. That means not only do we have no train stations but we have—

Mr Tim James: Roads? Schools?

Mrs SALLY QUINNELL: Not in Camden. We did not get any schools in that time.

Mr Tim James: Roads?

Mrs SALLY QUINNELL: Don't worry. I will get to roads. That has caused every single person in Camden to have to drive. Fifty per cent of workers drive to work every day. That has meant that people need to be organised as to where they live and prepared to pay the tolls on those roads. I commuted this morning. I left home at 6.30 a.m. and it took me two and a half hours to get here. That is just not doable on any given day. My commute to work today was longer than we are advised to drive in one sitting. We also have a problem with the idea of consultation that the member for Hornsby mentioned. At one point there was so much development in the area that the people of Camden did not know which suburb was which because there were so many new suburbs being developed at once. Our local paramedics and police force needed to resort to using Google Maps because their system for finding homes was not keeping up with the development. A man died in Oran Park because the paramedics could not get to his house fast enough, as his street did not exist in their system.

The member for Drummoyne said that the Coalition's approach was slow and measured and close to infrastructure. I love that idea. I can tell you that is just not the case in Camden. We have had unbelievable levels of growth, and we do not have the infrastructure to support it. That is why I am wholeheartedly behind the Transport Oriented Development Program. It will create development and housing around the transport that people need so that they can live within walking distance of their supermarkets, restaurants and open space, and still use public transport to get where they need to go. That is a well-understood model. If members are not sure how it cannot work, I suggest they come and see everyone on the roads of Camden.

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (17:58): Opposition members agree that this State must be ambitious with housing targets. They need to be actionable and achievable. We need more homes to ease the housing affordability crisis, but it needs to be done right—in consultation with people and communities—rather than telling them to get out of the way. That is the Labor way. That is the Minns Labor Government's approach: telling people, communities and councils to get out of the way. I have done a bit of research and I offer the House some

quotes from a significant member of this Parliament, who said these words in relation to their electorate and developments in the life of the previous Government:

They are creating in many instances a high-rise hell ...

No-one is taking responsibility for the community infrastructure that is needed for this level of density. No-one is explaining how stressed schools, roads and trains can cope ...

I fear for my community—under this Government, it is being comprehensively ruined.

Who said that? It was Chris Minns. We have complete double standards from Premier Chris Minns—"stunning hypocrisy" Chris Minns; "no consistency" Chris Minns; "a total lack of credibility" Chris Minns. More to the point, do not ever believe what Chris Minns says. No-one can trust Chris Minns—that is abundantly clear from his words. It is *Hansard*. Labor members should watch the video. Have a look at some socials today and they will see it. Having said those words—hypocrisy is thy name, Chris Minns—today his Government is telling communities across the State that they will be overridden to impose high-density development with little or no consideration for local infrastructure capacity, existing development, the environment or heritage conservation.

We on the Opposition side of the House know that planning needs to be a partnership with people and communities. Instead, this Government has imposed a top-down, one-size-fits-all solution to the many diverse communities across our great State. It is lazy, bad policy from a lazy, bad Labor Government. The Government's proposal is rushed. It is a planning free-for-all that will not solve the housing crisis in New South Wales. It is no way to do planning and will not achieve a good outcome for the people of this State. Good planning is considered. It is holistic. It is made with full consideration of community, infrastructure, heritage and environment. Yes, we need new homes, but in haste this Government has lost sight of people needing to live in those homes with communities, infrastructure and services. People want well-designed homes that are well located with supporting infrastructure in place—parks, schools, roads, public transport, health and recreation facilities.

This Government seems to merely want to house people with little regard, if any, for their quality of life. Every community is impacted differently by policies. Every community is different, but Labor's lazy one-size-fits-all approach of telling people, communities and councils to get out of the way will not work. What is more, just two weeks before this policy was announced the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces wrote to councils across the State asking them to identify areas for increased low- and medium-density housing. That is as it should be, but then a mere fortnight later this Government announced this policy that says to councils, "You will not have a say. You will be overridden. You do not have a chance to design your communities—even to really have a say in your communities." This Government is putting the cart before the horse. It is rushing. It is lazy. It is bad process, which leads to bad policy and bad outcomes.

My electorate of Willoughby has already been playing its part in boosting housing. Across Chatswood, St Leonards and Crows Nest we can see how development can be done right, through substantial housing uplift with the support and input of communities, respect for heritage and investment in local infrastructure and services. The Coalition built the Sydney Metro to support those communities. We upgraded local schools and committed to two more local schools. We invested in parks and recreation, and we boosted the local hospital, Royal North Shore. In contrast, Labor is ripping out funding in my electorate for local facilities, infrastructure and roads projects. Indeed, there is no additional infrastructure funding to support tier 2 sites across New South Wales. There is no extra money. Basically, Labor is saying to communities, "We are going to impose this upon you. We're overriding you. We will not listen to you, and you are getting nothing for it—nothing whatsoever." There is no genuine consultation. This was rushed out before the holiday period when Labor members thought people would not notice. Believe me, people noticed. New South Wales deserves better. I commend the amendment to the House.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (18:03): On behalf of the Greens, I join in debate on the public interest debate motion that addresses a number of issues around housing affordability. However, the motion has a few key flaws. Therefore, I move:

That the motion be amended so that it reads:

- (1) Notes that the best way to address housing affordability is to increase housing supply and ease the pressure on demand.
- (2) Notes the NSW Liberals and Nationals First Home Buyer Choice policy meant the vast majority of first home buyers either paid no stamp duty at all or had a choice between upfront stamp duty and a small annual fee.
- (3) Notes that increasing density along transport corridors is appropriate, but only with sufficient community consultation and the appropriate provision of infrastructure to attempt to meet ambitious housing targets and that each community deserves to be consulted about planning in their local area.
- (4) Notes the comments from Mayor of Hornsby Shire Council Phillip Ruddock on 1 February 2024 welcoming the Transport Orientated Development Program, and the importance of close consultation with local communities.

- (5) Notes Inner West Mayor Darcy Byrne states about Labor's planning policy, "the timeline the Department of Planning has given for new zonings to be implemented across Sydney within a couple of months is unrealistic and won't happen".
- (6) Notes the Labor Mayor of the Blue Mountains, Mark Greenhill, has requested the Blue Mountains be exempt from the policy, and the Labor Mayor of Burwood, John Faker, has opposed the inclusion of Croydon as a TOD site.
- (7) Notes that Labor-controlled City of Parramatta Council has threatened legal action against the New South Wales Government over its housing policies.
- (8) Notes that the New South Wales Government has still not introduced legislation to end no-grounds evictions a year after being elected.

Paragraph (1) of the motion misses one critical word: affordable. As members know, if a government is undertaking transport-oriented development in an area where there is a range of different dwellings, and it gets rid of the old mid-range dwellings to build brand-new slick apartments, suddenly that entire area becomes unaffordable—unless there is inclusionary zoning and unless every new development has a percentage of genuinely affordable housing. That is why The Greens today gave notice of an affordable housing bill that will seek to ensure we have genuinely affordable housing in this State in perpetuity.

As matters currently stand, developers that are delivering housing need only deliver affordable housing for 15 years. That is unacceptable because the benefits to the developer—the profit in their pocket—continue in perpetuity. The Greens believe that affordable housing should also continue in perpetuity. Supply in itself is not enough. For those members who are new to this Chamber, former Premier Gladys Berejiklian touted with much enthusiasm that New South Wales had record levels of housing supply. In that same year, we also had record levels of homelessness. Housing supply alone does not solve the housing affordability crisis; the provision of affordable housing does.

Increasing affordable housing supply is crucial but it is not the only solution. To address the housing crisis that is gripping all communities we also need to ensure that people are able to stay in the homes they already occupy. We can do that by finally ending no-grounds evictions, which Labor promised before the last election. That is why The Greens amendment to the amendment moved by the member for Hornsby adds paragraph (8). In the midst of a housing crisis where rents are continuing to climb and vacancy rates are plummeting, we need to do everything we can to ensure that people who are already in their homes are not evicted. That means ending no-grounds evictions. There is ample evidence to suggest that demand-side solutions, like concessions for first home buyers, are at best sidestepping the problem of housing affordability and at worst exacerbating it by driving up the price of homes. It may provide immediate relief for the individual first home buyers in that situation but it is not a solution to the broader systemic housing affordability and insecurity crisis we face.

In theory, transport-oriented development is a well-understood planning principle. Co-locating housing with infrastructure like transport, green spaces and schools is essential to delivering the communities people live in, but it is also essential that people can actually afford to live in them. That is why The Greens are very concerned about the low 15 per cent affordable housing target for the eight accelerated precincts and the 2 per cent affordable housing target for the 31 stations. We need much greater ambition in setting targets. We also must ensure that these houses are affordable in perpetuity and not just for 15 years. The Greens are concerned about the interplay of State-led rezonings and the ability of local councils and communities to have a say in developments that will directly impact their neighbourhoods. We are concerned about the massive green light to private developers and their interests without adequate involvement with and respect for communities and their needs.

It is critical that the State Government works constructively with councils, which are the closest level of government to communities, to ensure that they are involved in these processes. It is absolutely beyond critical that we also look at investment in affordable public housing supply. The Greens hope that members will support our amendment to the amendment of the member for Hornsby.

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (18:09): By leave: I thank the member for Blacktown for bringing this important topic to the House today. We have heard about the impact of the previous Government's housing policy from a number of Western Sydney MPs on the Government's side of the House. Essentially, the western suburbs of Sydney took more than their fair share of people. That load was not spread evenly throughout Sydney. Unfortunately, we did not get a fair share of infrastructure with that.

I have spoken in this House many times about the suburbs of Austral, Leppington and Denham Court in my electorate of Leppington, which are effectively ground zero for the south-western growth corridor. In all those suburbs, which have seen exponential growth over the past four or five years, not one public high school was built by the former Government. The result is that my electorate is the one that has the most students in private school in all of the State. That is an interesting statistic. When people speak about private education, they speak about giving parents choice. In Leppington they have no choice; they must work those extra hours or that extra job to afford to send their kids to private schools. I have some fantastic private schools in my electorate, and they are

doing the heavy lifting. But, under this Government, the public sector will also do its fair share, because we will build a new high school in Leppington.

There has been much talk about transit-oriented development. In my neck of the woods, the Camden and Liverpool councils have been collaborating in a way that I wish we would see in this House—more collaboration among different jurisdictions. They have recently released a new plan for the town centre there. I guess it will be a form of transit-oriented development around the train station. I am pleased to see that in that plan is plenty of open space, green corridors and public facilities. A lot about nimbyism this and that was coming from Opposition members. It is a difficult concept for them to get their heads around, but there is a difference between good development and bad development. My record shows that, in my time on council, I opposed certain developments because they were bad developments. I have also supported good developments. An example of that is in my colleague Minister Chanthivong's neck of the woods, in Edmondson Park. The Ed Square town centre is a fantastic example of a public place with good amenity, space and some medium- and high-density housing.

Mr Tim James: No high-rise hell like Chris Minns said?

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY: No, there is high-rise there. The member need not worry about that. There is high-rise there, and there will be high-rise at Leppington. One of my issues is that we should be building really good transit-oriented development not just 40 and 50 kilometres from the city, but also five, 10 and 15 kilometres from the city. Everyone should be taking a fair share, and along with that should come a fair share of infrastructure. On the topic of Edmondson Park, in early January last year I was joined there by the Premier and the then member for Macquarie Fields, who is still the member for Macquarie Fields and also Minister for about half a dozen different things.

Mr Anoulack Chanthivong: Last time I checked!

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY: He still is the member. I can confirm that for the House. But he has also taken on a number of additional portfolios. Edmondson Park is where we announced the reform to stamp duty for first home buyers. I am pleased to see that that is going very well. I know that it is making a massive difference for young families and home buyers in south-western Sydney. It is making all the difference to whether they can get their foot in the door of what is becoming more and more an out-of-reach housing market.

But, of course, there is more to do. We have spoken about transit-oriented development, and the statistics speak for themselves. It will deliver somewhere in the range of 40,000 to 50,000 new homes across those eight accelerated precincts and will deliver an additional 138,000 homes around a further 31 stations over 15 years. While we are on the topic of building around good transport nodes, I note that we had an address from the governor of Tokyo. If you want to do it right, go to Tokyo and see how they do it there, because they do it well.

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (18:14): By leave: I briefly contribute because I feel it is appropriate that we correct the record and put the facts on the table. I acknowledge the contribution of the member for Newtown about the importance of affordable housing. It is so important, particularly when you look at some of the people in our communities across New South Wales who have been marginalised. Let me be very clear about this. The Premier, the planning Minister and all of my colleagues have made clear that we want to have a more equitable approach to housing supply in New South Wales. All the economists we read, whether in *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Australian Financial Review* or *The Guardian* or on social media, are saying that one of the biggest challenges we have is affordability, and supply is one of the keys to achieving that.

Again I come back to the point made by the member for Newtown. We want to have affordable housing. Supply is very much a part of that. Planning Minister Scully has made that point. My friend the Minister and member for Macquarie Fields is doing a lot of work in that space. In our area, out in south-western Sydney, we have experienced that problem of lack of investment. We experienced it for over 12 years because of the growing disparity between approvals for houses and investment in infrastructure. Without adequate investment, people who built houses in those areas were not able to build a community.

That is what this Government's agenda is about. That is what this motion is about. It is about getting it right, making it fair and equitable. No one member knows that better than the others, because we all have growth in our communities. We are all experiencing it. But let us do it together. Best outcomes are achieved by working together. We can find the balance. That is the Government's agenda. But we need to see better and more equitable investment in western and south-western Sydney. I know that the Minister is working hard on that. He did so as a local member, and he has done so in the Cabinet along with all the colleagues he has there.

I refer to the member for Camden's point. I was once privileged to be the mayor of Camden, and I was there during the growth of the centres of Oran Park and Gregory Hills. In fact, my picture is in the McDonald's in Gregory Hills. When I opened that, I convinced my youngest son that Gregory Hills was named after me. But then he got older and worked out that it was not. All jokes aside, this debate is about having an equitable placement

and a good plan for the allocation of urban housing, whilst complementing it with the services and infrastructure people need and deserve. Quite frankly, it is one thing to build a house or to construct a housing development, but it is a whole other story to build a community. That is what we need to be doing, and I know that that is this Government's agenda. I thank the House.

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (18:18): In reply: I thank the members representing the electorates of Hornsby, Riverstone, Drummoyne, Camden, Willoughby, Newtown, Leppington and Campbelltown for participating in the debate. Most of the speakers focused on the need for the growth of housing supply to be matched with infrastructure. As the member for Drummoyne said, it goes hand in hand. The member for Willoughby, in particular, talked about good planning and the need for parks and other things. But, unfortunately, I think he was not listening to the first part of my speech—I talked about how the Liberal Government slashed \$112 million from section 7.11 funding in Blacktown, wiping out parks and reserves. Yet, over the 12 years of the former Liberal Government, 100,000 people moved into the City of Blacktown. The other thing he has not talked about is the Department of Planning population growth projections over a 25-year period. The 25-year projection for North Sydney's population growth is achieved in Blacktown in 18 months. The 25-year projection for Willoughby's population growth is achieved in Blacktown in 2.2 years, yet the member for—

Mr Clayton Barr: Somewhere.

Mr STEPHEN BALI: —Willoughby says that we need to match the infrastructure. There has been hardly any growth in the population of the North Shore but what did the previous Government do? It upgraded Mosman High School, North Sydney Demonstration School, Neutral Bay Public School, Cammeraygal High School, Beauty Point Public School, North Sydney Girls High School and North Sydney Boys High School. It built administration buildings, new toilets, gyms and everything else and what did the Blacktown electorate get in those 12 years? It got a doughnut—nothing. What did Mount Druitt get? It got nothing in those 12 years. What did Riverstone get? It got a couple of schools.

[An Opposition member interjected.]

It got one, but it was double-storey demountables in the teachers' car park. You do not match population growth with the people. Just to finish off, obviously Government members reject outright the Liberal Party amendments. Unfortunately, we cannot accept The Greens amendments. As much as we agreed to the first part about housing supply and matching with affordability, we believe the second part focusing on rents is outside the scope of the motion. God knows what the Liberal Party was putting together—

Ms Jenny Leong: Just to clarify, rents are not part of the housing affordability crisis according to the New South Wales Labor Government?

Mr STEPHEN BALI: No, it is about supply of actual new houses rather than rents.

Ms Jenny Leong: Mr Temporary Speaker—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich): The time for the public interest debate has now concluded.

Ms Jenny Leong: I appreciate that.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich): Is the member for Newtown seeking to take a point of order?

Ms Jenny Leong: No. It is a point of clarification. The topic for this public interest debate is housing affordability. My understanding is that it was said the addition of my final paragraph in relation to rents was out of order and my other one was to insert "affordable".

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich): The comment was about rent being out of scope. The member for Blacktown was not raising a point of order about The Greens' amendment but reflecting the position of the Government. I thank the member for Blacktown for bringing a spirited and important public interest debate for the first day of Parliament.

The member for Blacktown has moved a motion, to which the member for Hornsby has moved an amendment, to which the member for Newtown has moved a further amendment. The question is that the amendment of the member for Newtown to the amendment of the member for Hornsby be agreed to.

Amendment of the member for Newtown to the amendment of the member for Hornsby negatived.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich): The question now is that the amendment of the member for Hornsby be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes35
 Noes51
 Majority.....16

AYES

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

Hodges, M
 James, T
 Kean, M
 Kemp, M
 Lane, J
 Layzell, D
 Marshall, A
 McGirr, J
 Perrottet, D
 Preston, R
 Provest, G
 Roberts, A

Saunders, D
 Singh, G (teller)
 Sloane, K
 Taylor, M
 Thompson, T
 Toole, P
 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
 Dalton, H
 Davis, D
 Dib, J
 Donato, P
 Doyle, T
 Finn, J

Hagarty, N (teller)
 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
 Mehan, D
 Park, R

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

PAIRS

Petinos, E
 Speakman, M
 Tuckerman, W

Daley, M
 Minns, C
 O'Neill, M

Amendment negatived.

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

The House divided.

Ayes48
 Noes38
 Majority.....10

AYES

Aitchison, J
 Atalla, E
 Bali, S
 Barr, C
 Butler, L

Finn, J
 Hagarty, N (teller)
 Hannan, J
 Harris, D
 Harrison, J

Mehan, D
 Park, R
 Piper, G
 Quinnell, S
 Saffin, J (teller)

AYES

Butler, R
Car, P
Catley, Y
Chanthivong, A
Cotsis, S
Crakanthorp, T
Dalton, H
Davis, D
Dib, J
Donato, P
Doyle, T

Haylen, J
Hoenig, R
Holland, M
Hornery, S
Kaliyanda, C
Kamper, S
Kirby, W
Li, J
McDermott, H
McGirr, J
McKeown, K

Saliba, D
Scully, P
Stuart, M
Tesch, L
Vo, T
Voltz, L
Warren, G
Washington, K
Watson, A
Whan, S
Wilkinson, K

NOES

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

James, T
Kean, M
Kemp, M
Lane, J
Layzell, D
Leong, J
Marshall, A
Perrottet, D
Preston, R
Provest, G
Regan, M
Roberts, A
Saunders, D

Shetty, K
Singh, G (teller)
Sloane, K
Smith, T
Taylor, M
Thompson, T
Toole, P
Ward, G
Williams, L
Williams, R
Williamson, R
Wilson, F

PAIRS

Daley, M
Minns, C
O'Neill, M

Petinos, E
Speakman, M
Tuckerman, W

Motion agreed to.

*Bills***CONSTITUTION AMENDMENT (EXECUTIVE COUNCIL) BILL 2023****First Reading**

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

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich): I order that the second reading of the bill stand as an order of the day for a later time.

CUSTOMER SERVICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2023**Returned**

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich): I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the bill without amendment.

*Community Recognition Statements***BRAD JENKINS**

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (18:36): I congratulate Brad Jenkins of Shell Cove for being awarded the Environmental Warrior of the Year 2024 at the Shellharbour Community Awards, which were held on 17 January 2024 at the Civic Centre, Shellharbour City Centre. Brad has taken the initiative to engage with local and State government to investigate opportunities to achieve better water quality outcomes through improved monitoring systems of the Minnamurra River and the Dunmore wetlands. Brad is also passionate about protecting endangered seabirds and has advocated for increased mitigation measures to reduce the threat of dogs at Killalea

State Park. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour electorate, I congratulate Brad on his award and wish him very well in his future endeavours.

WAYNE BARKER

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst) (18:37): I acknowledge Wayne Barker, a longstanding resident of Oberon, who was recently named the 2024 Citizen of the Year. Wayne and his wife, Jenny, have been the owners of Barker's Butchery for over 30 years. During that time Wayne has employed many local men and women in his business, trained numerous apprentices and been a huge supporter of local businesses in Oberon. Wayne supports numerous charities, sporting groups and local schools through sponsorship, donations for meat raffles and volunteering as an emcee for community events. Wayne is also an active member of the Bathurst harness racing community and has served as president and long-term committee member. Each year he assists with the organisation of the annual Oberon Community Night. Wayne is very community orientated and is loud and proud about Oberon. I congratulate him and thank him for his service towards making Oberon a great place to live. I consider Wayne to be a good friend and great mate.

NEWCASTLE HARBOUR SWIM

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (18:38): Winning the Newcastle Harbour Swim is a feat that most Novocastrians can only dream of and, at just 13 years old, Franki Roberts has achieved that dream, beating almost 300 other swimmers—men and women—in the single-crossing race. Franki swam 700 metres from Stockton to Queens Wharf in just eight minutes and 23 seconds. Franki trains with the Newcastle University swimming club, NUSwim, which produces some of Newcastle's and Australia's best swimmers. She has a great work ethic and has put a lot of hours and practice into winning this race. She is currently training for the 2024 Australian Age Championships in April, where she will compete in about seven different events. Franki is one to look out for. She has her eyes set on the Olympics and I am sure we will see her on the world stage in no time. Good luck at the Australian Age Championships—show them what you've got! Well done, Franki.

DAVIDSON ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (18:39): I commend and congratulate the 1,042 people who were recognised in the 2024 Australia Day awards, and there were several from the Davidson electorate. Jazz pianist, anaesthetist, engineer and inventor Dr Graham Grant of Roseville Chase became an Officer of the Order of Australia in the general division for his distinguished service to biomedical engineering and medicine. Among Dr Grant's many inventions was a portable incubator for premature babies, which has saved countless lives since 1965. Medals of the Order of Australia in the general division were awarded to Guy Fowler of Killara for his service to business and the community, including as ambassador for the Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute; Dr Peter Frederiksen of Roseville for his services to dermatology, including as visiting medical officer through the Royal Flying Doctor Service; and Robert Lions of Killara for his services to the community.

TIMOR-LESTE INDEPENDENCE CELEBRATION

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (18:40): On Sunday 3 December I joined the Timorese United Association [TUA] for the forty-eighth anniversary of the proclamation of independence. Along with members of the local Timorese community from Leppington, I was joined by the Consul General for Timor-Leste, Mr Julio da Costa Freitas; the Federal member for Werriwa, Anne Stanley; and both the current and former members for Liverpool, Charishma Kaliyanda and Paul Lynch. The event included traditional Timorese cultural performances and entertainment as well as speeches reflecting on the significance of the anniversary. While a momentous day on the calendar for the Timorese people, it is also an important beacon of hope for many around the world today, especially those who continue to strive for self-determination and a nation-state to call their own in the face of decades of brutal occupation and military violence. I thank the management committee of TUA for their hard work to bring the event together. It is essential we continue to commemorate that important occasion and ensure future generations understand and appreciate the struggle of their forebears.

KADDY TRANSPORT

Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (18:41): Today I acknowledge the vital service provided by Kaddy Transport in Dee Why. It was started in 1980 by Val Rayward, a matron at Royal North Shore Hospital, after polio confined her to a wheelchair. For over 40 years Kaddy has assisted thousands of clients who are frail or use wheelchairs to travel safely to medical appointments and social activities. Unlike similar services in the area, Kaddy is free. It relies entirely on friendly volunteer drivers and generous sponsors, including Dee Why RSL. I especially acknowledge Allan Hale, a long-time board member of Kaddy, who sadly passed away in 2022 after volunteering since 1983. Awarded the Order of Australia in 2014, he was still driving clients until a week before he passed. Finally, I give a big shout-out to Barbara Smith, Kaddy's office coordinator, who is retiring this week after decades of service. With the loss of those incredible volunteers, Kaddy is now in urgent need of new

ones—and especially drivers—to avoid closing. Today I put the call out for more volunteer drivers. Let us keep that incredible service on the road.

GUY ZANGARI

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (18:42): I acknowledge the recent achievements of Guy Zangari, a former member of this place and a resident of the Liverpool electorate, who was recently awarded a papal knighthood in the Order of St Gregory the Great. A committed member of the Catholic Church and his local parish of John the Baptist in Bonnyrigg Heights, Guy was recently recognised for his commitment to the defence of religious freedom and the dignity of human life throughout his tenure in Parliament, as well as his advocacy for those seeking to access places of worship during the COVID-19 pandemic. The accolade follows an earlier honour when he was invested as a Knight of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre. I recognise his recent involvement with Sydney Catholic Schools, where he serves as the manager for family wellbeing and education, following his previous career as a teacher in the Catholic school system across south-west Sydney. I extend my best wishes to Guy and the Zangari family, and I wish him well in his future endeavours as he continues to thrive in his post-parliamentary life.

SAWTELLIAN OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (18:43): Sawtell is renowned for its beauty, charm and generosity of spirit. Each year Sawtellians gather to recognise those who help to make their close-knit beachside community an even better place to live. On Australia Day I was honoured to present the coveted Sawtellian of the Year award to Steve Kelly and the Young Sawtellian of the Year award to Ashleigh Geytenbeek. Steve Kelly is a well-known local identity, especially around Sawtell Surf Life Saving Club, where he is a life member and the recipient of some 130 awards. A regular early-morning swimmer and headland identity, Steve can be counted on to help with beach and club duties. Ashleigh Geytenbeek joined the Girl Guides in 2018 as an eight-year-old and has consistently stepped up to help, always with a smile on her face and a kind word for all. As she has grown, those qualities have amplified, and the now 14-year-old is always putting the needs of the younger girls in the unit ahead of her own. I congratulate Steve and Ashleigh on their impressive contributions to the Sawtell community.

DAVID "DICK" PAYTEN COMMEMORATION

Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (18:44): I was honoured to recently join the Bass High School community in honouring the life and service of the late World War II veteran David "Dick" Payten, president of the 7th Division Association, Australian Imperial Force. The commemoration reflected a deep gratitude for Dick's contributions to veterans and the local Bass Hill community. I congratulate Bass High School for hosting such a heartfelt event. Leading up to his passing in 2020 at the age of 98, Dick would annually attend Bass High School's Anzac Day ceremonies and speak to the students about his experiences. He also dedicated more than 30 years of his life to Legacy Australia, supporting the families of our veterans by selling Legacy badges, helping with barbecues and much more. I thank Dick, who lived a life of service and impact. He truly made a difference and will not be forgotten.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE CROQUET COMPETITION

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence) (18:45): It was a pleasure last Sunday to join the member for Coffs Harbour at Government House for a special, time-honoured game of croquet. We were not playing, but I congratulate the Coutts Crossing Croquet Club, which played Woolgoolga Croquet Club on the lawns of Government House. The Governor, Her Excellency Margaret Beazley, and Mr Wilson hosted the day. I congratulate Helyn Davison, Simon Cook, Paul Schofield and Marilyn Richmond, who played for Coutts Crossing—and coaches Ken Davison and Kathy Schofield—on their outstanding win. However, in the true sportsmanship of croquet, it was declared a draw. I congratulate everyone on a great day.

TRIBUTE TO LEONA CAIRNS

Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (18:46): Leona Cairns was a respected member of the Bega Valley community, and her contributions improved the lives of many and of the community broadly in many ways. Leona was a community educator, social justice advocate, aged and disability care manager and community engagement activist. She was an early member of the Australian Breastfeeding Association and joined the Women's Electoral Lobby in the 1970s. After moving to the Sapphire Coast, she continued her teaching profession at a number of schools. Following teaching, Leona became the first manager of Home Care Service NSW, which serviced the Bega Valley shire. Her contributions extended to the regional New South Wales Home and Community Care Committee; the board of the Bega and District Nursing Home; multiple Tathra clubs, committees and associations; as well as Social Justice Advocates of the Sapphire Coast. At an international level, Leona was a member of Bega Valley Advocates for Timor-Leste. Leona passed from this world on 10 October 2023 and is missed by her life partner of 65 years, Brian, her daughters, her granddaughters and the wider Bega and Tathra communities.

BRUCE DUGAN

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (18:47): Pharmacist Bruce Dugan began his career in pharmacy an impressive 73 years ago, in 1951, starting as an apprentice in Tenterfield, New South Wales. That was followed by studies at the University of Sydney. He has since served the communities of Blacktown for 55 years, then Marulan, Goulburn, Crookwell, Yass, Queanbeyan and finally Bowral, where he has made a lasting impression on the residents of the Southern Highlands. Bruce has touched the lives of many with his warm nature and friendly conversation. Known for his optimism and kindness, Bruce says, "What a wonderful life I have had in all these years in all these communities. I have met thousands of wonderful people whom I will never forget." He adds, "From my experience in nurturing many young interns from all over the world, pharmacy is in good hands today and will continue to serve the public to the best of our ability". A true example of a modern-day gentleman, his exemplary customer service and expertise are renowned in the highlands. I wish Bruce good luck getting anywhere in a hurry in his retirement—he will be stopped in the street by so many former customers who miss their regular chats with him.

COMMUNITY MIGRANT RESOURCE CENTRE

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (18:48): On 4 December 2023 it was a pleasure to join the Community Migrant Resource Centre [CMRC] for its annual general meeting in Parramatta. The CMRC offers high-quality services, support and advocacy to migrants and refugees to facilitate successful integration. Operating in a community-building framework, the CMRC promotes self-determination for our migrant communities. In 2023 the CMRC supported over 26,348 individuals in our community. Notably, its early intervention service connected some 750 families to support services through local schools in Parramatta and Cumberland. Without the efforts of its team, the CMRC's mission could not be achieved. I congratulate Aurelia Rahman and Dijana Mackic for 26 years of service and acknowledge Wadiha Mouawad, Biljana Kulic, Norma Boules and Priscella Mabor for 15 years service. I thank chairperson Olayide Ogunsiyi and the whole team at the centre.

WARRIEWOOD BLOWHOLE RESCUE

Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater) (18:49): I acknowledge the heroic efforts of Pittwater's surf lifesavers in rescuing a teen from the Warriewood blowhole earlier this year, on 21 January. The chappie was injured during a jump into the water. While his two friends helped him climb back onto the rocks, he was semiconscious and unable to climb back to safety. Upon being notified, Warriewood surf lifesavers swung into action, launching their inflatable rescue boat [IRB]. The rescuers identified three boys trapped in the rock tunnel due to rough water conditions. The rescue was complicated as the IRB could not get to the boys on the rocks. Our lifesavers quickly came up with a plan, calling on another IRB from Mona Vale Surf Life Saving Club. Sixteen-year-old Saskia Rundle Trowbridge made the risky jump into the water and onto the rocks to help stabilise the boy with a head injury and get all three boys back to the beach for treatment. Patrol Captain Martin Carlisle, IRB driver Adam Kovac, Mark Booney, Jacob Rodwell and especially 16-year-old Saskia are heroes. I thank them.

BANKSTOWN JETS TOUCH FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (18:50): I congratulate Bankstown Touch Football Association, which held its annual Jets Gala Day last Sunday. I happily attended and caught up with many old friends. Touch football teams from right across New South Wales came to the Vale of Ah fields in Milperra to compete. It was a great event held in preparation for the NSW Touch Junior State Cup. Teams use this event as a trial run, so no results are captured and the games are played in a very friendly atmosphere. Ninety-two teams attended this year's event in Milperra, with lots of food and entertaining games on offer. Bankstown Jets Touch uses the funds raised on this day to support its representative teams to compete at State tournaments. I give a big shout-out to the small group of volunteers, including president Andrew Smith, secretary Mette Kitiona and the committee, for all the tireless work they do in supporting another great sporting club in my community. I wish good luck to the Jets teams competing at the Junior State tournament in Wagga Wagga later this month.

DRUMMOYNE CHRISTMAS ARTWORK COMPETITION

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne) (18:51): I recognise all the students who entered the 2023 Drummoyne Christmas Artwork Competition. I was so impressed by the hundreds of entries my office received from many students in my community that my staff and I decided to display them in the front window of the electorate office for all to enjoy over the holidays. Congratulations to Darcy R, aged nine, who won the competition with an artwork that was worthy of being featured in a gallery. Her artwork was featured on the Drummoyne Christmas card, which was sent to local community groups and residents and also sat proudly on the front page of the Drummoyne December newsletter. I also acknowledge highly commended entries from Adam M, Annamaria M, Charlotte B, Evangeline C, Fiorella G, Frances Y, Taylor Z, Oscar S, Maximo V, Claire C, Olivia C, Nina E and Ines R. It is clear that we had some trouble deciding on our winners and highly

commended entries because they were all so beautiful. Congratulations to the keen artists who worked very hard. I thank them for entering the competition.

FRANK AVIS, OAM

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (18:52): I recognise Mr Frank Avis, a resident of my electorate who was recently awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for his service to broadcast media, particularly radio. Frank started his radio career as a trainee announcer in the '50s at 2MG Mudgee when he was just 17. Since then Frank has gone on to host a number of stations across the country, such as Melbourne's 3XY and Perth's 6PR. Radio is an effective way to keep our community informed about important events, whether they are happening in the local area or around the world. I thank Frank for his 42 years of dedicated work in radio and congratulate him on this much-deserved award.

ANTHONY HATCH

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (18:53): Today I recognise Griffith Deputy Unit Commander Anthony Hatch for his 35 years of volunteer service with the NSW State Emergency Service. Mr Hatch joined the SES at the age of 16, allowing him to gain skills in road crash rescue and emergency response that set him up for a successful career with Fire and Rescue NSW. During his service with the SES, he has responded to several major incidents including the Thredbo landslide disaster of 1997 and an overseas humanitarian mission to the 2013 Fukushima tsunami in Japan. Officer Hatch was awarded a humanitarian medal for his work at Fukushima. Mr Hatch has been at the forefront of large animal rescue techniques, creating manuals and facilitating training across the State. In 2017 Senior Instructor Hatch was made an honorary member of the Australian Veterinary Association for his work in this field. Recently Mr Hatch was presented with a 35-year Long Service Award by the assistant commissioner for his commitment to the New South Wales SES. Mr Anthony Hatch is to be commended for his outstanding contributions to the New South Wales SES.

RACHAEL HANLON

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (18:55): I congratulate Rachael Hanlon on becoming the 2024 Blacktown City Citizen of the Year. Rachael is president of the Blacktown City Lions Club and, with her leadership and coordination, the wonderful members of the Lions club have made food donations and raised approximately \$1 million over the past 10 years. This has been distributed to various worthy people not only in the Blacktown area but also in the regions through the Liverpool Plains Shire Council service and other community organisations. The Lions have supported initiatives such as providing disability play equipment, bus shelters and ping-pong tables; the Healthy Harold program in Quirindi; funding to support therapy puppies; the Plumpton Rural Fire Brigade; providing food hampers to many people in need; supporting organisations such as the North West neighbourhood centres; Carevan; children's school breakfast programs; purchasing specialised equipment for people with disabilities; reconstructing the palliative care gardens at Mount Druitt Hospital and much more. I congratulate Rachael on the well-deserved community recognition.

WINDSOR WOMEN'S BOWLING TEAM

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (18:56): I express the pride I share with the Hawkesbury community as we celebrate the success of the Windsor women's bowling team, who were recently recognised as the Nepean district women's bowls champions for 2023. These amazing ladies took on the best in the district and went on to win the pennant. I met the local champions and patrons, including Joy, who has been bowling for 70 years. I also congratulate the Windsor Bowling and Sports Club. Not only does it provide an excellent facility run by volunteers, it also facilitates opportunities for young and senior members to connect and nurture each other through regular meetings, conversation, activities and events, which is so good for one's mental health and wellbeing.

BRYDIE MEREDITH

Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (18:57): I recognise Brydie Meredith, who received the Camden Young Citizen of the Year Award at the recent Camden Australia Day Honours. Brydie is one of four instructors at Catherine Park Physie and Dance. This community sports group, boasting 174 members, witnesses Brydie's commitment as she volunteers her time to teach five different classes across three days a week. They include classes for members with social, intellectual and behavioural needs, and Brydie's patient and inclusive approach has earned her admiration and respect. Her students aspire to emulate her drive and dedication. Brydie is determined to master physie and dedicates herself to training and practice. Her unwavering effort has resulted in qualifications for nationals, and she proudly represents Catherine Park Physie and Dance at the iconic Opera House, marking two consecutive years of achievement.

MAZHAR HADID, OAM

Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy) (18:58): I congratulate Councillor Mazhar Hadid of Liverpool City Council on being awarded the Order of Australia medal for his unwavering dedication to local government for 16 years. Councillor Hadid has served as a councillor since 2008 and as Deputy Mayor of Liverpool from 2012-2014, then again from 2020-2021 and again in 2022-2023. However, Councillor Hadid's contributions extend beyond the council chambers. As co-founder and president of the Australian Islamic House for over 25 years and the driving force behind the Voice of Islam radio station, he has played a pivotal role in bridging communities, fostering dialogue and promoting cultural understanding for the people of Liverpool. I would like to show my gratitude to Councillor Mazhar Hadid for his exemplary service, leadership and the positive impact he has made. I look forward to his continued contributions and wish him every success in his future endeavours.

TRIBUTE TO THELMA MARGARET O'NEILL

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (18:59): It is with sadness that I advise the House of the passing of Thelma Margaret O'Neill, commonly known as Tillie. Tillie was born on 13 April 1940 in Galway, Ireland and died in Campbelltown on 9 January 2024. She studied nursing in Surrey, England, and moved to Australia on 19 October 1964. In 1977 she moved to Campbelltown, where she was a nurse, working right across west and south-west Sydney. She loved Campbelltown, and Campbelltown loved her. I acknowledge my good friend the member for Macquarie Fields, who was also a friend of Tillie's. She is survived by Michael; her children, Eileen, Christine and Michael; and her many grandchildren. We attended her funeral at Ruse Catholic Church. It was a truly special occasion to be there to celebrate the life of Tillie. Rest in peace, Tillie. We will never forget you.

COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION MANLY BRANCH

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (19:00): I recognise the Manly branch of the Country Women's Association of NSW and congratulate it on being honoured as Community Group of the Year at this year's Australia Day awards. The northern beaches boasts a long-running connection with rural and regional New South Wales. Having celebrated its centenary only last year, the Manly branch has continued to work tirelessly within the local community over the past 100 years to provide critical support and resources for individuals and organisations in need. Whether it be through holding regular meetings, skills workshops or fundraising events, the Manly branch has demonstrated its commitment to advancing the interests of women and families on the northern beaches and should be congratulated once more on the vital and inspiring role it plays in serving our local community. Well done to the Manly Country Women's Association.

DISABLED SURFERS ASSOCIATION CENTRAL COAST BRANCH

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (19:01): Tonight I talk about the fantastic Central Coast branch of the Disabled Surfers Association of Australia. Umina Beach was filled with joy, with over 240 volunteers on the beach and land supporting over 100 surfers from the Central Coast, as well as those from Sydney and Newcastle who came to get in the water and join in the fun. It was amazing. The volunteers set up four channels because the surf was huge at Umina Beach. Surfers had four different opportunities to be taken out and ride a wave, supported by lovely volunteers. There really were smiles on the dials of everybody. I encourage everybody who possibly can to get involved in volunteering for the Disabled Surfers Association. It has been going since 2005 on the Central Coast, and the number of people who were at Umina Beach to appreciate the wraparound support was fantastic. I encourage everyone who can to get down to Umina Beach on the first Saturday of every month to put a smile on the dials of surfers with disability.

ELIZABETH BAY SHARK ATTACK

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (19:02): I thank the Elizabeth Bay community, which recently came together to rescue Lauren O'Neill, who sustained injuries as a result of a shark attack in Elizabeth Bay. I particularly acknowledge the heroism of Fiona Crago, a vet whose wife, Georgia, had earlier that day purchased compression bandages. She was able to reduce the loss of blood that Lauren sustained. I also acknowledge local Elizabeth Bay resident Michael Porter, who, along with other neighbours, helped to sound the alarm and ensured that emergency services were able to come to Lauren's rescue. I thank all of the paramedics involved in the amazing rescue, as well as the doctors and nurses at St Vincent's Hospital who have helped Lauren O'Neill so that she will nearly make a full recovery.

ROBERT "BOB" MULVEY

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (19:03): I acknowledge Robert Mulvey, also known as Bob Mulvey, for being awarded Central Coast Senior Citizen of the Year. Bob has been a resident of the Central Coast since 1991 and is well known in community circles, having joined and been a part of several community organisations, including the North Entrance Surf Life Saving Club, The Entrance Lions Club and

The Entrance North Landcare. Continuing his commitment to the community, Bob has been the president of The Entrance North Progress Association for over 20 years and tirelessly works to improve local facilities and advocate on behalf of the community on issues that matter. Bob is also a dear friend and Labor Party colleague. I have enjoyed working with Bob and his wife, Sheana, over many years to support the party on the Central Coast. I am sure the House will join me in congratulating Bob on his achievements and his continued service to our community.

BRIANA SMITH

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (19:04): I recognise one of my younger constituents, Briana Smith, who at the young age of just 16 and undertaking her studies at Kincumber High School is now a fully qualified pilot, having worked hard over the last two years to achieve her licence. Introduced to flying by her father, Andrew, who is the CEO of the Central Coast Aero Club, Briana's enjoyment of and passion for flying was evident when recently she took me on a flight and gave me a spectacular aerial tour of the Central Coast. It was an amazing experience flying with Briana, who is an outstanding pilot. Her achievement is an inspiration to other young people interested in learning to fly or with a dream to pursue an aviation career. I also congratulate the wonderful Central Coast Aero Club for the great work it has done supporting and providing aviation opportunities for people of all ages on the Central Coast. Congratulations again, Briana, on this wonderful achievement. You will no doubt have a bright future in aviation if you choose to pursue this avenue. Continue to enjoy the beauty and freedom of the skies and keep chasing your dreams.

WOMAN HOOD CENTRAL COAST

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (19:05): I acknowledge Woman Hood Central Coast, a charity that collects toiletries for local community groups across the Central Coast using simple pink bins. Keira Smith, a 17-year-old champion in my electorate who founded the charity, had two aims in mind: firstly, to fill the gap of toiletry donations and, secondly, to promote the local businesses that host her pink bins. In the first two months of collection, Keira managed to donate over \$21,000 in toiletries to Central Coast community groups. Every business has commented that their sales and social media exposure increased, and they have subsequently networked with other local businesses. I was so impressed with Keira's creativity and sense of community that I was delighted to host a pink bin and will be doing so for the month of February. It is people like Keira who really are champions of our town and the whole of the Central Coast. I am sure that the House will join me in congratulating Woman Hood Central Coast and Keira for her efforts.

WILLOUGHBY ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (19:06): I express my great pride and that of members of the Willoughby community in the locals of our area who were recognised in the 2024 Australia Day Honours. I warmly congratulate Dr Richard Bailey, who was awarded a Member of the Order of Australia [AM] for his service to medicine in the field of anaesthetics; Professor Jacqueline Close, who was awarded an AM for her service to medical research and to medicine as an orthogeriatrician; and Professor Paul Roach, who was awarded an AM for his service to nuclear medicine and medical research. I also congratulate Christopher Sullivan, who was awarded a Public Service Medal for his leadership in establishing and delivering critical protocols. I sincerely thank and recognise each of these remarkable citizens for the outstanding contribution they have made to our community, State and nation. Their dedication, hard work and distinguished service are an inspiration to us all. We are proud of their awards.

Bills

HIGH RISK OFFENDERS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2023

Returned

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

Private Members' Statements

WALLSEND ELECTORATE

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (19:07): The year 2024 marks the 150th anniversary of the founding of Wallsend. I am sure every member considers the patch they represent to be special, but I can confidently say that Wallsend is very special indeed. I am so proud to represent that community in this place. As we look forward to the celebrations planned in Wallsend to mark this important occasion, I share with the House some of Wallsend's history and maybe give some insight into why those of us who call Wallsend home hold the area in such high regard.

Wallsend's history stretches back far longer than 150 years. The Worimi and Awabakal First Nations have called the land now known as Wallsend home for tens of thousands of years. According to notes made by Lieutenant Edward Close, a Royal Army engineer and founder of Morpeth, the First Nations custodians referred to the area as Barrahinebin. The coming of European settlement changed everything for First Nations people across Australia, but I acknowledge that their ancient connection to the land is undiminished.

For Newcastle and surrounds, the moment of disruption came when Royal Navy Lieutenant John Shortland, while chasing convicts who escaped from Sydney, happened upon the mouth of the Hunter River. Further investigation uncovered the presence of coal in the area and coal in Wallsend. It is unsurprising then that Wallsend started as two separate mining towns—Wallsend and Plattsburg. Though Plattsburg is no longer a suburb in its own right, its name lives on in the wonderful Plattsburg Public School, which has been part of our history and the community since its beginning. In fact, it celebrated its own 150th anniversary in 2015. Some very intelligent people, I must say, went to kindergarten at Plattsburg Infants School and had a wonderful teacher named Mrs Allen. That was me, of course. Anyway, I will stop big-noting.

A man named Alexander Brown chose the name Wallsend in the 1850s. My community's namesake is a small mining town in the north of England right near the original Newcastle. As a bit of trivia, the original Wallsend was so named because it was located at the end of a defensive wall built by the ancient Romans. Mr Brown got to choose the name because he had purchased land and country encapsulated by Newcastle Road, Boundary and Croudace streets and running out beyond Gunambi Road. There was coal on that land, and Mr Brown founded the Newcastle-Wallsend Coal Company, which opened the Wallsend Colliery in January 1861. Coalmining was the lifeblood of Wallsend for many years. I single out the cooperative mine in the area which, in contrast to the investor-owned mines at Wallsend and Plattsburg, was started and operated by the miners themselves—a symbol of the history of Wallsend's working people.

The coal mined at Wallsend was of a high quality, and thus the settlement grew. Finally, it was proclaimed a town in 1874, with its own council and elected aldermen. The first mayor of Wallsend was James Fletcher, the Scottish-born miner and newspaperman who served in this place as the member for Newcastle from 1880 until his death 11 years later. Wallsend continued to grow and prosper and in 1937 was incorporated into Newcastle when the New South Wales Government passed the Greater Newcastle Act. Despite that loss of independence, there has never been a loss of identity. Wallsend residents are proud of our town, its history and our community. I look forward to celebrating the rest of the year with our community for our 150th birthday.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell): I thank the member for Wallsend. I am sure there are many people in Wallsend who had the pleasure of having Mrs Allen as their teacher back in the day.

WILLOUGHBY ELECTORATE LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (19:12): Every summer it is my pleasure and honour to join the many communities of the Willoughby electorate as we celebrate the Lunar New Year. Observed by millions of people around the globe, it heralds the pending arrival of the northern spring and the beginning of the new year on the lunisolar calendar. Ushering in a new lunar year is a celebration of hope, fresh beginnings and good fortune for the year. For 2024 the Lunar New Year will fall on 10 February, and it will be the Year of the Dragon. In Chinese folklore the dragon is a majestic and lucky creature symbolising bravery, creativity and innovation.

Also known as Chinese New Year, the Lunar New Year is observed by millions of Australians and thousands of people across the Willoughby community. It is a festival celebrated by not only Chinese Australians originating from mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan but also Australians of Malay, Singaporean, Thai, Filipino, Korean, Vietnamese and Indonesian backgrounds. Lunar New Year is always a big fixture in Willoughby, with its high proportion of residents from so many Asian backgrounds. Chatswood as a suburb is the third largest by ethnic Chinese population across New South Wales, and 42 per cent of Chatswood's population is of Chinese origin.

For 2024 Willoughby will continue to truly come alive across February to bring in the Year of the Dragon. Chatswood's Year of the Dragon festival features a wide range of cultural attractions and events, including a large-scale dragon sculpture, authentic Chinese cuisine, lantern parades, dances, music concerts, night markets and so much more. Lunar New Year festivities commenced last weekend at The Concourse in Chatswood, up and down the mall and down the main street of Victoria Avenue. Chatswood was ablaze with colour and animation with lion dancers, performers, musical experiences, food stalls and a spectacular lantern parade. It was a joy to be a part of. Indeed, my two young daughters participated in the street parade with me on Saturday evening.

Other highlights in the Willoughby Lunar New Year Festival program include a comedy gala on 17 February with a line-up of Asian Australian comedians and entertainers, a Symphony in the Park free outdoor concert on Friday 23 February at Chatswood Oval, as well as the *Soaring Dragon* and *Passage of Night*;

Luminary Rising exhibitions at The Concourse running from 1 to 25 February. Offering something special for all the family, I encourage Willoughby locals and visitors to our area to support and enjoy these wonderful events. Last year's Lunar New Year festivities in Willoughby for the Year of the Rabbit proved to be a roaring success in many ways. They delivered a \$10 million increase in visitor spending to the Chatswood CBD, among other things. This represented a remarkable \$1 in \$20 return on investment. I have every confidence that the 2024 Year of the Dragon festivities will yield a similar return for our community, if not greater.

The Lunar New Year is, of course, so much more than success in monetary terms. It is a colourful and wonderful demonstration of our cultural richness, diversity and harmony. To the community of Willoughby and further afield it showcases the beauty of one of our world's oldest continuing cultures and adds a vibrant thread to Australia's cultural tapestry. From witnessing the spectacular displays of colour, to sampling delicious food and enjoying world-class entertainment, one is left in no doubt of the extraordinary and enduring contribution Chinese Australians have made to our country for over two centuries since the arrival of the first Chinese immigrant, John Pong Shying, to our shores in 1818. It is a contribution that our former Prime Minister John Howard once described and praised in 1998 as being "generous, immense and impressive". I could not agree more, and even more so today.

The contribution of the Chinese Australian community to Willoughby is palpable across myriad fields, including business and commerce, education, the professions, IT, hospitality, art, culture, sport and recreation, and so many fields of pursuit and public interest across our area. I appreciate that other parts of Sydney similarly feature a large and vibrant Chinese Australian community, not least the localities of Eastwood, Epping, Carlingford, Burwood, Hurstville and Haymarket, some of which I know well. All of those communities are a great source of strength and pride, and contribute to our State's cultural diversity and strength. Having said that, I believe Chatswood, St Leonards and Artarmon, among others in Willoughby, do these festivities and this special time better than anywhere else in New South Wales at this time of the year. Once again, I wish everyone in Willoughby and across New South Wales celebrating the Lunar New Year this February a happy, prosperous and successful Year of the Dragon. Gong xi fa cai. Kung hei fat choi.

THE FORMAL PROJECT

MACQUARIE FIELDS AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS

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) (19:17): The high school formal is indeed a right of passage for every year 12 student. It is the night they celebrate their accomplishments with their friends, teachers and family. Preparing clothes, shoes and accessories for such a night comes at a significant cost that some families and many young people find difficult to meet. The cost-of-living crisis has only exacerbated those costs. Concerned that many young people could not celebrate this special time in their lives, The Formal Project was founded. Operating out of Minto Mall in my electorate, The Formal Project is a free service that provides local students with a place to get fitted and dressed for their special night at their school formal.

In 2023, with the support of an army of committed volunteers and the generosity of Minto Mall, The Formal Project fitted more than 1,300 students, providing them with dresses, suits, shoes and jewellery. This was an outstanding achievement. Money was raised through stalls to help pay for the hairdressing, make-up, nails, barber cuts, formal tickets, personal care items and so much more. This fantastic community initiative put a smile on many young people's faces, ensuring that they could enjoy one of the most memorable milestones in their lives. I have visited The Formal Project and it is certainly a popular place. It was wonderful to see the project's founder, Ms Samantha Oaks, named Campbelltown City Council 2024 Australia Day Citizen of the Year. I was delighted. I congratulate Samantha and commend all those within my electorate who are involved in this initiative to ensure that no child misses out on this special occasion.

This year's Australia Day awards highlighted a broad cross-section of our community's contributions. Big or small, every contribution goes toward making our community a better place. I congratulate all of the award recipients and nominees. All have demonstrated a commitment to our community. Eden College in Macquarie Fields was awarded the 2024 Community Group Initiative of the Year. Run by Father Chris Riley's Youth Off The Streets, Eden College supports young people who have become disengaged from mainstream education or are at risk of doing so. Operating since 2007, Eden College supports students through individual and flexible learning plans. Students work towards progressing to year 11 and 12, re-entering mainstream schools or transitioning into vocational training and employment. The college is supporting 43 students in years 9 to 12 to finish high school and gain employment after graduation.

Eden College has also identified that some families require assistance with food insecurity. A food hamper program delivers free food hampers weekly to about 10 families, and food hampers are also made available at half

price to all members of the Macquarie Fields community. While we celebrate the award winners, we should also applaud the many award nominees. They may not have received the top gong, but their community efforts do not go unnoticed. In particular, I mention from my electorate Jenny and Darko Ristic, the founders of The Silver Coin Project, which helps provide basic school necessities for children in need in the local community; Mr Abdus Sobhan, a long-time supporter of Clean Up Australia Day and the Multicultural Society of Campbelltown; Ashiqur Rahman, the co-founder of A-B Street Library; and Mr Ken Barnard, a wonderful man whom I have known for a long time. A dedicated volunteer and passionate mental health advocate, Ken is the chairperson of Headspace Campbelltown and vice president of the local mental health organisation, Beautiful Minds. Ken is also a long-term member of the board of Myrtle Cottage, Ingleburn, and has been actively involved in homelessness projects and suicide prevention. I congratulate all award nominees and winners.

As the member for Macquarie Fields, it is a privilege to serve my community and to witness firsthand the contributions made by so many locals in my electorate. From little things, big things grow. When Samantha Oakes learned that one young person was not attending her school formal because an outfit was too expensive, she thought, "That is one kid too many." This year, many young people will not have to face the same dilemma due to the great work of The Formal Project. It is proof that one act of kindness can make a huge difference to many people.

NORTHERN TABLELANDS ELECTORATE JUVENILE CRIME

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (19:22): For my first private member's statement of 2024, I would be well-placed to share with the House details of innumerable achievements and good news stories from across the number one electorate in New South Wales, the mighty Northern Tablelands. Instead, it is with a heavy heart that I feel compelled to revisit a contribution I made in this place in May last year touching on the rising tide of juvenile crime in my local communities, especially Moree and Inverell. At the time, I spoke about the tireless efforts of police in the New England district and the supporting authorities who were doing their absolute best and giving 100 per cent to hold back the tide of criminal activity.

I also highlighted that, despite those efforts, the local judiciary were trying to poke holes, as best they could, in that thick blue wall, allowing a backflow of emboldened juvenile offenders back out into the community, time and again. Decisions made by local court magistrates—in particular, those of one magistrate in the Inverell and Moree circuit—were not meeting the expectations of the communities who they serve. That was last year. Fast forward to today and, sadly, not much has changed. As a result, crime rates and especially crimes committed by juvenile offenders—many of them no stranger to local police—continue to increase and a new generation of feral children who have learned they can run amok with little or no consequence but a slap on the wrist from the local magistrate are presenting to the courts.

My criticism last year earned me the ire of the local judiciary and others who believe a decision made by an officer of the court is sacrosanct and beyond question or criticism. "How dare you," was the cry from some quarters. Well, I do dare because the limp-wristed approach of this magistrate in particular not only does not serve our communities well but also further demoralises the hardworking men and women of our Police Force who are doing their darned best to keep our streets and communities safe. This magistrate needs to get out of her ivory chamber, have a good hard look at herself and ask whether she is really up to the task of serving, protecting and delivering good justice to the people of Moree and the Inverell circuit.

I have spoken to the victims—countless people—of crimes that include home invasion, car theft, assault, malicious damage, serious driving offences, robbery and, the most popular offence under this magistrate's watch, breach of bail conditions. One family were horrified to see footage circulating on social media of a number of masked juvenile offenders inside their home, standing around and filming their five-year-old child asleep in their bed. Elderly residents in an Inverell retirement village were threatened in their home with knives. I could go on. When those offenders are arrested by police—they invariably are arrested incredibly quickly, and I praise the police for that—and charged and put before the courts, we see a lot of decisions that are not in line with what the community expects. I will detail a few.

A 17-year-old was bailed by the court right back into the same home as the victims he had threatened to kill. An 18-year-old who was already on bail in Queensland for robbery in company was granted bail for a new charge of aggravated robbery. A 16-year-old with an extensive history of noncompliance was granted bail; he breached that bail within 48 hours, absconding and committing further offences. Then we have that wonderful umbrella Act, section 11 of the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act, which allows the court to defer sentencing so the offender can be rehabilitated. Given the lack of rehabilitation programs throughout country New South Wales, that is seen by offenders as a "get out of jail free" card in many cases—like the 18-year-old "gentleman" who was already on a section 11 and went on the run for three months before being arrested again by the police. The magistrate generously allowed him another section 11 free pass and he went on to commit more offences, allegedly, while on the run. That matter will eventually come back to the courts.

The relentless revolving door at Inverell and Moree courthouses has not been helpful in reducing criminal activity. Indeed, it has had the opposite effect. However, the workload by judicial officers also needs attention. The Moree and Inverell circuit, including the Children's Court, has 697 cases pending listed for the next four weeks. There is one magistrate. I know I am critical of the magistrate, but there is one person who is supposed to hear all of those matters. That cannot go on. I call on the Chief Magistrate and the Attorney General to look seriously at this issue. A magistrate is not applying the law and meeting standards, but something is also wrong with the system. I will continue to push for reform and speak up on behalf of the community to get the changes we need to keep us safe.

ILLAWARRA CONVOY

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (19:27): On behalf of all residents of the Shellharbour electorate, I thank the Illawarra Community Foundation for working tirelessly to organise the 2023 Illawarra Convoy. Convoy involves a number of events and initiatives all aimed at raising much-needed money for the Illawarra Community Foundation. Since 2005, on the third weekend in November, Convoy has been held in the Illawarra and is a landmark fundraising event for the Illawarra region. Once known as the Convoy and Carnival for Cancer Kids, Convoy came about when Marty Haynes, i98 FM's radio breakfast show host, heard of the tragic passing of one of his listeners while working as a radio presenter in Canberra. Mr Haynes brought the great idea with him when he went to work for the WIN Network.

One of the most exciting parts of Convoy is the lead truck auction, with the winner leading the procession of trucks from Appin to Albion Park. Convoy travels a distance of 70 kilometres from Illawarra Coal's West Cliff Colliery at Appin through the streets of the Illawarra to the final destination at Shellharbour Airport. The 2023 iteration of Convoy saw 779 trucks and 633 motorbikes travel through the Illawarra. From Appin to Shellharbour Airport, streets were lined with onlookers cheering and showing their support for Convoy. The winning bid for 2023 was \$301,000 and was made by Menai Haulage. I congratulate and thank the Menai Haulage team.

I also take this opportunity to thank Tiny Tins and Wollongong Crane Trucks, who contributed \$261,000, followed by the RMK Group at \$100,000, Best Sheds and Wollongong Car Carriers at \$84,000, and Murrell Freight Lines at \$80,000, with another 45 groups also contributing to the lead truck pack. Leading the motorbikes in the convoy, with a record-breaking lead bike bid of \$252,000, was Coles Illawarra stores, with over 1,180 staff taking part in year-round fundraising within their stores from Corrimall to Ulladulla. Throttle Jockies took out second place, with a \$83,000 bid, followed by Motocity at \$53,126.53, Kye's Convoy Dream at \$40,000 and Bikers 4 Heroes at \$17,339.74. At the end of the convoy awaits a fantastic family fun day, where trucks and bikes are parked for onlookers to view those involved in the convoy. Over 17,000 people throughout the day visited the airport to be a part of the fun day. Among this number were headline entertainment acts Ricki-Lee and Thirsty Merc.

Last year's convoy was held on Sunday 19 November and raised \$2.85 million, a record for the Illawarra Convoy. That sum is the largest amount raised for the convoy alone in a year, only surpassed by 2021's result of \$3.05 million, which included funds from another convoy-based initiative, the House that Convoy Built. All money raised from the convoy was donated to the Illawarra Community Foundation for distribution to local charities and families who are facing life-threatening and life-limiting illness. Members of that foundation are a dedicated group who are involved in the organisation of the convoy event and hold skills to best distribute and manage the funds raised.

Back in 2005, the convoy creator, Marty Haynes, had a goal of raising \$20,000 for kids and their families who were living with cancer. Just 18 years later, the convoy is now the Illawarra's most amazing charitable event and has raised more than \$25 million for various charitable causes. I thank all of the participants, volunteers and supporters for their hard work raising money for various charities that support people in need across the Illawarra. Those involved truly create a fantastic day for all and for an outstanding cause. I encourage all residents of the Illawarra to put next year's convoy in their diaries now. The 2024 event will be held on Sunday 17 November 2024. I finish by again thanking Marty Haynes for his tireless work over 20 years in raising valuable funds for people with illnesses right across the Illawarra.

REGIONAL CRIME

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (19:32): I share with the House an alarming story from my electorate—a story that highlights the need to take a better approach to crime in our regions. An elderly couple have been the victims of home invasions not once but twice in four months. The most recent attack occurred late last year. In the first case, the couple, aged in their eighties, confronted the teenage burglars inside their home after being awoken late at night. Their plucky response earned an apology of sorts from one of the young offenders, who left empty-handed. The second incident, however, was more frightening. The intruders tried to bash their

way into the couple's property, leaving them shaken and alarmed. Their home was not the place of safety it should be.

I acknowledge the pluck and bravery of that couple. But I also raise the issue because, sadly, it was not an isolated incident. Since then, there has been a reported spate of home burglaries, car thefts and other crimes in Wagga Wagga, and I know that regional cities and towns across New South Wales have similar stories to tell. Crime is becoming an increasing concern for people in the regions, leaving victims frightened, angry and worried that it will worsen. It is a complex problem that will need complex solutions. We need to do more than just catch offenders. We need to prevent crime by identifying its root causes, and that will need courageous and ambitious actions. One of the first steps that would make a real difference is within the power of government. There should be equity between city and country, and it boils down to providing regional areas with policing resources that are genuinely comparable to metropolitan regions.

According to a report by the Country Mayors Association [CMA], despite making up more than 90 per cent of the State's land mass, regional and rural communities have fewer police per head of population than those in metropolitan areas. Adding to that, 24-hour rural police stations are a comparative rarity. That is no fault of the police, who are doing the best they can with what they have, but it is unfair and unproductive. That is why I am supporting a call by the CMA's head, Councillor Jamie Chaffey, for an inquiry to be held into rural and regional crime. Let us identify the issues and take action. Disappointingly, the Premier and the police Minister have so far declined to support that inquiry, despite strong representation from councils, NSW Farmers and the Country Women's Association, as well as the Police Association. Given that support, I urge the Premier and the Minister to listen to those regional communities. I urge them to support an inquiry to assess the data and gather the evidence. In that way, we will be better placed to reduce and prevent crime.

I acknowledge the Government's efforts to recruit more police. An inquiry would ensure that we know how best to get more officers on the beat in our rural and regional communities. Of course, no single measure will provide the solution. Even if police numbers are improved in the regions, officers will not be able to simply arrest their way out of the problem, just as kneejerk calls to lock up more people for longer will not eliminate crime. It will take a number of measures to not only catch offenders and keep them from reoffending but also get to the heart of the causes of crime. The State wants at-risk young people diverted away from offending. We want responsible citizens, not troublemakers. This means easing disadvantage in regional communities. It means giving young people hope and support instead of hardship and alienation. It means setting them on the right path so that careers in crime are avoidable, not inevitable. Of course none of that will be easy, but we must try.

We need to tackle a problem of this complexity with evidence-driven reforms that make a real difference. Bipartisan support for an inquiry with strength and purpose will turn ideas into action. For that reason, I call on the Government to become part of the solution by increasing police resources and backing the inquiry. Together we can reduce crime, deal with offenders constructively and, in the longer term, build pathways that lead disadvantaged young people to futures that do not involve courts, detention and deprivation. The time to act is now. I urge the Government to seize this opportunity without delay.

NEWCASTLE ART GALLERY EXPANSION

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (19:36): For the past 20 years the fight for the Newcastle Art Gallery expansion has plagued every local councillor and MP. It brings me great pride and an enormous sense of satisfaction that a few weeks ago we laid the foundation stone on the expansion, which is set to be completed late this year. This all began in 2003 when the Newcastle City Council of the time, under the leadership of Lord Mayor John Tate, began planning the expansion. The gallery's exhibition capacity was at 1.5 per cent of its extensive collection and the facilities certainly needed an upgrade. The 2004-2008 councillors continued this planning. Councillor Marilyn Eade, a champion of this issue, sought out an architect to design an epic expansion to make our gallery the best in Australia outside of a capital city. The design would expand the gallery exhibition space and include a community space and restaurant.

When I was elected as a councillor in 2008, the expansion was an issue I continued to push for. I became the chair of the Newcastle Art Gallery redevelopment committee. We got the then \$21 million project approved. Council committed \$7 million and the Federal Government also committed \$7 million, but would the New South Wales Government, under former Premier Barry O'Farrell, commit to the final third of the project? No. With its stubborn refusal, the Newcastle community had its art gallery dreams crushed. We saw the Liberal-Nationals Government once again neglect the arts. This led to a messy feud between those who supported and those who opposed. It saw art gallery director Ron Ramsey and future city director Judy Jaeger lose their jobs. I would like to take a moment to thank them for their service to the arts in Newcastle. It also saw art gallery staff forced into silence on the issue. I must credit Newcastle Art Gallery Foundation chair, Rob Henderson, a strong advocate who spoke on behalf of the staff at the time.

When I stepped into the role of member for Newcastle, I knew I had to see this expansion through. Over the past nine years I have fought tooth and nail for the project. I went to the 2015 election with a commitment that a Labor Government would commit \$14 million to the art gallery expansion. I urged the former Minister for the Arts to look beyond Sydney and give the Newcastle Art Gallery just \$26 million from the \$600 million arts and culture fund. They were unable to do so. During the 2019 election campaign, I once again announced that a Labor Government would commit \$14 million to the Newcastle Art Gallery. Following that election, I urged the Coalition Government to prioritise and support the gallery. In 2021, the former arts Minister praised the upgrade and said he thought it was a good project, but he still refused to help Newcastle by funding its expansion. What a cop-out! With enough pressure, in 2022 the former Government backtracked on its refusal and agreed to put \$5 million into the project. While it was far less than the \$14 million Labor put forward, it was enough to get it over the line.

With that, in May 2023, the gallery closed to allow the start of works to be carried out. This project is on track. I cannot wait for the expansion to be unveiled and opened to the public. I have already acknowledged some of the people who have made it happen, but there are so many more. I thank the current Newcastle city councillors, who facilitated the project and whose commitment to the arts and the city is commendable. I thank Minister Graham for his ongoing support. I know it is important to him because his father was a volunteer at the art gallery. Thanks to the Federal Government and Sharon Claydon for also contributing \$5 million. I thank all the past and present members of the Newcastle Art Gallery Foundation and the current Chair, Suzie Galwey, for never losing faith and for contributing \$13 million to this project.

I again thank former Chair, Rob Henderson, and his wife, Lindy, and the late Valerie and John Ryan for their generous contributions to this project. I also thank former Lord Mayor John Tate and extend that thanks to his wife, Lord Mayoress Cathy Tate, for her long and hard years of fundraising for the gallery. I thank art gallery director, Lauretta Morton, and all the gallery staff for bravely closing the doors while the expansion takes place. It will be so rewarding when it is complete. I thank everyone in the Newcastle arts community for being patient and never giving up on this project. There is so much potential for the arts in Newcastle. I cannot wait to get this project wrapped up so we can start on the next—the Victoria Theatre. Stay tuned, Newcastle.

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (19:41): I congratulate the member for Newcastle on his long-term campaign. I believe since—

Mr Tim Crakanthorp: Since 2004.

Mr STEPHEN BALI: Since 2004. I did pay attention. I heard about it particularly at the 2015 and 2019 elections, but it was 2023 by the time the funding came through. If we want to build a community, we need more than infrastructure and roads. We spend far too much time talking about roads instead of talking about an art gallery, which is as important as infrastructure, but it is building the community around it. In his private member's statement the member for Newcastle acknowledged the Ministers who were involved, the council, the volunteers, the Federal Government, the Newcastle Art Gallery Foundation and the staff—everyone who is working together to try to deliver the project. I congratulate the member for Newcastle. It is important to get the arts on the radar and to give everyone the opportunity to enjoy quality of life.

GENETIC DISCRIMINATION

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (19:43): "What advice do I give my children?" Kristie Ivone, a breast cancer survivor living in Albury, raised that question with me recently. Quoted in *The Border Mail*, Kristie said, "The cruel irony is that having the gene I carry lends itself to developing breast cancer younger, before the regular mammogram screening kicks in." How early in life does the family have this difficult discussion of mortality, treatment, early intervention and eligibility for life insurance? Many nations have been tackling this issue over the past couple of decades. In Australia, genetic discrimination in life insurance underwriting is legal. Section 46 of the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 enables insurers who risk rate their policies to discriminate on the basis of both predictive and diagnostic genetic test results where this decision is based on actuarial or statistical evidence.

Life insurance products, excluding default cover through superannuation, are risk rated. The principle is that the insured must disclose what they know about their health and their family medical history if it might affect their individual risk. Early intervention might save lives, reduce trauma and lead to positive lifestyle changes. What is perhaps not well known is that these issues have been with us for over a decade. Responding to concerns, in 2019 Australia's life insurance industry, through the Financial Services Council [FSC], introduced a partial moratorium on the requirement to disclose genetic test results.

FSC Standard No. 11 ties disclosure by the consumer to levels of benefit. For example, you would not need to disclose a genetic test result to your insurer when lump sum death cover did not exceed \$500,000 or total benefit

per month under any combination of income protection, salary continuance or business expenses cover did not exceed \$4,000. A Federal inquiry into these issues is currently underway, with public submissions having closed on 31 January. The constituent who discussed these issues with me is now advocating for a total moratorium on any requirement to pass results of genetic testing to a life insurance company. She wants it to be mandated by law—as is the situation in Canada—and not managed through self-regulation by the insurance industry.

The Australian moratorium on genetics and life insurance: evaluating policy compared to Parliamentary recommendations regarding genetic discrimination by Jane Tiller, Paul Lacaze and Margaret Otlowski was published in December 2022. The researchers found inter alia that in Australia people are not undertaking genetic tests or participating in scientific research due to concerns about obtaining affordable life insurance. They also found poor awareness and knowledge about the moratorium amongst some stakeholders and that not all life insurers were complying with the standard. The authors noted the Geneva Association document titled *Genetics and Life Insurance: A View Into the Microscope of Regulation* and said it:

... shows that most countries where bans exist have no financial limits at all. Of 20 countries it lists (other than Australia), 13 (65%) do not require disclosure of genetic results to insurers in any circumstances (with no limits) ... Some countries (like Portugal) even ban the collection of family history information. Only four (20%) of the 20 countries have financial limits of any kind.

Research by Amy Fernando, Emma Kondrup and others published in January this year said:

... in jurisdictions where genetic test results are protected, such as France and the United Kingdom, there is no evidence of costs spiraling out of control ...

The Commonwealth is running the review, but I encourage the State Government nonetheless to play a role advocating on behalf of New South Wales citizens for the best outcome, which now, more than ever, must involve government regulation and appropriate encouragement for our community to take full advantage of advances in research, diagnosis and treatment to ensure that opportunities for early intervention are maximised and every advantage is readily available for better health outcomes. When Kristie completed her round of chemotherapy she took her opportunity to ring the bell at the Albury Wodonga Cancer Centre to celebrate the achievement. Now Kristie is ringing bells elsewhere, making a healthy noise for reform of the nation's anti-discrimination laws for genetic and predictive testing. May these reverberations shake things up.

MEDICARE

Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (19:48): On behalf of the Bega electorate, I wish a happy fortieth birthday to Medicare. I sat my HSC in 1975, the year Medibank was delivered by the Whitlam Labor Government after a long and bitter ideological struggle against the Coalition Opposition. The concept of providing the basic right of protection against the financial impact of health care on the most disadvantaged in our society introduced me to a lifelong career in medicine. Its principles of universality, equity and choice, which apply to our other social determinants of health, including the foundations of education, shelter, transport and a protected environment, formed my political perspective. By my intern year in 1981, and after five major policy changes, the Liberal-Nationals Government had finally killed Medibank off. I was studying to become a registrar when Medicare was born, on 1 February 1984, and the same founding principles determined my future career in women's health. In the words of Bob Hawke:

With this historic initiative, all Australians now have a new, simpler and fairer health insurance system—

Medicare has given us a system of medical benefits that provides our out-of-hospital medical services, our diagnostic blood tests and imaging, as well as selected dental and allied health care. It guarantees free treatment for public patients in public hospitals and supports the cost of medical services for private patients in public and private hospitals. It is complemented by the wonderful Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, which subsidises a wide range of pharmaceuticals.

Over 40 years, society has changed. Our population is ageing. It is more diverse in demographics and ethnicity. Women have won great change in the fight for their reproductive rights but still have not fully achieved universality, equity and choice. Others continue to fight for equity of health care in sexuality and gender. We have the options of palliative care and voluntary assisted dying. Our health problems are more complex, and the difficulty of getting timely and affordable primary health care leads to increased demands on our emergency departments, hospital wards and surgical services. Demands, costs and expectations increase. There is a maldistribution of healthcare services in remote, rural and regional areas compared with our metropolitan centres.

But, after 40 years, things are improving. Primary health services are being supported by the Federal Labor Government by increasing the incentives for bulk-billing, particularly in rural and remote areas. The indexation of Medicare rebates has been increased by a historically large amount. Improvements to primary health care include improved networking of individualised, comprehensive, multidisciplinary care as well as telehealth services. Our local State health services need a strong, supported primary healthcare system. Local emergency departments and hospital wards face increased numbers of people whose medical problems have become more

complex through the lack of access to general practitioners. State and Federal governments have combined to establish the successful model of bulk-billed urgent care clinics, which provide health services to the 55 per cent of individuals who do not need to be in an emergency department's waiting room. This has already started locally, with Federal-State cooperation at Batemans Bay Medicare Urgent Care Clinic.

The Bega electorate is fortunate to have excellent services at Bega South East Regional Hospital, which was developed through the merging of the former Bega district and Pambula district hospitals. The Eurobodalla community will be served by an increase in the number, breadth and quality of clinical services provided locally when the single level 4 Eurobodalla hospital is completed. With more than 26,000 emergency department presentations, nearly 1,500 surgical cases, over 11,000 admissions and nearly 320 births per year, the combined clinical activities of the Batemans Bay and Moruya district hospitals will exceed that of South East Regional and Goulburn district hospitals.

A single level 4 Eurobodalla regional hospital will provide an emergency department with onsite specialty assessment, onsite intensive care, access to acute surgery and a full range of emergency procedures, and an emergency short-stay unit. These services will be provided by emergency medicine specialists who are available 24 hours a day, seven days per week, as well as by clinical nurses with advanced skills. The achievement of and commitment to these excellent local health services are the result of the establishment and support of Medicare by former and current Australian Labor governments. As the member for Bega, I am proud to work with the New South Wales Minns Labor Government and my Federal colleagues in the electorates of Eden-Monaro and Gilmore and provide these essential primary and hospital services to our community.

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (19:53): I thank the member for Bega for bringing to our attention the fortieth anniversary of Medicare and its predecessor, Medibank, which was introduced by the Whitlam Government so many years ago—before both our times. The fortieth anniversary is so important to celebrate because it gave the member for Bega his stellar career in health, particularly in women's health. He brings that extra bit of knowledge to this Parliament and he has talked about the different elements of the health system, from free treatment through the Medicare system to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. We have had lots of parliamentary inquiries into remote and regional health, which have identified so many problems. It helps us that the member for Bega has come from the health system. I look forward to having further discussions with him about telehealth and the multidisciplinary approach.

COFFS HARBOUR ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY HONOURS

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (19:54): The Coffs Coast has been fortunate to have many residents feature in the Australia Day Honours list this year. They are from all walks of life and deserve this important recognition for their outstanding service to our community and our nation. Emeritus Professor Gisela Kaplan was recognised as an honorary Member of the Order of Australia, AM, for significant service to science education through research into animal behaviour. She has published many scholarly articles and has authored and co-authored 23 books, many award-winning, and is well respected by her peers. Professor Kaplan's deep affection for nature has seen her undertake many activities outside of academic work. She has volunteered with WIRES for 30 years, raised orphaned nestlings and injured birds to be released back into the wild, and has regularly given her time to advocate for native birds across Australia.

In recognition of his significant service to the community through bushfire governance, research and mentoring roles, Dr Grahame Douglas was named a Member of the Order of Australia, AM. Dr Douglas has been researching and trying to make an impact for more than 30 years in the area of bushfire impacts on improving the resilience of communities, people and the environment. His extensive biography is filled with memberships of land, conservation and wildlife organisations as well as bushfire advisory committees, and he has authored and co-authored numerous papers and publications on solutions for bushfire-prone areas.

Sawtell's Kerry Clancy's dedication to surf lifesaving was recognised with a Medal of the Order of Australia, OAM. She embodies passion, dedication, patience and good humour in the many leadership roles she has held with Surf Life Saving NSW. Kerry has proudly paved the way for female representation in the organisation, being the first woman elected to the North Coast branch and then to the board of Surf Life Saving NSW [SLSNSW]. Kerry has been the director of member services since 2019 and has officiated at country carnivals for 23 years. She has been a life member of SLSNSW since 2014 and has held numerous titles, including deputy president and state councillor.

Joyce Marshall has been teaching the art of bobbin lace-making for almost 50 years. In honour of this and other community work, she was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia, OAM. Her love of lace has prompted her to spend decades teaching, mentoring and encouraging people of all ages. In 1979 Joyce was a founding member of the Australian Lace Guild. She has also been a tireless worker for the Country Women's Association of NSW at Sawtell, Lismore and Glenreagh and has held numerous CWA leadership positions.

The inspirational Noel Bultitude was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia, OAM, for service to the Woolgoolga community, most particularly with the Rural Fire Service. He was among the founding members of the Woolgoolga RFS where, at 89, he is still an active member. During his 75 years of active service, Noel has served in various leadership roles, including 14 years as captain. He is now the permit issuing officer. Noel still regularly attends incidents with the RFS and is the very definition of a community hero. Another dedicated RFS volunteer, Keith Driver, has been awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal for his remarkable 47-year contribution and leadership. Moving to the Coffs Coast in 1991, Keith joined the Lowanna brigade, bringing with him extensive experience in forest and grassland firefighting. Since 2008 he has been a member of the senior leadership team and remains an operational member of the Lowanna brigade.

Serving with Fire and Rescue NSW since 1989, Coffs Harbour fire station's Sally Foote is a recipient of the Australian Fire Service Medal. Sally has shown exemplary leadership in challenging circumstances in her career. She was the first female in Fire and Rescue NSW to reach the rank of station officer. Sally is considered a passionate advocate for female firefighters within Fire and Rescue NSW and a champion of diversity and inclusion. The Coffs-Clarence Police District Commander, Superintendent Joanne Schultz, was awarded the Australian Police Medal. Superintendent Schultz joined the NSW Police Force in 1988 and is highly regarded for her exceptional leadership, particularly in times of emergency or disaster. She wants to pass on what she has learnt to the next generation of police. I thank and congratulate all of these award recipients for making a positive difference to our community and our nation.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (19:58): It has been almost a year since the New South Wales Labor Government was elected to take on the large and daunting issues left behind after more than a decade of mismanagement by the previous Government. While the previous Government chased expensive, flashy boondoggles, which saw budget blowouts and schedule overruns, the day-to-day concerns of many New South Wales residents were ignored to the point of neglect. The impacts of that neglect can be seen in every part of the State, with the rising cost of living hitting every person. Nowhere is that more keenly felt than in housing. I know that because my constituents come and speak to my office every day about it.

There can be no doubt that New South Wales is in the midst of a housing crisis. Rents are spiking. They are eating up more of people's incomes and they are putting upward pressure on the cost of living. Rising property prices have left an entire generation feeling as though they have been priced out of the market forever. The neglect of the State's public housing stock has seen some of the most vulnerable people in our community in insecure, poorly maintained, ageing stock or facing homelessness.

Addressing an issue of that magnitude takes time, but as we approach the first anniversary of the election of the New South Wales Labor Government I inform the House about what two of the Government's achievements mean for my electorate of Charlestown—the rollout of Homes NSW and the Transport Oriented Development State Environmental Planning Policy. Individually those decisions will make important strides towards a stronger, fairer housing system for renters and buyers in the private market, as well as for public housing tenants. Together the reforms will mean a seismic change for the better, and they will create downward pressure on the cost of living. Last week the establishment of Homes NSW was officially announced. It was a great day for this Government, a great day for New South Wales and—most importantly for me—a great day for many of my constituents in Charlestown. Social housing maintenance and access is the number one issue my electorate office in Charlestown deals with on a day-to-day basis.

The New South Wales public housing system has been broken for a long time. With responsibilities split between a number of departments and agencies, there are too many opportunities for communication breakdown, which creates too many cracks for individual cases to fall through. At a time when the need for social and affordable housing has never been greater, so many public housing tenants find navigating the byzantine system almost impossible. Now the New South Wales Labor Government is ending that broken model, bringing together all those various agencies into Homes NSW, which will have people at the front and centre of its focus. This major reform was a key Labor election promise, and it will go right to addressing one of the major drivers behind the housing crisis. I am so proud to be part of a government that is putting people back at the heart of public housing and ensuring they have safe, secure roofs over their heads.

The formation of Homes NSW follows a reform announced last year—that is, the Transport Oriented Development Program. Property prices in the Charlestown electorate have skyrocketed in recent years, and I know we are not alone in that regard. The median house price in the 2290 postcode, which includes a broad swathe of my electorate, has climbed from \$535,000 in 2016 to \$877,000 in 2023. The Transport Oriented Development Program allows for the construction of 138,000 new homes within 400 metres of town centres and railway stations across the State, including two within the Charlestown electorate: Adamstown and Kotara.

It is clear that housing supply has not kept up with demand and that there is not enough of the types of housing that appeal to many in the twenty-first century. The sites selected for the program have infrastructure to build on. They are close to transport links and amenities including shops, schools and parks and they allow for more essential workers to live a reasonable distance from where they do their important work. It is about promoting housing choice to allow home buyers to find the type of property that works for them and their lifestyle. It is about getting people into homes. I am proud to be part of the team delivering the reforms for New South Wales and I cannot wait to see the benefits they will bring.

MILITARY SERVICE

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (20:04): This morning I saw my son, Gabe, off to the army. It was a proud moment for me because he is following a bit of a family tradition of military service and also following a long tradition of military service across Barwon. I served in the army—in 6RAR, Support Company, in reconnaissance sniper platoon. Thankfully, I never went to war. I was following in the footsteps of my father, Royal Maurice Butler, born 1930, who served in the 2nd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, fighting at Kapyong during the Korean War. He ended up as TPI, or totally and permanently incapacitated. After the war, he rarely spoke about his experiences, and he kept to himself the demons that he continued to fight. He belonged to that old school of men, who did not really like to talk about their service—what happened on a tour of duty stayed on tour.

His father, my grandfather, had an unusual service record. Francis "Frank" William Butler joined the army in World War I, lying about his age to get in. His father, Frank Sr, died in a cave-in while tunnelling for clay at a brickyard in 1909, so Frank Jr's mother wrote the note giving him permission to join. Sent to France to reinforce troops battling the German spring offensive in 1918, he spent less than two months at the front before being sent back to Australia, with a discharge, for being too young. But he had a second crack at military service, this time lowering his age—slightly—to enlist for World War II in 1942.

He was assigned to the 2/2 HQ Guard Battalion. The Guard Battalions were not sent to the front but stood guard over headquarters in the rear. For those duties, the army used their older recruits, who became known as the "Olds and Bolds". Frank was discharged in December 1943. I have recently been looking into the family history of military service with great interest to see other forebears who have joined up. Temporary Speaker Barr may remember that in World War I they often would take groups of men from regional communities, and they would take those—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr): I am not that old.

Mr ROY BUTLER: Know your history, Mr Temporary Speaker. They would take those men and put them in the same unit. If they ended up in a really horrible battle, what that meant was that almost a whole generation of young men from a community could be wiped out. In World War II, we learnt our lesson and we started mixing them up so that we did not end up taking out a whole generation of men from communities. While my family history of service gives me a great sense of pride in seeing my son go off for what will be a life-changing experience, I am always aware that military service involves risk and danger. Even in training or exercises, recruits and soldiers deal with equipment, machines, vehicles and weapons that can still pose a threat. Above all, there is a chance of being sent to serve in a conflict or as part of a peacekeeping force in some dangerous world hotspot. Given the fighting going on overseas in the Middle East and in Ukraine, that seems even more of a possibility.

But it is the willingness to risk their lives when their country calls, to stand against invaders, terrorists and tyrants, and to restore or preserve the peace that makes people who volunteer to serve so admirable. They effectively sign a blank cheque for their country, knowing that they might pay with their life. The people of Barwon have long been willing to make that sacrifice. If you travel to Barwon—and I urge everyone to do so; I know that Temporary Speaker Barr has before—in almost every town you will see a memorial to those who have served and those who lost their lives while serving in the military. Those memorials are often at the centre of town. They are usually striking landmarks, well maintained and a community focal point—a place to gather, not just on Anzac Day or Remembrance Day but all year.

Many, like my son, grew up in the country. This meant that they were mostly hardy, well versed in practical things such as riding a horse, handling a firearm and being able to survive in tough conditions. Some stories of service are well known, like Gilgandra's Cooee Marchers, a group of 35 men who decided to march over 400 kilometres to Sydney to enlist in October 1915. They were inspired by a recruitment poster that read, "A call from the Dardanelles: Coo-ee—Won't you come?" Hundreds joined them along the way. By the time they arrived in Sydney, there were over 300. Monuments in the town honour the marchers and the 41 of those who died in World War I. Among those who survived the war was James Gerald Cameron from my hometown of Mendooran, who fought in France and was awarded a Distinguished Conduct Medal.

But there are also some lesser known stories, like the three Aboriginal Knight brothers—Albert, Bill and Joseph. Born on a property near Louth, they each joined at different times but all served their country well. Albert won a Distinguished Conduct Medal. Bill won the Military Medal. Unfortunately, Joseph became ill serving on the Western Front and died after being sent to England for treatment. Then there is Alexander Buckley, born at Warren, who grew up on his parents' property "Homebush" near Gulargambone. He was only 24 when he enlisted in February 1916. He was sent to the Western Front, where he fought in the Battle of the Somme in 1916. In 1918 he was involved in action near Mont Saint-Quentin, where he personally cleared out a nest of machine gunners, but he was killed rushing a bridge at Péronne at the age of 27. He was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross. There are too many stories to tell. They have all become part of the great brotherhood and sisterhood of people who have served. I encourage all young people to consider the military as an early career option.

CREATIVE COMMUNITIES

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (20:09): For decades Western Sydney artists and creatives have needed to travel or move to the east to tell their stories, perform, work and display their art at our great cultural institutions. The audiences of Western Sydney have needed to travel east too. Despite having a quarter of the New South Wales population, Western Sydney has traditionally received a fraction of the arts funding. That needs to change and it will change. The New South Wales Government has unveiled Creative Communities, which is a landmark policy recognising the vital role that arts, culture and the creative industries plays in New South Wales. Its 10-year vision recognises that the heart and soul of our State lies in its vibrant arts, culture and ever-evolving creative industries. We are a vibrant tapestry of voices and stories, and Creative Communities aims to amplify them all.

Importantly, the Government listened to the Western Sydney Arts Alliance—independent organisations, artists and collectives; State cultural institutions; local government arts centres, galleries and organisations; and the universities across Western Sydney. They submitted a strong case for support, and I am pleased to advise that they were encouraged by the recognition of Western Sydney as a vibrant creative region that is valued for its contribution to the State and the nation, and the recognition of the alliance itself as an important part of the arts ecology.

Creative Communities builds upon Western Sydney's artistic strengths. The New South Wales Government will increase support for Western Sydney artists, arts organisations and creative communities. Powerhouse Parramatta will develop a major multi-year Western Sydney initiative for writers and writing with the Sydney Writers' Festival, the Western Sydney University and the City of Parramatta. When the Powerhouse Parramatta opens in 2025, it will include the Western Sydney HipHop Archive, in collaboration with 4ESydney and Blacktown Arts. The New South Wales Government will invest \$160 million in cultural infrastructure in Western Sydney, including building a lyric theatre as part of the Riverside Theatres redevelopment, a 350-seat theatre in Campbelltown and a new cultural centre in Blacktown. The strategy will also deliver the final business case for the Roxy Theatre in Parramatta.

New South Wales hosts the largest cultural workforce in Australia, boasting diverse voices and stories woven into the very fabric of our identity, and Creative Communities recognises that. The Government is putting First Nations first. First Nations stories are not just important; they are foundational. We are embracing all creativity. From seasoned artists to budding community groups, we see and value every single creative contribution, and we value culture for all. Access to arts and culture is not a privilege; it is a fundamental right.

Whether people live in bustling Sydney or a regional community, Creative Communities opens doors to experiences that enrich their lives, strengthen their communities and spark their creativity. It is delivering sustainable growth through equitable funding distribution, coupled with protecting cultural assets to ensure a thriving sector for generations to come, and we are sharing our stories globally. It is time the world sees what we already know: New South Wales is a cultural powerhouse, and nowhere more so than in Western Sydney, with great stories to tell and incredible talent and creativity.

I am so proud that Sara Mansour has been appointed to the Sydney Opera House Trust. She is an incredibly gifted poet, lawyer and Western Sydney community leader. She is also the youngest person ever appointed to the trust. As co-founder and artistic director of the Bankstown Poetry Slam, in 2022 Sara programmed and directed Brave New Word, a poetry festival for youth that culminated in Australia's first national youth poetry slam. Closer to home, one of Australia's most successful cultural exports, Paul Hogan, grew up in Granville. There are too many stories to tell about his cheeky antics before he was famous. More recently, A.Girl grew up in South Granville. She is a musician, singer, songwriter and rapper who won Next Big Thing at the 2019 FBi SMAC Awards, performed on triple j's *Like a Version* and *Bars of Steel* and won triple j Unearthed. She has gone from strength to strength ever since, releasing her most recent single, *Recognise*, in December.

I also mention Granville's Arab Theatre Studio, an independent organisation of contemporary artists and creative producers. Their vision is to continue their collective history of developing Arab-centred critical

conversations and telling those stories. Parramatta Artists' Studios is also about to move to Granville. Its work reflects the dynamic and evolving arts scene within Parramatta, providing a window into the creative spirit of Western Sydney. It opened in 2006 and I am delighted that it is taking applications for its new Granville site on Bridge Street.

Locally, the new Merrylands Civic Square includes artworks from many Western Sydney artists, including First Nations designers Dennis Goulding and Adam Laws, as well as Marian Abboud from my electorate. Her olive branch imagery on tiles reflects distant homelands, the culinary life of Merrylands and the resilience of our local community. The artwork on the pavers from Reza Taghipour reminds us of the local area's industrial heritage and our shared humanity and connections. Western Sydney and all of New South Wales have so much to offer creatively. The Government is celebrating that and supporting it for the next decade.

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (20:14): I congratulate the member for Granville. Her statement articulated her knowledge of the various council areas across Western Sydney, whether it is Parramatta, the mighty Blacktown or the Cumberland area, where the arts have been underfunded for over a decade now. Many statistics show that Western Sydney receives only about 10 per cent of the entire arts funding, yet half the population lives there. I commend the member for Granville for her hard work over many years connecting with the arts community, because our community in Western Sydney is about more than just sports. It is important to have artistic attributes and to further develop people's minds and talents in various ways. I thank the member for Granville for her passion for the arts.

HOLSWORTHY ELECTORATE LEISURE AMENITIES

Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy) (20:15): I discuss the need for improved amenity in Holsworthy and south-west Sydney. The muggy and hot summer we have experienced so far has reminded us of the need to provide our constituents a place for leisure and relaxation and to cool off. Both the Liverpool and Sutherland shire sides of my electorate have limited options when it comes to having a dip. Liverpool has the Whitlam Leisure Centre, which is more than five decades old, and the Holsworthy swimming pool, which is not open for leisure, only swimming lessons. In the Sutherland shire, there is the Engadine Leisure Centre and, of course, Cronulla Beach, a half-hour drive away.

It is a cliché when governments say they want to make a region the best place to live, work and raise a family. But in truth the only way they can do that is through economic opportunity, access to education and amenity for everyone to enjoy. The Government has opened Penrith Beach at Penrith Lakes and has committed to opening the Prospect Reservoir to the public. However, south-west Sydney has been forgotten. People in my community need to travel in excess of 20 kilometres to enjoy the water. I have long mentioned both in this place and before my time in State Parliament the need for amenity in and around Holsworthy. It is not hard to see the potential of the Georges River, weaving its way from Casula through to Sandy Point via Liverpool, Chipping Norton, Moorebank, Hammondville, Voyager Point and Pleasure Point. There are so many benefits to a boardwalk there. There is currently no walkable connection between the Points, being Sandy Point, Pleasure Point and Voyager Point.

Despite their proximity and commonality of being along the Georges River, the only way to connect is either by boat or along Heathcote Road. That places further undue pressure on Heathcote Road, which is already a very dangerous road to drive on. If those suburbs were linked by a boardwalk along the foreshore and connected to the East Hills footbridge, it would ease congestion and traffic from Holsworthy train station, as residents from the Points would walk to East Hills station. Heading further north, there is the potential to link a pathway under the M5 Motorway along Brighton Lakes golf course, with links to Lieutenant Cantello Reserve in Holsworthy and Hammondville Park, which can connect to the proposed sporting precinct. From there, the marina in Georges Cove would be the next place of attraction, with easy access to and from Georges Fair. At that point, a person would find themselves at Newbridge Road, where a connection can be made up to Lina's Beach in Chipping Norton.

Once they reach Chipping Norton Lake, there are a variety of activities, including a playground and four beaches, which loop around opposite to Warwick Farm Racecourse. This should be a vibrant hub for leisure during the summer, with pristine beaches that are certainly under-patronised. Angle Park can be linked up to Chauvel Park in Chipping Norton, which has an established pathway all the way to Haigh Park, where the proposed Moore Point development sits, which will connect once again to the Georges River past the current Paper Mill development and to Casula Parklands. It is a vision—one that will not be fulfilled overnight. Lining the pathway with activations such as open-air fitness hubs and playgrounds will promote healthier lifestyles and turn the Georges River and surrounds into a destination for wellbeing, relaxation and family days out. The activation of our river foreshore is not just about transforming physical spaces; it is about building a community that thrives on connectivity, wellbeing and shared experiences.

Connecting suburbs in south-west Sydney is so important. We should take every opportunity possible to build a future where public and active transport is encouraged. The former Government committed \$10 million to that project, but unfortunately the current Government does not see it as a priority. By envisioning and implementing a comprehensive plan that utilises this precious space, we have the chance to create pathways and walkways that not only connect us physically but also foster a sense of unity and togetherness.

WESTERN SYDNEY AIRPORT

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (20:19): I talk about the recent environmental impact statement [EIS], for which submissions are closed, relating to the Western Sydney airport. It was a rare occasion for people from Western Sydney to finally provide some feedback about the airport. My private member's statement is not going to reopen the debate on whether we should or should not have the airport. As we all know, it will be operating within two years or so. My private member's statement is to provide feedback on the environmental impact statement. It explored a whole range of issues such as noise, environment, the business case et cetera. Minister Catherine King today announced that something like 8,000 submissions were received about the EIS. Even though Western Sydney has 25 electorates, I am happy to say that, from my understanding, at least 600 of the submissions that raised key concerns came from my electorate of Blacktown.

Those concerns focus predominantly on noise and the economic statements that were produced in the EIS, as well as other issues. One thing that we need to look at is the way the EIS is structured when dealing with noise. It is generally focused on stage one, the smallest part of the airport, when it will have 10 million passengers or less. But the advantages and economic bonuses that are talked about will occur only when the airport has 82 million passenger movements. We are told, "We'll have 63,000 jobs generated from this." If we think about it, that is only 1,500 jobs a year that will come out of this massive investment with all its noise and problems. Yet the City of Blacktown currently grows at 2,500 jobs, without an airport. Every investment counts, I suppose, even if it is a vertical bus stop.

With 82 million passenger movements, significant cargo haulage, 370,000 air traffic movements—that is 1,000 flights a day—a lot of concerns are raised when the only plan is to transport fuel by truck. The other element we are worried about is the operation of the airport—east versus west. Why is it that Mascot has flight restrictions of 80 flights per hour and a curfew from 11.00 p.m. to 5.00 a.m. but Western Sydney airport has no restrictions whatsoever? Might we be entitled to a two-hour sleep at night—perhaps 1.00 a.m. to 3.00 a.m.? Maybe three hours? We need to look at the equity between the two airports.

The United Kingdom Civil Aviation Authority has found that noise levels between 45 and 60 decibels will cause problems. So it is confusing that the EIS has indicated noise levels at 60 decibels and above, which will cause significant concerns for public health such as increased rates of heart attacks, increased rates of hypertension leading to strokes, increased levels of cardiovascular disease, and increased annoyance and psychological health issues. It will have adverse impacts on children's cognitive learning, particularly for younger children in preschool. There is evidence that long-term aircraft noise has a harmful effect on memory, sustained attention, reading comprehension and reading ability for children. All those issues need to be looked at. We should not be worrying only that the noise level will be at 60 decibels. Children will be exposed for a long time; therefore, we need to make sure our schools are safe and that children in Western Sydney do not fall further behind.

We should not just focus on the flight paths in stage one, because as the airport expands the flight paths will change. We need to lock in the rules today that will apply into the future. Let us face it, some 82 million passenger movements are anticipated. That is 34 per cent more passenger movements than occurred in 2023 at the world's largest airport, Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport in the United States, and 26 million more passenger movements than occurred at the second largest airport, Dubai International Airport. There is so much that needs to be examined about the airport. I thank the Federal Labor Government for finally and for the first time addressing the EIS and seeking feedback. I hope it takes on board what we have raised.

TRIBUTE TO AUNTY VIOLET LOUSICK

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (20:24): I pay tribute to Aunty Violet Lousick and recognise her remarkable life and the significant impact she had on her community. Sadly, she passed away at the end of last year. I was lucky enough to know Aunty Vi personally, and I really enjoyed our chats. I got to know more of her story a few years ago when I included her as one of the feature contributors in a radio special on Wellington and its Indigenous leaders, heritage and future. Vi was one of the most well-known and loved Aboriginal leaders in the Wellington community, where she lived for over 60 years. Born in Narromine in 1928, Violet Rose West lived on an Aboriginal mission at Peak Hill with her family. As a young girl, Violet and her mother spent many years moving around the Dandaloo area, mostly because of the concerns her mum had about her and Vi's light skin.

Vi talked to me about that time. She said that her mum was really worried that if she was found, she would be a prime candidate for removal and assimilation into white Australian society. Vi talked about that in an emotional way, and it gave me a new understanding about what somebody like her went through at that time. That threat obviously meant lots of moving around and plenty of tense situations, including the need to hide. As she told me those stories, they became very real for her again. At the age of 14, after moving to Dubbo, Vi started work at Dubbo hospital. Violet met her future husband, Bill Lousick, who was of Chinese heritage, in a market garden over the river, where plenty of Indigenous people in the community worked.

Settling in Wellington around 1945, Bill and Vi married and went on to raise their seven children there. They operated a market garden, providing produce for the local community and further afield, but also providing an important source of employment for the local Indigenous community. It was lovely to see Violet's face come alive when she recalled those days. She truly loved supporting the community and providing employment opportunities. She loved the work too, and there were plenty of funny stories along the way, including her driving adventures. One of those stories included her approaching the local policeman for a licence despite the fact that she had been driving for quite some time and he had assumed she already had her licence—times were different then, and it all worked out for the best.

Vi's passion for gardening went beyond work. For her, it was a major personal hobby. She described it as a profound connection with the earth that allowed her to nurture life, from seeds to plants, reflecting her deep appreciation for nature and the cycles of life. I remember pulling up in my ute near where she was working in the garden to have a yarn with her while she did a bit of weeding or watering. She would tell me what she was up to and what was working and what was not. It was always delightful. The close relationship between Indigenous and Chinese families in Wellington, which is attributed to both Violet and Bill's heritage, highlights the cultural diversity and harmony within parts of our community. Their influence undoubtedly played a role in fostering unity and understanding among diverse cultural groups across the region.

Vi's commitment to the wellbeing of Wellington and its residents was highlighted by her collaboration with Aunty Joyce Williams in establishing the Aboriginal medical service. Aunty Joyce was another of the amazing women I interviewed about her role in the development of Wellington and her close partnership with Vi. The medical service sought to address the healthcare needs of the community, reflecting Vi's dedication to enhancing the quality of life of Indigenous people. Over the years Vi took part in many events celebrating First Nations culture, including the Baiyai Library Day. She was a great storyteller. Along with other Elders, Vi helped to preserve traditions and contributed to the broader community's appreciation for Indigenous heritage.

She attended the Wellington Weaving the Net Closing Forum, focusing on child safety and protection. Her participation in the development of the Wellington Plan emphasised the importance of communication. She was a member of the Wellington Mayiny Elders Group and worked with Wellington Information and Neighbourhood Services Inc. Later in life, her role at the Wellington hospital, providing assistance and support to the Indigenous community, again underscored her commitment to ensuring that everyone, regardless of background, was getting the highest quality health care possible, which was a passion of hers. The legacy that Aunty Vi has left is apparent not only through her numerous contributions to the community but also in her family. She leaves behind grandchildren, great-grandchildren and even a great-great-grandchild. Her impact on Wellington and its people will be remembered and cherished for generations to come. Vale, Aunty Vi Lousick.

CAMDEN CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (20:30): As part of the yearly Australia Day honours in Camden, one person is chosen and awarded Camden Citizen of the Year. The Citizen of the Year award recognises a local, active member of the community who strives every day to make a difference. I acknowledge this year's Camden Citizen of the Year, Denise Pritchard. Denise is a hardworking member of the community and is a deserving recipient of the award. She has been a proactive member of the Camden-Wollondilly Domestic Violence Committee for over 10 years, contributing to projects throughout that time. Denise was heavily involved in setting up Blue Wren House – Camden Women's Shelter, and soon became chair of the board.

Blue Wren House is a community-based, not-for-profit, non-government charitable institution that provides relief and support to women and children in need who are suffering, experiencing or escaping from homelessness due to domestic and family violence. Blue Wren House provides up to three months support, allowing vulnerable women and children to be supported and get back on their feet. Denise put it best when she described Blue Wren House:

A safe place, to rest, restore, recover. A safe place to take a breath and plan for a new life. A safe place with good people to hold the hand of women and children at the most vulnerable time of their lives.

As chair, Denise oversees the running of Blue Wren House to ensure it operates smoothly, while engaging local community volunteer groups to provide support for vulnerable women and children. She has made sure that Blue

Wren House is the best shelter it can be. Blue Wren House is holding its annual high tea on Friday 22 March between 11.30 a.m. and 2.30 p.m. at Camden Valley Inn, 290 Remembrance Drive, Cawdor. The event will include guest speakers, a silent auction, a raffle and a performance by acoustic duo The Honey Sippers. I encourage everyone who is available to attend this wonderful event and to support Blue Wren House and all the hard work that it does in public view and behind the scenes. I know Denise is very proud and has worked hard.

Denise is truly an inspirational role model because of the work she continues to do in the community. She has been described by others as patient, organised and someone who gets on with the job. Denise shows us all that no matter who you are, if you work hard and dedicate yourself, anyone can achieve what they set out to do and make a huge difference in society. There are not too many people like Denise—people who are primarily there for others and will stop at nothing to ensure that the vulnerable are cared for, protected and have a place to go. For over a decade Denise has worked in the community, supporting the most vulnerable and providing invaluable work in our society.

I was lucky to be sat next to Denise during our Australia Day luncheon. She is an incredibly humble and self-effacing woman who was quite shocked that she was receiving this recognition in the community. It just proves how much she deserves the recognition. It was lovely to meet her husband and son as well, and discuss with them the effort that she has put in. I once again congratulate Denise Pritchard, a true local legend, on all the fantastic work she does. She is a deserving recipient of the Camden Citizen of the Year award.

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (20:34): I highlight the excellent work of the member for Camden and congratulate her on recognising people in our communities who are heroes. It was lovely to hear the incredibly inspiring story of Ms Pritchard. In particular, it was wonderful when the member talked about the sacrifices Ms Pritchard makes, particularly her line that it is not just what is done publicly to support women fleeing family and domestic violence but also what is done quietly. Just providing that support is incredible. Every single member would say we have so many unsung heroes across our electorates, but a great local member acknowledges those heroes. All strength to the member for Camden and her community.

WATER MANAGEMENT

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (20:34): I speak about the shocking crisis facing New South Wales rural and regional communities. If you live in Sydney or its surrounding suburbs, it can be easy to forget the incredible struggles faced by families in rural and regional New South Wales. I see these struggles every day in my electorate of Murray, as good, honest, hardworking families have their lives torn apart by a Federal government that is willing to sacrifice regional communities for the sake of politics.

Right now the Federal Government is hell-bent on trying to buy an additional 450 gegalitres of water for what is dishonestly called "environmental water". Sounds pretty good, right? It might sound good, but it's actually a con job. A shocking amount of this so-called environmental water is not actually going to help the environment. This is the dirty little secret of the Federal Government and South Australia. Premier Minns has been duped. We have all been duped. This so-called environmental water, which Tanya Plibersek brags about and South Australian politicians constantly ask for, is not actually helping the environment. The truth is that it is being taken from New South Wales communities to artificially fill up South Australia's lower lakes with river water all year round. What happens to that river water? Eventually it evaporates, and some gets washed out to sea.

Here is the truly shocking thing: These lower lakes are not meant to be filled with just river water. They are meant to be a mixture of river water and seawater. They are at the mouth of the Murray-Darling Basin, where the river meets the sea. For tens of thousands of years these lakes were a mixture of river water and seawater. That was until the 1920s and '30s, when engineers decided to build seven large barrages to keep the seawater out of the lower lakes. At the time, they thought it would give them easier access to fresh water. Instead, it saw the water levels in the lower lakes drop away.

To keep the lake water high enough to ensure the rich and powerful South Australians who live by the lakes have nice water views and a place to moor their boats, the Murray-Darling Basin Authority has been taking water from communities upstream in South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales. The Commonwealth wants this to happen because it is worried about losing votes in South Australia. It is all about politics—and politics and water do not mix. New South Wales communities lose water so a select group of South Australians can enjoy lifestyles of the rich and famous and Federal governments can win elections.

To find out more, two weeks ago I got in my car and drove to South Australia to see for myself what was going on. I met with experts, South Australian fishermen, farmers and Indigenous representatives. Too many decisions about the Murray-Darling Basin are made by politicians and bureaucrats who rarely leave their offices and do not seem to live in the real world. Believe me, in the real world water is precious. It cannot be wasted.

That water could be used to grow food to feed the 27 million Australians who now live here or the millions around the world who want and need food from Australian farmers. Certainly it should not be wasted in South Australia's fake lakes, which are artificially filled with our river water.

The lower lakes hold a staggering amount of water: 1.8 million megalitres. For city people, I should explain that a megalitre is 1 million litres. So 1.8 million megalitres is an extraordinary amount of water. While I was in South Australia, everyone I spoke to believed the Lower Lakes should be returned to their natural state as an estuarine system with a mixture of fresh water and sea water. South Australian farmers, lake experts, historians and Indigenous people all told me that the fake lakes and the barrages have destroyed the world-famous Coorong—and, having seen the Coorong in the past fortnight, I sadly have to agree. New South Wales has been deceived, and I call on Premier Minns to help end the madness right now.

GOSFORD ELECTORATE WATER SAFETY

LOUISE LAMBETH

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (20:40): I talk tonight about water safety in the beautiful electorate of Gosford on the Central Coast. I thank the Minister for Transport and her fabulous team from Maritime for the efforts they have made with jet ski safety blitzes up and down the New South Wales coast. I am not necessarily a fan of jet skis, but it is great that 30 per cent of new boat owners in New South Wales are jet ski riders. A lot of jet ski riders come to the Central Coast from the electorate of the member for Lakemba, which is great, but there are some frustrations and a little bit of conflict between swimmers in our waterways and jet ski users. The jet ski safety blitz was great because it brought out boating service officers, maritime experts and police to educate people about the rules around jet skis, particularly in the Ettalong Channel, and the community were most grateful. I really appreciate their efforts and the involvement of the water police.

But it was also a tragic day. Two jet ski riders rescued a man and his son who were being swept out in the channel. Unfortunately, despite the efforts of the people from Maritime who tried to resuscitate him, the father drowned that day. That family could not have had better care than the supervision they received from the NSW Maritime team, but it was actually jet ski riders from the community who made the rescue. Once again, I offer my condolences to that beautiful family. No-one expects to lose a loved one. I think it sends a really clear message to swim between the flags.

My next celebratory comment is for Louise Lambeth, a long-term member of the Ocean Beach Surf Life Saving Club and the Gosford Woman of the Year. She is woman of the year because she has developed the Taking it to the Beach program, which educates beachgoers to stop, look and plan how to be safe anytime they are at the beach. She has been voluntarily running information sessions at Ocean Beach and at Pearl Beach, which is an unpatrolled beach, teaching people to be more aware when using our waterways. She conducted eight information sessions for large groups, individuals and families during the past school holidays.

Louise has also written three fantastic books. Her first book, *Annie and the Waves*, is about swimming between the flags and our fantastic, world-class surf lifesaving movement. Her next book was aimed at the multicultural community and educating people about the importance of safety when swimming in freshwater rivers, which is fantastic. Her newest book called *Tight Lines* is aimed at families and teaches kids to be safe when rock fishing. In reality, many members of our multicultural community do not have the same beach safety history that Aussie kids grow up with. A rock fishing safety story is a great way for kids to pass on to their parents the risks involved in fishing from the rocks.

I think the Gosford electorate has the best waterways in New South Wales, and I invite everybody to come up to the fantastic Ocean Beach and Umina Beach. Our surf clubs are absolutely brilliant. They have great interactions with Wet 'n' Wild Sydney, educating people who live in Western Sydney about surf safety. We also have the beautiful Pearl Beach—I am a little biased because I swim there most days when I get the chance. We also have the lovely Patonga Beach and the fantastic Brisbane Water. Our waterway flows under the Rip Bridge and down the Ettalong Channel—I am thankful for the fantastic dredging that is going on there. Brisbane Water is a magnificent waterway that enters into Deerubbin, which is the Aboriginal name for the mighty Hawkesbury River. We also have the Deerubbin car park. The community around Brooklyn and Mooney Mooney worked really hard to provide that great car parking facility, from which lots of boaters and fishers from Sydney can access the beautiful Hawkesbury.

Another important group that is looking after our waterways is Jono and his team from Clean4shore. They have recently done a massive blitz on Narara Creek—there have been some homeless living there—and cleaned up lots of the rubbish there. Jono does an amazing job taking kids from schools across my electorate and the electorate of The Entrance, as well as kids from Sydney schools who are not necessarily connected to the water,

out onto the waterways to help clean up the rubbish that has been left behind. Return and Earn has made a big impact so there are fewer bottles in the water. Let us do our best to keep our waterways safe and clean.

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (20:45): I have to say, apart from my electorate of Bankstown, the second best electorate in the State would have to be Gosford, represented by an outstanding MP. What the member spoke about, at its heart, was education: educating people how to best use our waterways. Everybody loves a day out on the water, whether it is having a swim at the beach or in the river, boating or jetskiing. But we want people to be safe. We have had a pretty tragic summer in terms of the number of fatalities in the water. It is always a reminder for people to be careful, to know their ability and to be as sensible as possible. I take this opportunity to thank the many volunteers who man our waterways and protect them, particularly those in Surf Life Saving NSW, as well as Marine Rescue volunteers. I also acknowledge Royal Life Saving volunteers and Maritime NSW. Education is at the very heart. We do not want people's great day at the beach to become the worst day for their family.

WORKING FROM HOME

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (20:46): Working from home has been embraced by the people of my electorate and the people of the Central Coast. The catalyst for working from home was of course the COVID pandemic and the stay at home orders which were in place at the time. What enabled it to happen so easily for my community was all the work that had been done by the Rudd Labor Government on the National Broadband Network. Members will remember the great controversy at the time. Those opposite and Malcolm Turnbull were talking about the private sector delivering broadband on a market-driven basis. Labor said it needed to be done by the Government and delivered to everybody's home. Because of that and that choice by the Australian people, most people in my electorate have fibre to the home, which made working from home and connecting to their workplace as seamless as it could possibly be during the COVID period.

The figures speak for themselves. The 2016 census indicated that out of a workforce of about 140,000 people on the Central Coast, only 7,113 worked from home. In 2021 during the COVID period, the workforce was about 150,000 and 38,433 people were working from home. The reality is that a lot of those people are still working from home; 70 per cent of Central Coast workers now either work from home within the region or travel within the region to work within the Central Coast. That is a great social change on the Central Coast. As someone who has lived there—not for as long as some of my constituents but for long enough—I am old enough to remember the industrial period when work was Monday to Friday. We bought a weekly ticket on a Sunday to avoid the queues on a Monday. We had our carriage on the railway car where we met the people we knew were going to be on that carriage and we socialised with them to and from work. We knew our workday would have two hours either side on the train travelling to and from work.

We might have some nostalgic memories of that but it was tough at the time. It was something that could only be done before starting a family. Fortunately, we have moved on from that on the Central Coast. Technology has made it. One of the good outcomes of the COVID period was forcing employers to understand that their workers would still deliver, and in many cases deliver better than they had been delivering in the past, but doing it from home. There are a lot of benefits. The results of a survey undertaken by Central Coast Council in 2020 showed that \$113 million each year is lost from the Central Coast by people leaving the area to work and spending their money through the day somewhere else. Another consideration is the emotional and social toll of being away from family, which contributes to negativity. There are some threats, though, to working from home and this change in our work-life culture. There are growing reports in the media of employers forcing people to return to the workplace, driven by that age-old concern held by bosses that their workforce is not working unless they can see them working.

Large institutions such as Origin Energy, Suncorp and ANZ are trying to link remuneration with time in the office. We need to resist that as a Parliament and as a society because working from home and not being in the workplace all the time is working for our community. Most industrial regulation these days is Commonwealth driven. In 2022 Federal Labor introduced some expanded flexible working rules which enabled a larger group of workers to request working from home. But it is still a limited number. Eligible workers are parents with school-age children, people with a disability, carers, the over-55s and domestic violence victims. That cuts out a whole bunch of the workforce who do not have the right to ask for the option of working from home. My Federal colleagues need to do more to support that. We need to maintain the better world that we have been able to create by having more people working from home and near to where they live.

AUSTRALIA DAY HONOURS LIST

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (20:51): I feel, on a daily basis, that I won the lottery at birth by being born an Australian. There is no greater day to celebrate and recognise all that is Australia, throughout

our history and the many iterations of this nation, than on Australia Day. We have such good fortune and we need to reflect on the history of whose shoulders we rest. Modern Australia has an Aboriginal heritage, a British foundation and a multicultural character. We honour the ancestors who were the custodians of this ancient continent, we pay tribute to those forefathers who enshrined freedom, fairness and unity in our Constitution and we look to the future that all of the new Australians who come from across many different seas bring to our nation, our national fabric and our identity.

On Australia Day we also welcome many new citizens to bless our nation. Their skills, experience, values and culture will enrich our country. This year I was excited to join and welcome new citizens at Mosman Council's citizenship ceremony, at which we also honoured the 2024 Mosman Citizen of the Year, 1st Balmoral Scout Group leader, Matthew Brownlie. Matthew and I have spent many years working together. I remember about five years ago he officially retired from the scouts, but obviously never left. He was recognised for his many years of volunteering with our local scouts and scouts across Sydney. He has attended a significant number of jamborees, including a very challenging one in South Korea recently.

I congratulate those recognised in the 2024 Australia Day Honours list. The Australian Honours and Awards system recognises the outstanding service and contributions of Australians, with recipients coming from across the country and all walks of life. Most of them are unsung heroes. I acknowledge the 2024 Australians of the Year, Professor Georgina Long and Professor Richard Scolyer, recognised for their pioneering melanoma treatment changes. They have a mission of zero deaths from melanoma by 2030. The Melanoma Institute of Australia, which they are co-directors of, is based at The Poche Centre in Wollstonecraft. We are very fortunate to have such a significant treatment and medical resource in our local community, servicing people from across Sydney. I also recognise the separate work that Professor Scolyer is undertaking with a multidisciplinary medical team on his own brain cancer. He is raising awareness and seeking to make advancements in immunotherapy treatment that are incredibly profound.

Award recipients from my local community included Catherine Livingstone, AC, from Milsons Point. Catherine is well known and was recognised with the Companion of the Order of Australia for her service to business, particularly through governance and strategic reform, to tertiary education, to science, technology and innovation capability development, and to the arts. Another local resident from Cremorne Point, Peter Lowry, AM—I think a number of members might know Peter—was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for his significant service to the community through a range of roles and organisations. For instance, he is the president and chairman of the Seaborn, Broughton and Walford Foundation, which supports the performing arts community and has also served on a range of other organisations, including the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust, which saved and preserved historic military lands across my community from what could have been development more than 25 years ago.

Paul Roach, AM, from St Leonards was appointed as a Member of the Order of Australia for his significant service to nuclear medicine and to medical research. He is the head of nuclear medicine and positron emission tomography at Royal North Shore Hospital and is the clinical director of nuclear medicine for the local health district. Kirribilli resident Judith Skinner was appointed as a Member of the Order of Australia for her significant service to medicine and to medical research, particularly in the field of cancer genetics. Judith is the director of the familial cancer service at Westmead Hospital and a board member of the Breast Cancer Advisory Group at Cancer Australia. Pascale Helyar-Moray was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for her significant contribution to business and women's affairs, particularly in relation to the work she does as the founder of Super-Rewards. If members do not know it, they need to look into it. It is a service designed to improve the gender superannuation gap.

Neutral Bay local Yvonne Hazell was recognised for her service as a radio presenter for 2RPH and the work she has done for Mosman Chamber of Commerce and the Rotary Club of Mosman. Christopher Pash from Neutral Bay was also awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for his service to the media and communications sector. He was a chair of the Australian Society of Authors and a director of the Pacific Area Newspaper Publishers' Association. In 1995 he founded Asia Pulse and served as the editor of *AdNews* since 2019. I congratulate all of those recipients. In the challenging geopolitical times across the globe, I hope that we can all reflect on how fortunate we are to live in Australia and call this wonderful country home, and to be blessed by all of the volunteers and unrecognised individuals throughout our community who have now been recognised for what they give to all of us.

FAIRFIELD HOSPITAL

Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (20:56): Access to health care is not a privilege but a fundamental right. Our obligations as a government are to ensure our healthcare system is fit for purpose, ready and able to meet the healthcare demands of local communities. Sadly, Fairfield Hospital has been forgotten—not by our hero doctors, nurses and healthcare workers, but by government, the people who sat in this very Chamber. Since it was opened

in 1989, Fairfield Hospital has not received a major upgrade. That is despite Fairfield city's population growing by approximately 50,000 people since the hospital was built. That neglect by government ends now. Upon entering office, the New South Wales Labor Government committed up to \$550 million to upgrade Fairfield Hospital. That is a healthcare game changer for the people of Fairfield. The upgraded hospital will expand a wide range of healthcare services. I will do my utmost to keep the people of Fairfield informed and engaged to ensure their hospital is the best it can be.

OFFSHORE GAS MINING AND EXPLORATION

Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater) (20:57): Today is a monumental day in the life of the Fifty-Eighth Parliament. Today the Government announced action to stop offshore oil and gas mining and exploration. I welcome the Government's announcement, which has finally followed the Coalition's lead. My community is deeply opposed to offshore gas and oil mining in New South Wales coastal waters. For years, politicians have promised to act, only for communities to be let down time and again. My community of Pittwater, rightly or wrongly, feels that politicians have repeatedly made empty promises to end offshore oil and gas, only to fail to do so. In 2022 the former Federal Liberal Government cancelled the licence which would have allowed offshore oil and gas. That victory was short-lived when the Albanese Government agreed in court for the licence cancellation to be undone. Our community was let down.

In early 2023, the Federal member for Warringah, a teal Independent, introduced a private member's bill to outlaw offshore oil and gas. Sadly, that bill was allowed to lapse. That is, the member for Warringah, who campaigned stridently to end offshore gas and oil, introduced a bill and then failed to pursue it and have it debated and voted on. For all the talk of Independents having a seat at the table to negotiate outcomes, that private member's bill should be seen for what it was—virtue signalling and grandstanding. Again, our community was let down. Before the last State and Federal elections, the Labor and Liberal parties both promised to end offshore oil and gas mining for good. Cue 9 May 2023, the first day of this Fifty-Eighth Parliament—no Government legislation.

Consider this: The Premier swore to end it. The Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council, the Hon. Penny Sharpe—the third most senior person in Labor in New South Wales—had previously told the other place that Labor has opposed this federally and our local members have opposed it locally. We are all in furious agreement. During 2023 this Parliament met on 39 days, spending a combined total of over 50,000 hours in this place and there was not one mention by the Government of ending offshore oil and gas mining. It took the Opposition dragging the Government, kicking and screaming, to get it to act on ending offshore oil and gas mining. Indeed, rather than act to end them, the Government was nothing but vacuous and obstructive in its attempts to stifle real action.

Following that inaction and the Minns Government abandoning our coastal communities, I set to work on drafting my own bill, working with the Parliamentary Counsel's Office [PCO] to draft, refine and introduce it. The PCO informed me it had previously drafted legislation, on instructions from a member of the previous Parliament, which attempted to end offshore gas and oil mining. In reviewing that legislation, it was clear that it would not do what it was meant to. The PCO and I worked tirelessly to draft strong legislation. By the time the draft legislation was finalised at the end of June 2023, we had prepared the most comprehensive bill to end offshore gas and oil mining in the history of New South Wales. If the bill became law, it would prevent the mining of gas and oil in New South Wales waters. It would mean that, even if the Commonwealth approved gas or oil mining in its waters, which we cannot prevent, we would ban gas and oil pipelines from running through our waters, we would ban ships in our waters from carrying gas or oil mined in Commonwealth waters, we would ban ports on our land that were built to receive gas or oil from Commonwealth waters and we would ban the refuelling or repair of ships in our waters transporting gas or oil mined in Commonwealth waters.

Despite promises of Labor members, they did everything they could to prevent the bill from going to a vote. They quickly figured out that this Parliament would not cop playing their games relating to offshore oil and gas mining. They referred the bill to a hand-picked Labor committee. The Parliament did not buy the spin of the committee, which recommended the bill be canned. When their committee rort did not work, they kicked the can to 13 March 2024 in a last-ditch attempt to kill a good bill. Labor has seen the writing on the wall. This Parliament demands action to end offshore oil and gas mining.

Today the Government announced that it will introduce its own legislation to try to end offshore oil and gas mining. I congratulate the Government on realising the inevitable in this Parliament. I hold concerns that the Government bill will not go far enough and that it will leave the door ajar for offshore oil and gas mining in the future. We owe it to our environment, our coastline and our communities to ensure that we do all we can to stop offshore oil and gas mining. When the text of the Government's bill is made available, I will carefully review it. If we need to amend it, amend it we will. If we need to compromise and negotiate in good faith, that is exactly what we will do. For too long our community has been let down by politicians and spin doctors on offshore oil

and gas mining. Today is our moment and now is our time. To quote John Lewis, "If not us, then who? If not now, then when?"

HAWKESBURY FERRY SERVICES

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (21:02): I bring to the attention of the House the chaotic disruptions to the ferry services in Hawkesbury. Communities using the ferry services at Webbbs Creek, Sackville and Wisemans Ferry have been denied a continued service due to industrial action taken by ferry personnel. This type of action is unheard of in that part of Hawkesbury and locals are really struggling to cope with a shift towards an inhospitable service. They have endured rolling stoppages with little notice, causing long delays in travel times. At a time when schools and businesses are returning to their usual activities, families and workers are spending as much as an extra five hours a day detouring on local, winding roads. While there have been some maintenance issues making the services unavailable, industrial disputes have been the cause of most of the disruptions. I am advised that the union influence has been far more evident, and there is a push for pay rises and changes to work conditions. I just wish that there were other means of negotiating than the extreme action of rolling strikes.

Transport for NSW is responsible for operating the ferry services. The affected community is entitled to know if the Minister for Transport is working to restore sustainable ferry services. I am receiving complaints at the Hawkesbury electorate office. I cannot understate what the disruption to those transport links means to residents. I am hearing reports that tradies are telling customers that they cannot commit to doing work on the other side of the river. School days are now much longer for many children, impacting their wellbeing and studies. It is harder to commit to after-school activities when a family has a long drive to add to the journey. Residents making arrangements such as medical appointments are frustrated and uncertain whether they will be on time or even lose their booking.

Residents from Sackville North have written expressing their concern about the impacts on emergency services and their fear of a slow response to a local crisis. We are told that emergency services will be allowed to use the ferries but to expect delays of 20 minutes or more. Imagine telling someone in Sydney they would have an extra wait for a critical service such as a fire truck, an ambulance or the police. Residents like Jennifer are extremely frustrated with the short notice for service changes. Sometimes the notice is just one hour. Ferry users are finding they have to keep a constant watch on social media and the Transport for NSW website just to stay up to date with ongoing changes.

In the previous term of Parliament, as a newly elected member I advocated for extra funding to keep the Lower Portland ferry service running, rather than having Hawkesbury City Council and The Hills Shire Council bear the cost, which is the usual practice. I am grateful that the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government at the time supported me with a funding injection of \$2 million over four years to maintain the operation of this vital link to the more remote parts of the Hawkesbury. That funding expires in June 2024. The ferry service is the only one in the Hawkesbury that is not funded by the State Government. I know that both The Hills Shire Council and Hawkesbury City Council are keen to transfer the responsibility for the service to the New South Wales Government.

It is time for the Minns Labor Government to address the needs of the community by accepting responsibility and ownership of the Lower Portland ferry. I appeal to the Treasurer in the other place, Premier Minns and the Minister for Transport to factor this ongoing cost into the next State budget. Currently, the Lower Portland ferry is out of service for 12 weeks for cyclic maintenance. That takes a toll on locals, who have to make alternative arrangements for such a long period because a substitute vessel has not been secured. In recent years the Hawkesbury community has been pummelled by a series of natural disasters and they have seen their way through. They are resilient folk but they are also feeling the stress of those events. Disruption to their vital ferry links and uncertainty about what the future holds add another layer of anxiety and stress. Premier Minns, you need to fix this.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 21:07 until
Wednesday 7 February 2024 at 10:00.**

Written Community Recognition Statements

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

JOHN GONZALEZ ESM

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)—I highlight the contribution of, and congratulate, Sutherland Shire State Emergency Service [SES] Commander John Gonzalez, who was awarded the Emergency Services Medal [ESM] in the Australia Day 2024 Honours List. John has been recognised for more than 36 years of distinguished

service with the SES, 22 years of that time as the Shire's local commander. Under John's leadership, sub units of the Shire SES have been established at Cronulla, Heathcote and Menai. He steered the SES response to major operational events including the 2003 Waterfall train disaster, the 2015 Kurnell tornado, the 2018 Grays Point tornado, and the 2022 flood in Kurnell. John has also been regularly deployed to assist other parts of NSW including multiple western flood campaigns as a sector/division commander and flood rescue operator. Outside his volunteer role, he has been employed by NSW Ambulance as an operational paramedic for more than 20 years and holds the rank of chief inspector and works within the Aeromedical Retrieval team. As a senior SES and Ambulance officer, John has worked to build relationships so the agencies can effectively support each other during emergencies. I recognise John for his committed service to the community.

ANDREW MCKELLAR ESM

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)—I highlight the contribution of, and congratulate, Cronulla's Andrew McKellar, who was awarded the Emergency Services Medal [ESM] in the Australia Day 2024 Honours List for distinguished service to surf life saving. Andrew has been an active patrolling member of Elouera Surf Life Saving Club since 2004 and Surf Life Saving [SLS] Sydney Branch's Rescue Water Craft [RWC] team since 2008. He has logged more than 2100 frontline patrol hours. Over the years he's conducted many rescues on both inflatable rescue boats [IRBs] and RWCs. Andrew participated in Surf Life Saving NSW's frontline contributions to the bushfire emergency in 2019, and flood responses in 2020 and 2021. Andrew's award citation says he is widely regarded as professional, technically competent, reliable and inclusive and that his organisational skills and dedication to training ensure SLS Sydney has well-maintained crafts and personnel available year-round. Mr McKellar is also Director of Lifesaving at the Elouera club and part of Sydney and NSW branch life saving committees. In addition to his volunteer work, Andrew also served the community as a NSW Police officer for 36 years. I thank Andrew on his commitment to helping keep our community safe.

CAROL PROVAN OAM

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)—I highlight the contribution of, and congratulate, Carol Provan, who was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia [OAM] in the Australia Day 2024 Honours List "for service to local government, and to the community of the Sutherland Shire". Carol has been a dedicated servant of the Shire community as a Councillor for 24 years, from 1983 to 1991 and again since 2008. Having worked closely with Carol, what have stood out for me is her natural affinity with the community; that as a community leader nothing is beneath her; and her passionate work to help constituents resolve issues big or small. Carol was Mayor 1987-1988 and 2011-2012 and she is currently the Deputy Mayor. Carol is also well known as a civil celebrant, where she has been appreciated by many for the way she has helped guide people through their happiest and saddest days. Carol loves her community and is dedicated to making the Shire a great place to live. She is most deserving recipient of this national honour.

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)—The Festival of Lights, a month-long December celebration held in Corbett Gardens, Bowral, has become a cherished tradition, enchanting the Southern Highlands with its dazzling installations and vibrant events. In 2023, the festival welcomed thousands of attendees, transforming Corbett Gardens into a hub of family-friendly festivities. The Festival incorporated Christmas Night Markets, the Angels in Our Town parade, the Southern Highlands Food and Wine Festival, a family carols night, a kids and teens disco, a Christmas Lights Competition and a New Year's Eve Countdown Concert, along with the stunning light displays illuminating the Gardens. The Festival is an initiative of Business Southern Highlands, and is only possible through the voluntary work of a dedicated team of locals who contribute their time and expertise to bring the magic of the Festival of Lights to life. The Festival is supported by the Wingecarribee Shire Council, along with Destination Southern Highlands and the Southern Highlands Community Foundation. The commitment of all those involved underscores the community spirit that makes this event a beacon of joy during the festive season, and one to look forward to each year.

RESPECTED BOWRAL PHARMACIST BRUCE DUGAN RETIRES AFTER 73 YEARS

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)—Pharmacist Bruce Dugan began his career in pharmacy an impressive 73 years ago in 1951. Starting as an apprentice in Tenterfield, NSW this was followed by studies at Sydney University. He has since served the communities of Blacktown, for 55 years, then Marulan, Goulburn, Crookwell, Yass, Queanbeyan and finally Bowral where he has made a lasting impression on the residents of the Southern Highlands. Bruce has touched the lives of many with his warm nature and friendly conversation. Known for his optimism and kindness, Bruce says "What a wonderful life I have had in all these years in all these communities. Met thousands of wonderful people whom I will never forget." He adds "from my experience in nurturing many young interns from all over the world, "pharmacy" is in good hands today and will continue to serve the public to the best of our ability!" A true example of a modern day gentleman, his exemplary customer

service and expertise is renowned in the Highlands. Good luck Bruce getting anywhere in a hurry - you will be stopped in the street by so many former customers who miss their regular chats with you.

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS GRAVITY BIKE TRAIL WORKSHOPS

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)—Mountain bikers of Southern Highlands have shown their sense of community spirit when they came together over summer to work on Stage 1 of a new downhill gravity trail. Incorporated into the existing bike trail network at Welby and first of its kind in the region. Located on Council land and is the beginning of a larger range of trails that will be suited to this specific riding style, involving steep and challenging drops - not for the faint hearted or unskilled rider. The majority of the work was completed by the young volunteers at the workshop days. Their enthusiasm and willingness to dedicate their free time is something we should all be proud of. This represents the conclusion to months of community debate about the privately constructed trails in the nature reserve of Mt Gibraltar. Built by volunteers with contributions from local businesses, the new trails are part of a wider plan to offer more mountain bike trails in a range of designs to suit different riding. The example set by those attending the workshops show what can be achieved when strong leadership responds to the needs of the community.

RECLAIM THE NIGHT - CASTLE HILL 1 DECEMBER 2023

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)—The inaugural Castle Hill Reclaim the Night march against Domestic Violence was held in Castle Hill on 1 December 2023. The global movement began in the United Kingdom in the 1970's and has become an important symbol of resistance against all forms of violence towards women. It was wonderful to see so many people marching to support victims of domestic violence. Thank you to Dr. Michelle Byrne for organising the inaugural Castle Hill Reclaim the Night march. I also thank Deputy Mayor Michel Blue and Councillor Frank De Masi for attending and supporting the event. Thank you also to the speakers who spoke against domestic violence, Azita Abdollahian from The Project Of You, Anita Fisher from Hills Community Aid and Carol Harding from The Sanctuary. The event was supported by Castle Hill Rotary Club, Soroptimist International The Hills and Powerful Empowered Women Comment. Thank you to everyone involved for your continued support for victims of domestic violence.

PAUL RAPP 70TH BIRTHDAY

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)—Paul Rapp recently celebrated his 70th birthday. Paul, otherwise known as "Rappy" has been the community services director at Kenthurst Rotary for many years. He has planned, driven and organised the Kenthurst Australia day ceremonies, Anzac Day ceremonies, Carols in the park and events for the Orange Blossom Festival. His personal support for local community groups such as the local schools and kindy, the men's shed, sporting groups, the Rural Fire Service, The Literary Institute board, and the Rotary club are exemplary. For the last few years Paul has taken over the responsibility for maintaining John Benyon Rotary Park. At Paul's recent birthday party local children attended and thanked Paul for maintaining the park. Paul's grandchildren Jackson, Hunter and Savannah Rapp, Ruby and Cade Passier refer to the park as "Poppys Park" which is no doubt due to Paul's tireless commitment to maintaining the park for the benefit of the entire Kenthurst community. His volunteer hours would run into the thousands for the benefit of the community. Paul was named the Hills Shire Council Senior Citizen of the year at the 2023 Australia Day Awards Ceremony. Congratulations and Best wishes Paul on your birthday.

LEO KIM - NSW GOVERNMENT STATE REPRESENTATIVE AWARD

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)—On 25 January 2024, I presented Leo Kim with the NSW Government State Representative Award. Leo is a rising swimming star who lives in my electorate. Leo is in year 6 at Excelsior Public School, Castle Hill. The award recognises people who have represented NSW in a competitive field, and I am pleased to inform the House of Leo's success in swimming. Leo represented NSW at the School Sport Australia 12 years and under swimming championships held in Sydney, August 2023. Leo results were: 50m Butterfly – 1st Place; 100m Butterfly - 1st Place; 50m Breaststroke – 6th Place; 100m Breaststroke – 5th Place; and 200m Medley Relay – 1st Place. Leo trains with the United Swimming Club at Croydon six days per week. Leo is aiming to compete at the National Titles which will be held in the Gold Coast in July 2024. The success Leo has achieved is the result of many hours in training. Leo is committed to the sport of swimming, and I am sure he will continue to succeed in his chosen sport. I congratulate Leo on selection to the New South Wales team and on achieving outstanding results at the championships.

LANSVALE PUBLIC SCHOOL - 2023 END OF YEAR AWARD PRESENTATION DAY

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)—I was delighted to kick start my first End of Year Award Presentations with Lansvale Public School on the 27th November 2023. It was a privilege to join the students, teachers, school principal, staff, parents, and the local communities in celebrating their remarkable achievements. I was impressed by Lansvale Public School's culture of excellence, which was well-featured throughout the two presentations on

the day. I commend the school leadership team for their ongoing commitment to delivering high-quality and targeted education meeting the diverse needs of multicultural students in my Electorate. I also had the privilege of presenting my Tri Vo MP Leadership Awards to the students from K-6 to recognise their outstanding leadership qualities. This year, the Leadership Awards went to Mabel Ong, Denzel Metzger, Katrina Ho, Chloe Nguyen, Kayla Tran, Toby Nghe and Kristina Duong. I congratulate the award recipients and wish them a bright future ahead. I extend my heartfelt thanks to the Principal Mrs Laura Karam and the Assistant Principal Ms Fergie Tu for their kind invitation. I also thank all the school members, parents, and local communities for their wonderful support.

LANSVALE EAST PUBLIC SCHOOL - 2023 END OF YEAR AWARD PRESENTATION DAY

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)—On the 13th of December 2023, I was delighted to attend Lansvale East Public School's End of Year Award Presentation Day. Lansvale East Public School is a small and family-oriented school, located in one of the most economically disadvantaged suburbs in my electorate. The school's continual effort to provide children of low-income households with access to adequate education is highly commendable. I had the great pleasure of personally presenting my Tri Vo MP Leadership Award to the students to recognise their outstanding leadership abilities and contributions to the school community. The Award went to Haytham El Khazaa, Kaufana Hausia, Chriselda Sinisa, Omar Al-Mir, Sarai Jimenez, Joan Babakobau, Milad Al-Zuhairi, Joshua Phillips, Genevieve Nguyen, Savaira Babakobau, Jayden Nguyen, Azon Jesuthas, Jonathan Phillips, Phoenix Arena and Toefiliga Failauga. I congratulate these students on their hard work and well-deserved achievements. I also congratulate other awards recipients, all the students, teachers, staff, parents, and the local communities on the wonderful accomplishments. I extend my special thanks to the Principal Ms Erika Ortega and the Assistant Principal Mr Teck Khoo for the kind invitation and support of the Awards.

CANLEY VALE HIGH SCHOOL - 2023 END OF YEAR AWARD PRESENTATION

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)—On 8th December 2023, I had the honour of meeting and congratulating the students at Canley Vale High School who demonstrated outstanding leadership skills. I commend the staff at Canley Vale High School, the parents of these students and the supporting community for influencing the environment which allowed these students to flourish and prosper. Canley Vale High School supports students of diverse backgrounds through numerous services catering to student health and safety. They have earned a reputation for being an extremely desirable school. I am inspired by the talent, unity and intellect that Canley Vale High School displayed in the impressive performances and various certificates being awarded. I was proud to present Mary Vo, Ryan Nguyen, Tina Nguyen, Jack Ky, Qy Minh Truong, Tiffany Pao, Ryna Luu, Mina phan, Karina Heng and Henry Tran with my 2023 Tri Vo Leadership Award and wish them the best of luck in their future endeavours. I extend my gratitude to the Principal, Ms Effie Niarchos, and the Administrative Officer, Amy Hall, for inviting and welcoming me to the school. I thank the students, parents and community for their continued support.

LOCKHART SHIRE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—Lockhart Shire has recognised some true community champions in its 2024 Australia Day awards. I would like to congratulate those recipients, starting with Citizen of the Year Lorraine Hoffmann. A Uniting Church lay preacher, Lorraine has served the Milbrulong Red Cross for more than 30 years, is a former chair of the Lockhart Local Health Advisory Committee, a volunteer tai chi and aerobics instructor and recently received a 30-year service badge from the Lockhart Hospital Auxiliary. Sports person of the Year Majella Day has done her community proud with a long list of successes, culminating in selection in the All Australian Under 15's AFL Women's team. She is a former captain of St Joseph's Primary School, part of the Kildare Peer Support Leadership Group and is a fantastic role model for young people. Australia Day Award winner Natasha Gowland has played more than 300 senior games for Osborne Netball Club and is a driving force in touch football at The Rock. She was described by Mayor Greg Verdon on Australia Day as "a person you can rely on to get the impossible done." Thank you to these worthy winners for doing so much for their community.

WAGGA WAGGA'S AUSTRALIA DAY AWARD RECIPIENTS

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—Congratulations to the recipients of Wagga Wagga's Australia Day 2024 awards for their amazing service to our community. The story of Citizen of the Year Annette St Clair is both sad and inspiring, as Mrs St Clair received the honour for raising awareness about melanoma following the tragic death of her daughter Amie in 2009. This award, accepted on behalf of Amie, reflects her mother's dedication to helping to save the lives of others through education and prevention of melanoma. Congratulations also to the 2024 Young Citizen of the Year Angus Smith. At just 18, Mr Smith has been recognised for his support of young people in democracy and his work with older leaders to ensure the voices of youth are heard. This year Wagga also honoured the late Peter Cox, who was posthumously inducted into the Wagga Walk of Honour in recognition of his years of service to the arts. The Environmental Citizen of the Year Award went to local community

organisation Demonstration Gardens Wagga Wagga and cofounders Jim Rees and Canny Kinloch. Congratulations and thank you to these worthy winners, and to all quiet achievers who do so much for their community.

NSW TRAINING AWARDS – CAITLIN JOLLIFFE AND JADE TAPFIELD

Dr JOE MCGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—I would like to acknowledge high school students Caitlin Jolliffe and Jade Tapfield, who were named as finalists in the NSW Training Awards for 2023 for their vocational education training with the Murrumbidgee Local Health District. Caitlin is a student at Wagga High School and was named as a finalist for the school-based apprentice/trainee award category. Jade is from Koorringal High School and was a finalist in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander trainee of the year category. Local Health Districts in NSW, including the Murrumbidgee, take part in the school-based training program which helps train allied health assistants, nursing and administration staff while they are still in high school. The trainees finish school with a TAFE certificate along with their HSC. Jade and Caitlin have described the program as eye-opening and a foot in the door to help decide on a future career. They were excited to be part of this program and are looking forward to starting work within the health system this year. Congratulations to both Jade and Caitlin on their nominations and I wish them the best in their future careers as nurses.

GRAHAM AND BETH DOCKSEY ORDER OF AUSTRALIA MEDAL - AUSTRALIA DAY HONOURS

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to congratulate RSL President Graham Docksey and his wife, Beth Docksey who have been awarded the Order of Australia Medal in this year's Australia Day Honours. Mr Docksey, a distinguished veteran, has been recognised with this second Order of Australia Medal, for his dedicated service to the Albury Veteran community and his involvement with the Anzac House where he serves as President. Mrs Docksey, a former superintendent police officer in Albury, has been honoured for her commendable service to the police veterans. Their individual accomplishments have significantly enriched our community. Graham has previously received the Australian Active Service Medal 1945-75 with clasp "Vietnam", whilst Beth was awarded as Albury City Council's 'Citizen of the Year' in 2022, and has received several police medals which included the Bev Lawson Memorial Award (highly commended) and Australasian Council of Women in Policing in 2013. Beth and Graham, your tireless efforts are commendable as you have demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to the organisations you support with your time and talents.

TUMBARUMBA ROTARY - AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to thank the members of the Tumbarumba Rotary Club and the Snowy Valleys Council for organising the 2024 Award Ceremony for Australia Day, held at the Tumbarumba Creekscape. The following community members were presented with awards at the Australia Day ceremony to celebrate and acknowledge their achievements: Citizen of the Year - Lance Adams; Senior Citizen – Neil Christie; Young Citizen - Amelia Murray; Sporting Award - Adelaide Trevaskis; Environment Community - Rotary Trio-Bikes; Special Awards - Tim O'Brien, Fred Weule, Brent Livermore, Grace McEachern. My appreciation goes to all the community members for your sincere contribution exemplifying the true spirit of community engagement.

ALBURY CITY AWARDS

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to congratulate the following winners of the 2024 Albury City Awards. The finalists and organisations have made a significant contribution to our community. The awards were held at the Albury Entertainment Centre, Friday 19 January 2024. Citizen of the Year – Simon Lloyd – Podiatrist and Deputy Commander Albury SES. Young Citizen of the Year – Isaac Kunde – Volunteer St John Ambulance. Senior Citizen of the Year – Les Schmutter – Friends of Nolan House, involved with Carevan, (mental health). Volunteer or Community Group of the Year - The Carevan Foundation - providing countless meals over 14 years. Active Citizen of the Year – Buddy Oldman – Wiradjuri Master Boxer – Awareness of Mental Health. Environmental Citizen of the Year – Sreejith Balakrishnan Nair – Audiologist, Paperless office, recycling & advocating in reduction of packaging levels in manufacturing. Creative Citizen of the Year – David Todd – Working with 35 productions on the Border since 1970's. Mayor's Award – Di Glover – Yes Unlimited – Homelessness/Mental Health. Albury is so lucky to have people who give their time to help people without a second thought.

AYLA KHATER ARTWORK FOR SYRIA

Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse)—I would like to commend Ayla Khater who raised more than \$1000 for Syrian children in need through her exhibition at the Woollahra Gallery at Redleaf. Having fled war torn Syria at three, Ayla found safety in Australia with her mother. Ayla embodies the values of our community by thinking

selflessly and giving generously. Ayla's artworks varied in style, used papier-mache and recycled materials, featuring both large and small pieces, creating a unique collection. Congratulations on your exhibition Ayla.

FLICKERFEST

Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse)—I would like to congratulate Flickerfest on celebrating their 33rd International Short Film Festival in January. This year, under the guidance of Festival Director Bronwyn Kidd, they returned to their long-term home at the revamped Bondi Pavilion. Flickerfest is considered in international circles as the leading Australian competitive short film festival and increasingly filmmakers view it as one of the main festivals on the world circuit. It began as a small local festival at the Balmain High School in 1991. Since then it has grown to become Australia's leading Academy® accredited & BAFTA recognised competitive Australian & International Short Film Festival. Congratulations again to Flickerfest on another fantastic celebration.

MACCABI JUNIOR CARNIVAL

Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse)—I would like to congratulate General Manager Ori Danieli and all staff and volunteers at Maccabi who held their 42nd Junior Carnival from 16th – 23rd January 2024. I was honoured to attend their opening ceremony at Moriah College. Maccabi Junior Carnival is a week of incredible experiences ranging from multi-level competitive sport to social activities that create life long memories for the students. For over 40 years the Junior Carnival has been connecting Jewish youth from all over Australia and is responsible for an immeasurable number of lifelong friendships. I look forward to continuing to support Maccabi and congratulate them again on a successful carnival.

NEAVE O'REILLY

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)—It's no secret that New South Wales is in the midst of a trade-skills shortage, so it is heartening to hear one young Lake Macquarie resident is shaping up to be the best in the world at her chosen profession. After obtaining a Diploma of Nursing at Newcastle TAFE, 19-year-old Neave O'Reilly from Fassifern recently won a gold medal at the WorldSkills National Championship, in the Healthcare, Health and Social Care Skill category. She is now set to represent Australia at the 47th WorldSkills International Championships in September in Lyon, France, as part of the Skillaroo Training Squad. This event attracts more than 1500 of the world's most elite apprentices and trainees from across 85 nations, who will compete in over 65 skill categories. I would like to congratulate Neave on her impressive win at the National Championship and wish her the best luck when she takes on the world later this year.

PAUL JOHNSON

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)—I would like to recognise the efforts of Paul Johnson from Killingworth, who for nearly two decades has nurtured and guided teenagers not only through high school, but also the challenging Duke of Edinburgh Awards program. Paul has been a Duke of Edinburgh Awards group co-ordinator for 18 years, making him the longest serving co-ordinator of groups in New South Wales. Late last year Paul's meaningful contribution was officially recognised when he was presented with an award at Government House where Prince Edward, the Duke of Edinburgh himself was in attendance. While this prestigious event was underway in Sydney West Wallsend High School, where Paul has worked for 16 years, was preparing for its Year 12 formal. Not wanting to let his students down, Paul travelled back up the freeway to surprise them with his attendance and, I understand he was joyously and tearfully received. Paul is a favoured teacher amongst the school's pupils. Many credit him with making a difference to their lives through his guidance during the Duke of Edinburgh Award experience. I thank Paul for everything he has done for our next generation of young leaders.

MELINDA SANDERS

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)—Mr Speaker, I rise to commend and congratulate photographer Melinda Sanders on achieving the milestone of 15 years as a photographer for the Western Weekender, a newspaper that covers the Penrith City region, including a significant portion of my Badgerys Creek electorate. I could not imagine a region over the last 15 years that would keep a photographer busier than our growing and changing Western Sydney region. Thankfully, in Melinda Sanders, we have had the benefit of a skilled photographer in to showcase the changes, amongst the many other stories that she has photographed. Melinda has captured a wide range of people, from business owners to sports people and prime ministers, and she has photographed at many unique locations and high-profile events. Mr Speaker, I also recognise the important role Melinda, as a photographer, has played in capturing images and relaying messages between representatives and the community, as well as holding representatives to account, particularly with the progress, or lack thereof, of projects around the region. I congratulate Melinda and wish her the best in her journey. Thank you Mr Speaker.

HSC CLASS OF 2023

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)—Mr Speaker, I rise to congratulate the HSC class of 2023 on the completion of this significant milestone and chapter of their lives. It is with great pride that I highlight the achievements of some of the top students in my electorate of Badgerys Creek. I congratulate Alastair Wood, a local resident of Glenmore Park, for receiving an ATAR of 99.2, and Justine Fowler, graduate of Macarthur Anglican School, for coming first in NSW for Indonesian Extension. My congratulations also go to twin sisters Grace and Isabel Manning, graduates of Emmaus Catholic College in Kemps Creek, who both received exceptional ATARs. Isabel attained an ATAR of 97.05, a result which made her College Dux, whilst Grace attained an ATAR of 95.25. I thank and commend all staff and parents for the education and support of their students and children and I extend my congratulations to them on the outstanding achievements. All the very best to the students and I wish them continued success into the future. Thank you Mr Speaker.

DR JOHN MCHUGH

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)—Mr Speaker, I rise to commend Dr John McHugh on joining the team at TRN House in Oran Park, as the resident Oral, Maxillofacial and Cosmetic Surgeon. Mr Speaker, I'm so delighted that our community will benefit from the expertise of a surgeon as qualified as Dr McHugh. His credentials are second to none and include fellowships in Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, amongst other academic achievements. Dr McHugh also serves as a reserve Surgeon with the Royal Australian Navy, and regularly deploys on humanitarian missions with US Navy hospital MERCY to provide surgery and surgical training in communities across the Pacific Islands. Whilst his career as a surgeon has reached great heights, Dr McHugh is training to be a pilot at Camden Airport, and he often flies over the same Oran Park community where he will be providing his services. I wish Dr McHugh all the best as he joins the team at TRN House. Thank you Mr Speaker.

MAX JACKSON

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)—I want to say a huge congratulations to Newcastle's own country music star, Max Jackson, on winning her first Golden Guitar Award at the 2024 Tamworth Country Music Festival. Max took out the award for New Talent of the Year following the release of her breakout single 'Little More Country', which cracked the top ten on the Australian Country charts. She was also nominated for Female Artist of the Year. When she's not winning huge music awards, Max makes regular trips to Nashville to meet up with songwriting partners, and travels the country, sharing her music everywhere, from small RSL gigs to major music festivals. Well done Max, and I look forward to watching you and your career flourish.

MEREWETHER CARLTON RUGBY UNION CLUB U14S AND U16S GIRLS

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)—Congratulations to the mighty Greens Under 14s and Under 16s Girls teams for taking out both the Minor and Major Premierships in their respective 2023 competitions. The under 14s defeated their rivals from Maitland Rugby Club with a convincing 18-5 win. A special well done goes out to player of the match Ellazae Elers and to coach Natasha for helping the team reach this victory. The under 16s continued their winning streak, remaining undefeated all season as they also beat rivals from Maitland 21-14. Congratulations to player of the match, Hebe Backus, and to coach Arlen for leading the girls through a fantastic season. Can't wait to see what next year has in store for both these teams.

UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE EXCELLENCE AWARD WINNERS

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)—Almost 60 University of Newcastle staff have been recognised for their outstanding effort and commitment at the University's Excellence Awards Ceremony. Congratulations to the award winners from Newcastle: Professor Jim Scurry, Dr Ken Jaaback, and Tania Day for the Industry Engagement Award, Andrea Thomas, Amanda Hill, and Lachlan Barrell for the Health, Safety & Wellbeing: Team Award, David Donnelly for the Professional Staff Excellence: Team Award, Professor Laura-Anne Bull and Jackie Adamson for the Student Experience Excellence Award, Tess Rendoth for the Teaching Award, Professor Geoff MacFarlane for the Research Supervision Award, and Dr Heather Murray, Dr Julia Shaw, and Dr William Reay for the Leadership Excellence Award. Well done to all award recipients and thank you for your ongoing dedication to the University.

LARAH VAN DE KERCKHOVE

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)—I would like to recognise and congratulate St George Girls High year 11 student, Larah Van De Kerckhove for completing the Premier's Reading Challenge 11 times. The Premier's Reading Challenge aims to encourage a love of reading for students across NSW. It is not a competition but a challenge for each student to read more literature and read more widely. Starting at Carlton Public School in 2013, Larah has completed the Premier's Reading Challenge 11 times, every year from kindergarten to year 10.

Even during the lockdown restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, Larah persisted and continued her love of reading participating in the Challenge despite the disruption to her usual school routine. Larah received the Gold certificate in 2016 for completing the Premier's Reading Challenge 4 times and the Platinum certificate in 2019 for completing the Challenge 7 times. This achievement is also a great reflection on the support and encouragement of her teachers and family for encouraging a life-long love of reading over many years. I would like to celebrate and commend Larah for this monumental accomplishment. Her ongoing commitment and passion for reading is an inspiration to us all.

MICAYLA METLEGE

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)—I would like to recognise and congratulate St George Girls High year 12 student, Micayla Metlege for completing the Premier's Reading Challenge 11 times. The Premier's Reading Challenge aims to encourage a love of reading for students across NSW. It is not a competition but a challenge for each student to read more literature and read more widely. Starting at St Catherine's School in kindergarten, Micayla has completed the Premier's Reading Challenge every year since 2012, finishing the Challenge for the 11th time in 2022. Even during the lockdown restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, Micayla persisted and continued her love of reading participating in the Challenge despite the disruption to her usual school routine. Micayla received the Gold certificate in 2015 for completing the Premier's Reading Challenge 4 times and the Platinum certificate in 2018 for completing the Challenge 7 times. This achievement is also a great reflection on the support and encouragement of her teachers and family for encouraging a life-long love of reading over many years. I would like to celebrate and commend Micayla for this monumental accomplishment. Her ongoing commitment and passion for reading is an inspiration to us all.

NOURA HAQUE

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)—I would like to recognise and congratulate St George Girls High year 12 student, Noura Haque for completing the Premier's Reading Challenge 11 times. The Premier's Reading Challenge aims to encourage a love of reading for students across NSW. It is not a competition but a challenge for each student to read more literature and read more widely. Starting at Parramatta North Public School in kindergarten, Noura has completed the Premier's Reading Challenge every year since 2012, finishing the Challenge for the 11th time in 2022. Even during the lockdown restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, Noura persisted and continued her love of reading participating in the Challenge despite the disruption to her usual school routine. Noura received the Gold certificate in 2015 for completing the Premier's Reading Challenge 4 times and the Platinum certificate in 2018 for completing the Challenge 7 times. This achievement is also a great reflection on the support and encouragement of her teachers and family for encouraging a life-long love of reading over many years. I would like to celebrate and commend Noura for this monumental accomplishment. Her ongoing commitment and passion for reading is an inspiration to us all.

THE LATE JAMES FRANCIS BRIGGINSHAW

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—ADMIRERS of good storytelling are mourning the recent passing at age 97 of Alstonville's Jim Briginshaw, who won a Walkley Award for best three headings, edited The Northern Star newspaper for 16 years and was a popular author and columnist. Mr Briginshaw was a journeyman sub-editor, holding senior posts at some of Australia's biggest newspapers before visiting friends in Ballina on a holiday from Brisbane in 1972 and casually asking legendary Northern Star editor Cliff Murray for a job. The rest is history; Jim took over the reins from Cliff in the late 1970s and proceeded to stamp his crusading, no-sitting-on-the-fence brand of journalism on the regional daily. Jim Briginshaw gave my media adviser Peter Ellem his start in journalism back in the days of typewriters, telex machines, hot metal printing presses and cigarette smoke-filled newsrooms. A tremendous craftsman, Mr Briginshaw's firebrand editorials left no doubt about where he stood on issues. He was 'old school' – there was no pussyfooting around. As an influential editor, he championed community causes, including the region having its own rescue helicopter service. My condolences to Jim's longtime partner Enid Rann, his daughter Christine and son Frank and their families.

THE LATE MERVYN HERBERT KING

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I was among a host of Northern Rivers politicians who last month paid tribute to former Lismore City mayor, the late Merv King, who passed away at 91. Mr King put his local community first and the terms 'a true gentleman' and 'thoroughly decent man' best sum up his character. He and his wife Bernice King raised their children on the family dairy farm in Tregeagle before retiring to Lismore, where they became avid council watchers. Mr King was elected to council in 1995 on the Lismore District and United Ratepayers Association ticket, headed up by another former mayor Jeff Champion. When then mayor Bob Gates fell ill, Mr King became acting mayor in August 2002. He went on to serve with distinction as mayor from March 2004 until 2008. I told The Daily Telegraph that Mr King was not afraid to make tough decisions after listening to feedback. "Merv King was a man of his times. He was very active in everything – sports at Oakes Oval and all

sorts of stuff." Merv and Bernice King were married for 70 years and more recently lived at Alstonville. My condolences to Bernice and all family members.

TRIBUTE TO FORMER SHEFFIELD SHIELD CRICKETER THE LATE JOHN MCMAHON OAM

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—The cricketing community on the Northern Rivers and across New South Wales and Australia is mourning the recent passing in Brisbane of legendary Lismore-based player, coach and administrator John McMahon OAM, aged 91. A left-arm wrist spinner and wicket-taking machine, McMahon played eight seasons for Balmain in the Sydney Grade competition before moving to Lismore for work as a journalist in the mid-1950s. McMahon went on to play 32 seasons of first grade cricket in Lismore – 18 with Marist Brothers and 14 with Western Districts – an incredible record in anyone's books. A career highlight was two Sheffield Shield caps for Queensland while playing in the Brisbane competition. His service to sport was recognised with the Medal of the Order of Australia and life memberships of Lismore District Cricket Association, Far North Coast Cricket Council, North Coast Cricket Zone, Country Cricket NSW and the NSW Cricket Association. During his lifetime, John McMahon was also a proud member of the Australian Labor Party. He and his wife Joan were deeply affected by the 2022 flood and had been living in Brisbane. I offer my sincere condolences to Joan and family.

82ND ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF GEMAS

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)—On Sunday 14th January 2024, I attended and laid a wreath at the commemoration of the 82nd anniversary of the Battle of Gemas at the Suakin Barracks of the 2/17 Infantry Battalion in Pymble. The Battle of Gemas was fought by B Company of the 2/30th Infantry Battalion when they engaged the Japanese forces on the Malayan Peninsula on 14 and 15 January 1942, in the first AIF attack against the Japanese. We remember the 20 people that died or were never found, and the 58 wounded. The memory of those who fought in the Battle of Gemas are honoured with a memorial built by the 2/30 Association in Gemas. I recognise and thank the 2/30 Battalion Association President Greg Allardice, together with members past and present of the 2/30 Battalion and the 2/2, 2/15, 2/17 and 2/19 Battalion AIF who participated in the commemoration. We Will Remember Them. Lest We Forget

KILLARA PROBUS CLUB

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)—On Monday 8th January 2024, I attended the monthly meeting of the Killara Probus Club at the Killara Bowling Club. Probus describes itself as "Fun and Friendship in Retirement". First formed in England in the 1960s, there are now Probus Clubs in 23 countries worldwide. Non-profit and non-fundraising, Probus enables retirees to connect socially and remain active in their community. Killara Probus was formed over 36 years ago and the age of its 75 members ranges from 71 to 100. In addition to monthly meetings featuring presentations from guest speakers, members also enjoy a number of organised outings throughout the year. I acknowledge immediate past President John Townend and current President Andrew Cripwell for their enthusiastic presidency of Killara Probus Club and John Middleton, whose many years in the aluminium industry provided the basis for a very interesting talk on the history of aluminium smelting in the Hunter Valley and its relationship over the years with the NSW Government. The electorate of Davidson has many active retirees, including the members of Killara Probus Club. I am proud to be able to represent them in the Parliament of NSW.

AUSTRALIAN YAU KUNG MUN: LION DANCE KIDS

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)—On Sunday 4 February 2024, I celebrated Chinese New Year in Sydney's Chinatown marking the comeback of the iconic dragon! The festivities began with the Dragon and Lion Dance, symbolising strength and spirit. The parade was a unifying blend of sight and sound. Led by Australian Yau Kung Mun, also known as Lion Dance Kids, they provide all of us with insight to the Chinese culture. It helps develop resilience, grit, and responsibility to kids. The Lion Dance tells the story of the monster "nian", meaning "year" in Chinese. Nian would terrify the villagers at the start of each year, until a wise man said that Nian was afraid of loud noise, fire and the colour red. The villagers wore red, banged drums and lit firecrackers. Nian ran away never to return. Yau Kung Mun tell this story in their Lion Dance. I recognise Dr. Anthony Ching, Honorary Patron of Lion Dance Kids for his tireless work in bringing everyone together. I am proud to represent in the Parliament of NSW a vibrant Australian Chinese community. Gong Xi Fa Cai for the Year of the Dragon.

BEVERLY BATROS

Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden)—I would like to acknowledge Beverly Batros, the recipient of the Camden Sport Achievement Award at the recent Camden Council Australia Day Ceremony. Beverly has been an integral part of the Benkennie Netball Club since its establishment in 1984. Starting as a player, she soon became a coach, lending her valuable expertise to guide Camden and district representative teams for an impressive 16 years, only concluding her coaching role in 2020. Beverly's selfless dedication to our club and Camden netball

serves as a true inspiration. To this day Bev consistently participates in coaching courses to enhance her skills. Beverly exemplifies the backbone of grassroots sports, demonstrating that a lifelong volunteer commitment to something you love is not only possible but deeply rewarding. Beverly is a well-deserved winner of the Camden Sport Achievement Award.

COMMUNITY RADIO

Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden)—The United Nations designates February 13th each year as World Radio Day. World Radio Day is an opportunity to celebrate all things radio. I would like to use the premise of the upcoming World Radio Day to highlight the community radio stations that serve the people of Camden and the Macarthur region. C91.3FM is a beloved community radio station that proudly broadcasts to the wider Macarthur region. Broadcasting diverse and locally relevant content, C91.3FM has been a steadfast voice connecting residents throughout the region. Through its commitment to community engagement, the station serves as a platform for local information. I would also like to acknowledge 2MCR-FM another community radio station that broadcasts on 100.3FM, covering Campbelltown, Camden, and Wollondilly Shire. Originally permitted to broadcast for only 28 days per year, 2MCR-FM has grown to become a full-time station providing local news and views for many in the community. 2MCR was even once home to a world record with station member Matt Fulton beating the Guinness World Record for Longest Radio DJ Marathon in 2002. Community Radio plays an important role in my electorate and surrounding areas, and I would like to celebrate both 2MCR and C91.3.

JOHN CLARKE

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—Mr Speaker, I wish to applaud the amazing teaching career of my constituent, John Clarke. They say education is the passport to the future and Mr Clarke, or 'Sensei' as he has become affectionately known, has sent many students on to bright horizons. To mark his retirement last November, his current charges formed a guard of honour to close the curtain on an incredible 57-year career, a career that started in 1967 at Blayney High and ended at James Sheahan Catholic High School where he has taught for the past 34 years. In between was an 11-year stint at Canobolas Rural Technology High. Mr Clarke, who was 77 at the time of his retirement, started out teaching history, economics and geography but switched to Japanese for a new challenge. That has enabled him to spend more time with his other great love, his family, with three of his daughters also teaching at Sheahan, two of whom he is delighted to report are his bosses. Mr Clarke says helping kids 'know things' is what's kept him in the job for so long, deriving enormous satisfaction from their attainment of knowledge while continuing to learn himself. Well done Sensei.

SUE RANGER

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—I would like to recognise the remarkable achievement of Sue Ranger, who was awarded the NSW Service Recognition award for her 50-plus years of service to Parkes East Public School. When Mrs Ranger started at Parkes East in 1972, there was no carpet in classrooms and no air conditioning but there were fireplaces the students tended. She was the lone clerical staff member and dealt with everything from skinned knees to office inquiries and teacher support. The school's newsletter, which was Mrs Ranger's responsibility, was produced on gestetner machine. Mrs Ranger is now the head of an administration staff of five and oversees a budget of \$4.3m. She has also been part of enormous change at the school as public education moved into the digital age, and facilitated its first server. She continues to be its IT guru. Principal Michael Ostler describes Mrs Ranger as a person with a heart of gold, who has proven she can do almost anything for Parkes East's students and staff. Mrs Ranger describes the school community as 'one big family', a family she is now extending to the grandchildren of those kids she met in the early days of her career.

HUGH HOGAN

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—Mr Speaker, I would like to congratulate ABC Central West journalist Hugh Hogan on being awarded the 2023 Farm Writers' Star Prize for rural writing in NSW. In June 2022, Mr Hogan wrote a piece published on the ABC website on the impact of planned transmission lines to landholders. While the infrastructure is critical in Australia's pursuit of renewable energy, Mr Hogan's story, headed 'Farmers, renewable energy advocates call for more compensation for hosting transmission lines' gave an insight into farmers' concerns on the construction of high voltage lines through their properties. These concerns included visual, environmental impacts, bushfire risk, the impact on land value and gaining adequate compensation. A country boy at heart, Hugh grew up in Hay. He is now firmly ensconced in the Central West and we are delighted to have him. Giving the rural sector a stronger voice in the wider community is one of the major roles of Farm Writers and Mr Hogan's Star Prize story is an example of this. Mr Speaker, NSW is largely city-centric and often the viewpoint of rural and regional communities is overlooked. I thank Mr Hogan for raising the profile of rural communities.

GREENACRE STREET LIBRARY

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)—It gives me great pleasure to acknowledge Toddler Ink Childcare Centre for their excellent community initiative in creating and registering their own Street Library at 137 Macquarie Street, Greenacre. After learning that some of their Toddler Ink pre-schoolers had no books to read at home and had never visited a library, Daisy Catarci, the Assistant Director set up a bookworm area where children could spend time reading. The pre-schoolers were also encouraged to borrow and return a book every week as well as organising excursions to the local library. This led to Ms Catarci's decision to create and register their own Street Library to not only encourage their pre-schoolers to read but also to encourage their parents and the local community to pick up a book for relaxation and expand their world. The colourful Street Library provides a space for families to engage in early literacy and it fosters a love for reading in young minds. It is incredible to see such an initiative to ensure our children and community have an opportunity to explore the world of books, engage in imaginative play, and develop a lifelong love for reading.

MS PACHOS NEWLY APPOINTED PRINCIPAL FOR ST EUPHEMIA

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)—I would like to extend my congratulations to Ms. Penny Pachos, who has been appointed as the new school principal at St. Euphemia College in my electorate of Bankstown. Ms. Pachos will be taking over the reins from Father Peter Mavrommatis, who has been the interim principal of the school since September 2019. Ms. Pachos is a dynamic and empowering educator. She is proficient in mathematics and is an overall excellent facilitator of educational prowess. She is well-known for always prioritising students' well-being and providing them with assistance in making important everyday decisions. She recognises that a positive and supportive environment is essential for the holistic development of her students. By having a strong sense of community, promoting Christian Orthodox values, and dedicating care to each child as an individual, ensures that all her students feel a sense of belonging. Once again, congratulations to Ms. Pachos on her appointment. There will undoubtedly be challenges that arise, but I am sure that she can overcome those challenges fittingly. I extend my heartfelt best wishes to Ms. Pachos as she embarks on her new role.

GRACE KIM

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)—I would like to offer my congratulations to Greenacre's Grace Kim who was the winner at the 2023 NSW Golf Industry Awards for Female Player of the Year. She has made our community proud with this incredible accomplishment as a young female in the golfing industry. The NSW Golf Industry Awards aim to celebrate and acknowledge the achievements of individuals and organisations within the golf industry. Ten remarkable golfers earned well-deserved spots as finalists in the highly anticipated Male and Female of the Year categories at the 2023 NSW Golf Industry Awards. After an amazing year which included her impressive finishes in placing 13th in the Women's PGA Championship and 14th in the Women's US Open saw the 22-year-old from Greenacre climb to a career-high 55th place on the Rolex Rankings. Grace Kim's achievement is a testament to her exceptional skills and accomplishments on the golf course and her outstanding performances throughout the year. I would like to express how proud our community is of all that Grace has accomplished. Her dedication, hard work, and perseverance speak volumes about her character and abilities, and we wish her all the best in her future endeavours.

BONNIE'S CANDLELIGHT VIGIL

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)—In 2023, approximately 64 women and 11 children were killed by intimate partners or family members. Tonight I rise to acknowledge the Candlelight vigil for victims of domestic violence held in Macquarie Mall in Liverpool. Organised by Bonnie Support Service, the Vigil is an annual commemoration of the women murdered every year at the hands of a violent partner. The vigil invited guests to reflect on the lives lost through a candle-lighting ceremony, tribute performances and by reading out victim's names. Information and resource materials were also distributed at the event for those wishing to learn more about domestic and family violence. I note that intimate partner homicide is the most common form of homicide in Australia. Unfortunately, there is a spike in such incidents during Christmas and New Year, attributed to financial pressures, tensions around custody arrangements, family dynamics and increased use of alcohol or other substances. I commend Bonnies for continuing to hold this vigil every year, and I thank Executive Officer Tracy Phillips, the Board and the staff for the fierce advocacy and support they provide to at-risk women in South West Sydney.

OPENING OF GULYANGARRI PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)—Speaker, the first day of school is an exciting day for any new student. None moreso than the students walking through the gates of Gulyangarri Public School for the first time ever last week. After farewelling their families, these new students walked through the gates as the inaugural student body at this new school for the Liverpool CBD. I had the pleasure of joining Gulyngarri's brand new students with Deputy Premier and Minister for Education Prue Car and Murat Dizdar, the Secretary of the Department of Education, last week. Gulyangarri's motto is "opening the door to possibility", and with innovative new facilities, special education classrooms, and an on-site pre school to open later this year, Gulyangarri is a school overflowing with possibility. Gulyangarri is the Darug word for children, fitting for a place with children at the heart of everything it does. It is not easy to work towards the opening of a new school, and I want to especially acknowledge the foundation school principal Ian Tapuska, foundation deputy principal, Jodie Field, and all the staff for their hard work. I look forward to getting to know the teachers, students, and parents at Gulyangarri.

HEARTBEAT OF FOOTBALL FOUNDATION

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)—I acknowledge the Heartbeat of Football Foundation, who I had the privilege of seeing in action during the Multicultural Communities World Cup Football Tournament late last year. The Heartbeat of Football Foundation was founded in 2016, a year after Andy Paschalidis witnessed his Forest Rangers FC teammate, Matt Richardson, die from cardiac arrest playing over 35's football. Since then, the Foundation has aimed to promote healthy hearts in sport through awareness and education initiatives, proactive screening checks and the promotion of defibrillators at sporting grounds across Australia. These elements comprise the necessary steps to achieve the organisations' goal of zero heart-related deaths at Australian football grounds. They have since expanded this vision to encompass other sports as well. I note the tremendous impact of the organisation, having facilitated over 100 heart health awareness and testing days across NSW, with an estimated \$80 million dollars in health care savings identified as a result. I commend the Foundation's crucial work in addressing heart health, and I thank Andy and Angelo for their passion and dedication in advocating for action against this often silent killer that can have enormous ripple effects throughout our community.

JANNAWI

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)—I wish to welcome Jannawi Family Centre to their new premises at the Flour Mills in Summer Hill, after serving the Inner West and South-Western Sydney communities from their Lakemba home for over 40 years. Jannawi Family Centre was established in 1978 to support children who have experienced trauma through violence, neglect, psychological or sexual assault, including because of family violence. I understand that the name Jannawi is a Darug word for "with you, with me" or "walking together". This certainly encapsulates the Jannawi Family Centre's approach to child and family support – one of respect and partnership. It is a sad fact that family and domestic violence is endemic in our society, which is why Jannawi Family Centre's expertise in working to support children who have experienced trauma through violence is needed so much. Providing support for organisations like Jannawi Family Centre, that are working hard to keep children safe, is a no-brainer. For a small organisation, Jannawi certainly stands tall in the child protection and family support sector and I am proud to welcome them to Summer Hill. Congratulations Chair Leanne Wallace, all the Board, Director Biljana Milosevic and the Jannawi team!

ATHENA SPYROPOULOS

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)—Athena Spyropoulos was a much-loved member of our Marrickville community. Athena and her husband Aristomenis migrated to Australia in the 1960s and established their Athena Cake Shop in Marrickville in 1974. The Athena Cake Shop quickly developed a loyal following and established a fine reputation for always delivering delicious Greek sweets and pastries that continues today. Many family milestones, be it birthdays, weddings or christenings were made complete by one of Athena's mouth-watering cakes. Athena's legacy extends beyond the delightful confections she crafted with precision and passion. Her warm smile, generous spirit, and unwavering commitment to quality made Athena Cake Shop a cornerstone of our community and brought Greek culture to so many people. Athena and Aristomenis not only built a business but also their family here in Marrickville, raising their two children Efy and Kosmos. In recognition of Athena's indelible mark on our community, we extend our deepest condolences to Aristomenis, Efy and Kosmos, their families and her many friends. Vale Athena.

INNER WEST SUSTAINABILITY HUB AND GREEN LIVING CENTRE

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)—When the cost of living continues to play on all our minds, the Inner West Sustainability Hub and Green Living Centre have come together to offer a program that helps us deal with the cost of living and importantly how we might be more energy efficient. On

Saturday, 24 February 2024 at the Inner West Sustainability Hub, Summer Hill, Energy Efficiency Consultations will be provided to people from the Inner West area, to help people understand where their energy is going and how they might reduce their energy usage and carbon footprint. The event details can be found on the Inner West Council website. Not surprisingly these consultations will be in high demand and bookings are essential. A big thanks to both the teams at the Inner West Sustainability Hub and Green Living Centre, for putting on this event. Like minded organisations like these two, partnering together provide outstanding events and awesome outcomes. I look forward to hearing of the success of this event and encourage people from the Inner West to take advantage of this free opportunity.

GERRINGONG ROTARY CLUB

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises the Rotary Club of Gerringong Sunrise. The Rotary Club of Gerringong Sunrise is offering a new award for young community members who are looking to expand their horizons. The Apprentice Encouragement Award is intended to help our community. The award offers \$3,000 over three years and is open to anyone starting an apprenticeship or already an apprentice. Applicants must reside in the postcode 2534 and applications closed on 27th January 2024. The Gerringong Rotary Club has previously supported young people in advancing their careers in science, engineering and research. There remains a lack of skilled tradespeople and the club is keen to support anyone committed to their trade career path and encourage practical skills which will help to serve our local communities. The club hopes the award will grow to eventually support three students in a few years by gaining employee interest and support for this excellent initiative. If you are starting your apprenticeship or are already an apprentice and would like more information, please contact the Project Manager Pam Daniel at guidepostpam@gmail.com or the President Robert Miller on 0404 061 130.

MR BOB MORGAN

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises Mr Bob Morgan from Kiama. Bob Morgan, a proud member of the Kiama Tennis Club, represented New South Wales in the recent Australian Teams Championships held in Hobart. This event saw tennis players come together. Bob Morgan's journey in the Australian Teams Championships adds another chapter to his illustrious tennis career. In 2023, he won the Australian Oceania 80 Men's Doubles title alongside his partner Herbie Chee from Mollymook. During the recent championships, Bob Morgan played a pivotal role in the NSW 1 team's performance. Bob teamed up with Dennis Bindon and Alan Walsh, the team captain, forming a formidable No. 1 pair in most matches. Other contributing players included John Whittaker and John Davis, with Mick Bruton, the former Tennis Seniors NSW President, serving as the non-playing captain. Despite facing challenges from teams representing other states, the NSW 1 team remained undefeated, losing only two sets throughout the entire week-long event. Bob Morgan's No. 1 team emerged victorious in the 80 Men's Open Division, securing a memorable triumph. A huge congratulations and well done to Bob Morgan of Kiama.

CWA NOWRA BRANCH

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises the Country Women's Association Nowra Branch. On Tuesday 16th January 2024, I was extremely delighted to attended the CWA Nowra Branch 'Meet the Mural Artist' event in Berry Street, Nowra. I acknowledge the Emcee, Carol Williams, Branch Publicity Officer and Booking Officer, the Branch President Jan Colnan, the guest speaker Mr Bruce Morton, Mrs Joy Beames, State President of CWA of NSW. This impressive mural was painted by local artist – Clayton Campion and designed by Kellie Hooper. The mural image is of the first Branch President, Mrs Sarah Emily Morton, previously Anderson nee Fuller. It also depicts the CWA's commemorative coin, local flora and the black cockatoo of Nowra. This outstanding initiative and amazing mural was made possible through the support of the Shoalhaven Arts Board and the Country Women's Association of New South Wales. I was delighted to attend the official unveiling of the mural and I congratulate the CWA Nowra Branch for their important and ongoing contribution to our local Shoalhaven region.

HUGH LEE

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)—I rise to draw the attention of the House to Hugh Lee who recently concluded a 17-year tenure as the President of the Eastwood Chinese Senior Citizens Club! Hugh's unwavering dedication and leadership have played a pivotal role in shaping this thriving hub of community activity. Since its establishment in September 1991, the Eastwood Chinese Senior Citizens Club has stood as a non-religious, non-political, and not-for-profit organization, providing a diverse array of recreational, cultural, educational, and welfare activities tailored to the evolving needs of its members. Under Hugh's guidance, the club has become a beacon of unity and support for our senior citizens. His 17 years of service reflect his commitment to the club and passion for fostering a sense of community and well-being among its members. His legacy is well established, and I know will be remembered well into the future. As he steps down from the Presidency, I know the House

will join me in offering our heartfelt gratitude for his tireless contribution. May this new chapter bring you well-deserved relaxation and fulfilment. Congratulations once again, Hugh Lee, on a remarkable presidency, and may your future endeavours be as rewarding as your many years of service!

EASTWOOD CHINESE SENIOR CITIZENS CLUB

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)—I rise to bring to the attention of the House two outstanding individuals who have stepped into leadership roles at the Eastwood Chinese Senior Citizens Club! Congratulations to Joey Chan and Angel Yu on their elections as President and Vice President, respectively. Established in September 1991, the Eastwood Chinese Senior Citizens Club has been a pillar of our community, embodying values of non-religiosity, non-politics, and not-for-profit service. The club's commitment to providing a diverse range of recreational, cultural, educational, and welfare activities has been instrumental in enhancing the lives of its members. Joey and Angel have long been dedicated to the well-being of our senior citizens and their elevation speaks volumes of their character and commitment. I have no doubt that under their guidance, the club will continue to thrive and positively impact the lives of its members. As they embark on this new chapter, I know their efforts will be deeply appreciated, and their leadership will undoubtedly contribute to the ongoing success of the Eastwood Chinese Senior Citizens Club. I know the Parliament will join me in wishing them both much success and fulfilment in their roles. Congratulations once again on this well-deserved achievement!

YOUTH CREATIVE COMPETITION

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)—I rise to bring to the attention of the House two remarkable individuals in our community and extend my heartfelt congratulations to Charlotte Jolly and Annabelle Whitfield for winning their respective age categories in the 2023 City of Ryde Youth Creative Competition. Their exceptional talents and dedication have enriched our entire community, and it is humbling as a local MP to know the future of Ryde is so bright. It is truly heartening to witness the creative spirit flourishing amongst our youth, and your achievements will no doubt inspire many. The City of Ryde's inaugural Youth Creative Competition, with its theme of "Hope For The Future," provided a platform for young minds to express their visions and aspirations. The contributions of Charlotte and Annabelle have added depth and vibrancy to this initiative, showcasing the incredible creativity that resides within my electorate. I want to pay tribute to their artistic prowess and literary excellence. It is a testament to the bright future that lies ahead for our community, and I trust their creativity will continue to inspire others to pursue their passions with the same enthusiasm and dedication. Congratulations once again on this well-deserved recognition!

ARMENIAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE AUSTRALIA – ANNUAL GALA

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—On the 18th of November, I had the pleasure of attending the Armenian National Committee's Annual Gala. Beginning as a grassroots organisation, the Armenian National Committee [ANC] has become one of Australia's largest community organisations. The ANC strives to represent the collective viewpoint of Armenian-Australians, serving as liaisons to connect their community with elected officials. Their Annual Gala recognises the incredible work of ANC Committee Members and volunteers. Featuring festive musical and dance performances and moving speeches from leaders in the community, the Gala was a true celebration of Armenian culture. At the Gala, I was honoured to receive the NSW Freedom Award, recognising my advocacy for the Armenian community. I will never forget Vatar, the six-year-old boy I met at a Refugee Camp during the Parliamentary Delegation to Armenia. He, along with tens of thousands of others, had been forced to flee their homes in Artsakh to the relative safety of the Republic of Armenia. I will continue to stand for Vatar and the Armenian people, advocating for your rights to your homeland. Thank you to Executive Director Michael Kolokossian and the dedicated Armenian National Committee for your support for our Armenian-Australian community.

AU-NZ CROATIAN WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP GALA

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—On the 2nd of December 2023, it was an honour to represent our Premier, The Hon. Chris Minns at the Australian-New Zealand Croatian Women in Leadership Gala. The Australian New Zealand Croatian Women in Leadership network represents Croatian entrepreneurs, small business owners, women in the workforce and students. Through regular workshops and events, this network facilitates idea-sharing and personal development for likeminded women. The Leadership network is inspiring the next generation of Croatian female leaders, and culturally and linguistically diverse women as a whole, to reach new highs and lead intersectional growth across NSW business sectors. The Gala celebrated Croatian culture through engaging stories, delicious food and vibrant musical performances. Our Croatian diaspora have overcome trials and tribulations to rebuild their lives. Through their deep connection to culture, strong community bonds and devotion to the upmost hospitality, our Croatian-Australian community should be praised for their contribution to creating a welcoming and supportive home for everyone in NSW. Thank you to Sonja Palic, Founder of AUS-NZ Croatian Women in Leadership, Zrinka Lovrencic, President of the Australian-Croatian

Chamber of Commerce and Zvonimir Kurtovic, Australian Representative of the Council for Croatians Abroad for organising a wonderful event.

MASINAS HADDAD – GREYSTANES HIGH SCHOOL

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—It was wonderful to have Masinas Haddad, Year 11 student at Greystanes High School, join my Electorate Office for Work Experience in December last year. Masi was an immense support to our team, assisting to create engaging social media content, drafting representations to support our constituents and connecting with our community at special events. A highly capable individual, Masi is to be commended for his enthusiastic and diligent approach to work. A true local in our Electorate, Masi has given countless hours serving our community. Embodying his commitment to advocacy, Masi actively supports his peers as a Well-being Advisory Team Leader and Student Representative Council Member. His natural leadership and empathy carries a maturity far beyond his years. Greystanes High School has been providing dynamic learning experiences to students in the Electorate of Prospect since 1961. Empowering their students to excel in and out of school, Greystanes High School provides challenging and diverse learning opportunities for every student. I encourage all Members to extend this valuable opportunity to local schools. It was a pleasure to host Masi for work experience. I thank him sincerely for his dedicated efforts to support my Electorate Office.

PATRICIA CHRISTENSEN

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, volunteers throughout New South Wales work tirelessly behind the scenes, with often little to no recognition for their work. That is why it is my absolute privilege to host the St George Community Awards every year. Since 2011, I've recognised countless local businesses, community groups and individuals for their wonderful contributions. Among these remarkable individuals, Patricia Christensen, Chief Instructor at the Hurstville All Breeds Dog Training Club, stood out this year, having dedicated over 35 years to the club. Patricia holds an absolute wealth of knowledge regarding dog obedience training, dog behaviour and club management. This makes her not only an expert, but one of the most approachable individuals I've had the pleasure of meeting. Her genuine enthusiasm for dogs and their well-being ensures that the program extends beyond just traditional training. It is clear that Patricia has a real knack for training animals. Once again, I'd like to extend my gratitude to Patricia for her unwavering commitment over the years. I am confident she will continue to contribute to her community well into the future.

POOMPAVAI ARASU

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, I truly believe that volunteering is not just something you do, but instead, it is a way of life. Last year, I had the privilege of hosting the St George Community Awards which has been recognising the contributions of individuals, community groups and businesses within my local area for 13 years. I would like to put the spotlight on a wonderful member of my community, Poompavai Arasu, for her incredible efforts over the years by serving those who are most in need. As the Founding Director of the Singapengal Charity Group, Poompavai's efforts have made an enormous difference to the lives of many. Poompavai provided food and support to people during the COVID-19 pandemic and regularly helped those in the community who required assistance every single day. With so many families doing it tough at the moment, it is the work of community volunteers like Poompavai that keep us moving forward as a community. I wish Poompavai all the very best in her future endeavours and thank her for the wonderful contributions she has made within our community.

RIVERWOOD COMMUNITY MARKETS

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, I had the opportunity recently to visit the Riverwood Community Markets, and I must say, I had an absolutely wonderful time. Whilst the markets have had an extended break due to COVID, it is incredible to see them back on again, with much of the Riverwood community coming down to support the local stallholders. The weather was absolutely perfect - a sunny 27 degrees. Many locals took advantage of this and strolled down early to hunt for some bargains. The Riverwood Community Markets just seem to be getting bigger and bigger each time I visit. There was truly so much on offer – everything from handmade crafts, and delicious baked goods, to pre-loved clothes. I also enjoyed a wonderful morning tea, made with love by the volunteers at the Riverwood Community Centre. These guys do an absolutely fantastic job and should be commended for their efforts. Once again, I would like to thank everyone who rolled up their sleeves to make the Riverwood Community Markets such a smashing success. I look forward to attending again sometime in the near future.

EMMA RICE

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—Speaker, I would like to congratulate Dubbo teacher Emma Rice on her well-deserved recognition at the NSW Teachers Guild Awards. It is truly commendable to see her dedication to ensuring that regional students have equal access to quality education. Over the past two years,

Emma has made significant contributions by teaching science, technology, and agriculture, and being the sole finalist west of the mountains for this prestigious award speaks volumes about her commitment and excellence in education. Emma's victory speech, where she addressed a crowd of over 400 people, highlights her passion for improving education in rural and regional areas. Her message, emphasising that high-quality education is available locally, serves as an inspiration to students who may have doubted their access to such opportunities. St Johns College Dubbo, where Emma teaches, deserves recognition as well for being a leader in advocating for rural education. The school's participation in the iFarm program, highlighting IT-driven indoor farming systems, demonstrates a commitment to innovative and practical learning methods. Once again, congratulations to Emma on this remarkable achievement. I wish her continued success in her mission to provide quality education to students in regional areas.

GEOFF RICHARDS PANEL BEATING

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—Speaker, I would like to congratulate the team at Geoff Richards Panel Beating on their success at the 2023 Paint and Panel Bodyshop Awards. Established in 1974, this Dubbo business is synonymous with dedicated repair work for the people of Dubbo and surrounding towns. The team walked away with victories in the Best Country Repairer and Business Excellence Categories. The title of the Best Country Repairer is actually the third year in a row the team has walked away with this award, demonstrating the high-quality care this regional workforce puts in day-in, day-out and the dedication of their entire team. To win the Business Excellence award, businesses need to demonstrate 'next level' thinking and lead the way in the industry, set new standards and incorporate innovative ways of conducting their business, so to know we have an industry leader right here in our backyard is pretty impressive! These achievements are a testament to the leadership and staff of this fantastic locally owned and operated business. Congratulations all of you. Keep up the good work!

JOHN ROBINS

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—Speaker, I would like to Congratulate John Robins who received the 2023 Tony McGrane Award at the Dubbo Day celebrations on the 23rd of November last year. Since moving to Dubbo in 1989, John and his wife Janet have witnessed and actively contributed to the growth of the running community in Dubbo. His involvement in various initiatives, such as volunteering at Dubbo Parkrun, writing running plans for the Dubbo Stampede, and initiating Dubbo Track Sesh, has significantly impacted the thriving running culture in the city. Not only is John a dedicated physiotherapist, but his passion for running and community engagement shines through his volunteer work and the projects he has undertaken. He goes above and beyond, exemplifying the spirit of the Tony McGrane Award, which recognises individuals who exceed expectations in their careers and community involvement. John's perspective on volunteering as simply doing something that interests him reflects a humble and genuine approach to contributing to the community. Congratulations again to John on this well-deserved recognition.

ISAAC STRUTT-STEVENSON

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)—It seems like the entire world has been watching Boy Swallows Universe on Netflix since its launch in January, and one of the most memorable characters in a very memorable series is played by 14-year-old Cardiff High student Isaac Strutt-Stevens. Isaac plays the role of Christopher, a young cancer patient who encounters the lead character, Eli, and helps him escape the clutches of the 1980s Queensland health system by causing a creative, foul-mouthed distraction. It's a hilarious, bittersweet performance which put Isaac across from such Australian acting luminaries as Bryan Brown and Kate Box—not bad for the young creative's first acting gig! Isaac comes from a creative family, with his mother Jennifer and aunt Catherine both being musicians, artists and designers. Catherine was on set with him every day, and Isaac reports that he was especially interested in getting to see the process of making an episode of television up close. Isaac is interested in filmmaking and building bikes and bases in the bush, and is hoping to get the opportunity to do some more film and television acting. I'm sure we'll see a lot more from this talented young man!

DEREK FISHER

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)—There's never any shortage of creativity in the Charlestown electorate, with artists of all sorts calling our community home. I would like to acknowledge New Lambton resident, teacher and actor Derek Fisher, whose short story 'Scars Rising' was highly commended by the judges of the Newcastle Herald's annual writing prize. Taking on the contentious issue of who gets to tell which stories, the story makes us of what the Herald's judges call Mr Fisher's "unique style and voice", with a "near-Brechtian disdain for any kind of formal conceit" and a "concern for culture and history." Inspired at least in part by a photograph prompt of a sunset over Merewether Baths, Mr Fisher's story engages deeply with the local area.

This is the fourth year running his work has been published. Congratulations to Derek and to all the other entrants who tried their hands at writing a story for this wonderful competition. As Derek told the Newcastle Herald, "The act of creating is the ultimate thing."

NICOLE CROTTY

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)—Glenrock is an iconic part of the Charlestown electorate community, a beautiful part of our area, and so much of that is down to the wonderful work of Nicole Crotty. Glenrock State Conservation Area is home to an abundance of native flora and fauna, including the Powerful Owl, and is a unique pocket of littoral rainforest. A key part of preserving and protecting and this beautiful patch is the Glenrock Environment Group, which meets every Thursday at 9am. It was at their annual Christmas function on 21 December 2023 that Nicole, who has served as the caretaker of the Glenrock Scout Camp at the heart of the Conversation Area for more than seventeen years, was recognised for her extraordinary contributions. I was honoured to be present as a bench dedicated to Nicole was unveiled as a lasting tribute to her work with Scouts NSW. I can't think of a more fitting testament to her dedication or a better way to honour her work—a place for visitors to the camp to sit and take in the beauty of Glenrock, which Nicole has worked so hard to maintain. Congratulations, Nicole, and thank you.

ABBIE YOURELL

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)—I would like to congratulate Abbie Yourell on being named Richmond Valley Council Young Citizen of the Year 2024. Abbie is a highly committed young member of the Evans Head Casino Surf Life Saving Club who excels in everything she does. Abbie is an extraordinary athlete, academic, community leader and volunteer. Abbie has been at the top of her school year for many years. She is a well-mannered, polite, and respectful young woman with great family values and support. Abbie has been a member of the surf club since 2012, starting nippers aged five. She gained her Bronze Medallion at the start of 2022 and has now been patrolling for four years. On top of volunteering at the Surf Life Saving Club events, flood recovery, and her local dance school, Abbie is on the School Student Council, volunteering weekly in the school canteen and at all school fundraisers. Abbie is a highly valued asset to the community she lives in, a determined young woman who strives to be the best she can be at everything she does. I thank Abbie for her invaluable contribution to our community.

AIDAN REALLY

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)—I would like to congratulate Clarence Valley Council Young Citizen of the Year 2024, Aidan Really. Aidan developed a passion for fundraising for cancer patients after sadly losing his father to bowel cancer in 2021. From his personal experience, he understands the cost incurred by patients for treatment regularly visiting oncology sites, and travelling out of the district for specialist appointments, tests, scans and treatment. All money raised is distributed by the nurses in the oncology ward in the way of petrol, gift or food vouchers which has gone on to assist dozens of patients going through treatment. Aidan works extremely hard to fundraise along with his biggest supporter, his Mum Veronica Balsamello and of course Team Aidan, all tirelessly raising funds for strangers going through difficult times. I thank Aidan Really for his invaluable and ongoing contribution to our community.

ANEIKA KAPEEN

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)—I would like to congratulate Clarence Valley Council Citizen of the Year 2024, Ms Aneika Kapeen. Ms Kapeen is the chief executive officer of Mudyala Aboriginal Corporation and has been recognised for the extensive amount of valuable work she has done for the Clarence Valley community over the last ten years. Ms Kapeen stands as an inspirational role model, embodying a spectrum of contributions, encompassing educational empowerment, cultural preservation, and artistic expression. Her leadership approach, marked by inclusivity and unwavering dedication, becomes a source of inspiration. Her capacity to instigate positive change not only serves as a guiding light for others but also motivates community members to actively participate in enhancing both their personal lives and the well-being of those in their surroundings. I thank Ms Kapeen for her invaluable contribution to our community.

KARINGA VILLAGE WEE WAA

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)—Karinga Village is an aged-care residence in Wee Waa that offers independent living for older members of the community. But it is not like any other ordinary nursing home. Karinga Village was built by locals for locals, so older residents could afford to downsize and stay in the local area when they reached retirement age. The residence is run entirely by a committee of local volunteers, who work tirelessly to make the lives of its occupants the best that they can be. Built in the late 1970s, Karinga Village is in the process of some much-needed renovations to ensure their facilities are kept to the best standard. I congratulate

Karinga Village, and its committee, for their hard work and dedication in helping care for the elder Wee Waa community and surrounds and I wish them all the best for their future endeavours.

STEPHEN DUTTON

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)—Local Cobar resident and employee Stephen Dutton of the NSW Ambulance Cobar has recently marked 20 years of service at the Cobar Ambulance Station and more than 26 years with NSW Ambulance. Stephen joined the NSW Ambulance in 1997, his first posting was to Broken Hill NSW where he stayed for 6 years before relocating back to Cobar to be closer to family. After relocating back to Cobar, Stephen was promoted to the Station Officer role and has been dedicated in providing that service to the station and his colleagues ever since. I congratulate Mr Dutton for reaching this magnificent milestone and for his hard work and dedication in helping care for the Cobar community and surrounds and I wish you all the best for your future endeavours.

NED SUTHERLAND

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)—Congratulations to Rutherford Technology High School's Ned Sutherland whose talent and skills were honoured at The Hunter Sports Awards in Williamstown in December. Ned has always been athletic and active since he was a child and he said he started getting serious about his athletics when he started in high school. Ned's teacher at Rutherford Technology High School, Miss Buckton noticed Ned was quite talented in the field of athletics and encouraged him to compete at school where he excelled. Ned said he didn't realise how far athletics could take him. Last year, Ned was the age champion in swimming, athletics and cross country, and was also part of the school cricket team. Ned qualified for the national all schools athletics carnival which was held in Perth in December, the first ever Rutherford Technology High School student to qualify for nationals. At the recent Hunter Sports Awards Ned received an award for his performance in Athletics and an additional medal for the Premier's Sporting Challenge Multi Class. Congratulations Ned.

IMAGINE AWARDS

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)—Congratulations to the Maitland Regional Art Gallery for winning the 2023 Best Exhibition Project at the Museums and Galleries NSW IMAGInE Awards in November, for their Upriver Downriver exhibition. Upriver Downriver took over the entire gallery during winter last year and won best exhibition project at the awards. Flowing from the Mount Royal Range's babbling brooks, meandering through Wonnarua Country, the Upper Hunter, Maitland, and down to the bustling Port of Newcastle, Upriver Downriver featured 100 artworks and 52 artists works celebrating the incredible landscapes and communities of the Hunter Valley and its river. The collection of artists includes stars like Nell, James Drinkwater, Todd Fuller, Peter Gardiner, Nigel Milsom, Michael Bell and Lottie Consalvo as well as emerging talents like Alexia Sakoff and Bronte Naylor. It includes artists from Newcastle and Maitland, but also several from the Upper Hunter like David Darcy and Travis De Vries. It included Indigenous artist Mitch Mahoney building a river reed canoe over four days, with the public invited to participate in the process. The exhibition will now become a permanent biennial in Maitland Regional Art Gallery's artistic program. Congratulations to the Maitland Regional Art Gallery team.

CATHERINE WEAVER

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)—Congratulations to author Catherine Weaver of Tenambit. Catherine's short story 'Books, their Covers and Judgement' features in the NSW Seniors' Stories publication for 2023. The theme for this ninth volume collection is 'Ageing and Life Lessons'. Catherine's story is one of just a hundred, in this collection of stories, from across NSW. The life lessons seniors have learnt over the six to nine decades of life experience have been tucked under their belts. The stories highlight how they are privileged to have done so, even taking aches, greying hair and everything else taken into account. Catherine explores the life of Sid and begins with the line "Don't forget your tablets Sid". The story continues of an aging man who enjoys spending time with his similar aged friends and passing judgement on those younger. Catherine explores the frailties of health, ageism and highlights the importance of reliable public services to ensure a good quality of life for the most vulnerable in our community. The reader is left to hope that Sid does remember those tablets. Congratulations on this achievement Catherine, your story enhances this latest publication and enriches the culture of the Maitland community and NSW.

RIVER WALK COMMUNITY ART PROJECT

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)—I would like to congratulate Dundaloo Support Services on the unveiling of their River Walk community art project. The surrounds of the river bank at Queen Elizabeth Park in Taree have been brightened up with the permanent installation of more than 300 artworks along the Valley Fair Wall. The paintings are the product of two years of work by people living with disabilities from around the

MidCoast local government area and beyond, and were created for two previous exhibitions, We Are One and Imagine, in 2021 and 2022 respectively. The initiative to display the works in a permanent outdoor setting is the result of the partnership between Dundaloo Support Services, Manning Regional Art Gallery and MidCoast Council. Thank you to each and every artist for their beautiful contribution to our community that will be admired for many years to come.

BEATS ON THE BANK

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)—I would like to acknowledge Taree Universities Campus for organising the Youth Music Festival - Beats on the Bank, Taree's newest music festival that celebrates musical talent on the Mid Coast. Beats on the Bank, a live and local music event for 12-24 year olds, featured homegrown Mid Coast talent like Patrick Hayes, Lizzy's Angels, Jack the Bread Guy and Daisy Avenue. This free event, held at Manning River Rowing Club offered a courtesy bus for attendees from outer areas on the Mid Coast. The evening was preceded by a series of free workshops in the days leading up to the big night that covered various elements of live performance and production. Allowing young people to develop skills in the entertainment space, mentored by local industry professionals. Thank you Taree Universities Campus, Headspace, the youth team from MidCoast Council and Chris Tippert from The MEC and MSR Entertainment for working together to make this event possible.

DISTINGUISHED ACHIEVERS LIST

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)—I would like to acknowledge Taree Universities Campus for organising the Youth Music Festival - Beats on the Bank, Taree's newest music festival that celebrates musical talent on the Mid Coast. Beats on the Bank, a live and local music event for 12-24 year olds, featured homegrown Mid Coast talent like Patrick Hayes, Lizzy's Angels, Jack the Bread Guy and Daisy Avenue. This free event, held at Manning River Rowing Club offered a courtesy bus for attendees from outer areas on the Mid Coast. The evening was preceded by a series of free workshops in the days leading up to the big night that covered various elements of live performance and production. Allowing young people to develop skills in the entertainment space, mentored by local industry professionals. Thank you Taree Universities Campus, Headspace, the youth team from MidCoast Council and Chris Tippert from The MEC and MSR Entertainment for working together to make this event possible.

PETER BACHA OAM

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)—I recognise the Order of Australia Medal bestowed on Peter Bacha on Australia Day for service to football, and to the community. Peter is well known in the Granville electorate as the heart and soul of Rydalmere Lions FC, and his involvement with the Zgharta Association. This award isn't just a medal, it's a tribute to over 40 years of Peter's tireless dedication. As founding member in 1980 he has also been player, coach, manager, and most importantly, the club's president. His passion transcends the pitch, radiating to the very core of Rydalmere Lions. From nurturing young talent to seeing them soar to the A-League, his impact is undeniable. Ask anyone in the Granville District Soccer and Football Association, where Peter's a life member, and they'll tell you about his countless awards, including Parramatta Local Citizen of the Year. He says, "It means the world after 44 years at the club." He even met his wife, Yvonne, at the club. In Peter's words, "It's more than just football, it's family. "Peter, may your journey continue to be a testament to the incredible power of community and love for the sport. Congratulations!

JUDITH RUTHERFORD AM

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—I would like to pay tribute to a wonderful leader and servant of the Willoughby community, Judith Rutherford AM, whose memorial service I was honoured to attend at St Barnabas Anglican Church, Roseville, on 31 January. Born in Sydney in 1935, Judith lived in Castle Cove for 55 years with her husband Ken, whom she married in 1955. Judith worked as a music therapist with Inala, a Rudolf Steiner School for children with disabilities and served as a Founding Director and Chair of the Board of Nordoff-Robbins Music Therapy Australia. Dedicated to serving her local community, Judith was a long-serving Councillor of Willoughby City Council for 26 years and Deputy Mayor on three occasions. Active in her local community, Judith helped establish the Castle Cove Neighbourhood Watch, re-activated the Castle Cove Progress Association and was the first president of the Federation of Willoughby Progress Associations. For her services to local government, clinical music therapy and Asian Art and Culture, Judith was awarded an AM in the 2010 Australia Day Honours. I salute Judith Rutherford and her lifelong contribution to our community.

LUNAR NEW YEAR

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—With its large Chinese community, the Lunar New Year is always a major highlight on the Willoughby calendar and 2024 will ring in the 'Year of the Dragon'. Willoughby's Year of the Dragon festival will feature a wide range of cultural attractions and events including a large-scale dragon

sculpture, authentic Chinese cuisine, lantern parades, dances, music concerts and night markets. Chatswood will be ablaze in colour and animation with lion dancers, performers, musical experiences, food stalls and a spectacular lantern parade. Other highlights in the Willoughby Lunar New Year festival program will include a 'Comedy Gala' on 17 February, a 'Symphony in the Park' free outdoor concert on Friday 23 February at Chatswood Oval; as well as the 'Soaring Dragon' and 'Passage of Night' exhibitions at The Concourse running for the whole period from 1-25 February. To everyone in Willoughby and NSW celebrating the Lunar New Year this February, I wish each of you a happy, prosperous and successful 'Year of the Dragon'! Thank you Willoughby Council and every person who makes this festival such a success.

FAREWELL REV TIM ST QUINTIN

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—St Peter's Anglican Church in Cremorne has stood and served our community for 115 years. It is one of the many wonderful local church communities in Willoughby. As well as offering its parishioners a rich tradition of Anglican worship every Sunday, the parish of St Peter's is deeply engaged with the local community. The parish is a strong supporter of several ministries and community services to help our less fortunate including Anglicare, the Anglican Board of Mission, Taldumande Youth Services, and the Anglican Aid Drought Relief for Farmers in NSW. The Rector of St Peter's, the Rev Tim St Quintin, has served this parish faithfully for the last seven years. On Sunday 24 January 2024, I was honoured to be present for Tim's final service as rector. I give thanks to Tim, his wife Sarah, and the family for the wonderful leadership and sacrificial service of the parish they have loved. I know that they will be sorely missed by their congregation. I wish Tim and his family all the very best as they relocate to Mudgee in the NSW central west to continue their ministry in the Anglican Church.

FRIENDS OF KEMPSEY POUND

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)—Today, I rise to congratulate an inspiring community group with a heart of gold, that goes above and beyond in the name of animal welfare. The Friends of Kempsey Pound, led by Marion Crowley was recognised as the Community Group of the Year for the Macleay Valley, after saving over 700 animals between 2022 and 2023. From temporary homes, adoptions, facilitating transfer and raising funds for vaccination, the Friends of Kempsey Pound work tirelessly to guarantee the best outcomes for the struggling companions that are looking for hope. They have hosted many events educating the values of desexing animals, while offering free vaccinations to protect our furry friends against Parvo virus. This event saw 350 dog owners and 590 dogs participate, ultimately promoting health and preventing disease spread. In 2023, Friends of Kempsey Pound secured grant funding for a desexing program which included 70 cats and prompted responsible animal ownership, while minimising unwanted litters. This dedicate group of heroes work around the clock, finding volunteers and foster carers to ensure every animal is set up for the best success at life. Well done on your achievement.

AVA RYAN RISING CRICKET STAR

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)—Today, I rise to extend a well-deserved congratulations to Ava Ryan for being selected as Sports Person of the Month in the Macleay Valley District. Age is no boundaries for Ava's exceptional talent, dedication and contributions to the sporting scene. Ava has been seen representing New South Wales Country at the under-19 Nationals in Brisbane, which compliments how she's grown into a standout figure and role model in the cricket community. It's not Ava's first stint in representative cricket either. The South West Rocks local and St Pauls college student was recently called up for her third straight appearance for New South Wales Combined Catholic Colleges and has also spent time batting for South West Rocks Cricket Club, Coffs Coast Chargers and Northern District. I believe it is essential to recognise and celebrate our young sportspeople in boosting their confidence and motivating them to continue to pursue their passion for sports. Ava is commended for her dedication to the pitch, and I wish her great success in her future as a cricket star.

RUTH WAITE KEMPSEY CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)—Today, I rise to congratulate a dedicated community leader who has contribute more than 30 years of service to cultural growth and advocacy to the Macleay Valley. Ruth Waite has been an integral part of the local initiatives from culture to sport, aiming to inspire, foster inclusivity and equity of indigenous students. From a 12 year stint as the Secretary of the Wigay Aboriginal Cultural Park, five years with NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group and board member for the Mingaan Wiradjuri Aboriginal Corporation. As Kempsey Shire Council's Mobile Library Coordinator, Ruth promotes positive reading habits, community connection and cultural exchange. It's a widely adored service from youth to adults and compliments participation in the Summer Reading Club and Zoomobile. We are lucky to have a person like Ruth working tirelessly for our community. For 35 years she stood as the Secretary of the Kempsey Basketball Association, going beyond the official title to be a manager, coach, referee and importantly, a role model. Well done, Ruth for this magnificent achievement. You continue to be a beacon of inspiration for our hometown.

PORT MACQUARIE PIRATES RUGBY CLUB

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—Today, I acknowledge a 50-year legacy of rugby in the Hastings. The Port Macquarie Pirates Rugby Club or formerly the 'Pines' was inaugurated in 1974 by a few passionate locals, keen to establishing the game in the Hastings. From humble beginnings of just one senior team to now a registered Club comprising of both girls' and boys' teams of all ages, the Pirates are attributed to bringing and securing rugby on the Mid North Coast [MNC]. The success of the Pirates over five decades is reflected in thirty premierships claimed from a multiple of grades and several local players progress to represent NSW Country, the Waratahs and Australia, thanks to leadership and first-class training offered at the Club. Last year the Pirates secured two senior premierships in the MNC Northern Division competition, defeating the Coffs Harbour Snappers 24-17 in the men's and the Grafton Redmen 26-15 in the women's competition. As we head into the 2024 rugby season, the Pirates have appointed Deb Williams as the new President and I wish her well in her role. Congratulations to the Pirates on achieving this incredible milestone and I wish them every success in the years ahead.

STACY JANE- ESCABAGS

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—I take this opportunity to highlight the alarming statistics of domestic violence and abuse in Australia. Data highlighted in the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021-2022 Personal Safety Survey reflects the sobering details that 4.2 million Australian adults – 21percent, or 1 in 5 – have experienced violence, emotional abuse, or economic abuse by a partner. Stacy Jane is the innovative creator of an impressive initiative Escabags. These invaluable tote bags are filled with a range of products and useful items for women. The Parent and Child Escabag even contains a teddy for comfort and security. Having an Escabag means that in desperate situations, women under threat will not need to re-enter the family home to gather everyday essentials. When fleeing a possible life-threatening situation, women can immediately seek safety. It is a remarkable achievement, that since launching in 2020, almost 10,000 bags have been distributed, free of charge throughout the country and boasting more than 1600 stockists nationwide. Women's shelters, hospitals, police stations and every Service NSW branch across the state, now stocks escape-bags. I applaud Stacy's incredible achievements, her determination and her passion in helping so many women to maintain dignity amidst the hardest of times.

AVINAV SIVARAJ – JUNIOR CHESS CHAMPION

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—Today, I recognise the reigning champion of Chess in country NSW, Avinav Sivaraj from Port Macquarie on winning his second consecutive title in December. Avinav is a 10-year-old chess superstar who has taken out the NSW Country Junior Championship under 12's Division in a back-to-back victory. A young man with so much talent and skill, Avinav scored a 7.5 out of 10 at the championships in Sydney, defeating his opponent by half a point to clinch the win. Avinav is rightly proud of his achievement, noting that the tough competition had only increased in the level of skill since his maiden victory in the previous year. In 2023 Avinav, also achieved his career best in the under-18 chess tournament in Newcastle, making the finals and finishing overall runner-up at the championship. Remarkably, new to the tournament scene, Avinav has found his passion and continues to dominate the chess board at various levels, against all age groups. I congratulate Avinav for soaring to new heights in the chess world and I wish him every success in 2024.

DEAN OXLEY

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)—Dean is a quiet achiever who is a highly respected member of our Bathurst community and has been recognised as a Living Legend. After 24 years as a Head of Sport, Head of Boarding and PDHPE coordinator at St Stanislaus's College, Dean started working as a psychologist in 2010 and opened his private practice in 2017 with 3 other psychologists. The COVID years placed a large portion of the local community at risk and had a major effect on the prevalence of anxiety and depression. Dean supports and encourages community engagement across the many clubs and organisations in Bathurst as a positive therapeutic approach for his patients that builds connection and fosters wellbeing and belonging. Dean has been involved with Bathurst Bulldogs Rugby Union club for many years. He was awarded life membership in 2023 for his commitment to the club. He is the current Bulldogs first grade coach and the NSW Country Cockatoos (Opens Men's rugby team) coach. Congratulations and thank you for your service.

IAN LITCHFIELD

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)—Ian Litchfield has led a life full of community involvement and service. As a young man Mr Litchfield served in the Australian Navy before studying engineering and going on to be a jackaroo. He has been a part of the Bathurst Electorate for many decades. Some of the community groups Mr Litchfield has been involved with include the Lowther-Hampton bushfire brigade, Hampton Public School P and C, NSW Farmers Federation, Oberon RSL Sub Branch and Rydal Show Society. He served as Chairman of

the Trust for the Lowther War memorial for over 30 years. He has also been a founding member of the Blaxland Shire Landholders Association, secretary of the Ratepayers Association of NSW regional division, and a Justice of the Peace. I have had the pleasure of meeting Ian on a number of occasions, and he has been instrumental in the restoration and upgrade of the newly completed Rydal Wool Pavilion in which he has been chief steward of since the 1960s. This man has done so much for those around him and was awarded an Order of Australia in 2014. I thank Ian for his ongoing generosity for his community.

WARREN HICKEY

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)—Sensei Warren Hickey has been a true leader, teacher, and mentor in our Bathurst community for over 40 years and was recently acknowledged as Bathurst's Citizen of the Year. Warren strongly advocates for positive change and has volunteered his time on hundreds of occasions to assist young people and their families, sometimes to the detriment of his own family. Warren has worked across many schools in Bathurst providing personal health and wellbeing programs for both boys and girls at risk. Warren's ability to find the good in a young person and help them channel their energies toward positive outcomes has turned the lives of many students around for many years, and he has watched their growth and sense of self-worth improve after being included in these programs. Warren's ability and skill at connecting and communicating with young people who are off track in their daily lives has significantly reduced youth issues around Bathurst over time. Warren has successfully competed in tournaments at State, National and International levels winning many titles across all areas including a World Championship. Warren's contribution to our community is valued immensely.

KYE FOSTER

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I would like to congratulate Koonawarra Public School teacher, Kye Foster, as he is getting ready to fully immerse himself in his culture at the state's first Aboriginal bilingual school. Mr Foster will spend a year teaching at Gumbaynggirr Giingana Freedom School in Coffs Harbour where students and teachers speak Gumbaynggirr language. Kye advised that each class has a language teacher and a curriculum teacher and that he will be more of a curriculum style teacher. He will get to do language classes every afternoon, as well as being immersed in it all day. The bilingual school started in 2022 and embeds the Gumbaynggirr language, cultural perspectives, and traditional philosophies within their teaching. Besides learning about his own culture Mr Foster plans to return to the Illawarra in a year (or possibly two) empowered with new ways to support all students to connect with Aboriginal culture. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour community, I would like to congratulate Kye on an amazing teaching opportunity and wishes him well in his future teaching endeavours.

SAVE THE POWERHOUSE AND PYRMONT ACTION GROUP

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)—Today I bring to the attention of the House the incredible work done by two local advocacy groups – Save the Powerhouse and the Pyrmont Action Group. Save the Powerhouse members including Patricia Johnson and Jean-Pierre Alexandre, have worked alongside Pyrmont Action Group members Tom Lockley and Elizabeth Elenius, and other passionate community advocates such as Jennifer Sanders and Kylie Winkworth in order to protect a core aspect of Sydney's arts, culture and education scene – The Powerhouse Museum. These dedicated groups and community advocates have worked together to ensure that there is a bright future for this Museum of Applied Arts & Sciences for generations to come. This is a beloved place for many Sydneysiders, who have fond memories of visiting with their families. The Powerhouse Museum has been a thriving hub of arts and education right in the heart of our city. Thank you to these two passionate groups, and to each and every person who continues to work hard to ensure this space will be protected and available for others to enjoy for years to come.

KIRRAWEE PUBLIC SCHOOL LEADERS

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)—I congratulate the incoming student leadership team of Kirrawee Public School on their appointment. Being democratically elected by your peers is an incredible achievement of which these students should be proud. I encourage them to make the most of this fantastic opportunity to contribute to their school community and to develop the skills that shape the community and professional leaders of the future. I use this occasion in NSW Parliament to acknowledge Kirrawee Public School's student leadership team for 2024, namely School Captains Alena Dunphy and Mikey Davey and Prefects Baylee Hutchinson, Kaly Zhen, Nicholas Gately, and Archie Jackson. With the guidance of their incredible Principal Selwyn Williams, I have every confidence that these dedicated students will capably lead their peers through what will be their most important year of schooling thus far and be role models to their entire school community. I extend my best wishes to these student leaders as they continue to exemplify Kirrawee Public School's motto of being '(their) best always'.

TAREN POINT PUBLIC SCHOOL LEADERS

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I congratulate the incoming student leadership team of Taren Point Public School on their appointment. Being democratically elected by your peers is an incredible achievement of which these students should be proud of. I encourage them to make the most of this fantastic opportunity to contribute to their school community and to develop the skills that shape our community - enabling them to be professional leaders of the future. I use this occasion in NSW Parliament to acknowledge Taren Point Public School's student leadership team for 2023, namely Captains Zara Routh and Aiden Qerba, and Vice Captains Joelle Milne and Ari Tokoragi. With the guidance of their incredible Principal James Nobbs, I have every confidence that these dedicated students will capably lead their peers through what will be their most important year of schooling thus far and be role models to their entire school community. I extend my best wishes to these student leaders as they continue to exemplify Taren Point Public School's motto of 'Pride of the Point'.

BONNET BAY PUBLIC SCHOOL LEADERS

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I congratulate the incoming student leadership team of Bonnet Bay Public School on their appointment. Being democratically elected by your peers is an incredible achievement of which these students should be proud. I encourage them to make the most of this fantastic opportunity to contribute to their school community and to develop the skills that shape the community and professional leaders of the future. I use this occasion in Parliament to acknowledge the student leadership team for 2024, namely School Captains Toby Condon and Natalia Tsonev, and Vice Captains Matthew Faulkner and Sidney McGrath. With the guidance of their incredible Principal Liz Rudder, I have every confidence that these dedicated students will capably lead their peers through what will be their most important year of schooling thus far and be role models to their entire school community. I extend my best wishes to these student leaders as they continue to exemplify Bonnet Bay Public School's motto of 'learn to grow, grow to learn'.

PALM BEACH GOLF CLUB – 100TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)—I acknowledge and congratulate the Palm Beach Golf Club as they celebrate their 100th anniversary. Founded in 1924, Palm Beach Golf Club now has 500 members and is a beloved gem within our local community. With views of Pittwater, Station Beach, Governor Philip Park and Barrenjoey Headland's historic lighthouse, Palm Beach Golf Club is undoubtedly the most scenic course in the world. Beyond its course, the Club offers a wonderful dining experience, enjoyed by locals and visitors alike. Over the years, the Club has also hosted countless special events and celebrations. But it's not just the course or restaurant that have brought Palm Beach Golf Club so much success, it's the countless members and volunteers who have devoted their time to ensure the Club is always improving. Thank you to the current board, President – Daniel Hill, Vice President – Rhonda Mortimer, Captain – Justin Zleren, Treasurer – Stephen Farr and Directors – Bob Quin, Justine Paul, Lex Mitchell and Charlie Mayson for your dedication and service. Congratulations on your first hundred years, and may these words, enshrined in the records of the oldest Parliament today, be just as true in another hundred years' time.

ST SAVA INGLESIDE - 75TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)—I recently had the opportunity to attend the 75th Anniversary celebrations of St. Sava, Ingleside, the oldest Serbian Orthodox Church in Australia. Founded by Serbian settlers and refugees, the Church was originally located in Vineyard Street, Mona Vale – just around the corner from where the Pittwater Electorate Office is now! It was wonderful to join with the Church community to celebrate this amazing milestone and the contributions of Serbian Australians to our state and nation over the last 75 years. Throughout the 20th century, the Serbian Australian population grew steadily, with many Serbians coming to Australia in search of security and opportunity. Serbian Australians contributed substantially to our manufacturing and construction industries. Some of our best athletes are Serbian Australians, including the Manly Sea Eagles own Jake and Tom Trbojevic. St Sava is known as 'the enlightener', a protector of the Serbian people and an advocate for education and the law. The Church congregation continue to uphold St Sava's values, through their support of each other, the Serbian Australian community and our broader community. Thank you to Father Sasha, Bishop Siluan and the whole Church congregation for your service to our community.

NEWPORT BEACH - AUSTRALIA DAY BREAKFAST

Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)—Together with hundreds in the Pittwater community, I recently attended the annual Australia Day Breakfast at Newport Beach. It was a wonderful opportunity to come together, reflect on our past, celebrate our vibrant community, and enjoy the beautiful place we call home. Thank you to all the volunteers who devoted time to ensuring the event was a success, particularly Alan Brett of the Northern Beaches Rural Fire Service Control Centre. Thank you to our amazing community groups Zonta Northern Beaches, Warringah Pittwater NSW SES, our local RFS brigades and Northern Beaches Council. And special thanks to the

Rotary Club of the Upper Northern Beaches for manning the all-important barbeque, the Northern Beaches Chorus for performing the national anthem, and Uncle Neil Evers for his welcome and reflections.

SUMMER MOES

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)—It is my absolute pleasure to congratulate Summer Moes, a shining star who has been selected to join the Australian Under 19 Women's Team for the World Floorball Championships 2024 in Finland. Summer is not only the youngest player in the team, but they are also the only NSW player selected to represent Australia. What an incredible achievement for a 15-year-old individual! Summer was introduced to floorball 3 years ago and they have been playing at the Peninsula Floorball Club. They will be playing in the goalkeeper position at this international competition. Sport is a big part of who I am, and to see a young person in our electorate and it is so thrilling to see Summer absolutely excelling at an international level. Summer Moes is an excellent reminder to everyone to be open and try new things. I also want to acknowledge Summer's family for supporting them through this unforgettable journey. Regardless of the outcome of this Championships, your community is proud. I wish you and the Australian Under 19 Women's Team all the best.

RECOGNISING OUR WONDERFUL GOSFORD HOSPITAL STAFF

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)—I would like to recognise the fantastic health-care staff at Gosford Hospital, who look after our community every day. Late last year, a constituent in my community, Peter, was taken to Gosford Hospital by ambulance due to urgent health concerns, subsequently spending 8 days across three wards, Emergency, Short-Stay ward and H3 ward. I would like to share what Peter experienced with you today. During his time in hospital, Peter experienced nothing short of the best quality care possible, describing the team as knowledgeable, caring, showing the greatest empathy and that nothing was too much trouble for them. A special shout out goes to the unit manager of H3 ward Ms Tracy Southwood and the team, who Peter sees as an award-winning team, led by an incredible manager. Our Health Care staff are truly treasures of our nation. They are the backbone of our community, keeping us safe and healthy in our most vulnerable times. When we need it most, we look to our health care staff, who step up and provide the most comprehensive and compassionate care possible. On behalf of the Gosford community, thank you from the bottom of my heart.

PARKLANDS COMMUNITY PRESCHOOL

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)—Early childhood education plays a critical role in the development of our future generations, and it is my pleasure to acknowledge the wonderful work of Parklands Community Preschool, a learning centre where children will receive more than just education but also a concrete foundation that can be treasured for life. Nestled in the scenic Mount Penang Parklands precinct, Parklands Community Preschool was established in the early 80s' by an enthusiastic group of parents, and it is going strong with the support of a team of passionate educators and parents. With a mission to serve the community, this preschool creates a warm and welcoming environment for both young children and their caregivers. Parklands Community Preschool creates countless interesting programs to educate the children to be environmental warriors and future leaders. Kindness is a major part of their educational curriculum, regularly involving children and their caregivers to participate in various activities which aim to support local charities and not for profit organisations. It warms my heart to see such a beautiful community preschool in the Gosford electorate. Thank you Parklands Community Preschool and the team behind it for inspiring us to serve the community through your exemplary actions.

CANTERBURY BANKSTOWN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE CHRISTMAS PARTY

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills)—I would like to congratulate the Canterbury Bankstown Chamber of Commerce [CBCC] for hosting a delightful 2023 Community Christmas Party at Entertainment Park Bankstown, welcoming over 300 guests to an afternoon of festive fun. The event, featuring arcade games, pool tables, a racing car simulator, e-karting, virtual reality experiences, and more, brought joy to attendees of all ages. An outdoor buffet and specially curated children's activities, including face-painting and a beauty show, added to the festive atmosphere. I was incredibly grateful to attend this event. The community generously donated over 1000 Christmas gifts for local children facing challenges through the CBCC Christmas Drive, some of which were donated to Biyani House in Revesby. These gifts mean so much to kids and families doing it tough over the Christmas period, and I thank everyone who donated to the appeal. I hope that the spirit of generosity and community continues into 2024, and I thank all those involved in the coordination and organisation of this event.

SUTHERLAND SHIRE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARD WINNERS

Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)—On Australia Day I had the pleasure of attending the Sutherland Shire's Australia Day citizenship and awards ceremony. With over 150 conferees, it was an honour to share this occasion with our newest Australians and celebrate the citizens that make our community a better place. I would like to congratulate all winners, including Citizen of the year Blakey Johnston, who has positively impacted youth mental health in Sutherland Shire through initiatives like his 40-hour surf challenge and leadership at Cronulla

Surfing Academy. The Young citizen of the year went to Jenson Wade, a seven-year-old who led a successful environmental campaign removing 162 kilograms of rubbish from local waterways. Community Group of the Year the Sutherland Shire Toy Restoration Centre, who supports underprivileged families by refurbishing and selling donated toys, and the Environmental citizens of the year, the SSC Community Nursery's volunteers, providing their valuable time to preserve and reintroduce native flora in Sydney. I would like to show gratitude and congratulate these Australia Day award winners for all their effort making the Shire such a wonderful place.

SOMASCAN MISSIONS DINNER DANCE

Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)—On 2 February 2024 I had the pleasure of attending the Somascan Missions Dinner Dance in Liverpool. Somascan Missions is a local charity providing financial support for local and overseas communities under the care of Somascan Fathers, with projects in Mozambique, Sri Lanka, and a food hamper service in Sydney. In 2004, the Somascan Fathers arrived in Australia, and soon expanded to Liverpool in 2020. Their devotion to work and charity was on full show at the dinner, which was a crucial fundraising initiative for to further enhance their work. I would like to thank in particular Father Chris, Father Mathew, and Treasurer Charbel Eltarraf for all the work they do, and look forward to supporting them into the future.

HALLE MCRAE

Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)—I rise to congratulate Halle McRae of Chipping Norton who recently competed at the 2024 Winter Youth Olympics in Gangwon, South Korea. A budding snowboarder, 16-year-old Halle competed in the Women's slopestyle snowboarding event and the Women's Big Air event. Halle's commitment to her sport and the relentless pursuit of excellence embodies the spirit of our youth, inspiring us all to reach new heights. The Australian contingent, comprised of 47 outstanding youth Olympians, displayed unwavering dedication and sportsmanship, earning our nation 2 silver medals and 1 bronze medal. Congratulations to Halle and the entire Australian Winter Youth Olympics team for making us proud. May their achievements continue to inspire generations to come.

DR ANDREW BROWNING

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—I would like to acknowledge my constituent Dr Andrew Browning and his ongoing lifesaving work in Africa as an esteemed obstetric fistula surgeon. Dr Browning began his life-saving work with the late Dr Catherine Hamlin in the 1990's in Ethiopia, treating women who suffered fistula injuries from long deliveries at home. The injuries left untreated led to life-long stigmatisation, diminishing quality of life, and often leading to depression and suicide. Andrew and his wife Stephanie spent 17 Years living and working in Africa, as Christian missionaries. Andrew's work included establishing maternity hospitals, training midwives, and performing surgery across Kenya, Somalia, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Malawi, and South Sudan while based in Tanzania. He established The Barbara May Foundation to raise funds and awareness to support and expand his important work across Africa. As a result of his leadership and the work of the foundation, maternity hospitals and training programs have been set up across Africa and Southeast Asia, providing an essential, life-saving model of care for thousands of disadvantaged women. Now settled locally with his family, Andrew still returns regularly to Africa to perform surgeries and we acknowledge your invaluable ongoing contribution to women's health worldwide.

KINCUMBER NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate this fantastic community focused organisation whose great programs include the Youth Brekky Club. Located close to Kincumber High School, during school terms the volunteers at the Kincumber Neighbourhood Centre [KNC], serve a hot breakfast to high school students from 7.30am on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, serving an average of 650 meals a month. With greater demand from families facing disadvantage from factors such as job loss, reduced income and cost of living challenges, this community service is providing those students in need with a hot nutritious meal to help set them up for learning for the day. The volunteers also get to interact with younger people, which is a great example of meaningful community connection. Congratulations to all the volunteers at KNC. Your generosity and efforts exemplify the community spirit that makes living on the Central Coast very special.

MEMORIAL FOR ANTONY, ANGELINA, SIENNA AND VERONIQUE

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)—A few days ago, alongside Prime Minister Albanese and Premier Minns, I was honoured to attend the opening of the memorial garden commemorating the memory of Antony, Angelina, Sienna and Veronique, the children of the Abdallah and Sakr families who faced an unspeakable tragedy when on February 1 2020 the children were hit by a car on their way to buy ice creams. After four years a memorial has been installed to mark their loss and a permanent recognition now stands at the site at Oatland. Maronite

Bishop Antoine-Charbel Tarabay presided over the blessing ceremony, joined by Auxiliary Bishop Richard Umbers. The outpouring of support from the community and from political leaders at every level stands testament to our state and our nations sympathy and solidarity for the Abdallah, Sakr, and Kassas families. It is the families' hope that this memorial will serve as a testament to faith and a source of strength for the families and the many others dealing with grief and reconciling with tragedy. I extend my deepest condolences and that of the whole community once more to their family and friends. They will not be forgotten and their memory will live on.

PARRAMATTA TOWN HALL RE-OPENING

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)—On December 14th, after over two years of refurbishment, the doors of Parramatta's beloved town hall were once again opened. Since it first opened in 1883, Town Hall has seen the growth and development of Parramatta from a humble settlement at the fall line of the Parramatta River to an upwards expanding modern city centre at the heart of Greater Sydney. Throughout its existence, town hall, with its beautiful Victorian Free Classical architectural style, has been a place where many memories have been forged, from its first public use as a venue for the Parramatta Glee Club in 1883 to its appearance as a backdrop for Delta Goodrem's 'Enough' music video. With this refurbishment comes state of the art audio visual and lighting technology as well as improved disability access, to name a few features. This refurbishment also connects Parramatta Town Hall to the civic and community hub PHIVE, seamlessly bridging Parramatta's storied past with its bright present and future. I thank the City of Parramatta Council, architect Manuelle Gautrand, architecture firms Lacoste + Stevenson and DesignInc, heritage specialists TKD Architects, and construction group Built for their contributions to this refurbishment of a Parramatta icon.

WEST WYALONG CAN ASSIST

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—Congratulations are extended to three members of the West Wyalong branch of Can Assist who were recently presented with life memberships and gifts of appreciation. Marie Seckold, Diane Croucher, and Darlene Lamb were recently awarded Life Members of West Wyalong Can Assist at their Annual General Meeting. Marie, Diane, and Darlene were awarded life members for their voluntary and unwavering service over many years. Marie received this prestigious award for her service as a Fundraising Officer. Diane received a life membership for her tireless commitment and generous contributions as past and current treasurer. At the same time, Darlene was awarded a life member award for her continuous service as a secretary for over 12 years. Marie, Diane, and Darlene, along with the other members of Can Assist, are committed to ensuring all people, regardless of where they live in NSW, have equitable access to cancer treatment and care. By providing financial assistance, practical support, and raising awareness. This volunteer network ensures that country people are given the same opportunities and treatment choices as those who live in city centres. Congratulations once again, Marie, Diane, and Darlene.

KEN EVERS AND LEVI PATTERSON

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—Congratulations and appreciation are extended to father-son duo Ken Evers and Levi Patterson, who have generously shaved their hair to raise money for their family members. Ken and his 13-year-old son generously chopped and donated their hair on Saturday, 9 December 2023, at the Ganmain Pool to raise money for Ken's relative, Sharon Walsh, as she battles cancer. The father-son team has raised an impressive \$590 to help Sharon and her family cover medical expenses and alleviate some financial stress. Thousands of Australians step up every year to shave, cut or colour their hair. It is the ultimate act of support for people facing cancer. Congratulations, and thank you again, Ken and Levi, for stepping forward and donating your hair.

PATRICK WATERS

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—I recognise a local Cowra resident's incredible and dedicated efforts and unwavering commitment to his profession. Inhouse Riddler and stock and station agent at Allan Gray and Co., Patrick Waters, has recently celebrated two decades of service to his line of work. After starting his career at Elders and transitioning from a commercial-based role to a more private side of business with Allan Gray and Co., Patrick has seen his fair share of evolution, growth, and change within the agricultural sector. As the saying goes, "Like Father, Like Son," auctioneering runs in the family. Patrick's son, Harry Waters, received the title of Young Auctioneer at the Australian Livestock and Property Agents Association's [ALPA] Competition in 2022 and 2023. Patrick was thanked and congratulated by his local community for his service to the livestock industry. I congratulate Patrick again on this remarkable milestone and wish him every success in the future.

LAUREN GRANT - LEETON

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—Today I would like to recognise Lauren Grant of Leeton, for her contributions to raising awareness of domestic violence and raising funds for charitable organisations to help women and children into safehouses and supporting transition back into society. Tragically, Lauren's mother

suffered constant physical and emotional abuse at the hands of her partner, before losing her life to the knock-on effects of domestic violence. A story which Lauren bravely shared on her fundraising site. Lauren, to honour her mother and to raise awareness, spent 12 months preparing for a gruelling 8 day climb to the Mount Everest Base Camp. She successfully completed the trek showing the courage and strength she hopes all women realise they are capable of. Domestic violence is a big issue, statistics show that in Australia and the UK, domestic violence is increasing. As a result of her efforts, she hopes that more people in the community will start to have conversations, to help victims feel comfortable in speaking out. I congratulate Lauren for her courageous efforts for an immensely important cause.

KAREN BOBELDYK - DENILIQVIN

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—Today I would like to recognise Mrs Karen Bobeldyk. Karen has been committed to her career at the Deniliquin Health Service for 53 years. As an administrator, she has always been the first point of contact for all patients who visit the hospital. Karen began work in administration in 1970, at only 24 years of age. Karen's love for her work shone through as her kind presence ensured everyone felt cared for and comfortable. During her many years of work she has witnessed the amazing progress of technology. After over five decades, Karen has finally bid farewell to her colleagues and patients. Now stepping into retirement, Karen is planning on continuing to help people through volunteer work. Karen is an asset to the local community. Her dedication and benevolence to the Deniliquin Health Service benefitted her colleagues and the entire Deni community. She has been awarded a Certificate of Outstanding Service for her decades of hard work. Mrs Bobeldyk's contribution to the hospital will always be remembered. Her colleagues and patients will miss her greatly; however her legacy will continue on.

BEN PHILLIPS

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I would like to congratulate Ben Phillips who has been one of Dapto's best cricketers since joining the club this season, after returning home after almost 10 years playing cricket in England. Phillips has hammered 265 runs at an average of 65 for the club. His best knock for Dapto was the classy 115 he scored against Northern Districts. Phillips impressive club form saw him selected to represent Illawarra and Greater Illawarra. Phillips first taste of representative cricket resulted in him hammering a classy 145 for Illawarra in their Creighton Cup victory over South Coast. All up Phillips has scored 521 runs in 18 matches for Dapto, Illawarra and Greater Illawarra at an average of 40.06. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Ben on his amazing results and wish him well in his future sporting endeavours.

MICHAEL AND KRISTIAN MASI

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I would like to congratulate Shell Cove twins Michael and Kristian Masi who graduated from high school last year receiving outstanding ATARs of 97.20 and 97.45 respectively. The Corpus Christi Catholic High School graduates had an extraordinary journey to their HSC exams, both skipping ahead a year of school, and one brother undergoing surgery mere days before the exams. With similar interests, the brothers studied the same HSC subjects: English advanced, mathematics extension two, ancient history, music one, and studies of religion. With a passion for maths, they may study at university after their gap year but for now, their focus is on music. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour community, I would like to congratulate both Michael and Kristian and wish them well in their future endeavours.

HUNTER WETLANDS CENTRE AUSTRALIA

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—The Hunter Wetlands Centre Australia is one of only twenty-three Star Wetland Centres representing every region across the world. The site at Shortland used to be a complex of football fields called Marist Park, with a clubhouse and amenities building for Hamilton Rugby Club. It was literally a dump until the mid-1980s, until a small, committed group of individuals formed the Hunter Wetlands Group and kick-started what is today a vibrant wetland ecosystem, teeming with life. It now enjoys a growing reputation for excellence in wetlands conservation, education, eco-tourism and awareness. The Wetlands has many beautiful spaces for reflection, thought, and exploration. There is something for everyone – an animal house, discovery playground, walking and bike trails, dip netting, café, nature play, birdwatching, guided walking tours, canoe hire, animal shows, teddy bear hunts, art and craft exhibitions, bird photography tours, native plant sales. None of this would be possible without the generous support of volunteers from the local community. Maintained by the community for the community, Hunter Wetlands Centre is committed to inclusion and diversity, providing an environmental haven for plants and animals – and us.

CALVARY MATER NEWCASTLE'S BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT TEAM

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—The Calvary Mater Newcastle's Bereavement Support Team continues to provide comfort and support during difficult times for individuals and families. This group of

dedicated volunteers includes Sue Hunter, Pat Lynch, Margaret Fogarty, John Papp and Siobhán Farrell, who provide support to the loved ones of palliative care patients following their death. They ensure that people are given the opportunity to share their story, express their pain and experience the healing that comes with deep and non-judgemental listening. These highly empathetic people have extensive knowledge about grief, outstanding communication skills and an incredible ability to build trust and rapport with loved ones. Between them, members of the Bereavement Support Team have 56 combined years of voluntary service to the Mater. From March 22 to June 23, they made a total of 863 phone calls - demonstrating their care and commitment, sometimes even months after the death of a loved one. Stories are often shared by grieving people with the team, and not with immediate family members, highlighting pivotal moments in often long journeys of healing. Your work is invaluable, has an impact and does not go unnoticed. Thank you.

HANNAH RAYMENT

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)—I take this opportunity to recognise Ms Hannah Rayment, who is the City of Canada Bay Council's 2023 Citizen of the Year. Hannah is a well-deserving recipient of this award as she devotes her spare time to contributing to her community and helping those in need overseas. Hannah joined the local not-for profit organisation, Communities for Communities in 2015, and has been Vice President for the past three years. Bringing her professional experience to the volunteer-run organisation, Hannah provides marketing and public relations support as well as organising various fundraising events throughout the year such as the annual community favourite, Carols in Halliday Park. Communities for Communities has supported over 2,400 families with various initiatives, raised over \$2.8 million and built 920 houses in six different countries including Cambodia, Fiji, Indonesia, Vietnam, and Thailand supporting communities in need. All of this could not be possible without people like Hannah volunteering their time. Hannah also volunteers with the St. Vincent de Paul Van Service each month. Hannah is making a truly extraordinary contribution to our community. I wish to congratulate Hannah on this well-deserved award, and I wish her all the very best.

NICHOLAS MAKSYMOW OAM

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)—I wish to congratulate Mr Nicholas Maksymow OAM who has been recognised as part of the 2024 Australia Day Honours List. Nicholas was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia OAM for his commitment and service to the Russian community of Sydney. Nicholas has served as a Director of the Russian Relief Association of St Sergius of Radonezh since 2011, and as its Treasurer since 2017. The association has supported the Russian Community and elderly persons for over 70 years by providing a range of care services. Nicholas has also been intimately involved with the St Alexander Nevsky Russian Language School, a Saturday community school at Concord for Russian speaking children – serving as its Vice-President from 2006 to 2012, and then its President since 2012. Nicholas has also served as the Founding Director of the Russian Resurrection Film Festival since 2004, and has been involved with the President of the Russian Ethnic Community Council of New South Wales, the Russian Club Limited Strathfield and the Ethnic Communities Council of New South Wales. I sincerely congratulate Mr Nicholas Maksymow and wish him all the very best.

ANDREW SIDNEY WHITTON OAM

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)—I wish to congratulate Mr Andrew Sidney Whitton OAM of Abbotsford who has been recognised as part of the 2024 Australia Day Honours List. Mr Whitton was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia OAM for his service to the community through a range of roles. Mr Whitton has a long history of fundraising with Parkinson's NSW, an organisation striving to raise awareness and improve the lives of people living with Parkinson's, their families, and carers. Between 2010-2020, Mr Whitton became a member of the Board of Trustees of The Parkinson's NSW Trust and in 2012-2018 became a Board Member of Parkinson's NSW, finally becoming President, and serving from 2015-2017. Alongside his work with Parkinson's NSW, Mr Whitton volunteered during the Covid-19 pandemic as a grocery deliverer for the Asylum Seekers Centre. He has also coached and managed several junior sporting teams in rugby and baseball. Mr Whitton is an exemplary person who puts the needs of his community before his own. His kindness and compassion is evident and has been recognised. I sincerely congratulate Mr Whitton and wish him all the very best.

FLEECE TO FASHION AWARDS GALA DINNER AND PRESENTATION

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise Fleece to Fashion on their successful awards presentation and gala dinner held recently to celebrate Merino wool qualities, production and placement within global fashion and textile industries. I congratulate each of the winners: Supreme Champion, Developing Designer & Encouragement Award - Chelsea Mitchell; Akira Isogawa Mentorship – Jun (Michael) Sheung II; Secondary Schools - Dechen K; Special Occasion - Judy Bond; Inspired Menswear – Jack Bartholomeusz; Wearable Art and Innovation in Wool – Sasha Matteucci; Global Cultures – Alice Pettiroso; Wool

Re-imagined – Amy Macaskill; The Wedding Party – Laurel Judd; Most Marketable – Aoibha Doyla; Wool Producer's Pick – Holly Normoyle and Encouragement Awards – Summer Wanless & Phillipa Signorelli. I commend the team behind the event, Chairman Lachlan Fulloon; Event Manager Sarah Mason; Board members Liz Foster, Greg Moin, Phil Gream, Kate Stephen; and Team members, Beau Thackway and Edie Rose. Special thanks to judges: Akira Isogawa and Jonathon Ward; Host Catriona Rowntree; and fashion doyenne Melissa Hoyer.

OBSERVA CARE - ARMIDALE

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise Observa Care Armidale for winning the Health category and being named the overall champion at the Innovate with nbn Grants Program Awards 2023, which were held in Sydney recently. The Health Award recognised Observa Care for their development of the Remote Patient Monitoring Service Model, designed to ultimately improve patient health outcomes for regional and rural Australians. I congratulate Rod and Deborah Martin the founders of Observa Care, on their foresight and fortitude to develop and deliver their vision. The model developed is aimed at using technologies so clinicians can assess an individual's health status in real-time, providing better patient monitoring. I commend Rod and Deborah for their contribution to health and to the wellbeing of the people in rural Australia.

WALCHA FARMER'S MARKET CELEBRATES 10 YEARS

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise Walcha Farmer's Market Club for reaching an impressive 10-year milestone recently. The idea originated when Olivia Nivison and Paula Jenkins saw the need to support local and backyard producers and demand for organic locally supplied produce and from this association, the Walcha Farmers' Markets was established. I congratulate the original committee members Sara Brown, Lisa Kirton, Karen Blomfield, Paula Jenkins and Olivia Nivison, along with other members who have shared their talents and time to the group over the years. Along with the markets the group have held numerous cooking workshops, gardening demonstrations, talks on animal care and welfare, including special guests over the years to benefit their community. The Farmer's Market has also diversified to include musicians, competitions, and a community stall for locals to sell their own excess produce. I commend each member for their commitment of time and effort to the group. Thank you for the support given to local farmers and to the Walcha district and community.

CHRISTIAN BROTHERS' HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT LEADERS

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)—On behalf of the Newtown electorate, I would like to recognise Christian Brothers' High School incoming Student Leaders. The incoming Student School Captains and Touchstone Prefect Body include Daniel Khoury, Harrison McCarthy, Allan Bechara, Christian Kayrouz, Dermott Molloy, Philip Gionis and Max Herron. The incoming House Prefects include Max Rulli, Jai Townsend, Daniel McMahon, Daniel Nicolatsopoulos, Tristan Diakos, Michael Touma, Anthony Dimopoulos and Aaron Chan. The Student Leaders have elected to focus on five key areas of focus next year, including School Pride, House Spirit, Religious Life and Justice and Outreach Opportunities, Improved Classroom Culture, and Increased focus on Inclusivity and Mental Health. The Student Leaders also plan to implement the Junior School and Senior School Buddy Program, increase student voices via the Student Representative Council, host House-based team building events, BBQs and sporting events, refocusing student knowledge of the aims an Edmund Rice education, introduce fundraising initiatives for charities and organisations, build awareness around mental health initiatives, and more. We look forward to seeing the work and initiatives of the Student Leaders in the new year and the contributions they will make to their school community and our electorate of Newtown.
