

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Thursday 8 February 2024**

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

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

## *Visitors*

### **VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I welcome a number of visitors to the gallery, including members of my family and particularly my wife.

## *Announcements*

### **LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY PHOTOGRAPHS**

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

## *Business of the House*

### **SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: BILLS**

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (10:02):** I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to extend the lapsing date for the Human Tissue Amendment (Ante-mortem Interventions) Bill 2023 to 31 May 2024.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (10:03):** It would take a brave Manager of Opposition Business to oppose the motion.

**The SPEAKER:** I believe the Manager of Opposition Business is brave enough to do so, but I appreciate that he will not.

The question is that the motion be agreed to.

**Motion agreed to.**

[*Notices of motions given.*]

## *Bills*

### **PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS AMENDMENT (VIRTUAL STOCK FENCING) BILL 2023**

#### **First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Mr Philip Donato, read a first time and printed.**

#### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (10:19):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

In 2016 I was elected to represent not only the good people of the Orange electorate but also the interests and needs of farmers across our State. The record will reflect my enthusiastic and vigorous representation in this place and beyond, which I have done on behalf of farmers from across New South Wales who endured the devastating drought that took hold in 2018. It was this representation that "encouraged" the then Government to eventually deliver essential support and aid for those we rely on to provide the food and fibre we often take for granted. Farming is a pillar of my representation. The farming sector is rooted in the history of Australia's colonisation and is the industry that has supported rural and regional development in the hundreds of years since. Farming has influenced the shape and definition of country people and their communities. Now technological progression shapes and defines farming practices, including stewardship over the land and husbandry of the livestock that farmers care for.

I turn to the bill that is before the House. I, along with many livestock farmers and respected peak farming bodies, believe the bill is important in advancing livestock production and land management. I urge my fellow members to support this bill. It is a pivotal legislative change—a change that has the potential to revolutionise the agricultural landscape of our State and support our farmers in advancing livestock farming, in keeping with the twenty-first century. This bill seeks to amend the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979 to allow farmers to lawfully use virtual fencing in New South Wales. Unsurprisingly, virtual fencing did not exist in 1979. If it had, section 16 (1) likely would have been altered. This section of the Act prevents the use of certain electrical devices on animals; therefore, it prevents virtual fencing devices being applied to stock animals in New South Wales. If supported, the amendment to the Act would specify:

**[1] Section 16 Certain electrical devices not to be used upon animals**

Insert ", but does not include a virtual stock fencing device" after "the regulations" in section 16(1), definition of *electrical device*.

**[2] Section 16(1)**

Insert in alphabetical order—

*virtual stock fencing device* means a device—

- (a) consisting of GPS-enabled sensors and collars capable of delivering electric pulses and cues to stock animals, and
- (b) used for the purposes of confining, tracking and monitoring stock animals.

Virtual fencing is an innovative system that enables livestock farmers to create virtual boundaries without the need for physical internal property fencing. Virtual fencing is invisible and somewhat intangible. The virtual boundary is created on a computer program using GPS technology for the purpose of confining stock animals to a pre-determined area without using traditional fixed fencing. Stock animals are fitted with a neck collar that is powered by a solar-chargeable battery. When the stock animal approaches the pre-determined boundary, the collar emits an audible cue, followed by a safe electrical stimulus to deter the animal from the virtual fence line. The energy of the stimulus delivered by the collar is less than that of a standard electric fence.

The history of this technology is fascinating and illustrates the advancements that have been made in agriculture and technology. It is the product of meticulous research and development by not only the private sector but also our world-renowned scientific institution the CSIRO. Its work in the field of virtual fencing has been instrumental in bringing this technology to life and providing legitimacy to this advanced farming practice. It is a testament to the power of collaboration between industry and science.

Why is it imperative that we embrace this technology in New South Wales? The benefits are manifold, and they extend to our farmers, our economy and our environment. First and foremost, virtual fencing offers our livestock farmers a tremendous boost in efficiency and productivity. Traditional fencing is not only costly to install and maintain but also limits the flexibility of grazing areas. Recent flood and bushfire events have exacerbated the impact and costs associated with traditional fencing. With virtual fencing, farmers can adjust internal boundaries and move their livestock with ease, reducing labour and time requirements. This not only makes their operations more cost effective but also allows them to focus on other critical aspects of their business.

In light of the number of on-farm accidents to farmers and farm workers engaged in traditionally moving stock, such as quad-bike rollovers, this technology has the benefit of potentially reducing injuries. Environmental benefits are another critical aspect of the technology. The reduction in physical fencing allows for more efficient land use, which minimises overgrazing and soil degradation, protects riparian zones and has the potential to increase carbon sequestration. These positive environmental impacts align with land stewards' growing commitment to sustainable practices and conservation of natural resources. A valuable fringe benefit of this fencing technology is the reduction in obstruction to the movements of native fauna and animal entanglement, injury and mortality.

Additionally, the potential for innovation in livestock management is immense. With the data generated by the virtual fencing systems' updatable algorithms recognising animal behaviour, farmers can gain deeper insights into, and monitor the behaviour and health of, their animals. This data-driven approach can lead to more informed decision-making and improved animal husbandry and breeding programs. It is a leap forward in modernising our agricultural sector. Being able to track stock would help farmers sleep better at night knowing that this technology would act as a deterrent to stock theft. In the event that a theft occurs, the containment breach would immediately trigger an alert. During a recent mock stock-theft scenario and training operation involving the University of New England and NSW Police Force investigators, a GPS-enabled stock collar was assessed. Following the staged theft, the containment breach immediately alerted the farmer simultaneously via text message and email. Further detections of high distance movement and high accelerometer movements were also communicated to the farmer, as well as stock location.

The simulated exercise resulted in police being notified, and their response to the GPS information resulted in the detection and recovery of the livestock within 23 minutes of the reported theft. Given that annual losses of livestock in New South Wales have exceeded \$5 million dollars per annum, the benefits potentially derived from virtual fencing technology cannot be overlooked. Incorporating virtual fencing technology into legislation is not just a matter of economic and environmental progress, but is also about empowering our farmers to compete on a global scale. As other jurisdictions, such as Queensland, Tasmania, Western Australia, New Zealand and the United States, have already embraced and legislated or regulated use of this technology, we cannot afford to be left behind. It is my understanding that Northern Territory and Germany are presently in the processes of legislative reform to allow for the use of virtual fencing. We must take a proactive approach to create an environment that encourages innovation and adaptation in our agriculture sector.

Virtual fencing can be another tool in the chest for farmers to access should it meet their needs and benefit the land they farm and the stock they manage. The research conducted by CSIRO underscores the scientific validity and practicality of virtual fencing. Its work has shown that the technology is not only effective but also cost efficient. By aligning our legislation with these findings, we can enable our farmers to access the benefits of that technology. NSW Farmers, a highly respected peak body, has long supported virtual fencing. During the earlier stages of my research into that technology, I engaged with NSW Farmers president Xavier Martin and his team. Mr Martin conveyed his support for the legislative reform the bill seeks to achieve, being aware that such a reform is what the organisation's members resolved to support.

As recently as last week I visited Gallagher's animal management facility in Queensland to see their virtual fencing technology in operation. Gallagher is one of very few manufacturers worldwide which produces virtual fencing technology. Its technology and products have endured years of testing and product development, and I was impressed with the level of scientific expertise among its product research and development team, discovering the evolution of their cutting-edge fencing system. The computer program appeared easy to use and contained safeguards to prevent misuse of the technology. I saw, firsthand, cattle interacting with the device and the virtual fence line. Witnessing the technology being used on the cattle and their responses to it has reinforced my support for the technology and for progressing the requisite reform. I take the opportunity to thank Gallagher's head of animal research and trials, Dr Jarrod Lees, and Gallagher's global strategy and new ventures manager, Sarah Adams, for their time in detailing the technology.

It is clear that the legalisation of virtual fencing technology in New South Wales is not merely a matter of convenience; it is also one of necessity. It is a testament to our commitment to the wellbeing of our farmers, the environment and our economy. By embracing the technology and incorporating it into our legislation, we open the door to a new era of efficiency, productivity and sustainability in our agriculture sector. Let us move forward with the knowledge that we have the means to revolutionise our livestock management practices and support our farmers. I urge you, my fellow members, to support our farmers by adopting the amendment. Together, we can make our State a leader in modern agricultural practices and, in doing so, ensure a brighter future for our farmers, our regional communities and our State as a whole. Support for the bill is support for our farmers and the livestock industry which we all rely on. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

#### *Motions*

### **FEDERAL INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING**

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (10:36):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Condemns the Government for failing to stand up for the people of New South Wales against the Federal Government's savage infrastructure cuts.
- (2) Notes that Labor is cancelling 17 road projects, which will mean more congestion and pain for commuters, particularly in Western Sydney.
- (3) Calls on the Government to immediately confirm that it will find a way to fund these key projects.

To give members some context, this is a very disappointing before and after story. Before, we had a State Government that built stuff and got stuff done, including over 35,000 projects and \$200 billion worth of infrastructure in less than a decade up to 2022. Under the Liberal-Nationals Government there were cranes across the skyline. It was an exciting time. There was huge private investment in our economy and two triple-A credit ratings. New South Wales was a place where we had a future and a vision. Now, in the after, we have a Labor Government under which nothing is getting done. Worse than that, things are getting cancelled. The shovels have been packed away in the back shed, the hard hats are gathering dust, and New South Wales is going backwards.

Last November the Albanese Government axed funding totalling \$3.6 billion for 17 vital road projects in New South Wales. These projects would have made a very real difference to people's lives. As a result of Albanese's cuts and the Minns Government's failure to stand up for us, New South Wales will face increased congestion and dangerous roads. Paul Keating once said, "Never get between a Premier and a bucket of money." When the Premier's mate Albo rips \$3.6 billion out of our State, what does the Premier do? He does nothing. This is a Premier who says all of the right things when the cameras are rolling but then does nothing. At the time he said, "I'm very concerned." He is very concerned. That is good. Them's fighting words! But that does not get stuff done. We need to know what is being done to get back on track. This is a Premier who will not stand up to his Labor mates in Canberra.

Let us be clear, more than half of the total cuts nationwide have come at the expense of our State, the biggest State. It is an outrage. New South Wales contributes more than its fair share to the nation and yet the Albanese Labor Government has disproportionately cut infrastructure funding to our State. But this is what Labor governments do. They cut infrastructure; they do not build. They cut our future. These cuts will see infrastructure projects pushed back for years. Under the Coalition Government, regional road projects were typically funded 80 per cent by the Commonwealth and city projects about 50-50.

Let us remind ourselves of the projects that are going to be cancelled under Labor: Blaxland Road and Balacava Road intersection improvements; Bruxner Highway upgrades between Wollongbar and Goonellabah; the commuter car park upgrade, T1 North Shore, Northern and Western Line - Kingswood; the commuter car park upgrade, T1 North Shore, Northern and Western Line - St Marys; the commuter car park upgrade at Woy Woy; the Great Western Highway upgrade, Katoomba to Lithgow, construction of east and west sections; Gwydir Highway improvements; the M7-M12 interchange; Mulgoa Road stage two; the Northern NSW Inland Port at Narrabri; Oxley Highway stage two—

**Mrs Leslie Williams:** Shame!

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE:** It is incredible, is it not? The list continues: the Remembrance Driveway corridor upgrade – Camden Council; Southern Connector Road, Jindabyne; the Sydney to Newcastle Tuggerah-Wyong faster rail upgrade; the Toowoomba to Seymour, Moree Intermodal Overpass; the Werrington Arterial stage two; and the Western City Road Transport Network Development project. I need to catch my breath. We are all trying to catch our breath after hearing that long list of projects cut by Labor federally and seemingly endorsed by Labor NSW—which is concerned, but what is it doing? Western Sydney commuters are rightly disappointed that the Premier has not stood up for the Mulgoa Road stage two and M7-M12 interchange projects. Those cuts will mean more congestion, less productivity and more pain for businesses in Western Sydney. The Labor Mayor of Penrith said:

To see the extent of the projects that have been cut from Western Sydney, and namely the Penrith Local Government Area (LGA) is quite a shock.

Premier Minns and his Government have turned their backs on Western Sydney. A question mark still hangs over these projects. Will this Government fund them itself? Under this Labor Government, we have zero action and zero vision. The former Coalition Government was looking to the future, with a \$120 billion infrastructure pipeline and \$77.6 billion for transport and infrastructure projects—the biggest infrastructure pipeline ever seen in this State. We delivered the Sydney Metro North West. We were delivering the Sydney Metro City and Southwest in 2024, the Sydney Metro West in 2030, and the Sydney light rail and Parramatta light rail in 2024.

Eight motorways, NorthConnex and WestConnex were all delivered or in delivery under the former Government. We committed over \$825 million to fixing pinch points across Sydney's road network. We built and were building the roads that our communities needed and that they rely on—even more so now with the housing that needs to build out in Western Sydney. We had a vision for our State. The Minns Labor Government does not seem to care about these very real issues affecting communities right across this State. Labor does not care about the cost of living, cutting the Back to School vouchers and Active Kids vouchers.

What has the Minns Government done to make life easier for the people of New South Wales? The Premier can say the right words when the cameras are rolling, but where is the action? What is he doing about this situation? We heard about it in November and there has been radio silence ever since. Labor promises infrastructure but does not deliver it. Just after coming to government last year, the Premier cancelled the Beaches Link, two metro lines, the Blue Mountains tunnel and many more road projects. It is in Labor's DNA to cut infrastructure and spending. We have legitimate questions that need to be aired here today, so I look forward to the House considering this motion.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (10:43):** The phrase "fixing the mess" immediately springs to mind, but I will not start there. I want to start somewhere else. I have enormous respect for my colleagues across the Chamber. They are not silly; they are smart. I put to the House that those opposite are 100 per cent aware of the

financial situation facing the State of New South Wales and the Federal Government. They are knowingly misleading the House and communities. They are crying crocodile tears. When the Liberals and The Nationals came to government in 2011, the State had a \$22 billion debt. When they left office, the State was on its way to being \$187 billion in debt—an 800 per cent blowout in just 12 years. In its first 160 years, this State racked up \$20 billion in debt and then, in just 12 years, it went from \$22 billion to \$187 billion. That is unsustainable.

Whether Opposition members talk about the projects that the member for Vacluse listed or about Active Kids, First Lap or Back to School vouchers, they were all borrowings and the credit card is now maxed out. Their Treasurer and their Premier knew the condition of the finances, which is why they did not put those types of programs and projects and funding and cost-of-living relief into future budgets. They knew it was unaffordable and unsustainable. I am not just saying that. It was proven by the action and decision-making of the Coalition's Premier and Treasurer. That is the truth. The other truth is that, federally, when Tony Abbott was elected back in 2013—

**Mrs Leslie Williams:** That is a long time ago.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** Yes, it is. The country had \$500 billion worth of debt. Fast-forward 10 years to when the Coalition lost the election in 2023, the country was \$1 trillion—that is, \$1,000 billion—in debt. It had doubled the national debt in the 10 years that it was in. So what happened here in New South Wales is similar to what happened federally—that is, those opposite put everything on the credit card and they broke the bank. We are broke in New South Wales. It happened on their watch. We are broke federally. It happened on their watch. They racked up the debt. Does everyone agree that debt ultimately has to be paid back? Can we have agreement about that? What is the plan for paying back the debt? Are you going increase taxes? Do you want to increase taxes in New South Wales? Is that what you want to do? What about the assets that used to make money, that used to be a revenue source for this State? How about if we had some of them to help us pay down the debt? No, you sold all of them. So what do you want to do?

**Mrs Leslie Williams:** Point of order: As per the standing orders, I ask that you request the member for Cessnock to direct his comments through the Chair.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** The member for Cessnock will direct his comments through the Chair.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** I was wondering how long that would take, to be honest.

**Mrs Leslie Williams:** I gave you a fair go.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** Yes, you did. We must have solutions here. We cannot just keep spending on the credit card and pretend that will go on endlessly and forever. We cannot do that. The previous New South Wales Government was also famous for making announcements without doing its homework. I am not just saying that. Infrastructure NSW, a body set up by the Liberals and The Nationals at the start of their tenure back in 2011 to take the politics out of announcements, regularly criticised the announcements made by those opposite because they had not done their homework and properly costed projects.

When it had prepared a business case that showed, let us say, 12¢ or 28¢ in the dollar, the previous Government decided to go ahead and announce the project anyway, despite the fact that it was a bad business decision. An example of that is the Dungowan Dam project. It was announced as a joint State and Federal project, funded 50-50. The projected cost started at \$480 million. It started at \$480 million. We are going fifty-fifty. It blew out to \$650 million. Are we still going fifty-fifty? The Feds were a bit shaky. It blew out to \$800 million. The Feds said, "We were fifty-fifty at \$600 million." It blew out to \$1.2 billion. We still have not built the thing, and we are already blown out to almost 300 per cent. That is the nature of the projects and announcements that were made.

It is disappointing in New South Wales that the Federal Government has decided to hold, pull back, pause funding for the 17 projects. Twelve were State projects; five were local council projects. The State continues to lobby and advocate for those projects. Some of them will go ahead with State funding alone if the Feds don't stump up. For some of those projects we will continue to build the business case. Some of them were fanciful and may never go ahead. But the homework has not been done. The business case needs to be considered properly for all of the projects, in order to fix the mess. That business case needs to be put for the funding, and decisions need to be made. If the State and Federal governments were not broke, we would not need to have these hard conversations and make these hard decisions. But this State's fairweather Government of the past 12 years left the bank empty. They know that fact, and they are pretending it does not exist.

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (10:50):** I thank the member for Vacluse for moving a very sensible motion on Albanese's and Minns' waste and mismanagement. We all know that Labor cannot manage money.

Labor also cannot manage infrastructure. In November last year the Albanese Labor Government announced \$5.36 billion in project cuts to 17 infrastructure projects in New South Wales, and \$3.5 billion of those cuts are Federal cuts. I am keen to do a roll call, based on the projects the member for Vacluse read out. One of the projects is Blaxland Road-Balaclava Road. The member for Ryde is in the Chamber. Another is the commuter car park upgrade in St Marys. The member for Londonderry is not in the Chamber. There is Oxley Highway stage two planning. The member for Port Macquarie is in the Chamber. There is the Remembrance Driveway corridor upgrade. The member for Camden is not in the Chamber.

There is the commuter car park upgrade at Kingswood. The member for Penrith is in the Chamber. I look forward to her contribution. There is the Sydney to Newcastle, Tuggerah to Wyong, faster rail upgrade. The member for The Entrance is in the Chamber. I look forward to his contribution. Labor cuts to infrastructure are not surprising. The Prime Minister said, "There's no cuts to our infrastructure investment that is at record levels." But he ended up cutting 17 projects in New South Wales worth \$3.5 billion. Is that surprising from a Prime Minister who, over 100 times in the past two years, said he was committed to stage three tax cuts with zero changes to that? Only two weeks ago, even upwards of a week before he announced stage three tax cut changes, he simply did a backflip. We cannot believe anything Labor members say. I will give some small credit. I note that the Premier said, "The enabling infrastructure is important to the economy, for housing and for our share of inbound immigration over the next two years." It would be credible if the Premier practised what he preached.

Days after the Federal Government's infrastructure cuts, another infrastructure project was cut, but this time in New South Wales. It was very similar to the commitments from the member for Londonderry and the member for Penrith, which were for commuter car parks. One of the commuter car parks that got cut was for Lindfield, within the Davidson electorate. I have a very secret document from a public servant, which says, "Do you know whatever happened to that briefing note for Lindfield and whether it ended up getting signed and sent to the ministerial office? I'm looking to get a copy." So it was signed off by the Minister. It continues, "We're thinking the Lindfield one is a good basis to start with." There we have it. The document, echoed by my unaligned friend, the member for Cessnock, says that State Labor is looking to cut more infrastructure projects in New South Wales, based on Federal Labor's cuts. When it comes to infrastructure, like money, Labor cannot be trusted. What is next on the cutting block? I call on Labor members to call out the Federal Government and also to say what they are going to cut.

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (10:54):** I contribute to debate and oppose the motion, which is factually inaccurate and misleading. I have, in this very place, heard the Premier, the Deputy Premier and other members speak up for the people of New South Wales on this issue. Where were members opposite when that was happening? I have spoken previously, both in this place and at my council, advocating for my residents. I have advocated to Minister Graham on the M12-M7 link and Mulgoa Road. I wrote to the Federal Minister and issued media releases and articles. A short desktop search would have demonstrated that the whole premise of the motion is fiction. But then the members opposite never did let the facts get in the way of their propaganda. Again, I speak from experience. As the member for Camden has said, this Labor Government is constantly mopping up messes they left for us.

Our Government is working hard for the people of New South Wales. We did it from opposition, and now we are in government and delivering for our constituents, as they elected us to do. I admit that it is a hard slog after 12 years of a Coalition government that was focused on factional battles and ignoring the needs of workers, while selling off every State asset and causing the people of New South Wales more financial pain. That pain is felt deeply by residents in my Western Sydney electorate of Penrith. Do members opposite even know where Western Sydney is? Ashfield is not Western Sydney. As for the pain they mention, I do not need to look any further than the toll roads they saddled us with. Talk about disingenuousness: The previous Government was obsessed with building major toll roads, which they promised would not be privatised. Then they quickly backflipped after the elections. I say elections because they did it more than once.

To add insult to injury, those toll roads, which are mostly used by Western Sydney residents, are locked up until 2060. In particular, I call out the case of the M4 and M5, placing a toll burden on Sydney of \$123 billion in today's dollars, most of it paid by Western Sydney commuters. The privatised WestConnex alone accounts for over half of that burden—\$64 billion in today's dollars. How dare they express their fictitious concern about pain for Western Sydney commuters? The motion calls on our Government to find a way to fund key projects. Let us instead talk about the cost blowouts and repair bills for trains that did not fit tracks or fit through tunnels. Let us talk about the cost of ferries that did not fit under bridges, operate at night or even go backwards. We hear deafening silence on those gems of mismanagement.

Since coming to government, it is very clear to Labor members that the Coalition never did the next phase of planning for Western Sydney's growth. No proper planning for funding roads to support car, truck and freight movements in the new airport precinct was done, even though the airport is due to open in just over two years.

That planning was imperative for cities like Penrith, as we are geographically closest to the airport. To spotlight just how absurd the motion is, let us talk about the projects that this Labor Government is supporting through the budget, including flood resilience projects in Western Sydney, the M7 to Townson Road, Pitt Town Bypass and the Garfield Road East upgrade in Riverstone. Each member of this Labor Government is committed to advocating and delivering for the people of New South Wales. They elected us to do it, and we are delivering. I urge members to oppose the motion.

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

*Announcements*

**MEMBER FOR MONARO**

**MEMBER FOR WYONG**

**The SPEAKER:** I acknowledge the upcoming birthdays of the member for Monaro and the member for Wyong. I wish them all the best for wonderful celebrations. I love that they have coordinated their birthdays so closely that they can sit together, enjoy it and party on through question time.

*Visitors*

**VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I acknowledge the presence in the gallery of the former member for Miranda, Barry Collier. I extend a warm welcome to guests of the member for Maitland, Denise and Trevor McGowan-Slee. I welcome guests who are staff members of the member for Oxley, Adam and family, Twee, Kin and Kyarra. I also welcome Councillor Darriea Turley, AM, president of the board of Local Government NSW. Everybody knows who Councillor Turley is, as they should. I also welcome guests of the member for Keira. I am sure nobody knows who Adam Hall is! I welcome Adam, Rebecca Podesta, Tilly Shim, and Nora Dang from the Health Services Union. By the way, in the front row of the gallery are representatives of the Piper family. I will not name them all because we do not have enough time, but on the right is my wife.

*Announcements*

**MCKINNON PRIZE FINALISTS**

**The SPEAKER:** I draw the attention of members to shortlisted McKinnon Prize finalists for State and Territory political leader of the year. I know this will come as a surprise to some and I am sure the Premier is not aware that he has been shortlisted jointly with former Premier Dominic Perrottet, the member for Epping. I love to see those guys working together, and we will keep that going. Also shortlisted is the Hon. Victor Dominello, who did a fantastic job of delivering digital driver licences, and—surprise, surprise—the member for Sydney, Alex Greenwich. I congratulate all those who are shortlisted. I wish them all the very best.

*Question Time*

**MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT OFFICE STAFFING**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (11:07):** My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. During budget estimates in November last year, in response to questions regarding Kieren Ash's political work while a departmental liaison officer [DLO] in the Minister's office, the Minister repeatedly stated—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! All members will come to order and allow the Leader of The Nationals to ask his question. He will be heard in silence.

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS:** During budget estimates in November last year, in response to questions regarding Kieren Ash's political work while a DLO in the Minister's office, the Minister repeatedly stated, "My experience of this public servant's work was that it was in line with his responsibilities." Does the Minister stand by that answer?

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (11:08):** It is good to know that in 2024 things have not changed. It is like Opposition members went to the photocopier and just got the questions from last year and said, "These ones will do." How exciting! Seriously, the tactical geniuses opposite—give me strength. Before we get another long point of order from the member for Wahroonga, I would say, firstly, that I absolutely stand by those statements because in my experience the public servants that have come to serve us in government, to help us fix the mess that they were left, are nothing but diligent and professional individuals who have served us like many of them served Ministers of the previous Government.

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

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** In fact, as I have stated multiple times before in this House, many of the public servants who have come to serve in our offices are exactly the same individuals who helped members opposite communicate with their constituents, communicate government policy, write speeches and prepare notes. They are exactly the same public servants.

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** Point of order: The question was directly relevant to the work done by her DLO, Kieren Ash.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** I have answered the question.

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** Is the Minister standing by what she said previously?

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** I have said that.

**The SPEAKER:** The Leader of the Nationals will resume his seat. I will not hear another point of order on direct relevance. The Minister was being directly relevant. She has signed off on it. The Minister has the call.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** The fact is that they continue to ask questions about the ins and outs of ministerial offices, about the minutiae of codes of conduct, because they cannot ask about public transport. They left it in a complete and utter mess. Let us remember that when it comes to our rail network, a system that completely melted down under their leadership and left tens of thousands of passengers stranded on platforms, they left us a five-year maintenance backlog. So we took the advice of hardworking public servants. We worked with our transport workforce, who are hardworking individuals that we respect, rather than getting into conflict with them. We are finding solutions, including our rail repair plan—\$97 million worth of investment.

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

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** That has now removed over 90 per cent of the high-priority defects across our rail network and is seeing results for passengers each and every day to deliver more reliable public transport. That is what we on this side of the House are focused on.

#### ASSET PRIVATISATION

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (11:11):** My question is addressed to the Premier. Does the Government have any plans to reverse its position on privatisation and start selling off the State's assets?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:11):** It is a direct question, and it deserves a direct answer. The answer is absolutely not. I know the House has been waiting with bated breath for that answer. The evidence relating to privatisation is in, and it has been a disaster for our State. Let's look at Vales Point Power Station. It was sold for \$1 million in 2015 by the Liberal Party, and then it was sold by the new private owners for \$200 million. So it was sold for \$1 million, the new owners flipped it for \$200 million and the taxpayers got hosed. Eraring Power Station was sold for \$50 million, and now the shadow Minister for Health claims that it will cost \$3 billion to keep open. Why would you sell an asset like that for \$50 million?

It is important to note that in Queensland energy companies and generators have delivered more than \$5 billion in dividends to the Queensland Government in just the past five years. That is dividends that the New South Wales Government has forgone as a result of the privatisation agenda of those opposite. Of course, the monster of them all is WestConnex—half of which was sold in 2018 for \$9.3 billion. The other half was sold in 2021 for \$11 billion. Sydney motorists are on the hook to pay a minimum of \$123 billion in tolls, \$10 billion to the private sector and \$11 billion—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Kellyville will come to order. I call the member for Kellyville to order for the first time. I call the member for Kellyville to order for the second time.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** Members will remember that after the 2019 election there was no mention at all about further privatisations. In response to this, we have been met with, from the current Opposition, the previous Government, a complicit and comprehensive defence of privatisation. Damien Tudehope, the shadow Treasurer, talking in the other place, said:

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

He also said:

We make no apology for asset recycling ... The people of this State thank us for it.

Thank you for the tolls. Thanks for the energy bills. Thanks for selling off all our assets. But one person stood up, and that was the then Premier of New South Wales, Dominic Perrottet. In an award-winning contribution to this



discussion, he said, "We are not privatising assets. I can't be clearer," which is pretty comprehensive. [*Extension of time*]

The current shadow Minister for Health made an intervention in the election campaign. He said, "There's no privatisation of Sydney Water, and there is no privatisation of Sydney Water assets. We've already made that very clear." That was pretty comprehensive. But there was an intervention not that long ago from the Hon. Nick Greiner, AC, in a document—which is heavily annotated, and we are going to come back to it a fair bit—called *Review of the Liberal Party's New South Wales Election Result*. This report, which is now the bible for the New South Wales Opposition, says, "They should develop a clear policy and rationale for the role of private investment in public sector assets, without which any centre-right government cedes the ability to make decisions about asset recycling and renewal in the public interest." So, notwithstanding the words of comfort from the then Government, privatisation is back on the agenda for the New South Wales Liberals and Nationals.

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** Is he the Premier now? Who is the Premier now?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** Am I wrong? So it is off the agenda? It is interesting that the Leader of the National Party makes that intervention, because we have seen quite a few people in recent times, including the member for Miranda, say that privatisation does work. She said that she actually knows what it means to work. She said, "The Opposition has no idea how to make privatisation work, and we do know." This is what we see when it comes to the modern Liberal Party in the Parliament: two different views in competition with each other. This is part of the organised chaos brought forward by the New South Wales Liberal Party.

**Ms Eleni Petinos:** Point of order: If the Premier insists on representing the views of members on this side of the House, he should refer to his source or otherwise withdraw the comments that he is making out of context.

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order. The Premier's time has expired.

#### TRANSPORT FOR NSW OFFICE STAFF

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (11:16):** My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. Documents released by the Minister's office this week reveal that Mr Ash sent, from his ministerial account to her account, emails that contained material of a political nature, and that he worked directly with the Premier's caucus liaison unit developing political material for the member for Bankstown. Does the Minister agree that these were breaches of his responsibilities as a departmental liaison officer [DLO]?

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (11:17):** I guess that that was page 2 off the photocopy from last year. Seriously, yet again I would say to the member for Port Macquarie that it is pretty disappointing because we have had lots of good conversations about delivering high-quality transport services. I know that there are members on that side of the House who, privately and in their communities, talk about delivering good public transport services, but in here all they care about, apparently, is the minutiae of the operations of ministerial offices or codes of conduct. I have got to say that an apprentice coming down from Gosford on the train to work on one of our metro projects does not even know what a DLO is. You know what they care about? They care about whether their train turns up on time. That is what we on this side of the House are focused on.

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

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** In relation to the member's question firstly I would say that, as I have outlined to this House on multiple occasions, an investigation into these matters is being undertaken by the Department of Transport. That is an employment matter, and I am not going to comment on it further. That public servant is entitled to due process and to privacy, so I will not give a running commentary.

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

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** But what I would say is that many members on that side of the House were Ministers and they know that public servants provide them with information which they provide to their community. The email that the member opposite is referring to is exactly that. In fact, it was a piece of information about the Sydney Metro City and Southwest. That multibillion-dollar investment will provide the communities of the inner west and the south-west with the public transport services that they have been promised for years. What were members opposite going to do with that project? They were going to cancel it. What are we going to do? We took a methodical, responsible approach. We reviewed it, we found the extra \$1.1 billion and we rescued it.

The people of south-west Sydney will now have a reliable transport service with a train every four minutes, which they have been waiting for for years and years and are deserving of and entitled to receive. That is our Government's approach. Those opposite can be distracted, confused and obsessed with the minutiae, but this Government will get on with delivering the public transport services that the people of Sydney need.

## HOSPITAL EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (11:20):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Health. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is reducing wait times in emergency departments across the State?

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (11:20):** I thank the greatest Parliamentary Secretary we have for his question. I congratulate him on being a terrific Parliamentary Secretary.

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

**Mr RYAN PARK:** Those opposite are all a close second. He is my Parliamentary Secretary and he is fantastic. It would be remiss of me to not also give a shout-out to the greatest ever member for Miranda, Barry Collier. Bring back Barry. Everyone should read his book. Each year three million people present to our emergency departments [EDs]. Currently, emergency departments in this State are facing significant challenges, causing particular concern. Members have raised the issue with me because they are dealing with it in their local communities. About 40 per cent to 45 per cent of people presenting at emergency departments are in either category four or five. They are generally people with things like an earache, a sprained ankle or a severe laceration. They are people who, in our youth, would probably have been dealt with by a local GP. The challenge is that bulk-billing rates are down and access to GPs is difficult so, as a last resort, they are forced to go to emergency departments.

At the other end is an increase in category two cases, which are highly complex, with very unwell people presenting to emergency departments. On top of that, the number of hospital beds being occupied by elderly people could fill a hospital roughly the size of Prince of Wales Hospital. That means that the front of the hospital—the emergency department—is under enormous pressure. I have said a number of times that the Government is opening up as many alternative pathways as possible with investment in virtual care, geriatric outreach services and services that deliver care to people at the right place at the right time to avoid trips to the ED. Our EDs are very busy. A group led by Dr Chan, a fantastic emergency physician from St George Hospital, has been formed to examine what is happening in the State's EDs and work on innovative solutions. The team will look at outside and overseas models, as well as alternative pathways to EDs, so that the men and women in our communities, who we are grateful and fortunate to represent, can get emergency care when they need it—but when they do not need it, they are not forced to go to an emergency department. It is about the right care at the right place and the right time. [*Extension of time*]

We have had significant success with the NSW Surgical Care Taskforce. When this Government came to office in March last year roughly 14,000 people were waiting longer than is clinically recommended for surgery. With the work of that taskforce and the concentrated and diligent work of NSW Health staff, frontline clinicians, healthcare professionals and allied healthcare professionals, this Government has been able to get that number down to 2,000. We need to make improvements in our emergency departments. We will not be a government that says everything is going well all the time. We believe that we can improve and that we need to improve. We need to improve for every community. The taskforce will be given the mandate to look at what is happening across New South Wales hospital emergency departments. It will work with unions like the Health Services Union, whose representatives are in the Chamber today, and frontline staff and patients and their families.

Recently I made an unannounced visit to the Shellharbour ED. Frank Testa, who is a nurse unit manager there, told me how under pressure that hospital is because, as the member for Shellharbour knows, it is in a growing community. In those sorts of hospitals, we have to look at how we can open up alternative pathways at the same time as investing in the future, like we are doing in Shellharbour with an investment of three-quarters of a billion dollars for a brand-new hospital. People like Frank, and others, have talked to me about patient experience officers. They are non-clinicians who see people when they come in and give them information about how the ED is working that day and what is happening with their care. We will continue to invest in a range of different models, including our taskforce, to take pressure off our EDs and deliver the right care at the right place at the right time.

## ROZELLE INTERCHANGE

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (11:25):** My question is directed to the Premier. Yesterday when the Government supported the establishment of a parliamentary committee inquiry into the Rozelle interchange and the problems that it is causing in the inner west, the Premier told media outlets that he wanted to find a long-term solution. Previously the Minister for Roads said "nothing is off the table" when it comes to fixing the mess. Will

the Premier tell the House what kinds of long-term solutions the Government is prepared to consider to fix the interchange for the people of my electorate?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:26):** I appreciate the question from the member for Balmain and the serious disruption, anger and anxiety for that community as a result of this project. In recent weeks the Government has changed the phasing and sequencing of traffic lights along the City West Link, as well as the roads that lead onto the Anzac Bridge. The Government has also added an extra lane to the approach to the Anzac Bridge for local road users and the City West Link now has the right of way onto the bridge. The Government is investing \$7.4 billion into the Western Harbour Tunnel. We believe that the serious congestion local communities are suffering from will be alleviated by that capital investment, although, as the member has pointed out to me, that is years away. The Government will continue to work with the local mayor, the local community and the member for Balmain to find long-term solutions for the community in the immediate vicinity.

The local community, civic leaders, former and current members and the current mayor repeatedly pointed out to the previous Government that serious congestion would result from the infrastructure changes, but it largely fell on deaf ears. Despite community feedback about major infrastructure changes affecting the local community and causing upheaval, not much was done. I note that the current shadow roads Minister has been heavily criticising the Government about admitted problems at the Rozelle interchange, without disclosing to the people of New South Wales that she was the Minister responsible at the time. It led to an extraordinary interview on 2GB not long ago. I mention that because it gives an idea of the chronology of how we got here. The transcript is important because perhaps Labor, the Liberals and The Nationals can learn collectively from those mistakes.

Clinton Maynard asked the shadow Minister, "In fairness, Natalie, you were the roads Minister. This was a project of your Government. Did your Government stuff up the design?" The shadow Minister answered, "I'm not shying away from the fact that I was roads Minister and you can see from our implementation that I was across the details of that implementation." Maynard then said, "When your Government was running the State, this would have widened part of the motorway. This potentially would have created extra lanes or contraflow options on the Anzac Bridge but the idea was shelved because of cost." Ward replied, "Well, you get lots of briefings in government." Who can remember them all? Maynard said, "Well, what happened when you were Minister? This was a year ago." She responded, "I don't know what's happened." [*Extension of time*]

Quite clearly, trying to fix the mistakes of the shadow Minister takes time, but that does not stop the shadow Minister from criticising the Government.

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** The current shadow Minister criticised the Government and said:

... you don't just rely on the department. You're the one that's responsible; you need to look at those. How can you not see a sign that has "toll" on it and say, "Actually, guys, that doesn't make any sense"? I mean, this is your job.

That was Ward criticising the Government. Clinton Maynard came back and said, "When you were roads Minister—

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** Point of order: The member for Balmain clearly asked the Premier what the Government is prepared to consider. It has nothing to do with a former Minister.

**The SPEAKER:** I will take my lead from the member for Balmain as to whether the question is being answered appropriately. She asked the question and she does not require assistance from the member for Dubbo. The Premier has the call.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** To the point of order: It is not possible to answer the question without explaining or understanding how we got into this mess, and the mess was provided by the Liberal Party. The former Minister criticised the Government and said that when a Minister sees a sign with "toll" on it, they have to do something about it and say, "Actually, guys, that doesn't make any sense." She said that is what she did when she was in government. Maynard then said, "When you were roads Minister last year, you weren't briefed on the signs either?" She said, "On which signs?" He replied, "On the sign that said 'toll'," and then Ward responded, "I don't recall." But the gall of comprehensively screwing up a transport project, turning lives upside down in the inner west and making life miserable for the Balmain peninsula—all with her signature and handwriting on it—and then a couple of months later saying, "I don't know what you're talking about. I can't remember all of this." It was ultimately a comprehensive failure from the previous Government. We are working on solutions, but we have been left a terrible scenario by the previous Government.

### TEACHER JOB SECURITY

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (11:31):** My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Education and Early Learning. Will the Deputy Premier outline how the New South Wales Government is providing greater job security for teachers and support staff?

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (11:32):** I certainly can answer that question from the Parliamentary Secretary for Education and Early Learning, who is doing a great job helping us rescue what was left to us after the previous Government's record on public education. It goes without saying, because I say it almost every day in this House, that every single student outcome—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. I warn the Opposition leadership group that if their behaviour continues, I will have members removed from the Chamber. I have warned members before about being disrespectful, particularly when this Minister is speaking. I do not know whether members realise how loud their conversations are, but such behaviour is disruptive and disrespectful. The Minister has the call.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, and it is intentional. I go back to what we are here to do, and that is to repair the public education system in this State. As I was saying, every student outcome that this Government aims to deliver and achieve depends on our teachers—like the wonderful teachers and staff that the Minister for Transport and I met this morning in Dulwich Hill, led by Gina Dracopoulos. They are the most vital resource in our schools. They are the reason that so many people in New South Wales chose to vote this Government in—to repair the system through the prism of their wonderful profession.

One of the things we realised upon coming to government is that Opposition members left us with a teaching workforce that was unacceptably temporary. There were too many temporary teachers. Only about 60 per cent of the teaching workforce in our schools was actually permanent. In what sort of world, when we are offering public education to our students, do we only offer a permanent job to 60 per cent of teachers? It is the profession that starts all others—teaching our children, our most precious resource. We have turned that around, and 17,000 temporary teachers and staff have accepted a permanent position since we came to office. That life-changing endeavour has resulted in teachers being able to rent homes, get loans and get cars. Support staff working in the front office of the school—the ones that kids go to when they are sick and who have to deal with them in the sick bay—were temporary, not permanent, under the previous Government.

That has benefited schools right across the State of New South Wales. There is not a school I go to where I do not hear reports of teachers and support staff being made permanent and what it has meant to the running of that school, and to those individuals, that they have a right to permanent employment. More than half of the teachers that we have made permanent are in rural, regional and remote New South Wales. Of the support staff that we have made permanent, 60 per cent are in regional, rural and remote schools. [*Extension of time*]

It says a lot about how The Nationals treated their communities when so many of our most precious resources in those regional communities—our teachers—were only temporary and not permanent. We are talking about communities like Tamworth, where 300 teachers and staff are now permanent thanks to this Government. In Dubbo, 277 teachers and staff are now permanent thanks to this Government. In Cootamundra, 327 teachers and support staff are now permanent thanks to this Government. In all those cases, all the local members were Ministers in the previous Government. They should hang their heads in shame. In the suburbs of Sydney, as well, it is reported back to me at every school I go to. I use the indulgence of the House to make particular mention of the schools in the Penrith community, for the member for Penrith, where 221 teachers and staff are now permanent.

**Mr Jihad Dib:** The Riff.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** I will say to the member for Bankstown that usually only those of us who live in the Riff are allowed to call it the Riff. Obviously, it holds a very special place in my heart that the Government has been able to make teachers permanent in the growing parts of Western Sydney so that we can keep them in our schools, teaching our children and improving their educational outcomes. It is all about valuing and respecting the teaching profession because, at the end of the day, it is all about getting better education and wellbeing outcomes for our children. The only way to do that is to put more teachers in front of them. It is just another example of how this Government truly is committed to achieving that aim.

### MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT OFFICE STAFFING

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (11:38):** My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. The Minister stated during budget estimates in November last year:

... the work that I engaged with this relatively junior public servant on was policy based and was in line with his responsibilities as a public servant advising government on the areas that he was working on.

Given that the Minister received an email from Mr Ash on 23 July that included a speech with overtly political content, will she now admit that her previous statements in this place and at budget estimates were false?

**Mr Greg Warren:** Point of order—

**Mr Matt Kean:** Audition! A few vacancies coming.

**Mr Greg Warren:** I don't need an audition to take you on, mate.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Hornsby will come to order and allow the member for Campbelltown to take his point of order.

**Mr Greg Warren:** Mr Speaker, under Standing Order 128 (2) (d) and (e) and Standing Order 128 (3) (d), I request that you rule this question and other related questions out of order. I consider this line of questioning to be defamatory to a member of the public who is not in this place.

**The SPEAKER:** I thank the member for Campbelltown. The Attorney General will cease applauding while I consider the very specific point of order.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** To the point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** I will hear from learned counsel on my left. I call the Manager of Opposition Business.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** There is no defamation because the reference is to statements that have been made in Parliament and in budget estimates, all of which are governed by an absolute privilege through the laws of defamation. The question simply asks, "Has the Minister made previous statements which were false?" It is a question to the Minister and there could be no defamation of any other person.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** To the point of order: The member for Campbelltown is correct in terms of several paragraphs in the standing orders. The question certainly contains an imputation under paragraph (2) (d). In relation to paragraph (3), the question also asks the Minister for an opinion. The question certainly contains an imputation. It clearly is not a question of whether something is false or incorrect; it contains an imputation and that is not permissible. The point of order has been taken and the question should be reframed, otherwise it is out of order.

*[Interruption]*

**The SPEAKER:** Does the member for Bankstown wish to speak to the point of order?

**Mr Jihad Dib:** I am just getting a glass of water.

**The SPEAKER:** While he was there the member could have poured a glass for the member for Oatley. I am now in the invidious position of making a determination. As the arguments are not black and white, I ask the Minister whether she is prepared to answer the question. I agree that the question is very close to being out of order, and could be ruled out of order. I am also sure that the Minister is quite capable of answering the question. So, on that basis, I will allow it. The Minister has the call.

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (11:42):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am capable of answering the question, but I think a ruling should be made in relation to the very relevant point of order. I enjoy this. It means that the lawyers get their time in the sun, and that always brings enjoyment to this House. That was a pretty average, second-rate question; I suppose it was from the photocopied pack from last year again. Members opposite know very well, because they were Ministers, that public servants prepare speech notes all the time. Public servants prepare speech notes and contribute to speeches on a regular basis.

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

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** It is clear that it really hurts to be in opposition because no-one writes Opposition members' speeches any more. No-one is helping them with questions, that is for sure. This is a beautiful demonstration of how hard it is to be in opposition. On this side of the Chamber, we know how hard it was to be in opposition for 12 years. That is what it will feel like for members opposite—12 years.

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

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

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** Three years will come around pretty quickly. My point of order is that the question is specifically about overtly political speeches. It is very specific. It is not about speeches but about overtly political speeches, which we have seen.

**The SPEAKER:** I take it that the point of order is about direct relevance. I rule on that. I call the member for Tamworth to order for the first time.

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

**The SPEAKER:** Before the Leader of the House speaks to the point of order, I point out that the question was only allowed to proceed on the barest of margins. There are a number of reasons to rule it out of order under Standing Order 128. That is my interpretation. If the member for Wahroonga does not like it, we can discuss that later. There is no ground for any argument from the Opposition as to the manner in which the Minister is answering the question. I do not uphold the point of order.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Mr Speaker, you are quite right. Those opposite cannot ask a question that contains an imputation and then complain when they cop the response. It is pretty clear. The Opposition asked the question, and it got the answer that it deserved.

**The SPEAKER:** The Leader of the House supports my ruling. The Minister has the call.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** I stand by my answers in budget estimates. I stand by my answers in this House. The fact is that members opposite are in a lot of pain. They are really struggling to deal with the fact that no public servants are available to help them write their speeches any more. This is a perfect demonstration of not only their difficulties struggling with being in opposition, but also their absolute hypocrisy given that we are talking about the same public servants who served them. [*Time expired.*]

**Mrs Tina Ayyad:** Mr Speaker—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Holsworthy will resume her seat. There is no point of order. I call the member for Dubbo to order for the first time.

#### PLANNING POLICY

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (14:46):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. Will the Minister update the House on the importance of the New South Wales Government pursuing housing and planning reform?

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (11:46):** There is no controversy about this issue, so it should be straightforward! I thank the member for Camden for her question. She has her finger on the pulse of the need to make sure communities are well looked after. She is doing a great job closing the infrastructure gap left by her predecessor—whoever he was. It is essential that the Government undertakes bold and ambitious planning reforms so that more people in New South Wales have a home. Sydney ranks as one of the least affordable cities on the planet, and tens of thousands of people leave the State each year simply because housing is out of reach in New South Wales.

Of course, we did not get here overnight and we are not going to fix the problem overnight. But this Government has taken the responsible course of action of getting housing back on track in this State by reforming the much-criticised New South Wales planning system. These reforms should have happened years ago. They are important because they introduce density over major transport locations, as well as the low- and mid-rise homes that are also desperately needed. As members might be aware, I am an avid reader. I read from a wide range of sources. This morning as I was reading the papers, I came across an interesting statement. It said, "Without drastically increasing supply, we're blocking an entire generation of Australians from home ownership."

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

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** That sounded like something the Premier, one of the members behind me or even I would say. But it did not come from a Labor member. It was from the Opposition's yimby-in-chief, Chris Rath, in the other place. He follows on from the Leader of the Opposition, who said in response to our planning reforms aimed at getting more people into well-located, well-designed and well-built homes, "The Opposition is in furious agreement with ramping up housing supply." He clearly recognises the importance of our reforms. I recently read another piece in *The Guardian*. Among other things, it said:

The ability to own a home taps into deeper themes of fairness and opportunity. ... The Liberal party needs to be bold and tackle this issue at the root: supply. High density housing, done well in areas well-served by transport links and public utilities, is the path forward.

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

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** It continues:

It may not be politically expedient in the short term. ... But it is the right thing to do to broaden out opportunity and to ensure that Australians my age have a fair go at building a future for themselves and their families.

That piece was written by Chanum Torres. Who is Chanum Torres? He is the President of the NSW Young Liberals and is more in touch with the world than any of those opposite. It is not just young people, tradies, essential workers and the Government that understand the need to do something about planning and housing.

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

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** The Government's reforms are important because they are calling out the people who need to be converted: the New South Wales Liberal Party.

**Mrs Sally Quinnell:** I seek an extension of time to receive more information.

**The SPEAKER:** Can I take a moment to consider it?

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** Don't take too long, Mr Speaker. You'll enjoy this.

**The SPEAKER:** A further two minutes is granted.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** The battle within the Liberal Party over housing, which the Premier referred to earlier in question time, is real. There is an unnamed group, led by the member for Manly—who, despite playing politics with the issue in question time yesterday, recognises the Liberals need to change—against the young fogies of the Liberal Party, those with the attitudes of yesteryear, young beyond their years.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Point of order: It is direct relevance. This has nothing to do with the question, which is about pursuing housing and planning reform. The Minister is talking about Liberal Party machinations, which has nothing to do with the question.

**The SPEAKER:** I understand the point of order. I have ruled on this point before. If Ministers are directly relevant early in their answer, they have passed the threshold and latitude is extended for the rest of their answer. There is no point of order. The Minister has the call.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** There we have it writ large. It is the nimby versus the yimby. That is the Liberal Party division writ large. If some members opposite had their way, despite many wanting to get behind Labor's planning reforms—they do not know exactly where they want to go—they would lock young people out of their suburbs. They want to lock tradies, truckies and takeaway store workers out of their suburbs. They want to lock health workers and hospitality workers out of their suburbs. In fact, if some members opposite had their way, they would seal their suburb off from the rest of the world like in *The Truman Show*. The Government will not be doing that. It will give the young people who spend much of their weekends in lines with hundreds of others trying to get a home the hope they need and the opportunity they were denied by the previous Government for a decade. It is time for reform; it is time to get housing right in New South Wales. That is exactly what this Government will do.

## BUS PROCUREMENT

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley) (11:51):** My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. On 22 November last year I met with the Minister and Transport for NSW. The Minister shook my hand, looked me in the eye and promised that the panel 4 bus deeds would be delivered by Christmas. Given that the delay has caused 25 per cent of the staff of Express Coach Builders in my electorate to be let go, what does the Minister have to say to the families that are suffering because of her broken promise?

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (11:52):** Firstly, I thank the member for Oxley for his genuine engagement on this important issue and for his commitment to his community and the workers within it. I recall that meeting well, and he described it exactly as it was: an important discussion about a concern that we share. Unlike the previous questions from those opposite, this question is genuinely about a public transport issue, and I am very happy to answer it. I share the member's disappointment about the fact that Transport for NSW failed to issue the letters regarding the panel that he referred to. Bus Procurement Panel 3 has been allowed to continue. Manufacturers have been able to continue to order a range of buses under the contract requirements. That panel will now be in place until March 2024. That is on track.

I agree with the member that it is disappointing that the expectation that we had has not been met. However, that does not preclude, nor has it restricted, manufacturers and procurers from placing contractual arrangements and procuring buses. We have a big mountain to climb because, unfortunately, under the former Government there was no commitment to buying Australian made. There was no commitment to buying New South Wales made. There was no commitment to supporting Australian manufacturing and local ingenuity.

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

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** As a result, the Government has a big mountain to climb to rebuild the State's domestic manufacturing industry and ensure that it is using the levers and power of government procurement to rebuild that industry. That is exactly what our Government is focused on.

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** Point of order: It is relevance, just to bring the answer back to the actual question.

**The SPEAKER:** Government members will come to order. I need to hear the point of order.

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** The question was what does the Minister have to say to those families who are suffering because of her broken promise? What will the Minister say to them?

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister has been directly relevant.

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** Is there a promise she can make to them?

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Dubbo will resume his seat. The Minister may not have used the words that the member wants to hear. It is her answer; it is not Opposition prescribed text. The Minister has answered the question directly. The Minister has the call.

**Mr Michael Kemp:** I was on my feet with eight seconds left on the clock. I request additional information.

**The SPEAKER:** I saw the member for Oxley stand in his place; I did not realise why he did so. I grant an additional two minutes.

**Mr Michael Kemp:** It is important to my electorate that members allow the Minister to answer the question.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister has been answering the question directly. I remind Opposition members of my ruling. The Minister has the call.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** As I was saying, the Government has a long way to go to ensure that local jobs are secure and that it rebuilds domestic manufacturing not just in the regions but across our towns and cities. The fact is that those opposite purchased trains, ferries and buses from overseas.

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

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** Those opposite now want to point fingers. It looks pretty pathetic, to be frank.

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

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** The member for Oxley is genuinely committed to his community, unlike some others, including the Leader of The Nationals, who are politicking. I am happy to meet with the member for Oxley again because, as I have said, I was disappointed that there was a delay in sending out the panel 4 deeds. I asked Transport to issue them before Christmas, and they failed to do so. That is unacceptable. I have advised the House that I asked Transport to accelerate the rollout of panel 4. It will be ready on schedule in March. Only under this Government's commitment to domestic manufacturing can local communities have confidence that there will be a long-term pipeline of investment in buses, ferries and trains. The policy of those opposite was to buy them from overseas and put them on our roads, tracks and water, and we have seen the ramifications of that.

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

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** It is a long way back to ensure that we can secure the long-term skilled jobs that members on this side of the House believe are important.

#### RED IMPORTED FIRE ANTS

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (11:58):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education, representing the Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Western New South Wales. Will the Minister update the House on how the New South Wales Government is responding to the detection of red imported fire ants in northern New South Wales and boosting biosecurity across the State?

**Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (11:58):** I thank the member for Lismore for her continuing strong interest in this issue. Since I last reported to the House about the progress on fighting fire ants in northern New South Wales, there has been another nest detected and eradicated in Wardell. Quick action was taken by the Department of Primary Industries to eradicate that nest. It is important that we thank the members of the community, many of whom have been phoning in suspected detections of ants. The department has received 520 calls from the community to the biosecurity hotline. All but two of those were found to be negative, but it is important that the community is engaged and trying to help avoid the huge danger



that fire ants pose to pets, livestock, humans, crops and machinery. They are incredibly damaging insects, and we want to make sure they do not establish themselves in New South Wales. That is why one of the first actions that Minister Moriarty took was to put the \$80 million needed into the National Fire Ant Eradication Program that the Opposition failed to put in place.

As I said, two isolated infestations of fire ants have been found in the Northern Rivers and they were dealt with rapidly and effectively. The Department of Primary Industries biosecurity teams have been working extremely well on that. Further surveillance and treatment are continuing in both areas, and, to date, we have not seen any new fire ant sites. There has been strong action from the department and agencies since September 2023, with vehicles stopped and inspected on the border under what has been titled Operation Victa—like the lawnmower, for some reason. I am not too sure why. I have not worked that one out yet. Over two days in February, 100 vehicles were stopped, 100 vehicle operators were provided with educational materials, 55 vehicles were identified as originating from the infested zones in Queensland, and nine of those were subject to emergency orders. Most of them showed good compliance, but four penalty notices were issued to operators of those vehicles.

Strong action is being taken by the Government to respond to the issue. Community awareness campaigns have reached over 200,000 people through social media and 1,000 people by email. Nearly 2,000 face-to-face meetings have been held through drop-in centres and community meetings. Those are an important part of the Government's approach to tackling pest species in the area. I am sure the member for Lismore would like to hear more about it.

**Ms Janelle Saffin:** Yes. I seek further information.

**The SPEAKER:** It would create an undesirable precedent if I were to grant an extension. The Minister's time had expired. The member for Lismore is not the first Whip to miss the jump.

#### PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (12:02):** My question is directed to the Minister for Multiculturalism. Noting the statement made in the other place yesterday by the Parliamentary Secretary for Emergency Services asserting that the State of Israel was carrying out a genocide in Gaza, does that assertion now represent the policy position of the Minns Labor Government? If not, why is the Parliamentary Secretary still in that position?

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** There are a couple of issues with the question. The member for Davidson is sailing very close to the wind.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Under Standing Order 128, the question contains argument, it contains or seeks an expression of an opinion and it contains hypothetical matters. It is out of order.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** To the point of order: The member for Davidson was quoting from *Hansard*. He has asked whether a statement that has been made is the Government's policy. We hear questions all the time about the Government's policy, and the member is asking why, if it is not Government policy, a member of the Executive is still in his position.

**The SPEAKER:** It is a two-part question, which is out of order. Members cannot ask two questions in one. I give the member for Davidson an opportunity to reword his question.

**Mr MATT CROSS:** My question is directed to the Minister for Multiculturalism. Noting the comments made yesterday in the other place by the Parliamentary Secretary for Emergency Services asserting a genocide in Gaza, is that now the policy position of the Minns Labor Government?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport) (12:05):** I am very cautious about entering into those types of debates in this place. I have said before that we need to be careful that we do not look to politically profit from those situations. But the answer is no, it is not the New South Wales Government's policy.

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

#### GAMBLING

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (12:05):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Gaming and Racing. Will the Minister update the House on what measures have been taken to reduce gambling harm and prevent money laundering in New South Wales pubs and clubs?

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast)**

**(12:05):** I thank the member for The Entrance for his question, and I acknowledge his commitment to minimising gambling harm. I am pleased to have the opportunity to update the House on the implementation of our latest election commitment to introduce responsible gambling officers into pubs and clubs in New South Wales. From 1 July this year responsible gambling officers will be required in pubs and clubs with more than 20 gaming machine entitlements. Responsible gambling officers must be on duty wherever poker machines are in operation. They will identify patrons at risk of gambling harm. They will check in with patrons and be available to provide assistance, starting with a simple conversation, and suggesting breaks in play.

Those officers will provide immediate support to patrons and tell them about gambling support services and facilitate requests for self-exclusion. They will record incidents of potential gambling harm in a gambling incident register and escalate serious incidents of gambling harm to senior management. Venues with significantly more gaming machines will be required to employ additional responsible gambling officers to ensure that enough trained staff are available to help patrons and that the officers have a reasonable workload across larger gaming floors. All pubs and clubs with gaming machines will also be required to create and maintain a gambling incident register and have a gaming plan of management. We understand that some venues are already undertaking that practice, but it will now be mandatory for all venues.

Responsible gambling officers must complete special training—the Advanced Responsible Conduct of Gambling training—providing them with the skills they need to perform the role. Some categories of venue management will also be required to complete the advanced training so that gambling harm minimisation is supported from the top down. That will assist in creating a culture of harm minimisation within venues. One out of every three people who gamble regularly is considered to be experiencing moderate and acute harm. We understand, and so does industry, that we have a social responsibility to minimise harm and to give people the help and support they need. I commend ClubsNSW, the Australian Hotels Association and other industry peak bodies for their participation in developing the policy, and I acknowledge that some of their venues already have responsible gambling officers in place.

I was pleased to make the announcement at the Central Coast Leagues Club, a venue that has had responsible gambling officers in place for 12 months. It was a pleasure to meet Rebecca, a responsible gambling officer who shared her experience and demonstrated the value of the role in providing support and intervention when needed. Rebecca confirmed what the research shows us: Sometimes a conversation makes all the difference when it comes to reducing harm. That is why we want officers in venues to have those important conversations. *[Extension of time]*

Officers will also have whistleblower protections and be able to notify Liquor and Gaming NSW if they believe their venue is breaching harm minimisation requirements or they are impeded from carrying out their duties. By introducing these requirements, New South Wales is proactively identifying and assisting people at risk of gambling harm. We encourage venues with fewer than 21 machines to follow suit. I particularly acknowledge NSW Council of Social Service and Wesley Mission for their continued advocacy in harm minimisation and their important contribution to our Independent Panel on Gaming Reform, which will not only oversee a cashless gaming trial in this State but also provide a road map for the Government for future reform. There is no single solution when it comes to addressing harm from gambling, which is why we have a range of gambling reforms. It is great to have industry and harm-minimisation organisations on board, sitting at the same table, helping us to develop our gambling reform agenda.

We are putting in place a number of reforms, which include reducing the cash input limit from \$5,000 to \$500; reducing the statewide cap on gaming machines by approximately 3,000; banning political donations from clubs involved in gaming; establishing the Independent Panel on Gaming Reform to oversee the trial of 4,430 electronic gaming machines, far exceeding the Government's election commitment of 500 machines; and banning external gaming-related signage and internal gaming-related signage that can be seen from the outside of venues. I am very pleased with our progress. We are doing it in consultation with and with consideration of the industry and harm-minimisation groups. The Labor Government is getting on with the job of making sure that we minimise harm from gambling in New South Wales venues.

#### ORANGE ELECTORATE RAIL SERVICES

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (12:11):** My question is directed to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads. Will the Minister provide an update on the extension and stabling of the Bathurst Bullet daily return passenger train service to Sydney commencing and finishing at Orange, and any other related rail infrastructure projects for the Orange electorate?

**The SPEAKER:** I rule the second part of the question out of order. Double-barrelled questions are not permitted under the standing orders. The Minister has the call.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (12:11):** I am sure that the member for Orange is just using the first part of the question as an example to illustrate the second part. Before I start my answer, I acknowledge my guests, Denise and Trevor, who are in the gallery. It is great to have them in the Chamber today. Denise worked in former Deputy Premier Jack Ferguson's office. I thank the member for Orange for his question and his ongoing advocacy for better rail services for his community and better rail safety. He and I have spoken on a number of occasions about level crossing safety in his area. We have also met with Madeline Bott, who I understand is now one of his constituents. I thank the Orange Rail Action Group for its advocacy and passion on the issue of extending the Bathurst Bullet service to Orange. One of the very first events I attended as Minister was in Orange, and that issue was firmly placed on my agenda by the member for Orange, Orange City Council and the Orange Rail Action Group.

I have met with the group and the member for Orange a number of times to discuss its campaign. I admire its ongoing advocacy. It has not just happened in the past 10 or so months; it has been over a number of years. The member for Orange can be assured that the New South Wales Labor Government and Transport for NSW are continuing to explore all of the opportunities to boost rail services in Orange. We are fully aware of the positive outcomes, opportunities and benefits to the community. Every member in this House knows that transport is a social determinant of health, education, opportunity and jobs. It is vital to social inclusion. If we can get the people of Orange access to rail, that will be a great thing. We are exploring a number of opportunities to benefit the community of Orange, and once we have more specific detail to share, the member for Orange will be the first to know. He can be assured of that, because we are governing for everyone in New South Wales, not just the people in electorates who elected us to government.

I also note our announcement of \$28 million of Federal Government funding to New South Wales to assist in the upgrade of 23 rail level crossings, one of which is at Akuna Road at Parkes, in the Orange electorate. It is interesting that when I was in opposition and I was pushing for level crossing upgrades, I wrote to the then Minister for Regional Transport and Roads and was told that it was one of five crossings that would be updated and upgraded by September 2022. [*Extension of time*]

The other crossings to be upgraded then were located at Overshot Road, Euchareena; Convent Lane, Borenore; Goldfields Way, Old Junee—the member for Cootamundra has been advocating for that; and Beni Street, Wongarbon. But it did not happen. So now this Government is getting on with the job and upgrading 23 level crossings. On Tuesday this week we all came back to Parliament to start the year off fresh. I note that the Acting Leader of the Opposition is the Leader of The Nationals. I thought I would definitely get a question about level crossing safety because during the break the member for Bathurst, the member for Northern Tablelands and the member for Cootamundra were all talking about it. I was excited to talk about it. It is top of the pops—the thing people are talking about.

**Mrs Leslie Williams:** Well, are you going to fix it?

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** Weren't you listening? We have \$28 million from the Federal Government. We will get there.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will direct her comments through the Chair.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** I thought I was going to be questioned about level crossings, but I was not. We on this side of the House—and, privately, a number of those opposite—are a bit perplexed that after two months away from Parliament we get a question about what one Minister said and what another Minister might say; it is that age-old question about youth. I think we need to go back to The Nationals' approach. The Federal member for Maranoa nailed it when he said after the last election that The Nationals had put in a "herculean" effort. The Nationals' effort was herculean: they got the lowest representation in this place since 1925.

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

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** I would liken the member for Maranoa to Sisyphus, because The Nationals are pushing it uphill and they are not getting anywhere.

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

#### DAVID BERRY HOSPITAL

**Mr RON HOENIG:** By leave: Pursuant to Standing Order 131 (7), I table a written response from the Premier to a question asked of him by the member for Kiama during question time on 6 February 2024.

*Committees***STANDING COMMITTEE ON PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGE AND ETHICS****Reference**

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

That:

- (1) Under section 14A of the Constitution Act 1902 (NSW), the draft Constitution (Disclosures by Members) Regulation 2024 be referred to the Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics Committee for inquiry and report by Monday 2 September 2024.
- (2) If required, the Committee has leave of the House to confer with the Privileges Committee of the Legislative Council in order to meet the requirements of Standing Order 311.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Documents***INFORMATION AND PRIVACY COMMISSION NSW****Reports**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with section 37 of the Government Information (Information Commissioner) Act 2009, I announce receipt of the erratum to the report of the Information and Privacy Commission entitled *Report on the Operation of the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009: 2021-2022: Open Government, Open Access, Open Data*, dated 7 February 2024, received on 7 February 2024. I order that the document be printed.

*Condolences*

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

**The SPEAKER (12:20):** I welcome to the public gallery family and friends of the former member for Cronulla and Treasurer of New South Wales.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:20):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Extends its deepest sympathies and sincere condolences to the friends, family and loved ones of Michael Egan, who passed away on 31 January 2024.
- (2) Acknowledges Mr Egan's nearly quarter century of political service, including as:
  - (a) the member for Cronulla between 1978 and 1984;
  - (b) member of the Legislative Council between 1986 and 2005; and
  - (c) becoming the first New South Wales Treasurer to serve from the Legislative Council, going on to be the longest serving Treasurer in New South Wales history.
- (3) Recognises the extraordinary contribution Mr Egan made to the State of New South Wales, including the State's near-elimination of net government debt under his stewardship.
- (4) Acknowledges Mr Egan's career after politics in which he continued to dedicate himself to serving his community, including as Macquarie University's longest serving Chancellor from 2008 to 2019, chair of the Australia Day Council of NSW, and chair of the Centenary Institute of Cancer Medicine and Cell Biology.
- (5) Mourns the void left in our State by the loss of Mr Egan.

Today we remember the longest serving Treasurer of this State—the longest serving and also one of the finest. It has been said that Bob Hawke had Paul Keating, John Howard had Peter Costello, and Bob Carr undeniably had Michael Egan. It was a partnership that lasted the distance. It balanced the books and established Labor's reputation for sound economic management. It also laid the foundation for 16 years of government. Today we honour an outstanding member of Parliament, and we pay tribute to a loyal friend and mentor to many. Michael could be stubborn, irreverent and combative. He called himself a good hater in the Irish tradition. But deep down he was funny, charming and a faithful supporter of the people in his life. I acknowledge his family and friends who are with us today, including Byron Addison.

Michael Rueben Egan was born in Coogee but grew up in Caringbah and Cronulla in the shire. Like many Labor MPs, he was educated by the Christian Brothers, who recorded him as student 001 at St Pats in Sutherland. He would always insist, hand on heart, that the seventh student enrolled in his class—student 007—was a boy named Jimmy Bond. As a student, Michael was fascinated with Labor politics, and he joined the party while he

was still in high school. Looking back, it was an amazing moment to enter the labour movement. Bob Carr spoke of attending his first Young Labor meeting at the time. The chair was Paul Keating, the secretary was Laurie Brereton, and in the other corner was a young left-winger named Michael Egan. Those who know Michael Egan's history would recognise that he did not stay in the left for long.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Because he could count.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** Entering Parliament was not easy for Michael. He ran three times for the seat of Cronulla and lost three times. But in 1978, he tried a fourth time and won. Parliament suited Michael. He was born with a sharp mind and a razor wit. He gave brilliant speeches on this very floor and gained new admirers, including the Premier Neville Wran. Just as his luck was turning, it turned again. After just two terms in office, he lost the seat by an agonisingly close 269 votes. Michael met this news with dismay and swore to hunt down the 269 people who had voted against him. But over time he realised that his thirst for vengeance was misplaced and that he should, instead, see those people as benefactors. Michael was always sensitive to the role of timing in politics, and the timing of his defeat meant that he was able to take Barrie Unsworth's place in the other place when Barrie became leader of the party in this place. It was in that other place that he would make his defining contribution to New South Wales.

He will go down in history for his unprecedented achievements as Treasurer of this State. It was a position he held for almost a decade, between April 1995 and January 2005. He once said that the best memorial a Treasurer could leave behind was a budget free of debt, and that was a gift that he left the State. On taking the job, Michael rapidly turned the budget to surplus. He delivered nine balanced budgets on a lending basis. He all but eliminated net government debt. It was a set of accomplishments never recorded before in the State's history. In his sixth Budget Speech, he was able to boast, with justification:

We're the first government in the State's recorded financial history to reduce the State's debt and liabilities rather than add to them—he was typically humble—

We're the first government to pay all of the Budget's bills, rather than put some on the bankcard.

We're the first government in the State's history not only to pay our way each year, but also to put something aside for a rainy day.

It was Michael Egan's steady hand that made all the achievements of the Carr Government possible, a period when Labor invested heavily in essential services and infrastructure across the State; when we hosted the greatest Olympic Games ever, debt free; and when the Government reduced costs for households and businesses, improved living standards, grew the economy and created jobs. It was at the Treasurer's desk that the Carr Government's reputation for economic competence was born.

Michael took his job seriously, but he was not always serious. He was a great storyteller and even better company. This was a person who loved his vocation and loved the halls of Parliament. He could draw on that savage wit when the time required. But in the upper House, he also built a reputation for being collegial—away from question time—and was open to working across Parliament, often with those whom many outside would assume were his most bitter enemies. I know that while former Premier Dominic Perrottet served as Treasurer and then Premier of this State he was one of the many members who studied Michael's speeches. It is a legacy that will live across the Chamber, not just within the Labor family.

In 2005, after almost a quarter century in Parliament, Michael announced his plans to leave politics. It could hardly be considered a retirement. He continued to serve this State for many years, as the longest serving Chancellor of Macquarie University. By his calculation, he graduated more than 43,000 students—another record, like his tenure as Treasurer, unlikely to be beaten. It is a fitting tribute that Michael received an Honorary Doctorate from the university in its then newly named Michael Egan Hall. When he announced his decision to finally retire as chancellor, Michael recalled the advice that Tim Fischer had given him many years prior: "Whatever you do, don't stay too long." Those words feel painful right now.

For those of us who knew him and for those who loved him, we can only wish he had more time. But we console ourselves with the knowledge that his was a full life, and that he lived it well. On behalf of the Government, this Assembly and the people of this State, we again extend our love and condolences to his life companion, Byron, and to his families and friends. New South Wales has lost a great leader, and many have lost a very dear friend.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping) (12:28):** On behalf of the Leader of the Opposition, I join the Premier in paying tribute to the life and contribution of the late Michael Egan. I received a message today from the member for Cronulla, and Leader of the Opposition in relation to this motion. The message states:

Michael was a tenacious local campaigner. He never gave up. He had four goes as the Labor candidate in Cronulla in 1971, 1973, 1976 and 1978 before finally winning in 1978. He went on to a long, active and distinguished career in public life both inside and outside of politics.

I'm grateful to Michael for the blunt no-nonsense razor sharp private advice and observations he gave me from time to time after I was elected in 2011.

One of the great things about politics is the unexpected friends that you make. When I first entered Parliament back in 2011, I never thought I would have either the opportunity or, to be honest, the inclination to strike up a friendship with a staunch stalwart of the Labor Party's Carr era and our State's longest-serving Treasurer, but I am proud and grateful to be able to count Michael Egan as a friend. On behalf of the Opposition, I express this House's deepest condolences to Byron, to the Addison family, and to his family and friends.

Compared with others, I knew Michael only for a relatively brief time. The first contact I ever had with Michael speaks volumes of his sense of humour but also his respect and passion for Treasury and, more particularly, the office of the Treasurer. It was back in 2017 when the newly sworn in Premier, Gladys Berejiklian, was holding a press conference. As the new Treasurer, I was by her side. Michael saw a photo of this in a newspaper, and a few days later I received a package from Michael in the mail containing two packs of shoe polish and leather conditioner. It was accompanied by a note saying:

Dear Treasurer, your shoes aren't up to scratch, a good treasurer always has shiny shoes. Always here if you need some advice. Best wishes, Michael.

It was the first of many pieces of advice Michael generously shared with me and which I will never forget. Today I would like to share some reflections that I believe show the measure of the man. Michael's political legacy speaks for itself. He may have left his mark more quietly than some, but it is the enduring mark of a giant of New South Wales politics.

As the Premier has pointed out, Michael was born in Coogee on 21 February 1948, the only child of Jean and Stanley Joseph Egan. He grew up in the shire and was educated at St Patrick's Christian Brothers College in Sutherland. He joined the New South Wales Labor Party as a 16-year-old boy. He was a lively left-winger in Young Labor. He was often seen holding a megaphone in shopping centres in the shire, supporting Arthur Calwell and opposing causes like conscription and Vietnam. He also led the charge in opposing what he called the dictatorial chairmanship of the Labor Party's then president, Paul Keating. But it did not take long for a young Michael Egan to have good sense, to see the light and join the right.

He was elected to this place as the member for Cronulla in the Wran slide of 1978. He was elected again in 1981 before losing the seat of Cronulla in 1984. To this day he remains the only Labor member in our State's history to hold the seat of Cronulla—and long may that record remain. Championed by former Premier Bob Carr, he began his service in the New South Wales Legislative Council in 1984. He was passionate about Ministers not simply being respondent to the public service but rather having bold ideas and policies and driving the public service to implement them. In his typical turn of phrase, he said:

The task of a Minister is to make the difficult decisions of government, not to leave them up to independent public servants while he jumps up and down on the back seat of a ministerial car.

He made an early name for himself in the Parliament through committee work as the chair of the Public Accounts Committee, and he later reflected that the committee system would be improved if every parliamentary committee would have its reports written by its chair. He said, "That would mean they would be shorter and more to the point"—with respect to the committee staff present. He said, "There would be no academic tomes; they would be more practical responses to issues and problems." But his best committee work happened in a committee that did not actually exist. In opposition, he created for himself the title of Chair of the Waste Watch Committee. He would regularly refer to himself, in the Chamber and in the media, with this title. It was not long before he was being represented in the media as a quasi Auditor-General of New South Wales. It was this political cut-through and deep intellect that led him to become Leader of the Opposition in the upper House in 1991.

But, as the Premier said, Michael will always be remembered as the pre-eminent Treasurer of New South Wales. During his time, he maintained our State's triple-A credit rating and the integrity of our State's finances for more than a decade. He delivered nine balanced budgets. He took the bold position of underwriting the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games, which ended up costing the New South Wales budget \$1.2 billion in capital works and \$800 million in operating costs for that two-week event. He did all that while eliminating the State's net debt. He set the precedent for taking the fight up to Canberra on GST, regularly coming to blows with the then Federal Treasurer, Peter Costello. He was a Treasurer with financial imagination, a man whose deep sense of inquiry created innovative financing solutions to keep the budget balanced whilst driving our State forward and navigating the headwinds that came our way.

It is interesting, given the first question the Premier answered today in question time, that one of those innovative financing solutions was none other than privatisation. Make no mistake, Michael Egan was the founding father of asset recycling in New South Wales. In 1998 he privatised the TAB. In 2002 he privatised Powercoal, which managed and operated eight coalmines across New South Wales, and later that year he sold

Australia's biggest freight rail operator, FreightCorp, whilst taking a lesser price on that transaction to increase long-term competition in handling freight in and out of Newcastle. But his most notable transaction is one he never achieved. That was in 1997, when he attempted to privatise the electricity assets in New South Wales. In stark contrast to the Liberal Party, the Labor conference has historically had veto power over major policy decisions at a State and a Federal level. This provided Michael with the challenge of convincing the unions and the Labor conference of the benefits that the State of New South Wales would receive through the privatisation of the State's electricity assets.

And so it would have been, had it not been for one single rogue right-wing union, the Electrical Trades Union, which held out and opposed it. Unfortunately, that made it impossible for the left faction of the Labor Party to fulfil its traditional role in the Labor Party of heroically opposing the disgraceful sellout of eternal Labor principles but then quietly rolling over and allowing the sensible members of the right to get things done. If Michael had been successful in that transaction, he would have sold those assets at the height of their worth of about \$30 billion in 1997 dollars. But alas, as he prophetically said at the time, "If we do not do this, the Tories will." And so we did, and so we took the glory. But as I reminded Michael recently, when he claimed this as a failure, sometimes it is through political failure that foundations are laid for future reform. History will show that he was the early pioneer of this transaction, and he can take credit for the benefits that have flowed to the people of our great State.

Michael had a fierce passion for budget integrity and for his stern management of the Budget Committee, which is now known as the Expenditure Review Committee [ERC]. But he also had unique methods to get his way on that committee. On one occasion the health Minister at the time, Craig Knowles—like all health Ministers—was asking the Treasurer for more money. Michael was opposing that request and, like all Treasurers, he was absolutely right. However, as Treasurers know, chairing the ERC does not mean you always get your way, and Michael was smart enough to know when he was not on the winning side. As the Minister continued to make his case, in the middle of the conversation Michael jumped to his feet, pointed across the table and said, "Craig, you are a thieving effing"—and members can use their imagination for what came next. He then stormed out of the room and the meeting was closed. The Treasury Secretary, John Pierce, sat there stunned. His team was a little confused and when they went back to the office, they said, "What was that, Michael?" He said, "Well, we were obviously losing and the only way I could think of shutting that meeting down was to walk out and put on a display." It was a highly effective strategy—Daniel—and it is one that I wish I had adopted.

**Mr Chris Minns:** Don't get any ideas, Daniel.

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET:** I do not think Gladys would have liked that. But Michael was not just a penny pincher as Treasurer. He ran the Treasury with a conscience and a heart. He hated the injustice caused by pokie machines and doubled the pokie tax in the face of strong criticism. He understood the pressures faced by families and the responsibility of governments to give back. That is why in his budgets he established the back-to-school payments for parents. That was one of the inspirations behind our Government's Active Kids, Creative Kids and Back to School vouchers.

In some ways, you could say he wrote the script on how to be a great Treasurer: Have a knack for numbers and a heart for people. Michael made the blueprint for all Treasurers to follow in attacking the Opposition for its economic and financial incompetence. In fact, in the 2019 election campaign, I asked my team to print for me every Michael Egan press release as Treasurer, and I studied them and we used them as the model for our attacks on Michael Daley and Ryan Park. So I say on behalf of the people of New South Wales that we owe a great debt to Michael for delivering a Liberal-Nationals Government in 2019. We owe Michael Daley for that, too. He should take some credit.

Not all of Michael Egan's legacy in New South Wales politics is appreciated by current members. One legacy in particular is the bane of Ministers of every political persuasion in this Parliament. Michael was once the subject of an order in the upper House to hand over papers, now known as the dreaded Standing Order [SO] 52. Michael flat-out refused. He would not budge. He wanted to fight it in court. It did not end well. But, before he could legitimately file a claim, he had to be physically removed from Parliament by the Usher of the Black Rod. The poor Usher of the Black Rod was a meek and mild man, Warren Cahill. He knew that Michael had a bit of fire in his temperament, so he was not keen on doing the removing. So Michael had to tell him, "Warren, I can't drag myself out of here. You're going to have to actually touch me." Anyway, Michael got removed all the way out to Macquarie Street, which the court overturned—the only thing he won in the court case. He went to court to fight the order for papers, and he lost. Then he decided in true Michael Egan style to appeal to the High Court, where he lost again.

So we really have Michael Egan to thank for alerting the sleepy members of the upper House to the virtually unfettered power they have to demand ministerial documents and in so doing grind the Government to a halt. As Treasurer I would studiously review the Egan cases in both courts to see whether there was a Mookhey SO 52

that might be slightly narrower in scope so that we could go to court again and get a new judgement. Sadly, the Egan judgement stands, and his name will endlessly be quoted in the upper House until such time as there is a mechanism to overturn that terrible decision of the High Court.

One of the things I learned about Michael as I got to know him was that, even after being away from politics for more than a decade, he still carried a deep passion and deep sense of responsibility for the New South Wales Treasury. The Treasury was like a family to him. He understood that the Minister had to drive but that the Treasury was not just an abstract bureaucracy; it was made up of people with great ideas and huge potential. When he became Treasurer, he made a rule that every briefing note that came his way had to include the name and a contact number of the person who wrote it. He did that not so some poor junior public servant could get a call from Michael on a Sunday afternoon; he did it because he wanted every member of his Treasury engaged and personally invested in the work they were doing. He would communicate his approval or disapproval on the advice that came in with those smiley and frowny stamps they had in the '90s—another deeply human touch.

Because Michael was a man of great depth and big heart, he always saw the good in others and the importance of giving people an opportunity. When he was considering employing a press secretary with a criminal conviction, the people around him told him not to. The candidate was none other than the current Secretary of the New South Wales Treasury, Michael Coutts-Trotter. MCT had the interview, and he could sense from Egan's tone that the criminal record would be an issue. As expected, Egan told him, "There are two things I don't like about you, and I can't work out which is worse: your hyphenated name or that you were educated by the Jesuits."

Clearly, it was the latter, because Michael had been educated by the Christian Brothers, as the Premier pointed out, and he never forgot the lesson from Brother O'Halloran after the Second Vatican Council, when he brought the students together and said, "Boys, I have some bad news for you all: We can no longer hate the Protestants. But the good news is that we can still hate the Jesuits." I believe that Michael's Catholic education had an enduring impact in his life and inspired that sense of compassion. As Treasurer he would still receive letters from old Christian Brothers in aged-care homes, referring to one of Michael's speeches they had read in *Hansard*, proud of his achievements and what he had become.

Michael's sense of compassion in hiring MCT certainly paid off in spades. The two made a formidable political team and showed the Christian values of giving someone a second chance, having the courage of one's convictions and, most importantly, not passing judgement. In the end, it would be MCT who would save Egan from himself, as Michael had a habit that would give any press secretary nightmares. He would read a story or a brief or watch a media report that would fire him up. He would promptly sit down and pump out his own press release, which, engulfed in rhetorical flames, would arrive on MCT's desk, with orders to send it immediately to every journalist in the gallery. Ever loyal, MCT would safely secure these releases in a special locked drawer, never to see the light of day.

All of this speaks to Michael's big-hearted nature. But, above all, it speaks to his remarkable love for the state of New South Wales. He wanted New South Wales to succeed. He prided himself on our economic strength. He was eternally optimistic for our country and for our State's capacity to create opportunity and give the people who live and work here better lives. He took extremely seriously the responsibility of the Government, to be responsible stewards of the funds and power entrusted to it by the public. Everything he did in the job, and so much that he did outside the job, was geared towards those noble ends.

I, amongst many others, was fortunate enough to visit Michael a couple of times in his final weeks at Wolper Jewish Hospital, in Woollahra. While his health was weak, his mind was still sharp, and in true Michael style he was debating public policy right to the very end. I noticed that next to his bed were two things: some well-worn rosary beads and a copy of the latest *Spectator* magazine. He was reading well till the very end. The true measure of the man was this: a heart for others, a mind for big ideas and an unshakeable conviction to make this world better. So, on behalf of the Opposition, I thank Michael for his service to our Parliament and to our State, and I again express our deepest condolences to Byron, the Addison family and his friends. Whilst today we may mourn Michael's loss, we also celebrate the mark he has left on our world and in our lives. May he rest in peace.

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (12:46):** After two incredible contributions in honour of the late great Michael Egan, OA, I express my condolences on his passing. As we have heard from the Premier and the former Premier, Dominic Perrottet, many in this place remember him fondly and with a grin. He had a fierce intellect, an incredible work ethic and an unfailing dedication to Labor values. However, I am informed that he was less dedicated to healthy eating. His colleague and boss, the then Premier, Bob Carr, is known for his adherence to a healthy lifestyle. I am told that he and the Treasurer would taunt each other in a theatrical display of disgust during Cabinet meetings as each condemned the dietary intake of the other. Green concoctions requested by Premier Carr



would be reviled by the Treasurer, and the Treasurer's steady intake of meat pies and sausage rolls loudly and continually condemned by the Premier.

As we have heard, he delivered 10 State budgets, originally inheriting a \$17 billion debt, which he paid down while delivering the Sydney Olympics without incurring any debt at all, something of which both he and Premier Carr were rightly proud. They delivered the Olympics in 2000 but at the same time invested enormously in public assets and services. As the education Minister, I will say a little bit about education and Michael's commitment to it. He was a champion of education and its power to transform lives. I understand he claimed to have been the first student enrolled at St Patrick's College Sutherland, and he remained dedicated to the Catholic ideals of service throughout his working life, both as Treasurer and after, as Chancellor of Macquarie University.

He was Labor to his bootstraps, but one of the enduring pillars of those Labor values was his belief that education was the silver bullet and should be the cornerstone of a good Labor government. As a result, despite the need for extensive budget repair, his first budget, the 1995-96 budget, included an increase in education funding for additional teaching positions, with a particular focus on literacy, community languages and technology positions; an increase in the rollout of computers and technology in schools; and, importantly at that time, an entirely new syllabus from K to 12.

Off the back of those syllabuses, the introduction of the Basic Skills Test for years 3 and 5 and the secondary literacy and numeracy assessment programs—the English Language and Literacy Assessment and the Secondary Numeracy Assessment Program—for years 7 and 8 looked at the statewide basic skills of students in order to target kids who needed help. Those assessments were the forerunners to the national testing scheme that we now know as NAPLAN. By the 2003 election, Labor had made an enormous investment in public education which has stood the test of time and stands, I believe, as one of the crowning achievements of the Carr-Egan Government and of my Labor predecessors in that portfolio—the move to reduce class sizes in the earliest years of school to give public school students the best possible start in life.

Insiders will tell you that Michael Egan was extremely difficult to convince—I do not think that is unusual—but class size reform in the early years was a biggie, and he was convinced. Now we know that class size reduction was a centrepiece of that election campaign in 2003, and it convinced families across the State that the Government had public education and the best start for our children at the centre of its plan to improve outcomes for the State of New South Wales. It is also the contention of some who served with him who I have spoken to today that, despite his sometimes gruff exterior, he was in fact quite a softie. He cared deeply about people, the member for Epping said eloquently. He cared about people in prison, young offenders, widows, the poor and the downtrodden. He was all ears when proposals came before him that would serve those groups and he was, to his core, a man with Labor values and an enormous heart.

As we have heard, Michael has provided advice and mentorship, good grace and good humour over decades to this place and to those who have served in it. He has been a good friend to many on both sides of the aisle but, more importantly, his prosecutorial style ensured that every dollar spent in the State of New South Wales during his time was well spent. I know the current Treasurer has valued Michael Egan's friendship, advice and counsel throughout his career. In that way, the influence of Michael Egan lives on in this Parliament and this State. We, the Labor family, are indebted to Michael in perpetuity, but his legacy and his values live in this place with those who remember him fondly and those who are imbued with those values. Vale, Michael Egan.

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (12:52):** On behalf of the Government and the Labor Party, I acknowledge the life and service of the Hon. Michael Egan, AO. Michael Egan was one of the most enigmatic and charismatic figures in Labor politics and in State politics. With a career spanning nearly a quarter of a century, serving both in this House and the other place, Michael was one of the most dedicated and tenacious politicians to set foot in this building. From his election to this House in 1978 until his eventual retirement from politics in 2005, Michael embodied Labor values through and through. His generosity and service while in public office is evident in innumerable ways. I have witnessed it within my own electorate and community. Michael's mother, Jean, was a student at Tempe Public School. When she sadly passed away in 2016, Michael established a \$20,000 musical scholarship as well as the Jean Egan Award for students who had put others before themselves. Michael presented those awards himself every year at Tempe Public School until last year, when he was too ill to attend the ceremony. That is just a small example of the kindness that Michael showed towards others and towards the people of New South Wales.

It is difficult to summarise the political career of someone like Michael Egan because few politicians have had one like it. Michael's interest in political life was evident from a young age, when he joined the Labor Party at 16 years of age. Never one to shy away from a challenge, Michael was first elected to this place as the member for Cronulla in 1978 after three previous unsuccessful attempts. A lover of question time and the theatrics of the bearpit, Michael served his constituents in this House until 1984, when he failed to retain his seat. That loss turned out to be a blessing. In the right place at the right time, Michael was elected to the Legislative Council in 1986,

where he served for more than 18 years. That included three years as the chair of the Public Accounts Committee, where he authored landmark reports on audit reviews of government spending programs. From 1991 to 1995, he was Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council before being appointed Minister for State Development, Minister for Energy and, of course, the role he is well remembered for: Treasurer.

Becoming Treasurer was an ambition that Michael set for himself when he was 16 years old. He held the portfolio for nearly 10 years, becoming the longest serving Treasurer in the State's history. Breaking convention, he was the first State Treasurer from the Legislative Council. During his tenure Michael delivered 10 State budgets, including budgeting for the Sydney 2000 Olympics, while maintaining surpluses over numerous years. His hands-on approach and his drive for innovation and reform gave the Carr Government its reputation for responsible fiscal management. He was famous for his pre-budget lock-up media briefings in which he gave intelligent and charismatic performances to craft the narrative and shape the reporting of State budgets by the fourth estate.

By his own admission, fiscal consolidation and paying off Government net debt are amongst his greatest personal achievements as Treasurer. He was also proud of the reforms he led regarding national competition laws and reforms to the electricity industry. As Treasurer, Michael also made significant contributions in tort law reform. He campaigned vigorously for a royal commission into the collapse of HIH Insurance and he worked alongside the Federal Government to introduce legislation to amend the common law. His eventual departure from politics was considered a huge loss by the then Premier and now former foreign Minister Bob Carr, who said, "No Treasurer has left office with the State's finances in a better position." It was a huge loss because of not only his obvious skill and aptitude as Treasurer but also his unbreakable character.

I also recognise Michael's life after politics and his enduring commitment to the people of New South Wales in health and education. Michael served as chair of the Centenary Institute of Cancer Medicine and Cell Biology from 2005 to 2017. During his tenure the institute experienced significant expansion with increases to the number of laboratories and the number of staff undertaking lifesaving medical research. He was the governor of the Woolcock Institute of Medical Research from 2005 until 2009.

In the field of education, Michael was the longest serving Chancellor of Macquarie University, a position he held from 2008 to 2019. Taking up the position at a time when that institution was marred by controversy, he oversaw significant changes and presided over more than 260 graduation ceremonies for nearly 40,000 graduates—including a member of this House, who proudly posted pictures of her graduation ceremony on Michael's recent passing. In an address to the Microeconomics Conference early in his tenure as Treasurer, Michael reflected on why he joined the Labor Party when commentators were writing off the idea of it having any form of political force left in this country or State. Michael said:

There was too much unfairness, there was too much injustice, and that it existed amid general affluence only made it all the more intolerable. It was our vocation in life to change it.

And change it he did. Few political figures have left their mark on New South Wales like Michael Egan. He will be remembered, of course, for his decisiveness and his resolve as Treasurer. He will be remembered for his character, his charm and his good-humoured nature. He will be remembered for his gift of the gab, which was evident in his colourful rhetoric and quick wit, and he will be remembered for his strong sense of social justice and his service to the Labor Party. The State of New South Wales is a far better place because of him and the social and economic reforms he introduced when Labor was in government. I finish with a poignant reminder to all of us who hold public office of the privileged position that we are in—a position where we can go into bat for our constituents, something that Michael never took for granted. He said:

There are plenty of people all over the world who would have made great legislators, great Cabinet Ministers and leaders of governments, people who tried just as hard as we did, and no doubt would have been better than us, but for whom the conjunction of circumstances was not as fortuitous as ours.

I extend my deepest sympathies to Michael's loved ones and friends at this time. May he rest in peace.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (13:02):** I will say a few things about Michael and my association with him over a long time. First off, I pass on my sincere condolences to his family and friends for their great loss. I am a shire boy, by the way; I should make that quite clear. I lived in Caringbah, went to Woollooware High and all of that. I first met Michael outside a polling booth when I was about 19 or 20, and I must admit that at that particular time I did not have a great deal of interest in politics. But he took me aside briefly, as you do on pre-poll—you get about two or three minutes—and I actually voted for him at the next two elections.

At that time I was working in the club industry, so I ended up going to work at Revesby Workers' Club in 1984. Pat Rogan and Bill Bullard were there, and that was when Michael took over the famous Cronulla Workers. I have not heard any mention of that in the speeches, and they have all been very good speeches—no offence there. But as a young bloke working in the workers' club, I was seconded out to Cronulla Workers. I thought that

was one of the best gigs ever. Michael was president; that was alright. But it was more the fact that they had INXS, Little River Band, Dragon, Cold Chisel—the list went on and on. It was a pretty tough place in those days. Quite a few dramas happened outside in the street, but Michael tried his best with that.

Later in life we got seconded out to the Tradies at GyMEA. Sutherland District Trade Union Club was the official name of it. I had a long and great association with the Labor Party and with Michael. Fast-forward, and I ended up working in the club industry up in the Northern Rivers. Michael and the then Premier decided to double the tax on the licensed club industry, which we thought was a little bit inappropriate at the time, so we had lobbyists and placards. I was standing out the front of Parliament House chanting, "Axe the tax!" We all remember those days. Brian Pezzutti managed to get me and another couple of the managers a couple of meetings with Michael. We all trooped down the road here and up in the lift, and my first impression of Michael was he was so forward—bang, bang, bang. But we were quite prepared, and I give him his due. The thing I deeply respect about Michael is that he listened and analysed everything we were saying. It was not the toe-to-toe, "stick it up your nose" bit; it was really good. I was so impressed with him.

But at the end of it he turned to me—I will never forget this—and said, "I agree with everything you're saying." Because we were bringing money into the State; we were not taking it from somewhere else. We were bringing it in from Queensland, thank goodness. He said, "It's just going to be too difficult for me to change, but thank you very much for bringing it in. And by the way, Geoff, before you leave, come and I'll show you something." There was this antique day bed or chair, and I said, "What is this?" He said, "This is the chair of the first Treasurer of the State. They used to put all the money under the bed, and the first Treasurer used to sleep on it." I said, "Why is that?" He said, "Because in the First Fleet, somebody would steal it. Somebody would knock it off." I will always remember that.

Later in life, when I was elected in 2007, a number of former members would usually come in and tell the newbies about what happens and what you should and should not do. It is pretty bipartisan. Lo and behold, who should walk through the door? It was Michael, so we had a bit of a giggle. The other thing he told me was "Geoff, you come in here with no friends and you might go out with no friends. But if you do go out with some friends, they're going to be really good friends, so you remember this and you do it." It is a sad loss. He should be extraordinarily proud of the legacy he has left, the people he has touched, his influence on the greatness of the State and his dedication. The list goes on. We all mourn the loss of a loved one or somebody we have known, but we should also celebrate the fact that we have known them and we have experienced the joy and the love from them. Michael, please rest in peace.

**Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (13:07):** I am honoured to add my voice to the condolences for Michael Egan. I acknowledge the speeches that we have already heard. There have been some fabulous tributes to the former Treasurer from those who knew him very well. I am one of the few in this place, along with the member for Lismore, who was here very briefly when Michael was a member. I was elected in 2003 and he was a very long-serving Treasurer in the Carr Government. At the start I thought he was a little bit scary.

**Ms Janelle Saffin:** A bit.

**Mr STEVE WHAN:** A bit, because he had that incredible experience, and he certainly did not leave you in any doubt whatsoever of his view on any issue. But after a while I started to notice that he would often be sitting in meetings with a bit of a mischievous look on his face. He would often have something quite cutting but very funny to say on certain things, and I noticed it as well after he left politics on the occasions that I saw him. I was also in the Former Members Association for a little while, and I think I am probably still eligible. Whenever I came across Michael, I was certainly thoroughly entertained by his recollections of things that had happened and of circumstances, as well as his assessment of people, which was often very entertaining. Michael was a great figure who played an incredible role in the history of Labor in New South Wales and in government in New South Wales. He is someone who deserves all the tributes that he has been given today by the Premier, the former Premier and others.

I was only here for a couple of years during Michael's time in this place, so I asked Richard Amery, who is very heavily involved in the Former Members Association, for some thoughts about Michael to add to the discussion today. Richard, as is his wont, sat down at the typewriter last night and sent me typewritten notes that I am now going to use. I acknowledge that these are Richard's words. Richard wrote:

It is with some sadness that we speak of the passing of Michael Egan, a former member of this House and of the Legislative Council.

To say the very least, Michael Egan was a significant figure in the history of the Labor Governments of Wran, Unsworth and, in particular, Bob Carr.

He first became a Member of Parliament when he was virtually swept into office in what became known as the first "Wran slide" election result of 1978.

The second Wran slide saw Michael retain his seat of Cronulla, however in a snap election called by Wran in 1984, the Government majority was trimmed from 27 to 17. The seat of Cronulla was one of the seats that returned to the Liberal fold.

Michael went to work on the staff of Barrie Unsworth, one time Transport Minister in the Wran Government. Michael's fortunes took a turn for the better following a number of historic events in 1986. First, Neville Wran surprised all the Annual Conference of the Labor Party when he announced that he would be retiring from politics and vacating the Premiership.

Following this event, Barrie Unsworth, a member of the Legislative Council, nominated to be the new Premier. This he achieved when Barrie was chosen by the Labor Caucus to be the new Premier. The issue here was that Unsworth was in the Upper House. So he stood for the seat of Rockdale which he won narrowly some time later.

Incidentally, I was in Young Labor then and I drove from Canberra to work on that by-election by handing out how-to-vote cards. It was one of my first introductions to New South Wales politics because I was, at the time, in the Australian Capital Territory branch. I return to Richard's words. He continued:

This resulted in a vacancy in the Legislative Council. Michael Egan nominated for the vacancy and was duly elected that year.

Labor lost the 1988 election, and this was followed by a record breaking leadership term by Bob Carr. Michael Egan worked his way through the ups and downs of Caucus Politics to become an effective member of the Shadow Cabinet. Carr appointed him as the Chair of the Waste-watch Committee—

we heard some reflections on that earlier, as it was a one-person committee—

which in effect was a committee of one. Michael was always in the news highlighting Government waste. He was also the main opposition spokesman on economic matters, even though Carr was the official Shadow Treasurer.

His strong performances in Opposition made it no surprise when the new Premier, Bob Carr, appointed him to be the State's Treasurer. A position he held for the rest of his Parliamentary career.

It has been said that Egan did much to deliver balanced budgets, reduce Government expenditure and maintain the State's credit rating. But we should not forget that he was also Treasurer during a period when competition policy was at the forefront of the economic debate. Michael Egan quickly gained the respect of the Treasurers from other States and Federal Treasurers from both sides of the Parliament.

There had been some criticism of his hard line on Government expenditure, but we should not cherry pick history and leave out the pressures put on the State's finances by, not only competition policy but the various issues that bounced around the country following the introduction of the GST by the Howard Government. Egan was a strong critic of aspects of the GST where he saw that New South Wales was not getting what he felt was our fair share.

I digress to raise something I read in one of the tributes to Michael in the media. At one stage he confronted the then Federal Treasurer in Canberra while the Treasurer was giving a press conference. The report said that the Treasurer at the time, Mr Costello, patted Michael on the head and made a dismissive comment. Michael's comment to the media afterwards was that the Treasurer was "not only a thug, but a thief". He was very blunt in defending New South Wales's share of the pie when it came to the GST. I return to Richard's comments. He went on:

When we look at all the sides of Michael Egan, when we look at his role in the corridors of this place, we can find many who liked him and some who did not. However, it would be very difficult to find anyone who did not respect him and felt he did an excellent job for the Government he was part of and for the people of this state whom he always felt it was his job to support.

Vale, Michael Egan.

I will personally add to that and pass on my condolences to Michael's partner and family. It is always really sad to lose somebody who is such a figure in the labour movement. He was such a loyal Labor figure over many years. I know that he had differences with one of our leaders when I was back in the shadow ministry—Robbo made a couple of comments about that—but I think in some ways that just showed his loyalty to the things that he felt were important and that he represented during his career. Michael was much admired by me and by many others who followed. I am very pleased that I got to share a short time with him in the Parliament. My condolences to all.

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (13:15):** I speak to the condolence motion for my former parliamentary colleague the Hon. Michael Egan, former member for Cronulla and also a former member of the Legislative Council, where I was privileged to serve with Michael for eight years. Michael was a true Labor warrior, an icon and a great practitioner Treasurer. I first express my sympathy to Michael's partner, Byron, his family, his friends and his colleagues who are here today. I recognise a lot of the faces in the gallery. I express my sympathy and also some joy at what Michael brought not only to his colleagues, but also to the people of New South Wales.

I will share some personal things. Michael was funny, he was generous and he was cantankerous. He was quite forensic in an intelligent way. He was sharp but, as the former Premier said, he had a big mind and a big heart. My mother liked him. She had met him when Michael and I were out doorknocking—we also doorknocked together at different times. My mum met him and really liked him, so I said to Michael, "If Mum likes you, there

must be something about you I have to like too." That way I got to know him a bit better. He doorknocked with me in Lismore, Evans Head and other places, and we were at conferences and the like together.

Today I was listening to the story about Warren Cahill, the Usher of the Black Rod who had to remove Michael from the upper House. I remember it well. I was reflecting on it because Warren Cahill now works for the United Nations Development Programme [UNDP]. I also worked for the UNDP, and Warren and I ended up together at the Myanmar Parliament. We used the Egan case as one of our case studies at that Parliament. I have been thinking back and describing to parliamentary colleagues just what sort of person Michael Egan was. He and Bob Carr, a former Premier and former foreign Minister, were as thick as thieves. That really started when Michael moved from the left to the right faction of the Australian Labor Party. Some would say that he saw the light and others would say that he moved to the dark side; it depends on where one sits.

I could turn to many of Michael's notable achievements, but none is more notable than the work he did to bring in those nine balanced budgets. I remember that Labor had a record of 10. I think it was only during the global financial crisis that the triple-A rating was not as strong as it should be. When I hear people talk about Labor not managing money well, I say, "No, that's not quite so." Michael was very proud of that, and other people were too. He won the argument—and it was an argument—to bring down the State's net debt and was really proud of that. It was as significant as Treasurer Keating floating the dollar. Michael also took his colleagues very seriously and engaged with them beyond the caucus, the Treasury and economic matters. He engaged on social issues as well.

He managed to incorporate social policy into his economic thinking and the things he was doing with policy and reform. It is probably not known, but Legislative Council Labor members formed a group, of which I was a founding member, and put forward an annual budget submission to Treasurer Egan, and he took it seriously. Some would not, but he took it seriously. We premised it on the four principles of the Carr-Egan approach to the budget and the financial and fiscal matters of the State, and it focused very much on service delivery. Michael met us, briefed us and made sure that we got access to the briefing papers. He brought others in to engage with us. It showed his measure that he was Treasurer but was able to make sure that his colleagues were involved.

One thing that I liked about Michael was that he maintained what I call his core principles to serve the public, which were very much informed by Labor values and framed within a public policy framework, but also what I used to call his Christian Brothers values. His Catholic values informed a lot of what he did. He was the first Legislative Council member to serve as Treasurer. He was clearly not the last; we have one now. We did, however, diverge on a few things. Energy policy was one of those things. I can remember fighting with him at the country conference about the issue of privatisation and competition. That was to do with dairy farmers, because I have always represented the dairy farmers where I live. It was not, on the whole, about competition, but it was about dairy farmers. I always got a good hearing with Michael. I also remember the issue of pokies. Michael was very strong and clear about that. As a former local club worker, that was not particularly easy for me. I went out, though, to explain, defend and promote what Michael was putting forward because it was for the betterment of the State. It was not easy, but I did that, and he thanked me for doing so. Quite often, they were not easy meetings, and I faced a few of them about pokies in my time.

It may surprise some, but Michael held quite a commitment to civil liberties. Given that there was a lot of law-and-order debate and talk at that time, he still maintained principles around that. Michael, the late erudite judge and former Attorney General Jeff Shaw and I had more in common on those issues than might be known. Michael was concerned with having a balance around those liberties, about prison reform, about the vulnerable and about police powers, but he was able to go beyond individual compassion and have them shaped into public policy reform. I quite admired him.

I note the comments made about Michael Coutts-Trotter. I knew him as a young press secretary when I was in the other place. MCT said on ABC Radio that he has a "great deal to be grateful to Michael for. His generosity has made possible extraordinary things in my life. I wouldn't have a career in the public service if it wasn't for his preparedness to give me a go and stand by me." He also said he was "an incredibly generous, funny and vivacious person in his private life" but also "an extraordinarily successful Treasurer" who was "the benchmark against which State Treasurers in New South Wales at least judge themselves." I think everybody in this place and, from what we are hearing today, outside of this place would agree.

Michael believed in redemption and forgiveness, and he was able to display that in many ways. I recount a couple more things. This is little known, or little understood if it is known—because it was in the media at the time—but Michael and I were on the ticket at the State Labor conference, which is where people are put on the ticket for election to the upper House. Some members might have been at that conference. Some of his colleagues from a particular union were unhappy with him. Labor has a way of voting. The order was changed unilaterally by some, which meant that Michael got knocked off the ticket. I was the collateral damage, and so did I.

I remember Michael was in Rome, and I talked to him on that Saturday night. With the way things go at these conferences, there were lots of meetings in the pubs and under the stage at Town Hall. The next day, the returning officer was able to announce that the ticket was as the order should have been in the first place, and I ended up in here with Michael. There are some funny things that I had totally forgotten about. But thinking about him today, I reflected on some of those things.

In closing, one other thing we shared was that Michael was a research officer for the Australasian Meat Industry Employees Union, of which I was a member and worked with them. We had that in common, and we used to talk about things like that. The Labor Party and New South Wales were well served by Michael Egan. His approach and reforms changed government in New South Wales, balancing fiscal competence with social policy advancing compassion—all elements of good government. Rest in peace, Michael.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (13:26):** I, too, offer my condolences to the friends and family of Michael Egan. Michael was a titan of the labour movement and New South Wales politics. He dedicated his life to the service of the people of New South Wales, firstly as a member of Parliament and New South Wales Treasurer, and later as Chancellor of Macquarie University. Michael came to the Parliament as a member of the Wran Labor Government. In 1984 Michael lost the seat of Cronulla—which we have heard about already—but, as we know, he returned in 1986 as a member of the Legislative Council. We now know that it was at the same time as the member for Lismore—a key fact that I did not know. He served for more than 18 years.

Michael Egan was a critical figure of the Labor opposition to the Greiner and Fahey governments. When Labor returned to power, Michael, in partnership with Premier Carr, was a towering figure in New South Wales politics. As Treasurer for nine years, he paid down the State's debt and kept us in the black for the rest of his tenure—a tremendous achievement—while also delivering huge enhancements for health, education, policing and the rest of government. He was, in the truest sense, a Labor Treasurer to his bootstraps. Michael's legacy as Treasurer is unrivalled. He protected New South Wales's triple-A credit rating, delivered nine balanced budgets and funded the 2000 Sydney Olympics without putting the State into debt. His family may not know this, but the member for Gosford won a silver medal at those Paralympics. She was cheering in the Chamber earlier when we began this condolence motion. That was another fun fact for all of us to learn.

Michael was a relentless advocate for reform within government and was fearless in taking on the big issues and forcefully arguing his case to interest groups and, famously, to his colleagues. He commanded fearsome loyalty from his personal staff and profound admiration from the public servants who worked with him—that was once they had adopted his uncompromising style, of course. The bruises healed soon enough. His contribution to the success of the Carr Government was monumental. Former Premier Carr recently paid tribute to Michael's combative spirit and list of achievements as Treasurer, describing him as a valued colleague and friend. The two of them together were a political force of nature. They created the template for truly successful Labor governments—economically sophisticated and fiscally responsible, while never losing sight of what the people of New South Wales elect Labor governments to do: improve the lives of the people in this great State.

After leaving politics, Michael was chosen to serve as Chancellor of Macquarie University. Under his tenure, a large-scale building project commenced, including the new medical facility. He also attended 268 graduation ceremonies and conferred more than 40,000 degrees. The graduation hall, as his family very well knows, has been renamed the Michael Egan Hall. Like New South Wales itself, he left that university unrecognisably improved compared with the institution he walked into. Michael was never shy of robust debate, continuing to appear at parliamentary inquiries and, famously, never leaving anyone in doubt of what his position was.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** It being 1.30 p.m., pursuant to the resolution of the House of 7 February 2024, debate is interrupted. I set down resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a later hour. I shall now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.30 p.m.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** Michael Egan set a high standard of ministerial accountability for himself and the Government—something every Minister should seek to replicate. Those who get the privilege to serve as a Minister know the weight of the office and also the opportunity it presents to improve the lives of the people of New South Wales and to shape our State. I thank Michael's partner, family and friends for sharing Michael with us. Even beyond his time in Parliament, Michael continued as a loyal servant to Labor by sharing his experience and advice with us. I can certainly attest to my time with him as a shadow Minister. He was so generous and gracious in sharing what it is like to be a Minister and preparing the shadow Ministers for what it would be like in a Labor government. I am truly grateful to have been able to lean from that wonderful advice. The labour movement is indebted to Michael Egan for his years of service to the party and to the people of New South Wales. Vale, Michael Egan. You will be greatly missed.

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (14:32):** Today we gather in this place to honour a true Labor leader and visionary. Today our New South Wales Labor family mourns the loss of a great friend and mentor, and a truly accomplished public servant for the people of New South Wales and Australia. Michael Egan was a Labor leader through and through. He spent a quarter of his life in public service, giving his intellect and his all to the people of New South Wales. A dedicated and compassionate advocate for the people of New South Wales, Michael spent his long and accomplished career serving the community in Western Sydney, Greater Sydney and throughout New South Wales. Michael was a Labor Party lifer—his whole life, from his mid-teen years onwards. Michael was a member of Young Labor throughout the 1960s, back when Paul Keating was its President. In fact, he joined the party in 1964.

Michael formally entered politics in 1978. He served first in the Legislative Assembly, in this Chamber, for five years as the member for Cronulla. That is the only time Labor has ever held that seat, and I look forward to a future Michael Egan making it a Labor seat again, as it always should have been. He then went on to serve in the Legislative Council, where he remained for 18 years. Michael served as New South Wales Treasurer in the Carr Labor Government and was the first member of the Legislative Council to hold that title. Some may not know that there was a time when only members of the Legislative Assembly became Ministers. The Carr Government changed that because it was all about talent. Bob Carr thought highly of Michael—and I will go into some of the things he did whilst in opposition with Michael—and being made the first upper House Treasurer was quite an achievement. He held that honour for almost a decade, commencing on 3 April 1995 until 21 January 2005—the longest serving Treasurer in New South Wales history.

In his illustrious career, Michael also served as Minister for State Development, Minister for Energy, Minister Assisting the Premier, Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council, Minister for State and Regional Development, and Minister for Gaming and Racing. He was outstanding in all of those portfolios, but particularly as Treasurer. He was instrumental in the success of our great city's hosting of the Sydney 2000 Olympics, which I am sure we all remember, and he did so without a dollar of debt. Of course, the member for Gosford won a medal that year, and that was because of Michael. Was it a gold medal?

**Ms Liesl Tesch:** Silver.

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT:** I am sorry; it was gold later. To support the Olympics, he improved essential services across our city and supported the infrastructure needed to host the games, putting Sydney on the map as a stand-out city across the globe. During his term as Treasurer, he returned the New South Wales budget to surplus and all but eliminated net government debt. He drove changes to make New South Wales ports, energy, rail and water more competitive, reducing prices for households and businesses, improving living standards and creating tens of thousands of jobs.

Michael's commitment to improving people's lives shone through as he championed economic and social reforms during his extensive tenure in the New South Wales Parliament and as the longest serving Treasurer in New South Wales history. Michael was a master at pushing past the political to implement economic and social reform that made lasting change. A fair and intelligent leader, he made policy for the good of all people in New South Wales, whether they voted for Labor, the Liberal Party, The Nationals, The Greens or whatever—policy that we continue to benefit from today. After his parliamentary career Michael continued to serve his community in a number of roles and, certainly, as the Chancellor of Macquarie University, where he personally presided over some 43,000 student graduations.

On a personal note, Michael was a mentor to me in so many ways, giving wise and measured advice from my days in Young Labor, where I first met him in the early 1990s—almost 30 years ago now; it is hard to believe. I think I first met him at a party conference in 1992, and we continued together on and off but more particularly when I was elected as the member for Prospect. When I first met Michael, we were in opposition, and he was working in different roles within the Carr Government. He had not quite become Treasurer, but he was always happy to provide advice to me and my colleagues in Young Labor. We were from the right. He had joined the right some years before—or Centre Unity, as we prefer to call it. He would often host us in Parliament. He would always come to Young Labor conferences, especially when we started having them in Western Sydney rather than the inner city.

I have photos from those times. I was looking at those photos of me and people like Michelle Rowland, Reba Meagher, Ed Husic, Cherie Burton and others last night. It is hard to believe—we all had a lot of hair and we were all quite thin—that here we all are, all these years later. Michael was a guide to all of us, without question, particularly once we got into this House. Michael really stepped up for me in my political career most recently in 2016—I was elected in 2015—when I was appointed chair of the Waste Watch Committee, a position that Michael held when he was in opposition in the 1990s.

He provided me with regular advice. I remember the first time I met with Michael to discuss the Waste Watch Committee after I was appointed. He came up to my office on the tenth floor, sat down and said, "So, tell me, Hugh, why do you think you are the chair of the Waste Watch Committee? What is your purpose as the chair of Waste Watch?" I said, "Well, it's to hold the Government to account. You look at all the economic mistakes they made, and financial misconduct." He said, "No, no. It's to get Mike Baird. That's all that matters. Go after Mike Baird. That's what matters." And then he told me story after story about how he would go after John Fahey and other members of that Government back when he was in opposition. In my first few months as the head of Waste Watch, I got my hands on every single media release that Michael had put out and every newspaper article that quoted Michael, and I read them all. It is interesting that the member for Epping, the former Premier and Treasurer, mentioned earlier that he did a similar thing when he first became Treasurer to see what Michael had done. It gave me an incredible insight into how to be a successful chair of the Waste Watch Committee.

Taking Michael's advice, and that of Michael Knight, I ended up getting in the media every week—either on the television or in the newspapers et cetera. It was fantastic. It drove the then Government, and especially Mike Baird, crazy—absolutely crazy. There were regular hits on his Government. It was brilliant. Thank you, Michael, for helping me with that. They set up a dirt unit to try to get me, time and again. I spoke to Mike Baird about this a few months ago when he was out in my electorate in his capacity as CEO of HammondCare, and we laughed about it. It happened because of Michael's inspiration and Michael's guidance. He was brilliant. I am so pleased—and I said this to Michael at the time—that he was on our side. I would have hated having him as a political enemy, because he would have been devastating.

Michael has passed now but his legacy lives on and will continue to live on through the members here who knew him and through the social and economic reforms he championed that made this great State even greater. He will be remembered always by this Parliament and by the people of New South Wales. I thank his family—his partner, his parents, his brothers and sisters—for sharing him with us. He was a great man, and he will be sorely missed. Vale, Michael Egan.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (14:42):** Michael Egan was the State's longest serving Treasurer. He served in both Houses of this Parliament, and after politics he served for many years as Chancellor of Macquarie University. His contribution to this State was significant. As Parliamentary Secretary to the current New South Wales Treasurer—who, like Michael Egan did, sits in the other place—it is only fitting that I say a few words about his remarkable contribution to the progress of this State. Michael Egan, as Treasurer, understood and practised the fundamental principle for social democrats in any parliamentary democracy, and that is to advance social democracy's agenda, to advance Labor's agenda. Labor governments need to be masters of the State's finances, otherwise the finances of the State will be the master and Labor governments will not be able to pursue that agenda or it will be severely curtailed.

Michael's ability, as Treasurer of this State for 10 years, to master the State's finances enabled the Carr Labor Government to pursue its program in full. In saying that, I note that he was wrong about privatisation. His own example—the controversial privatisation of State electricity during the Carr Government years—showed that privatisation is not necessary, because the Carr Labor Government was able to do all it wanted to do without privatisation. As a local member of Parliament, he also set an example for all of us who aspire to politics. Like Ben Chifley, he did not choose a safe seat to try to get into Parliament. He wanted to represent the party that he had identified as being the best to progress the human condition and he wanted to represent it in the area he lived in, no matter what challenges would result. The challenges for him were that he stood many times before he was elected. He was elected for only a short time as the member for Cronulla before he lost that seat, and then he went through the party mechanisms again to get into the upper House.

Michael set an example to have the courage of your convictions, to stand up for what you believe in, in the area you live in, and to pursue them no matter what. To his life companion, Byron Addison, to his family, friends and colleagues, I extend my deepest condolences and those of the people of my electorate. Michael Egan's impact on the politics and economic landscape of New South Wales will be remembered with gratitude and respect. Vale, Michael Rueben Egan.

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (14:45):** I make this contribution to the condolence motion recognising Michael Egan. Unfortunately, I did not know Michael well, so I speak through the eyes and experience of my father-in-law, Guy Cooper. From 1998 to 2011, Guy was the director and CEO of the Taronga Conservation Society Australia, known then as the Zoological Parks Board, which runs Taronga Zoo and Taronga Western Plains Zoo at Dubbo. Michael was the New South Wales Treasurer for a good chunk of that time. In 1999 the zoo was in a parlous state or "about to fall into Sydney Harbour", as my father-in-law put it, much like the Elaine mansion. At the time, the zoo was working on a new master plan. It was a big one. It was designed by international experts in zoo design from Seattle and included a new elephant exhibit, the Great Southern Oceans exhibit with



its water features, the Wollemi exhibit and a children's exhibit called Backyard to Bush, as well as redevelopment of all the educational facilities that were, and remain, world class.

My father-in-law wondered how they would ever get a funding proposal of that size through the fiscally conservative Treasury officials wielding their dreaded hammers. In 1999, before the master plan was complete, they tested the waters with a more modest proposal. It was suggested to them that the zoo might seek \$250,000 for a new condor exhibit—the condor being a highly threatened species and boasting the largest wingspan of all birds. The zoo's two condors, Connie and Bruce, had been living together for 20 years in a rather mean little exhibit, about two metres high and as big as the average lounge room, and in all that time, not surprisingly, there had not been an egg in sight. So, according to my father-in-law, there they were in the depths of the Treasury building, with the Treasurer, Michael Egan, seated at the head of a table surrounded by about 30 frowning staff.

All went reasonably well until the Treasurer asked about "supplementation". My father-in-law launched into his spiel about the value of condors, facing off against negative body language and the shaking of heads. However, Guy says he noticed a twinkle in the eye of Michael Egan. No more was said, and they continued on. At the end of the session, Michael folded his papers and said, "Well, that's it. Good luck. See you next year—and, oh, by the way, I think you should have your condor exhibit." There were gasps of dismay from the officials, and before my father-in-law could even mutter, "Thanks," a staffer told him, "Get out. Get out." My father-in-law said, "What do you mean?" The staffer replied, "Get out, before anybody changes their mind." Later that year, the new condor exhibit was opened, and just eight weeks after that Connie laid her first egg. My father-in-law wanted to name the baby condor Michael, after Michael Egan. Of course, on hatching, it was discovered that the chick was a female. But then Guy had the pleasure of advising the Treasurer that the chick's name would be Megan—for M. Egan. As an uplifting prologue, a descendant of Megan is now in California awaiting release into a region where the species is currently extinct.

The following year, in 2000, the zoo was back at Treasury asking for over \$300 million for the master plan. To his enormous credit, and with courage and genuine support for zoos and all they contribute, the Treasurer gave it the thumbs up, despite the palpable undercurrents of doubt permeating the room. As an example of his innovative approach to Expenditure Review Committee decisions, before everybody left the room Michael added that he wanted the zoo to pay for 40 per cent of it. My father-in-law said he nearly fainted. Raising that amount of money was almost unheard of in the day. But it turned out to be a blessing in disguise and a game changer. It was a call to arms for Taronga to mobilise the Taronga Foundation into a compelling campaign to raise an unprecedented sum of money. It galvanised and united the staff into a shared purpose with the general public to realise the vision of a new world-class zoo.

My father-in-law remembers Michael Egan as one of those rare politicians and human beings who you do not forget. Guy told me that Michael was always very good at the twilight concert for the zoo. He always came along. He brought his mother, and my mother-in-law, Jeanette, enjoyed accompanying and looking after her. My father-in-law said that Dominic Perrottet put it perfectly when he said that Michael Egan had a head for numbers and a heart for people. He had a feeling for the animals and the zoo and what it meant for Sydney and New South Wales and its people. I send my deepest condolences to Michael's family.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (14:50):** It is hard to top that story. I do not think any contribution I might make reflecting on my time as a young economist, coming up in the party ranks and looking up to two great Treasurers of the time, Keating and Egan, could quite match a condor hatchling named Megan. However, I will briefly speak on this condolence motion for Michael Egan, AO. This is, in part, a citizen's right of reply from my current chief of staff to some of the stories. Many stories can be and have been told about Michael Egan. Certainly some are more amusing than others; some are perhaps not for *Hansard*. Nonetheless, they all go to the depth of the talent of the man, the compassion of the man and the willingness of the man to get great things done for communities.

I was asked by my chief of staff, Paul Levins, to correct the record after the contribution from the former Premier and member for Epping about the meeting of the Expenditure Review Committee [ERC] that Michael chaired, at which the then Minister for Health, Craig Knowles, was in attendance. If members recall, words were said, events occurred and it was a lively ERC meeting. Mr Levins was, in fact, at that famous ERC meeting, as the chief of staff for the then Minister for Health. He is happy to confirm that Michael did indeed end that meeting dramatically, with the accusation that both Paul and the Minister were nothing but "grubby little thieves" because they had managed to secure an increase in the health capital expenditure program in the context of a very tight budget. We have heard repeatedly today how impressive Michael's work was in getting the New South Wales budget back into a position of virtually no net debt. To add emphasis to his exit, Michael threw a large lever arch folder across the room.

Some time later, when Paul left for employment in the private sector, he wrote to Michael reminding him of his words. He said, "Michael, the words 'You are a grubby little thief' will be forever etched in my memory."

For the clarity of members, I say this because unfortunately Paul, not being a member, is unable to come into this place and correct the record himself. Michael wrote back saying, "Your recollection about being a grubby little thief is correct, but it is missing a word. I think it begins with an F."

In that same meeting, Michael interrogated health officials about why hospitals were built without any windows that would open to let fresh air in. He was convinced that air conditioning was only spreading infection and that its removal might help the budget as well as patients. Sure enough, the hospital in which he spent his last days was the Wolper Jewish Hospital, which has glorious, large and open windows and doors. All of us in public life have our passions. As has been noted, one of Michael's was his Catholic faith. He is famous for contributing from the State budget to complete the spires of St Mary's Cathedral. He was heard to say that perhaps it would serve as an indulgence and get him to heaven. Michael, we can only hope that worked out for you.

Finally, throughout his life, Michael was known for picking up the phone and asking friends and colleagues if they were okay, a trait born of his interest in and concern for people and their welfare. In the words of Paul, "I learnt a lot from his advice and experience." Paul conveys his thanks for Michael's friendship and commitment to service. My thoughts and love, and those of Paul and the team in my office, go to Byron, Michel's life partner, and his family and friends. May he rest in peace.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (14:55):** I make a brief contribution on the condolence motion for Michael Egan. I speak not just as a Labor colleague but as a relative of Michael. It is not widely known, but Michael and I were cousins. My grandmother on my mother's side, Emmeline Margaret Egan, was sister to Stan Egan, who was Michael's father. Emmaline, Stan and their seven brothers and sisters were born in the Burragorang Valley, which was flooded in the '50s to make way for Warragamba Dam. That saw my mother's clan—a very large Irish clan—dispersed across Sydney and New South Wales. Michael was first cousin to my mother, Mary. At a gathering one day, many years ago, I suggested to him that that would make us second cousins. A technician on such matters, he corrected me that that we were, in fact, first cousins once removed. In any event, I am proud to share some great Irish genes with this great man.

My mother speaks fondly of her memories of Michael's mother and father, Uncle Stan and Aunt Jean, from her visits to Burragorang Valley. My mother, Mary Carlon, as she was then, recalls Michael's mother, Jean, being what she called "a stunningly beautiful woman". Michael was an only child. He was a lovely, private man—dynamic, opinionated, confident, fearless and loyal. He was a very funny man who was always looking to amuse, even on difficult occasions—in fact, probably more so then. He would make light of a seeming disaster. He loved it when his enemies came for him. He was always ready for them and bested them on most occasions. He was full of stories. He was quick to give advice, and his advice was usually crystal, formulated from an incisive mind infused with deep experience and passion. He went into public life because he cared about people.

I remember talking to him in the early '80s, when I was a much younger man with some ambition. At a quiet moment, probably at the funeral of a relative, while he was puffing away on a cigarette and he and I were sharing a chardonnay, I asked him for some advice for a young player on the way up. I will never forget it. He gave me one piece of advice at that time. He said:

Speak slowly. Watch your pace.

He spoke to me at this slow pace, and he said:

When you think that you are speaking to someone, and you think that the pace that you're speaking to them with is uncomfortably slow, that's exactly the right pace because they will be hearing it at the pace you want them to.

I have never forgotten that. Every year, I am fortunate enough to teach year 6 students in the Catholic schools and public schools speaking competition, and that is the first lesson I pass onto them. It is good advice and I have endeavoured ever since to pay homage to it. Michael was, I believe, the first from our huge Irish clan to enter elected life, and the whole clan was proud of him. I was proud to follow him, and he was proud of that too. He would phone me often during my 2005 preselection, which was a bit of a bloodbath, to offer me advice, valuable intelligence and counsel. His counsel was this: "Stay calm and just move forward like a machine. Forget the noise. Concentrate on the numbers." He said, "They'll try to bomb you out. Stay focused." I was very grateful for that advice. They did try to bomb me out. With his help, they did not. I was grateful to have won, and 18 years later I am still here. His advice, which I have just recounted to the House, was necessarily expletive-free. He had a very colourful Irish turn of phrase. When I entered this place in 2005, there were more lessons. He said:

Read the budget papers. No-one does. Understand the budget. That's the key to understanding government. You can't understand government unless you know how the budget works.

That was good advice, and I did follow it. It has come in very handy to this day, but particularly as shadow Treasurer. The other advice he gave was "Learn the standing orders. Understand them. Not many people do." I remember him saying, "If you understand them, you'll kill them in the House." That came in very handy for the

nearly eight years I was shadow Leader of the House under various leaders. It was a difficult time. "Get onto the Public Accounts Committee," he told me. "That's where I made my reputation. That's where I learnt so much about the workings of government. You should do that." And I did that too. When I was a new member, he was very helpful to me with advice. He assisted me as a guest speaker at my early fundraisers and with any questions I had. From time to time, as the great observer of Macquarie Street politics, he would still ring me and offer me counsel, advice, suggestions and jokes right up until the end.

Michael was really fun to be around. He was a one-off. I will miss our encounters. I offer my condolences to Byron and his friends and family on behalf of my family, and particularly on behalf of my mother, Mary, and my father, John, who passed away on 9 January. He loved Michael's company and admired him greatly as well. To Byron, I say this: You picked a gem of a life partner—an absolute gem—but I am sure at times you felt like you were sharing a roller-coaster with your gem, and you would have had a very fun life with him indeed. Laurie Brereton, former Federal member for Kingsford Smith and my great mentor and mate, spoke to me this morning about Michael Egan and asked me to pass on a few thoughts, which I am happy to do now. Laurie remembers first encountering Michael Egan in 1965 at the Youth Council, as it was then, which was the precursor to Young Labor. As the Premier recounted, along with Bob Carr and Paul Keating there was a raft of Labor luminaries who were very young at that stage. Laurie says that Michael ran on a ticket with Wayne Haylen, who went on to become a Queen's Counsel and a good friend of mine. They ran on a left ticket but, as the Premier recounted together with my interjection earlier, Michael did not stay on the left for very long. He was much too good a counter for that.

Laurie recounts that Michael was a vigorous debater right from his teens, was very passionate—sometimes incredibly so—and pursued all his roles with huge enthusiasm. He followed Laurie Brereton onto the Public Accounts Committee in this place. Laurie recounts with much gratitude that Michael was one of the first and enduring supporters of the Beds to the West Program. Laurie Brereton was a member from eastern Sydney. He was the member for Heffron at the time when he was Minister for Health. He was the Minister who was responsible for moving health services to Western Sydney. He said that Michael Egan was one of the first supporters of that. Laurie said, "He supported me in caucus and at the ALP conference, where there were vigorous debates: 'The hide of Laurie Brereton forcing doctors and nurses to have to go to the western suburbs to work!' It was almost heretical." Laurie said, "Michael was the member for Cronulla in Parliament but he supported me always on Beds to the West."

He said that Michael was great fun to be with. Laurie ran into Michael a few years ago in Cortina, Italy. They both say that that happened by chance, but I reckon they had done some planning about that. Laurie said he skied with Michael and Byron. He said Michael was great company. The company was outstanding. He will always be thankful for the times they shared. Laurie asked me to pass on the fondness for Michael and condolences to Byron from Laurie Brereton, Tricia Kavanagh and the entire Brereton family. I wish to also pass on some thoughts from my other great friend and mentor, the person I followed into the Maroubra electorate, former Premier Bob Carr.

Bob's public thoughts about Michael are replete, but when I spoke to Bob a few days ago, he recounted—and I will recount, with his permission—that he had visited Michael recently at the Wolper hospital, in effect to say goodbye to Michael. Bob recounted that he started to thank Michael for all that he done for him as Premier. Michael stopped him in mid-sentence, pointed his finger at Bob's chest and said, "I owe you. I owe you everything." Bob said it was the best of goodbyes. Nothing more needed to be said between the two. Bob, of course, as Premier, owes Michael large. From one Irish clansman to another in this place, I say thank you and farewell to my cousin Michael Egan.

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (15:06):** I contribute to the debate in support of the condolence motion. It probably will not surprise many that I did not know Michael. I speak this afternoon not about a political career but about a post-political career and, indeed, a legacy—a legacy that stands and will stand the test of time at Macquarie University in my electorate. We heard in this Chamber that Michael served as the Chancellor of Macquarie University for 11 years, from 2008 to 2019. Earlier today the member for Epping referred to the rough sum of around 45,000 students that Michael believed he graduated through that university. That is an extraordinary legacy that no doubt will grow and become something that many of those students remember for a long time.

The funny thing about that hall is that the naming and unveiling of that hall happened at a ceremony where Michael received his own honorary doctorate. It is one of the most magnificent halls—perhaps the best anywhere in Ryde—and I have had the privilege of delivering an occasional address from that particular hall to a cohort of graduates who, while they did not graduate under Michael's chancellorship, did graduate in a hall that bears his name. That is an extraordinary legacy at a university that is one of the best in the world and that is celebrating its sixtieth anniversary this year. I offer my condolences to Michael's family. He has left an extraordinary legacy in

politics and beyond. For me, as the member for Ryde, my remarks are a small note about our local community. Vale, Michael Egan.

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (15:08):** I, too, did not know Michael directly, but I wish to speak about his legacy for many people with disabilities. As Treasurer, he not only produced nine balanced budgets and eliminated New South Wales's net government debt, but also fully funded the Olympics and the Paralympic Games. The Paralympic Games in 2000 changed lives and changed attitudes towards people with disabilities in this State. It was pretty powerful to be out there, with kids saying not "What's wrong with that person?" but "What sport does that person play?" Being part of games in your own country is a powerful experience for young athletes, and the beauty is the legacy it leaves behind. So many of us who were young athletes back then were put in the spotlight and given a voice and continue now in various fields.

The Paralympic Games in Sydney changed the shape of the city and made it so much more accessible, but also changed a generation for inclusion for the future. Michael's legacy lives on in so many ways: the condor named Megan, the endangered species, the hall, but also changing the lives of people with disabilities. Vale, Michael Egan. I thank him so much for his contribution to the Labor movement and I thank so much his family who supported him on that journey.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** I thank all members for their contributions. I met Michael a handful of times. As the member for Gosford has said, he played a critical role in Sydney's hosting the 2000 Olympics—an event that shared our city with the world in such a powerful way. I thank Michael Egan for his enduring contribution to the LGBTQ community. Vale, Michael Egan.

The question is that the motion be agreed to.

**Motion agreed to.**

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

*Motions*

#### **FEDERAL INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING**

**Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (15:11):** I speak in support of the member for Vaucluse's motion about the Federal Government's cuts to infrastructure across this State. I have been walking the halls of this place for almost a year since my election, and something has been missing the whole time. What is the word? I think I have finally understood what it is: feckless. This Government does not have a real agenda. It does not have a record of delivery. This Government is struggling to know what to stand up for. I understand that many of the infrastructure projects were federally announced and that, as the new Government comes in, it will always try to identify new agendas and put its stamp on things. It will try to wind back the reforms of the former Government. Surely we can get behind the things that are already funded. Surely we can get behind infrastructure that is so desperately needed for the future of this State.

I have just looked up, on the Transport for NSW website, the page for the Blaxland Road and Balaclava Road upgrade in Eastwood. It is still there. The \$7 million upgrade to a road intersection had the added benefit of embellishing a local park, improving cycleways and footpaths, and making the heavily congested and busy Eastwood community just that little bit easier to get around in. This would not break the bank but was needed for the growth happening in that community. Fast-forward a couple of years. This new Government is elected and wants to put a rocket up new development in my community. That is okay. The Government thinks it has a mandate to inject new housing into the community. I welcome that, but you cannot do that without having new infrastructure.

Surely the logic follows that, if you are going to build 8,000 new apartments in Macquarie Park, you will at least build the already-funded intersection that has been promised to the Eastwood community just down the road. That is not what this Government is doing. It wants to give communities added pressure and take away, at the same time, the very things that relieve that pressure. That, by any logic, whether you are of the left or right persuasion, is not a sustainable model. That is not how you deliver good communities or sustainable environments. That is not how you house people in a city they will want to live in. I am bitterly disappointed by the lack of advocacy I have seen from a government that, sharing the same persuasion as its Federal counterpart, should be able to lean in and influence these savage cuts affecting local communities like mine, in Ryde. This was my electorate's only road infrastructure project that was to be funded under that program, and it is gone because this Government cannot stand up to its Federal masters in Canberra. That is a disgrace.

Most disgraceful, however, was observing the local Labor Party trying to spin this into some sort of saviour story about how it had secured the previously funded bus interchange, which the previous Federal Coalition Government had funded. Seeing Labor try to spin a cut into a success because it had stopped something from being cut is everything that needs to be seen to understand Labor's approach not just to infrastructure but to economics generally. Labor does not understand how local communities work, how to plan for the long term and, frankly, how to make the things Labor members walk out every day and speak to their communities about a sustainable reality for those communities they purport to represent and support. This Government needs to do better. This Opposition will certainly keep calling this out, but we must get this funding delivered. The people of Eastwood deserve it, and so do the people of New South Wales.

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (15:15):** Well, "feckless" is a new word in this Chamber. It is feckless to cancel a project for 8,000 dwellings. That would be like the project for 8,000 dwellings in the Carter Street precinct, the Hill Road exit off the M4 freeway, which those on that side cancelled. Would that be that kind of fecklessness? Would that be their delivery of service to Western Sydney? I think they protest a bit too much. But I welcome the member for Vacluse to the battle of Western Sydney. It is interesting times we live in when the charge is led by the member for Vacluse. The previous member for Vacluse, unfortunately, never led the charge into Western Sydney. I assume the current member got her passport stamped as she went through the Broadway interchange, as she came through the Cross City Tunnel that a Labor government built into Western Sydney. I use it occasionally to go out to the Turkish Consul General's place in Vacluse. I am sure the member for Vacluse is using it to come and visit the Gallipoli mosque in my electorate. It is a meeting of minds in my electorate.

**Ms Kellie Sloane:** I will come any day.

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ:** We will certainly have the member out there. I certainly welcome my good mate the member for Vacluse to the vanguard of defending Western Sydney, because when those opposite were in government there was an absolute absence of any concern for people in Western Sydney. The most congested roads in Sydney were Parramatta Road and Silverwater Road in Auburn. I know I bored the House senseless when I got up here again and again and spoke about it in this Chamber, but there was not one peep from the previous member for Vacluse. But I am hoping to hear more about that congestion, created by their tolls, their privatisation of the existing M4, which in that stretch at Auburn must have been paid for three times by the members of the public—

**Mr Nathan Hagarty:** Toll mania.

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ:** It is toll mania. Let us face the reality: When we build roads, we get the revenue and then the road becomes a public road. When they build roads, they sell them off and the taxpayers of Western Sydney on those congested roads are up for \$123 billion. For how long? How many of those road projects could we have built with that kind of revenue? The revenue is not going to us. It is going to the private tollway companies that our public funds have provided an asset to, which the Coalition took and sold off, in perpetuity. For decades and decades, people in Western Sydney will be paying for those roads.

The Premier was absolutely clear at the time. He wanted this funding from the Federal Government. He was very disappointed, but that does not mean that the projects have been cancelled. It is not like the Hill Road project on the M4, which those on the other side cancelled when there were 8,000 dwellings going into Carter Street. It will still be built. What this Labor Government has that those opposite never have is an absolute commitment to delivering for the people of Western Sydney. At least when Labor came in, for the first time I got a \$1 million traffic management study for the chaos created across Granville, Merrylands and Auburn by toll roads to the right and the left of everybody who cannot move out of the electorates. At last the State Government is actually spending money to look at the solutions to the traffic management problems the previous Government created in Western Sydney. I look forward to the member for Vacluse coming out at peak hour every morning and trying to get up Mona Street.

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (15:19):** By leave: I thank the member for Vacluse for bringing this important motion to the House. I have given notice of a similar motion, but mine is specifically about a project that impacts my community that has had its funding cut by the Federal Labor Government. As it was for so many communities, it was incredibly distressing to learn in November last year that the Albanese Government had axed funding for the planning of one of the most critical road projects in Port Macquarie. Speaking of peak hour, tens of thousands of local commuters and visitors to Port Macquarie use the Oxley Highway and particularly the section from the Pacific Highway intersection to the Lake Road intersection. The Federal Government decided to cut funding for the ongoing planning of that important arterial road. As far as my community and I are concerned, that is just irresponsible and negligent.

Let me be clear about the scope of that vital infrastructure project. I am not asking, on behalf of my community, for billions of dollars to be reinstated. In fact, I am not even asking for tens of millions of dollars;

I am asking for \$4 million to ensure the progression of planning for that critical road project that we on this side of the House started. I acknowledge Minister Aitchison's attention to the project; she was one of the first Labor Ministers to visit the Port Macquarie electorate after the change of government and I thank her for that. I have met with Minister Aitchison, both in Parliament and in Port Macquarie, to discuss the increased congestion on the Oxley Highway and the need for the funding to continue so we can plan for that major upgrade. But, to be honest, as of today it feels as though the conversations are going nowhere.

As I said, I appreciate the time that she gave me and Port Macquarie soon after she became the Minister. She was in Port Macquarie again on 21 December opening a completed road project on Pacific Drive. It was one that we funded but I was happy that she was there. While she was there, the Minister met with council members who also raised the issue of the funding cut. In a media release, CEO Dr Allen said:

For this project to be stripped of its funding, without any consultation with Council and our community, is of significant concern. It is difficult to understand how the area of greatest need to our community has had funding withdrawn due to the IIP Review.

She went on to say—and I absolutely agree with her—that she wanted to see continuation of the project to the selection of a preferred option, followed by detailed design and construction. I also support Dr Allen's comment that the notion that "the project does not have merit, national strategic rationale, nor is an Australian Government investment priority", as identified by Minister King, is of real concern.

We have already started the work on this side of the House. We put to the community three options about what that intersection might look like to address the congestion issue. We are now waiting for those details and that design with the final option to be decided based on extensive community consultation. As I said, we are asking for \$4 million to be reinstated. That is it. We know it is a massive infrastructure project, but I am urging the Minns Government and the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads to ensure that they stand up to Federal Labor and make sure they lobby for the funding—just for planning—so we can get that critical upgrade reinstated and back on the drawing board. I urge the Premier and the Minister to do what they can to make sure we continue with the planning.

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (15:23):** In reply: I thank all the members for their contributions to this important debate. The member for Davidson talked about not just the cuts and the pending cuts but potential future cuts that he has uncovered in Lindfield. The member for Port Macquarie talked about the just \$4 million that she requires for her community, which is nothing in the scheme of things. It is about progress. The member for Ryde spoke about the Blaxland Road and Balaclava Road intersection that now has a huge question mark over it and how illogical that seems when there is a huge investment—8,000 homes—being put into the area.

I also acknowledge the Government members—the member for Cessnock, the member for Penrith and the member for Auburn—for their contributions. I thank the member for Auburn for the kind invitation to come to her part of the world. I spent about four years in her neck of the woods when I headed even further out west, she will be pleased know, to my workplace in Colyton every day. When I drove on those roads I saw the incredible multimillion-dollar investment that slowed commuters down a little, but it was progress. That was progress and investment by the Coalition Government. I come back to that because at the heart of the motion is future investments—the 17 infrastructure projects that are now under threat because the Minns Labor Government is not standing up to the Albanese Government about the huge cuts to infrastructure in New South Wales that will leave a poor legacy. Why has there been silence on those projects since November? Our communities deserve better.

The member for Cessnock said that this State is broke and that the credit card is maxed out. He talked about what he claimed was an appalling record of economic mismanagement. That is a myth that is perpetuated over and over again when members opposite talk about the economy. Just prior to COVID there was a \$4.2 billion surplus. During the COVID period there were emergency payments, which had bipartisan support and supported our community, but we were future focused. That is the difference between the Labor Government and the former Coalition Government. The former Coalition Government understood vision and that budgets were not just about the here and now; they were about the future.

The last budget of the member for Hornsby and the former Coalition Government invested in bringing women back to the workplace and in transport and infrastructure, because when ratings agencies look at the economic picture of this State they look at the future. They look at investing and building. This is a government that is not building or investing in the future of this State. As a result, we are facing a shrinking economy. The core of today's motion has been ignored by those opposite because they keep looking in the rear-vision mirror rather than looking forward. They are ignoring the key point in the debate: How are we going to fight for our communities? Are Premier Minns and this Labor Government going to protect communities and stand up to Anthony Albanese and bring back that investment? That question has been easily and conveniently ignored in the debate. I urge everyone to support the motion.

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

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....34  
 Noes .....45  
 Majority.....11

**AYES**

Amon, R  
 Anderson, K  
 Ayyad, T  
 Clancy, J  
 Cooke, S  
 Cross, M  
 Davies, T  
 Di Pasqua, S  
 Donato, P  
 Griffin, J  
 Hannan, J  
 Henskens, A

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

Provest, G  
 Roberts, A  
 Saunders, D  
 Singh, G (teller)  
 Sloane, K  
 Taylor, M (teller)  
 Thompson, T  
 Toole, P  
 Ward, G  
 Williams, L  
 Wilson, F

**NOES**

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

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

Mehan, D  
 Park, R  
 Piper, G  
 Quinnell, S  
 Saliba, D  
 Scully, P  
 Shetty, K  
 Smith, T  
 Stuart, M  
 Tesch, L (teller)  
 Vo, T  
 Voltz, L  
 Warren, G  
 Whan, S  
 Wilkinson, K

**PAIRS**

Crouch, A  
 Speakman, M  
 Tuckerman, W  
 Williams, R  
 Williamson, R

Watson, A  
 Minns, C  
 O'Neill, M  
 Washington, K  
 Saffin, J

**Motion negatived.****E-CIGARETTES INQUIRY**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (15:37):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Commends the Government for establishing the e-cigarette inquiry into the regulatory framework governing e-cigarettes and their prevalence among children and young people.
- (2) Acknowledges the Government's commitment to reducing e-cigarette-related harm in young people with a further funding injection of \$6.8 million to crack down on the sale of illegal vapes and increase support for vape-addicted young people.
- (3) Notes that by working with the Federal Government to introduce stronger reforms, it commends the Government for taking strong and decisive action to stamp out e-cigarette-related harm through stronger legislation, enforcement, education and support.

The New South Wales Government recognises that communities across our State are increasingly concerned with the use of vapes, particularly amongst young people. It is also concerned with the rising number of vape shops

that are opening up in metro areas and across regional communities. My electorate has far too many, and people regularly come into my office on the peninsula complaining about yet another vape shop opening in our community. It is disgraceful, and it is happening because the previous Government did not do enough. In September our Government announced an inquiry into the regulatory framework governing e-cigarettes and their prevalence among children and young people. It has strict terms of reference and will report its findings later this year. But in the meantime, our Government is working with a range of stakeholders to address the issues head-on, taking strong enforcement action to address the supply of illegal vapes in the retail marketplace and implementing programs and services to assist young people with nicotine addictions.

I thank the Minister for Health, who has two teenage boys and is passionate about stamping out vapes. He is clearly on the record in a number of places and across the media saying the Government will not stand for what is going on in New South Wales. Vapes are clearly targeted at young people. The packaging does not talk about cessation of smoking but is clearly aimed at getting into the lungs—and the hearts, I think—of young people. We do not understand the long-term implications for young people, but realistically we know that nicotine addiction, nicotine poisoning, coughs, dizziness, headaches, nausea and the impact on learning in the classroom are significant in the short term. We must do more.

Regrettably, most vapes sold in retail premises or online and those imported from overseas have been found to contain nicotine. A study by the University of Wollongong cites that 97.5 per cent of vapes that have been captured in raids have been identified as containing nicotine despite no indication of nicotine content on the packaging. We do not necessarily know the long-term impact, but we know that nicotine consumption can cause changes to brain development as well as impaired attention, learning and memory, and may worsen stress, depression and anxiety in young people who are choosing this addictive product across our communities. Some vapes also contain substances known to harm health that are banned from legal nicotine products by the Therapeutic Goods Administration, including a product used in antifreeze and engine coolant which also masks the burning sensation as people are consuming these vapes.

The Government is committed to reducing the prevalence of vaping and to taking further action to protect young people from the harms of e-cigarettes. In New South Wales we are investing \$6.8 million over three years to crack down on the sale of vapes and increase support for young people who are addicted to vaping. Some \$4.3 million will be invested over the next three years to bolster compliance and enforcement to ensure that the State meets its responsibilities for retail, wholesale and pharmaceutical controls over vaping. In the next 12 months there will be a further \$2.5 million to help young people quit vaping, including a new digital platform, enhancements to the iCanQuit platform and an online learning module for youth services across the State. Last month the Minister launched a new education campaign highlighting the dangers of vaping. "Every vape is a hit to your health" aims to motivate young people to quit vaping or stay vape-free.

I congratulate and thank our Federal colleagues. On 1 January they started implementing a range of reforms to strengthen controls on the importation, manufacture and supply of e-cigarettes. From 1 January there is a ban on the importation of disposable single-use vapes. Further changes will be implemented in stages this year. There is a plan to introduce a bill in Federal Parliament in March that will seek to impose a domestic ban on the manufacture, supply, advertising and commercial possession of disposable vapes and non-therapeutic vapes. The New South Wales Government supports the Federal Government's vaping reforms and will work with its State and Territory counterparts to address the increasing availability, appeal and uptake of vapes by young people.

The Minister has spoken several times on TV and on radio about the undercover inspections and raids of stores selling vapes across New South Wales. In the 18 months to September 2023, health inspectors conducted more than 5,300 retail inspections and seized around 485,000 nicotine vapes and e-liquids with an estimated street value of \$15.5 million. Seizures of illegal nicotine vaping products have increased significantly in the months since. In the first five months of 2023, New South Wales seized 337,000 illegal vapes compared with only 182,000 illegal vapes the year before. According to the Minister, these vapes are hidden in fake ceilings and fake walls and behind other products. A dedicated tobacco enforcement unit has inspectors travelling across New South Wales.

In closing, I thank the 4,400 consumers in New South Wales who are obviously concerned and have made reports on the New South Wales website. They are the ones who have instigated the health inspections and the changes. It is also due to their work that there are now fines of up to \$1,650 or six months imprisonment for people who sell illegal vapes in this State. I look forward to hearing from my colleagues.

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (15:44):** I move:

That the motion be amended by inserting:

- (4) Commends the work of the former Government and former Minister for Health, the Hon. Brad Hazzard, for kickstarting the important work to combat the harm of e-cigarettes in 2022 through an education and awareness program.



The amendment is important because all of us have an interest in ensuring that the next generation of young people are not subjected to the destructive effects of nicotine and tobacco that we have seen in the past. We have an opportunity to ensure that young people today do not suffer the side effects that we saw from pervasive smoking across our communities. That is something that needs a bipartisan—in fact, a multipartisan—approach. I commend the member for Gosford for talking about the good work that the Government is doing. The Opposition encourages the Government and supports it to continue taking a tough line when it comes to the availability and accessibility of nicotine vapes—or any vapes at all for children under 18. But that is continuing the work of the previous Government and the previous Minister. That should be acknowledged.

If we want to ensure that the rates of lung cancer, cardiac disease and the side effects from nicotine and tobacco are avoided by the next generation, we need a multipartisan approach. That is why I am reaching out to the Government and saying that, yes, of course we want the Government to do good work on this, but we should also acknowledge that the previous Government started us on the journey. We should acknowledge that under the previous Coalition Government, in April 2018, then Minister Brad Hazzard made it illegal to vape in public spaces and on public transport. That crucial legislation brought the use of e-cigarettes in line with the limitations around smoking. It was an important step in the right direction. That law needs to be enforced to ensure that we limit the exposure of children to these harmful products—and not just children, but also those people who do not wish to be exposed to smoking by-products.

Under the previous Federal Coalition Government, for example, the Therapeutic Goods Administration ruled that nicotine vapes are prohibited from sale unless a customer has a medical prescription. From 1 July to 30 September 2023 over 150,000 products were seized. That is 150,000 illegal vapes off our streets in just one quarter thanks to that change. While legislation is important in addressing this issue, education and awareness are also key components in reducing youth vaping. Between March and June 2022, the New South Wales Coalition Government "Do you know what you're vaping?" campaign had over 11.5 million social media impressions and enabled over 100,000 young people, parents, carers and teachers to access materials and have conversations about the harms of vaping.

This should not be the exclusive domain of one part of our political system. This should be something that interests all of us. We all need to work together to protect our young people from the harmful side effects of tobacco, nicotine and the other products that are found in these vapes. At the moment, illegal vapes are coming into the country. People are using products that are highly unregulated and contain all kinds of harmful elements, including arsenic and dangerous chemicals. That is not acceptable. There is a proliferation of vaping shops throughout our communities. In my community in Hornsby vape shops are popping up. They are a honey pot for young people, attracting them in through the lure of lollies and sweets and colourful products to try to get them into vaping.

I am concerned that this is big tobacco 2.0 trying to shift its campaign from old-school tobacco cigarettes to new vaping. It is a gateway product to move people on to vapes that include nicotine, which will lead to a whole new generation of young people becoming addicted to that terrible substance. We should all stand against that. There can be plenty of debate about the merits of vaping and those kinds of products for people over the age of 18. But I think all members can agree that for people under 18 we need a bipartisan and multipartisan approach, which is why I am seeking to amend the motion to recognise that the Coalition has also done good work on this and that we support and celebrate the work that the current Government continues to do. We need to keep building on this to ensure that we protect the next generation from the harms that previous generations have experienced because of the proliferation of tobacco.

The statistics are shocking. The 2022-23 Australian Secondary School Students' Alcohol and Drug Survey found that 30 per cent of Australian secondary school students reported that they had used an e-cigarette. Older students, 16- and 17-year-olds, exhibited a higher prevalence of having used an e-cigarette, at 43 per cent, compared with younger students, 12- to 15-year-olds, at 24 per cent. Some 24 per cent of 12- to 15-year-olds have used an e-cigarette; that is a shocking statistic. Girls reported a higher prevalence of use, at 35 per cent, while boys were at 25 per cent. Concerning recent usage, 16 per cent of students had used an e-cigarette in the past month, 5 per cent had used e-cigarettes regularly—which is using e-cigarettes for 20 days or more in the past month—and 3 per cent had used e-cigarettes daily in the past month.

Recent e-cigarette use—past month, regular and daily use—was also more prevalent amongst older students and girls. Of the students who had used an e-cigarette, more than two-thirds, or 69 per cent, reported that they had never smoked a tobacco cigarette before their first vape. One in five of those students who had vaped but never smoked reported later trying tobacco cigarettes. E-cigarettes are clearly being used as a gateway product to get kids addicted to either vaping with nicotine or cigarettes. We should not be seeing that. The statistics are shocking in terms of cancer and other health-related issues. We know the pressure that puts on our hospital system.

We want to see the next generation of young people freed from the burden of the terrible diseases that have been brought upon us by the tobacco industry. We should stand together in making sure that does not happen.

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (15:51):** I thank my colleague the member for Gosford for bringing this debate to the House. I acknowledge the shadow Minister for Health and his contribution. Equally, I commend and congratulate the Minns New South Wales Government and the Albanese Federal Labor Government on their leadership on this serious public health issue. I will concentrate on the public health issues. This affects our community generally, but it particularly affects the vulnerable youth of New South Wales. As a public health issue, the recreational use of e-cigarettes should not be initiated. Smokers should neither start nor use e-cigarettes, and vaping in young people is a significant health issue. It has acute harms and uncertain long-term consequences. Vapes contain up to 100 compounds, including nicotine, heavy metals and microparticles—to name a few. Those compounds can cause irreversible damage to the health and development of young people. Evidence shows that exposure to nicotine can harm adolescent brain development, with consequent effects on attention, learning, mood and impulse control.

In 2019 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported over 2,000 cases of severe acute lung injuries linked to the use of e-cigarette devices and inhalants. The latest generational vape data has identified that 32 per cent of 14- to 17-year-olds have vaped. Two-thirds of those young vape users did not know that certain vapes contain nicotine. Vaping nicotine is strongly associated with the development of nicotine dependence. A serious public health consequence of childhood and adolescence vaping is the potential gateway effect towards cigarette smoking or other drug use. Approximately 12 per cent of our high school students smoke cigarettes. Approximately 80 per cent of individuals who start smoking during adolescence will continue to smoke, and one-third of those individuals will die prematurely from smoking-related diseases. Therefore, the youth population is a critical target for public health efforts to reduce smoking.

As with other drug management, the solution starts with the three principles of reduction of harm, reduction of demand and reduction of supply. NSW Health has taken a strong and proactive approach to protecting young people from the health harms of vaping. The Minns Labor Government hosted a round table on 16 November to hear from experts in the field and those in schools to plan for the actions we can take to address the issues of vaping in schools. The Government has committed an additional \$6.8 million dollars in funding over the next three years, which will allow NSW Health to increase compliance and enforcement activities and to support young people who are addicted to vaping. It takes a comprehensive approach to protecting young people from the harms of e-cigarette use, including through stakeholder and clinical engagement, education, communication and research.

As of 1 January, the importation of all disposable vapes, with or without nicotine, is prohibited at a Federal level, and all doctors and nurses can prescribe therapeutic vapes for smoking addiction. From 1 March, the importation of all non-therapeutic vapes will be prohibited, including importation for personal use. Further, in 2024, legislation will be introduced to require plain pharmaceutical packaging, limited flavourings and reduced prescribed levels of nicotine. An extra \$25 million of funding will be provided for Australian Border Force enforcement. The Minns New South Wales Labor Government and the Albanese Federal Labor Government have taken action on harm reduction, demand reduction and supply reduction on this serious public health issue, which is affecting our children and young people.

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (15:55):** I support the motion as amended by the member for Hornsby. I concur that there is a strong need for bipartisanship on the issue. I think all members can get behind it and agree that keeping young people under the age of 18 safe is vitally important. Throughout the course of the past year, I have spent a lot of time moving around local P&Cs in my electorate. The number one issue that I continue to hear about is how to deal with vapes. Some schools are installing detectors in toilets, and other schools seem to be confiscating vaping products on a daily basis. That is a big concern. In a community like Ryde, it is something that people rightly expect government to do better on. I look forward to working with the Government on policies that ensure that we can keep these harmful products out of the hands of local kids and, at the same time, build a framework to ensure that we can better monitor and regulate in this space.

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (15:56):** By leave: I contribute to debate on the motion. I congratulate the member on bringing this important debate to the House. As someone who grew up in the 1980s and 1990s, I remember a time when smoking cigarettes was prevalent. Governments across all three levels have done immense work and spent billions of dollars to make a huge impact. We have effectively eradicated cigarette smoking among young people but, sadly, we are now seeing the rise of vapes. When I travel throughout Leppington, I see temporary vapes scattered around and it is disturbing. As members have said during the debate, we do not know the impact of vapes. Chemicals and all kinds of things are thrown inside of vapes. I support the motion, especially the fact that the Government is establishing an e-cigarette inquiry that will look into the regulatory framework. It is important that there are laws that protect against this.

We know the dangers of smoking, but we do not yet know the full dangers of e-cigarettes and vapes. Just like we saw with the introduction of cigarettes decades ago, cigarette manufacturers and tobacco manufacturers are trying to make it "cool". They are appealing to the youth. As a father of two young children, it concerns me. Being a non-smoker and seeing the effects that smoking has had on my mum and dad, I would not want to see another generation go through that. To expand on that, my dad is on a puffer and a ventilating machine. He has to use them every four hours, which of course is the result of lifelong smoking. That has an obvious impact on my family and a major impact on the health budget. We do not want to see that continue with the next generation.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** It being 4.00 p.m., debate is interrupted for the petitions take-note debate. I set down resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a future day.

*Petitions*

**GREAT NORTHERN RAILWAY**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** The question is that the House take note of the petition.

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (16:00):** It is with great pleasure that I speak to the petition before the House today regarding the reintroduction of passenger train services on the Great Northern Railway line between Armidale and Jennings and Wallangarra—you almost pronounce it correctly, Mr Temporary Speaker. It is no longer in my electorate. It is now in the seat of Lismore, but I still think it warrants pronouncing the name of that wonderful community correctly. I note that the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads is in the Chamber and, before I address the petition and the people behind it, I thank the Minister for not only being here today but also the time she has made available to discuss this matter with me and the representatives of Trains North. I also thank the Minister for funding the upgrade of the Markham Street rail level crossing. The boom gates will be an enormous relief to the many users of that road and will no doubt avert what could have been, I fear, a very tragic accident in the future.

I welcome to the gallery the supporters of the petition and, given the distance between Parliament and the Northern Tablelands, many others who are watching at home. I acknowledge president Matthew Tierney, among others, for being the driving force in bringing forward the petition and for the work done over many years to amass 10,740 signatures, over 7,000 of which are from the Northern Tablelands electorate. I also acknowledge the Trains North vice president, Siri Gamage, secretaries Karin von Storkirch and Billy Wood, treasurer Alan McKenzie and members Margaret O'Connor, Deni McKenzie and Caroline Chapman for the work they have done. I acknowledge their predecessor groups including Save the Great Northern Rail group, led by Guyra's Rob Lenehan and others. A lot of people have worked over many years to bring this petition to Parliament today. It embodies the efforts by other groups that have gone before over the past three-and-a-bit decades to reinstate the line.

The line has been inactive since the early 1990s. In fact, the information I have is that all train services terminated on that line in 1990. For the trivia buffs out there, I was in kindergarten in 1990. That is how long it has been since we have seen a train run north of Armidale on that line. The line was never closed; it requires an Act of Parliament to do that. It is open, but it is disused and has not been maintained by State governments of all political colours since then because it has had no use. The Great Northern Railway was looked at by the Federal Government and the Australian Rail Track Corporation when considering the inland rail route, but, for a variety of reasons, they chose to go further west for the alignment of the rail line. In recent years there has been a move to once again use the line for rail passenger services. I commend the group again for the work they have done putting the case together and mobilising community opinion.

There has been a lot of debate about what the true cost of reinstating the line would be. Back in 2016 Transport for NSW estimated that it would be around \$1.3 billion to \$1.4 billion. Another cost has been banging around lately of about \$2 billion. Whatever the cost is, there is no doubt that a significant amount of public money will be required to reinstate the line to a condition to take passenger services or freight. One of the challenges, no matter who is in government, will be opening the line. Typically, freight would need to underpin the viability of the line to see passenger services reinstated. I know that the councils have been involved in the debate. Glen Innes and Armidale have very strong views about passenger services. Tenterfield Shire Council is supportive of bringing those services back.

I note that the Minister, in her correspondence, has not ruled out re-use of the line, suggesting that a business case needs to be provided. I am sure the Minister will elucidate that today. I look forward to hearing from her. Today is not the end of the debate; I view it as just the beginning. It is important that we keep talking and make sure the line remains in public hands and is available for possible rail services in the future. I commend the petition to the House.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (16:05):** In response: I am pleased to speak to the petition. I acknowledge our guests in the public gallery, particularly Matthew and Allen, whom I thought of yesterday. I know Colin Schroeder from EcoTransit is there as well. They have done an amazing job getting so many signatures on this petition and, as the local member said, so many from the local area. That is no mean feat in that part of the world. I lived there before I moved to Maitland in 2000, so I am well acquainted with the history of the rail line. In fact, when my parents-in-law and my family had the motel up at Walcha, it was their work with Countrylink at the time, under the former Labor Government, that got the rail line to Armidale reopened. When passenger movements first started, we were driving down to Tamworth to bring people up the Moonbi Ranges to open up tourism in the area, which also opened up Walcha Road.

I acknowledge the great meeting we had. It was but one of a number of meetings with people from the area. I met with Siri and others from the Northern Railway Defenders, Trains North, Deb O'Brien in Armidale and, of course, the member for Northern Tablelands. I thank him for his advocacy on behalf of his community. There is a fraught history of people—not the member but other politicians perhaps—putting the cart before the horse regarding what to do next. For me and the Labor Government, transport is a social determinant of education, health, opportunity and jobs. Wherever we see an opportunity to improve that, we should do it. But we need to do so in a much more strategic and coordinated way than has occurred previously. I do not blame anyone. We have to look at how we better connect resources with markets and connect people with hospitals, schools and jobs across our State.

That is why we have introduced a program of strategic regional integrated transport plans. It is an opportunity to look at all the existing infrastructure, public transport and road networks across our State and to marry them with planning areas—the planning Minister is in the Chamber—so that, when planning school precincts and health precincts in the regions, there is a transport plan that maps the same area and we do not put things in one place while our transport is in another. The other issue is that much of the work that has been done on this project is of some age. At some point in the future, it is probably worth looking at how we progress it to consider issues of community resilience and having strong transport networks. As a government, we are committed to doing that.

We know that in situations like the global financial crisis those communities that had access to heavy rail did better than those that did not. But then other options such as bus rapid transit et cetera can fill the gaps. We want to make sure that we come to these debates on public policy from a position of evidence and business cases. As the local member alluded to, I hold that very dear. We want to take a robust look at how our taxpayers' dollars—not our Government's dollars, not the former Government's dollars, but the funds of working men and women across New South Wales, not just from the cities but from the third of the population who live in the regions—can be spent to make their lives easier. That is why we are keeping an open mind on all and any options. We want to look at them strategically, in the context of the whole region.

Since taking on my portfolio, I have seen a tendency to cut transport up: Freight is here, passengers are there, roads are there and rail is here. Nothing is integrated to achieve the best use. Somebody will upgrade an airport and somebody will stick in some bus services, but they do not connect people with the places they want to go. I thank the people who brought the petition to the House. I thank them for coming all the way from New England. Having lived there, I know how far that is. I thank them for their contribution to our State.

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (16:10):** In reply: I acknowledge the Minister's contribution to the debate and welcome her comments about the Government looking at an integrated transport approach across regional New Wales South and particularly in New England. One thing is for certain: Regardless of the fate of the Great Northern Railway, the communities in our part of the world are ageing. Offering a coach service exclusively will not suit people with severe mobility issues or disabilities. It is very hard to access a coach, and some of the timetables do not suit people who need to travel for medical appointments, work or study. So I welcome the Minister's comments. She will find no stronger advocate or participant in that process than me. We need to look at integrating and at links not just to Sydney but to Queensland, where people in the northern part of my region gravitate to for business and medical services. With the lack of specialists and doctors, they also increasingly gravitate to the coast, to centres like Port Macquarie and Coffs Harbour. We perhaps need to look at daily direct public transport links for the two-hour trip between Armidale and Coffs Harbour.

Regardless, the petitioners have put forward very valid arguments for the return of train services. I acknowledge that the Minister is not in a position to say, "Yes, we will spend over a billion dollars reinstating this tomorrow." It has to be part of a broader piece of work, and I welcome what the Minister said in progressing that. Again, I thank Matthew and his team for the amazing work they did putting the petition together. I acknowledge the tidal wave of community support that is behind it and the work that will continue. I thank the House and the Minister.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** The debate on the 10,000-signature paper petition on the reintroduction of passenger trains on the Great Northern Railway between Armidale and Jennings-Wallangarra has concluded. I thank the guests in the gallery, who visited to listen to the debate and be part of our democracy.

**Petition noted.**

*Bills*

**RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES AMENDMENT (PROHIBITING NO GROUNDS EVICTIONS) BILL  
2023**

**First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Ms Jenny Leong, read a first time and printed.**

**Second Reading Speech**

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:14):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

On behalf of The Greens I introduce the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Prohibiting No Grounds Evictions) Bill 2023. While I am very pleased to bring the bill to the House, I also wish that I was not. That is because I wish that the Government, after more than a year, had already introduced a bill to end no-grounds evictions, which was an election commitment it made. Sadly, in the 15 months that have passed since I first introduced a bill in this place, in October 2022, we have seen little action on the ending of no-grounds evictions but lots of promises and commitments in the media and public sphere. Some things have changed in that time, though, and we must always celebrate the wins. In the public domain, the Labor Party, the Liberal Party and The Nationals have all committed to ending no-grounds evictions in some form. In the lead-up to the State election, they all touted their commitment to the idea.

We have seen a change in government. New South Wales Labor Party members now sit on the Government benches. That is very welcome after 12 years of the Coalition being in power. We have also seen the appointment of a new Rental Commissioner in New South Wales. But one year into the first term of the Minns Labor Government we are yet to see any Government legislation to finally end no-grounds evictions in New South Wales.

The bill I introduced on behalf of The Greens in October 2022 presented the then Coalition Government and Labor Opposition with an opportunity to finally act on advice from the Tenants' Union of NSW and other civil society organisations, like unions, local councils and community centres, and end no-grounds evictions for all tenants across the State. The lack of reform was hurting people in our community but, sadly, neither of the major parties was willing to seize the opportunity at that time. The ongoing threat and stress, as well as the harsh reality of unfair evictions, has continued to negatively impact millions of renters in New South Wales because of Labor and the Coalition's failure to support the bill introduced by The Greens in 2022.

Over the past year, rightly, much has been made of the housing crisis that has not spared any of the communities we in this place are privileged to represent. From the cities to the suburbs to the regions, we know that the rental crisis is hitting hard. We have all heard stories of young people evicted from their homes simply for asking for basic maintenance like mould removal, or of older people booted out of homes that they have lived in for years because their landlords want to sell, or of single mothers for whom a rent rise they cannot afford is a de facto eviction notice and who face the reality of living at a camp site, in a caravan park or car, or of trying to bunk in with friends or family.

Data from NSW Fair Trading reveals that across the State one tenant is evicted every 18 minutes. The Tenants' Union of NSW eviction map tells us that in 2023 landlords made 13,011 eviction applications through the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT], painting a grim picture of a desperate precarity that more than two million renters in this State now face. That grim picture is incomplete because it only reflects the evictions that go through NCAT. Many evictions do not end up at NCAT and the actual number of evictions is likely to be a lot higher than that 13,000 from last year. Let me repeat those damning statistics. Data from Fair Trading reveals that across the State one tenant is evicted every 18 minutes. That is not a reality we should continue to accept, especially when we have support across the political spectrum to bring the threat of unfair no-grounds evictions to an end.

In the midst of deeply entwined and entrenched housing and cost-of-living crises, thousands of people in New South Wales are at risk of being evicted from their homes for absolutely no reason, and they are being forced to contend with dropping vacancy rates and ever-climbing rents. This bleak reality is why The Greens have advocated, and will continue to advocate, for a statewide end and, indeed, a national end to no-grounds evictions.

It is unfathomable that after all this time, and given the election promises and cross-party support in this Chamber, we are yet to see this vital reform delivered for the people of New South Wales. There is an urgency here. Someone is evicted every 18 minutes. More than two million people are renting in this State, but we are yet to see this reform. People can be booted out of their home for no reason—or, more likely, for the reason that the landlord simply wants to ignore a backlog of maintenance or hike up the rent to some astronomical level.

The Minns Labor Government won the election off the back of an election platform that promised to deliver fairer rental rules for the people of New South Wales, including an end to unfair no-grounds evictions. But one year on, the steps the Government has taken to deliver on that promise have left much to be desired. To give some credit where credit is due, it is absolutely great that landlords and agents in New South Wales can no longer solicit bids on rental properties. But while this goes some way towards levelling the playing field and increasing transparency for people entering into tenancies, it does nothing to protect those who are already in one. It is absolutely a good and positive reform that bonds are now portable between tenancies and properties. But being able to transfer a bond is cold comfort to people who are evicted and forced out of their homes. Ideally, they would prefer to not have to move at all. We know the real-world consequences for people who face the reality of an unfair no-grounds eviction.

Time and again we hear stories—every member of this House would have heard them—of renters living in substandard conditions, too scared to ask the landlord to fix the hole in the roof, or the mould in the wardrobe, or the broken oven, or the questionable electricity socket, or the dangerous gas pipe, because they are worried that if they make a complaint about maintenance, they will receive an eviction notice for making a big deal of the maintenance problem. We know that landlords are itching to evict their tenants for no reason whatsoever, but simply to hike up their rents to astronomical levels and put the property back on the market, in the middle of a rental crisis, to profit more from the misery of millions of people throughout New South Wales. If we are serious about addressing the housing affordability and insecurity problem that is plaguing our cities, we need to listen to the experts who say that every reform to protect renters or boost housing affordability is undermined by the ongoing existence of no-grounds evictions in New South Wales.

Rather than narrowing our focus to building new supply that contains only the barest minimum of affordable housing—and no public housing—or to providing subsidies for first home buyers which, as ample evidence shows, only drive up the cost of housing, we need to be doing everything we can to keep people in the homes they are already in. Ending no-grounds evictions is one way to do this. Capping and controlling rents is another, but that is a conversation for another day. I look forward to bringing on that conversation this year. For now, we need to follow in the footsteps of the Australian Capital Territory and South Australia, both of which have ended no-grounds evictions for periodic and fixed-term tenancies. I note specifically the critical element of ending no-grounds evictions for both periodic and fixed-term tenancies. The Tenants' Union provided to many members of this House a briefing on the critical factors of this issue. I quote:

Reforms to ending 'no grounds' evictions must include fixed term agreements

The end of a fixed term is not a genuine reason in and of itself for an eviction, with actual practice demonstrating no presumption that the commercial relationship is expected to end. If NSW continues to allow landlords to evict without having to provide a valid reason at the end of a fixed term tenancy, reforms to end 'no grounds' eviction will be undermined and fail to deliver the greater protection and stability promised.

I appreciate that there are challenges in navigating this reform through the sector. I appreciate that we probably do not have consensus in this Chamber about what are valid reasons and whether that extends to fixed-term agreements. But I urge the Opposition and the Government to work together in the interests of the millions of renters in New South Wales to find a way through this. I believe that there is a way through this.

We also need to listen to the experts who, in a 2022 report for the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, found that dissatisfaction with tenancy law was completely unimportant to 47 per cent of landlords in considering whether to sell their investment properties. I will repeat that: 47 per cent of landlords said that the tenancy laws are completely unimportant—in other words, insignificant—in considering whether they would sell their investment property. The same report found that dissatisfaction with tenancy law was the least important reason factoring into a landlord's decision to dispose of an investment property, with the realisation of capital gains being by far the most important reason.

The argument that somehow, if we introduce good laws to protect renters, landlords will sell up and stop being investors and we will lose all the rental stock just does not hold up to scrutiny or the facts or the research. It is crucial to remember this in the face of the inevitable real estate and property lobby fearmongering that rental reforms will somehow cause the supply of rental properties in our suburbs, regions and cities to disappear through mass disinvestment in housing. Further to this, we must remember that even if some investors do sell up, that does not mean their properties just disappear. If an investor sells a property, the property or the home does not

disappear. It will simply go on the market again, either for a current renter to buy it and become a first home buyer or for another investor to buy it and rent it out.

The sob story of poor landlords suffering under laws that better protect tenants just does not hold up when the state of the rental and housing affordability crisis is so bad. We need to make laws to stop the woman in her seventies being evicted for no reason and being left with no choice but to live in her car. We need to make laws to stop the young person with a disability being evicted for no reason from an affordable and accessible rental property and becoming homeless because there is no alternative for him. It is those people—and millions more like them—who we should be making laws for and who need to finally see an end to unfair no-grounds evictions in New South Wales.

I now turn to the substance of the bill. First and foremost, the bill amends sections 84 and 85 of the Residential Tenancies Act 2010, which currently give landlords the right to terminate a fixed-term or periodic agreement without grounds. The amended sections would instead prescribe a list of genuine grounds on which landlords could terminate a fixed-term or periodic agreement, reflecting The Greens' understanding that in certain circumstances there are reasonable grounds for eviction. Those grounds are as follows: The landlord, or a person associated with the landlord, intends to live in the property for more than 12 months; the landlord intends to carry out renovations or repairs that will make the property uninhabitable for a period of more than four weeks and all necessary permits and approvals have been acquired; the premises will be used in a way, or kept in a state, that means it cannot be used as a residence for at least six months; and other grounds prescribed by regulations set out by the Minister.

The bill would insert a new section 83A to define a person associated with a landlord as a spouse, de facto partner, child or parent of the landlord; a parent of the spouse or de facto partner of the landlord; or another individual who normally lives with the landlord, and is wholly or substantially dependent on the landlord. This definition recognises that in 2024 the composition of households and definition of "family" and "household unit", for many, goes beyond direct family relationships and ties of marriage or blood. The bill also would insert new sections 85A and 85B to respectively create an offence when new landlords do not use premises in accordance with the grounds on which the agreement was terminated and to give tenants remedies through the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT] in situations where this occurs. It is absolutely critical that we create an offence and give tenants the ability to seek remedies through NCAT if the reasonable ground is not adhered to, because we know that being forced to move time and again is a huge cost and burden for tenants and renters, and they need to be compensated if a landlord does not adhere to the reasonable reasons that are given.

In the Newtown electorate office, we have heard many firsthand stories of renters being served an eviction notice because their landlord is, apparently, moving in or renovating their investment property, only for the home to be relisted weeks later, often at a higher price, and with no renovations having taken place. Together, sections 85A and 85B would make this an offence punishable by up to 100 penalty units and give tenants access to remedies through NCAT, including an order for compensation payable by the landlord to the tenant for wrongful termination or an order directing the landlord to use the premises in accordance with the ground on which the termination order was made.

These changes to the Residential Tenancies Act would go a significantly long way toward correcting the power imbalance between landlords and tenants, which has been allowed to grow unchecked for too long. It is unconscionable that no-grounds evictions have been permitted in New South Wales for this long, but we in this place have an opportunity to put this right and, this year, deliver a crucial reform that will make a material difference to the millions of renters in our communities across New South Wales.

I take a moment now to recognise all the housing-justice advocates who have for so long driven the movement to not only end no-grounds evictions but also improve the entire landscape of renting in New South Wales. While I was campaigning to be elected to this place, in 2014, I committed to seeing an end to no-grounds evictions in New South Wales. At that stage, the scandal and response from the real estate lobby and from the Government and the Opposition about the crisis and the drama that it would cause and that no-one would ever agree to such a thing made a story in the Herald and inspired Newtown's renters, who comprise 50 per cent of the electorate, to join us in our campaign for renters' rights. After that, we did not campaign alone for those years.

I recognise the incredible work of the Tenants' Union of NSW, Better Renting, Tenants Advice and Advocacy Services, and the more than 90 community organisations and unions who collaborated on the massive Make Renting Fair campaign, which has seen a change in both major parties regarding a commitment to ending no-grounds evictions. When we finally end no-grounds evictions and see stronger protections, it will be as a result of the tireless effort of experts and advocates who have been pushing for this reform for so long. They saw the need to provide people with a safe and secure place to call home and that the future would involve long-term renting.

I acknowledge my colleagues and the person who did the heavy lifting on this work, Patricia, and also Ned Cutcher, who is here today. He was working at the Tenants' Union and now works for my Greens colleague Kobi Shetty. I acknowledge that in our electorates of Newtown and Balmain we see that the housing crisis is real. Sadly, one of the things that we share with our Greens colleague in Ballina is the housing crisis. It impacts her electorate just as much. This is an issue across the State. It is not just an issue in The Greens' electorates. We must do more to see reform on renters' rights.

Finally, I urge my colleagues in this place to listen to the renters in their communities. I know they are getting the calls, hearing the stories and reading the news reports. Renters are struggling with worsening housing affordability and insecurity, and this bill will make a change. We cannot continue to wring our hands every day but take no real action as the crisis worsens. Every day, every week, every sitting session in which we fail to take action is another opportunity for people to be unfairly evicted. That is why The Greens have brought the bill to the House today. This New South Wales Labor Government needs to step up and deliver on what it promised before the election, either by supporting and passing this bill to make it law or urgently moving to introduce its own. Either way, it is absolutely long past time we got this done. I look forward to us getting it done in the coming months together. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

#### *Community Recognition Statements*

#### **HIS HOLINESS MAR GEWARGIS III YOUNAN**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (16:34):** Last night I had the privilege and great pleasure of attending the welcoming of His Holiness Mar Gewargis III Younan, the 110th Patriarch of the Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East. The event, held at St Zaia Cathedral in Middleton Grange, in my electorate, was attended by hundreds, including senior members of clergy, community leaders and local parishioners. His Holiness embodies the church's rich history and deep spirituality, which has withstood the test of time and persevered through many challenges and adversities. I echo words on the night: This is more than a visit; it is a pilgrimage. This is His Holiness's first patriarchal journey to Australia and reflects the strength of the local church community, a testament to our multicultural nation—the community thrives locally—free from persecution and political interference. I thank Mr Khamiss Khamiss, the president of St Zaia Cathedral's committee, and his hardworking team for making this event one the community will not soon forget. I also extend my best wishes to his Holiness during his stay in our great State.

#### **GEMAS DAY**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (16:35):** I was honoured to join the memorial service for the eighty-second anniversary of Gemas Day at the Suakin barracks in Pymble a few weeks ago. Gemas Day commemorates the anniversary of the Battle of Gemas, in the Second World War, where Australian soldiers in the 2nd/30th Battalion delayed the fall of Singapore. This resulted in the saving of many lives of the people who could be evacuated. We remember the 81 Australians who lost their lives in Malaya during this battle. We remember the many soldiers who fought in the battle who were then interned as Japanese prisoners of war on the Burma railway and suffered incredibly, including my own uncle who was in the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army. I commend the society, which commemorates Gemas Day every year at the Suakin barracks. It is important that we remember the sacrifices made by every Australian soldier so that we can live freely in this great country.

#### **IRAQI GRADUATES ASSOCIATION**

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (16:36):** I recently had the pleasure of helping to highlight the achievements of first- and second-generation Iraqi refugees and migrants at the HSC and university student celebration hosted by the Iraqi graduates association. These bright young individuals triumphed over the challenges of adapting to a new country, learning a new language and making their educational mark in Australia. Their dedication to education is a testament to the strength of the human spirit and pursuit of knowledge. I commend the Iraqi Australian University Graduates Forum and the Association of Iraqi Academics in Australia and New Zealand for hosting a wonderful ceremony. Completing education at any level is no small feat, and it would not be possible without the support of parents, teachers and school staff. I congratulate them all.

#### **TRIBUTE TO JOHN ELFORD**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley) (16:37):** I honour the life of John Elford, a Lower Macleay Rugby League legend who passed away, sadly, yet left an imprint on our local children. John, known as "Snoozer", was born at Kempsey in 1947. In the early days he played for the Smithtown Tigers and Kempsey High School. At the age of 13 he played second row for the under-18s. By '63, John was playing first grade at the age of 16. Three years later John went to the Western Suburbs club in Sydney, where his popular nickname of Snoozer came about



from his coach, Noel Kelly, due to his ferocious defence and ability to put the opposition to sleep. From 1966 to '76 he played 132 first-grade and 42 reserve-grade games, including representing New South Wales in '72 and twice as an Australian Kangaroo. Returning home in 1977, Snoozer decided his days in Sydney were finished, and he coached his hometown club. During his first season at the helm, Smithtown won the Group 2 competition. John was a dedicated sports figure and inspiration to many. He will be missed. Vale, Snoozer.

### ILLAWARRA RUGBY LEAGUE

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (16:38):** The Illawarra has a long and enduring passion for rugby league. Illawarra Rugby League, which began in 1911, has fostered generations of players and has long been a key pillar in the sporting culture of the community. That is why it is so great to see people like Steve Hewson being recognised for giving so much back to rugby league. Steve is a former player, having represented NSW Country in the 1970s. However, his community-mindedness and generosity have really shown through his dedication to coaching. Steve coached extensively for the New South Wales Rugby League academy, and his enormous talents were recognised when he was appointed as the inaugural coach of the New South Wales wheelchair rugby league team. Becoming part of the wheelchair sporting world presented Steve with significant challenges and opportunities for learning but was an experience that he found to be deeply rewarding. Steve was further challenged when he coached the national wheelchair rugby league side to the World Cup in 2013, where he was able to see the team learn and improve to the point where it could hold its own in the fierce competition. I congratulate Steve on his induction into the Order of Australia, for all of his contributions, in the Australia Day honours.

### TRIBUTE TO WENDY SWANN

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (16:39):** I pay tribute to nurse practitioner Wendy Swann, who passed away in December 2023 at the age of 65. Ms Swann was loved by her patients as "the purple fairy" ever since a miscalculation with purple hair dye before work at Wagga Wagga Base Hospital led her to don a purple fairy costume, complete with wings. That became her trademark, which put patients—especially children—at ease while she delivered care with compassion and professionalism. Her close friend Virginia Proust recalls that Ms Swann began her nursing career at Cooma in 1976. She went on to work in remote South Australia and Queensland, Sydney, Gosford, Bendigo and Melbourne. In the early 2000s she joined the Royal Flying Doctor Service in Dubbo. In 2007 she became a nurse practitioner in emergency at Wagga Wagga Base Hospital, where she became known as "the burns nurse" and she was loved by her paediatric patients and their parents. Ms Swann's brother, Brett Walker, remembers his sister as a person small in stature but huge in personality—"a rock star of the healthcare world". Her passing has deeply saddened her colleagues and countless patients whose time in hospital was greatly eased by her care.

### ISAAC MCCALLUM

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (16:40):** I recognise rising star Isaac McCallum, who has just completed his audition and is through to the next round of this year's *Australian Idol*. He not only got through but won a golden ticket to parachute him through. The local community is familiar with Isaac's talent because his busking outside our supermarkets is legendary. At only 23, Isaac has experienced periods of homelessness and he often uses the proceeds of his busking to pay for accommodation. Collecting shopping trolleys for a living when he is not busking, Isaac told the judges and the viewing public that he is 100 per cent ready to stop pushing trolleys and is ready for the big stage. I am sure most of the TVs on the South Coast will continue to tune in to this year's season of *Australian Idol*. We will all be behind this talented young man as he rides the wave of success. Isaac, the South Coast idolises you.

### TRIBUTE TO FATHER KEVIN BATES, SM, OAM

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove) (16:41):** I am honoured to pay tribute to the life of Father Kevin Bates, SM, OAM, a titan of our local Hunters Hill Catholic community. Ordained in 1972, Father Bates spent the vast portion of his ministry as a parish priest in Hunters Hill. Combining his love of music with his burning desire to spread the word of God, Father Kevin was able to reach the ears and hearts of tens of thousands through his 13 albums. Father Kevin will leave an indelible mark on our community and his passing is felt greatly, which was evidenced by the hundreds that took the time to pay tribute to his life yesterday morning and afternoon. May he rest in peace. Vale, Father Kevin.

### PHILIPPINE AUSTRALIAN GLOBAL ALLIANCE

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (16:42):** It is my great pleasure to acknowledge the Philippine Australian Global Alliance for Service and Advocacy [PAGASA], an invaluable community organisation that brings together Philippine community organisations and individuals across New South Wales. PAGASA, founded in 2023, seeks to promote Filipino culture and advocate for the collective needs of the

Australian Filipino community in New South Wales. The organisation also aims to address issues affecting the Philippines through natural disaster relief and educational assistance for students in the Philippines. It follows the establishment of the Alliance of Philippine Community Organisations, which has facilitated valuable social, religious and cultural platforms for the Filipino community in New South Wales. I had the privilege of hosting members of PAGASA at my office last year. My staff and I were treated to Christmas carols such as *Silent Night* and *Feliz Navidad* as part of their fundraising for local and overseas projects in support of children in need. I commend founders Jhun Salazar, Larry Perez and Fe Hayward for their work in bringing the community together. I look forward to seeing PAGASA achieve great things in 2024.

#### **TAMWORTH ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY HONOURS**

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (16:43):** I pay tribute to the five outstanding locals who won Citizen of the Year awards in the Tamworth electorate as part of Australia Day ceremonies in January. From Tamworth to Gunnedah, Manilla, Barraba and the Liverpool Plains, our citizens are what make our towns and cities special. There are citizens like Win Robinson, the 94-year-old grandmother who brings smiles to local children and those living with a disability by dressing up for Christmas, Easter and Halloween. There are citizens like Nick and Kim Peake from Barraba, who have been raising funds for sick kids and their carers. There are citizens like the legend Marie Hobson in Gunnedah, Kate Phelps in Manilla and Geoff Allen in Tamworth who give their time to a range of volunteer organisations, ensuring their communities are supported. The selflessness of those living in our communities never ceases to amaze me. I congratulate this year's citizens of the year for their outstanding contributions to our communities.

#### **PARRAMATTA DISTRICT CRICKET CLUB**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (16:44):** The Parramatta District Cricket Club consistently provides young cricketers with an avenue to learn new skills, so it is no surprise that the club is producing an immense amount of talent. Congratulations to the under-15 Parramatta girls on winning the Margaret Peden Shield. Despite Manly-Warringah turning up with balloons and banners ready for a win, Parra showcased their incredible skills to bring home the shield. I am sure their new home at The Green in Parramatta North will see them continue to excel. Congratulations to Blake Noorbergen, Nitesh Samuel, Advith Boreddy and Naden Cooray on their selection in the New South Wales under-17 metro side for the Cricket Australia National Under 17 Male Championships in Ballarat last month. Although their teams did not make the finals, all acquitted themselves superbly and have very bright futures. Blake performed exceptionally well for NSW Metro and for Parramatta in the Under 16 A. W. Green Shield; he was the leading run scorer with 427 and a highest score of 145. We are very proud of all of you.

#### **BEACH2BEACH CHARITY FUN RUN**

**Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (16:45):** I am thrilled to acknowledge the Beach2Beach Charity Fun Run, which has been recognised as the Community Event of the Year in the 2024 Australia Day Awards. The Beach2Beach Charity Fun Run, previously known as the Pub2Pub Charity Fun Run, is an annual event open to all abilities and ages. It encourages the community to be involved, get healthy, exercise and have fun, all the while raising money for great local charities and organisations. The event was started 30 years ago by the Bayfield family—thank you—and over 15 years has been organised by the Rotary Club of Warringah as an annual event on the Northern Beaches. The aim is to continue to grow and showcase our beautiful beaches and surrounds and to continue to raise money for local charities. Since its inception the Beach2Beach has donated over \$5 million to local community organisations, including schools, surf lifesaving clubs, scouts and many charities already benefitting from this wonderful event. I even did it once; I did not just fire the gun. I walked it, but I did it. I love your work, Rotary, and thank you to the Bayfields for your vision. Well done.

#### **UNITED AUSTRALIAN LEBANESE MOVEMENT**

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (16:46):** I congratulate Mr Jad Haber, founder and CEO of My Guardian, for receiving the prestigious Australia Day Award from the United Australian Lebanese Movement during its twenty-sixth annual Australia Day ceremony. The esteemed award serves as a recognition of the outstanding contributions made by Australian Lebanese individuals in our community. Mr Haber's dedication and leadership in founding and leading My Guardian exemplify the spirit of service and helping others. My Guardian provides unique aged and disability care to people around Revesby and surrounding areas. Its community-based, compassionate and innovative approach to service allows it to help people remain safe and independent in their own homes. I applaud the United Australian Lebanese Movement for its continued efforts in honouring and highlighting the remarkable endeavours of Australian Lebanese people, fostering a sense of unity and appreciation within our community. My congratulations to Mr Haber and the My Guardian team. Your work contributes significantly to the electorate of East Hills.

## LUNAR NEW YEAR

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne) (16:47):** As the beginning of the 16-day Lunar New Year Festival kicks off this weekend, I wish those in my community celebrating Lunar New Year a happy, healthy and prosperous Year of the Dragon. Those born in the Year of the Dragon are believed to possess traits such as intelligence, courage and charisma. It is a special time for many across our community as it represents coming together with family, loved ones and friends to share joy and good wishes. I represent a thriving multicultural community and I am so blessed to be celebrating and sharing in Lunar New Year traditions this month. I acknowledge the volunteers of the Rhodes Multicultural Community Association, including Yiping Zhang, Sandra Zhang, Jing Hong and Yuehan Zhang, who are busy preparing for the annual Dragon carnival in Rhodes, which is a vibrant celebration for Lunar New Year. I extend to my community, and indeed to all those observing across New South Wales, a successful and joyful Lunar New Year.

## TRAIN DRIVERS

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (16:48):** I thank our train drivers, the true essential workers who are often forgotten when we offer gratitude to our frontline workers. Thank you for doing your utmost to keep New South Wales trains running on time throughout the year and getting our community to where they need to be. Today I offer special thanks to Greg, or "Patch" as he is known to his workmates, a local Central Coast driver who has contributed 40 years of service to our State rail service. Greg was the first and last driver take the train on the Epping-Chatswood line and was the driver of a red rattler that took a group of young children from Camp Quality for a Christmas joy ride. The joy on those young kids faces as Santa replaced his sleigh for the oldest functioning train in New South Wales was fantastic, and Greg was very proud to be at the front of the team. Onboard was train-obsessed Harry Wilson, who was diagnosed with leukaemia at two years of age, and his family. I thank our experienced guys like Greg and all our train drivers for their contribution to the people and communities of New South Wales.

## DAVE MILLAR

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (16:49):** I am proud to recognise Dave Millar of Roseville, who recently made his 300th donation of blood or plasma to the Australian Red Cross. I know firsthand the dedication of those who donate, who have to make sure they drink lots of fluids, eat plenty of food, have a good night's sleep and set aside time to visit the donation centre. The question is: Are you a blood donor? If you are, congratulations on saving lives. Those who are not yet donors should consider becoming one today. I encourage everyone to donate by visiting [lifeblood.com.au](http://lifeblood.com.au). The Australian Red Cross has been saving lives through blood and plasma donations for over a century. In February 2024 it teamed with the Australian Cancer Council to raise awareness of the need to donate more blood and plasma. People living with cancer are the biggest users of donated blood in Australia. Dave is a blood donor; Dave saves lives. Let us all be like Dave. I thank Dave for his service.

## CHARLES GREAM

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (16:50):** I recognise Charles Gream, a respected and valued community member in my electorate of Cabramatta. Born in Armidale, Charles moved to Sydney in his teens to build a new life. He then met his wife and settled in Cabramatta in the early 1970s. Proud to be a resident of Cabramatta, where diverse people and cultures live in harmony, Charles wanted to tell people the wonderful story of Cabramatta through photography. For the past decade, Charles has been out and about across the electorate tirelessly taking photos of ordinary people, everyday life events, community events, beautiful landscapes and creatures and sharing those stories through his social media channels. Charles has a philosophy on life that he wishes to pass on to the young generations of Cabramatta. He says, "You've got to get out there, do some constructive things, be at your best and make a difference to other people's lives." I thank Charles for all his wonderful work and wish him the very best eightieth birthday.

## CHANCE HANLON

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (16:51):** Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises the inimitable Mr Chance Hanlon from North Nowra. Chance Hanlon was recently announced as the Shoalhaven Citizen of the Year and the Shoalhaven Medal recipient as part of our local Australia Day Awards. Over many decades in business, broadcasting on community radio and philanthropic and charitable activities throughout the Shoalhaven community, Chance has made an enormous contribution through his volunteer work and by building a stronger local economy and employing local people. Having known him personally for many years, I am aware that Chance and his family are renowned and respected for always serving the interests of our Shoalhaven region first—from speaking up for important investments in our region through to emceeing the local business awards every year. Chance is part of the essence, flavour, colour and movement that make up our vibrant local community.

Chance is incredibly deserving of that recognition and medal. I offer a huge congratulations and say well done to Shoalhaven's very own Mr Chance Hanlon.

#### **STUART PARK, WOLLONGONG**

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (16:52):** In another case of Wollongong setting an example for the rest of the country, it is now home to Australia's first all-abilities, all-ages playground, at Stuart Park. It opened in December last year, funded by the Federal, State and local governments, as well as by donations from local disability organisations, clubs and businesses. The all-abilities, all-ages playground allows adult people with a disability to have a play experience. I particularly congratulate Shoshana Dreyfus, who lobbied for it for several years, inspired by the experience of her son Bodhi. He is keen to get on play equipment but at his age often finds it much smaller than he would like. The work that she has done to get the funds and the design together is now attracting interest from the rest of the country, so I hope to see more playgrounds in more places soon.

#### **AMANDA FRASER**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (16:53):** Amanda Fraser is the first female president in Glenorie District Cricket Club's 130-year history, and the club is absolutely thriving. Amanda has demonstrated amazing leadership in restoring the fortunes of the Glenorie cricket club by creating a diverse, inclusive and vibrant experience for cricketers and families across the community. The current season has seen the club's executive become 50 per cent represented by females. In addition to the club's grassroots Blast program and six junior teams, many of which include female representation, this summer the Glenorie cricket club is fielding its first all-female cricket team. In recognition of Amanda Fraser's wonderful contribution, in 2023 she was deservedly awarded both the Cricket New South Wales and Cricket Australia Volunteer of the Year awards. The club's home is Les Shore Reserve, and it enjoys generous support from local businesses in the form of sponsorship. Playing in one of Glenorie's three senior teams is the former "Yellow Wiggle" Greg Page. That provides an added thrill for his younger teammates and opposition players. Greg's dedicated work in promoting awareness of the need for defibrillators has been impressive and of great benefit to the wider community. I congratulate Amanda, Greg and the entire Glenorie District Cricket Club.

#### **CONCORD HOSPITAL**

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (16:54):** Last Thursday I had the pleasure of visiting Concord hospital, which serves the Strathfield electorate. Concord hospital has a national and global reputation for being a leader in burns medicine and reconstructive surgery, stemming from its history as a repatriation hospital. Health Minister Ryan Park and I met with many grateful patients and with the dedicated staff of the hospital and the ANZAC Research Institute, which specialises in biomedical research with a focus on ageing. Concord hospital does many amazing things. It has an emergency department treating adult and paediatric patients, it has excellent physiotherapists and allied health professionals involved in the rehabilitation of patients following life-changing events, and it both employs and helps to train doctors who are keen to provide world-class patient-centred care. One of the highlights of our visit was witnessing a demonstration of a groundbreaking medical device that 3D-prints a patient's skin using their very own cells, which are then printed onto the patient's body through a robotic arm. Those advances in medical technology will improve the quality of life of many Australians for generations to come.

#### **GREG SMITH**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (16:55):** Greg Smith is playing his part in ensuring the continuity of knowledge of indigenous plants and culture through his nursery and education program, Yama 2 You Bush Tucker Nursery, located in Hill Top. More than just growing plants, Greg is growing knowledge through the engaging and fun sessions that he runs with local schools, day cares, preschools and community centres in the Wollondilly area. From Warragamba to Buxton, Picton to Mittagong and beyond, Greg—along with his younger offside, RJ—has passed on his skills by teaching over 3,000 children about Indigenous tools like spears and boomerangs, introducing native bush tucker, planting over 500 plants, performing smoking ceremonies, holding cooking classes with native ingredients and painting thousands of children's faces with ochre. Greg's work makes that knowledge accessible and mainstream, and it is helping to arm the next generation with empathy and passion for the Indigenous culture that makes Australia so unique. More than just giving a chance to learn, Greg brings the opportunity for youth to connect with our country and our ancestors. Each boomerang and spear thrown, each native seedling planted and each face painted with ochre is a chance for greater understanding.

#### **JUSTICE GRANT THEO RIETHMULLER, AM**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (16:56):** I pay tribute to the Hon. Justice Grant Theo Riethmuller, who was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia on 26 January for his significant service to the judiciary

and to the law. Justice Riethmuller has made a major contribution to our legal system and beyond. He was appointed to division 1 of the Family Court of Australia at Parramatta in 2021 and was a division 2 judge in Melbourne from 2004. He is a member of the court's case management committee, a national child support convenor and a former president and life member of the Townsville Community Legal Service. He is the co-author of *Family Law*, published in 2022; a consultant editor of *Federal Circuit Court Practice*; and a former editor of *The Queensland Lawyer* journal. Prior to being a judge, he practised as a barrister. He is a former committee chairman of Relationships Australia and was adjunct lecturer in civil procedure at James Cook University from the late '90s to early 2000s. I congratulate Justice Riethmuller and thank him for his service.

#### ANNA DUBIER

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek) (16:57):** I commend and congratulate Emmaus Catholic College student Anna Dubier on her great success in the field of cycling. In 2023 Anna travelled to Belgium for two weeks to race, prior to travelling to Malaysia in May as a member of the Australian junior development team to compete against Malaysia's top riders. She did us all proud by finishing first in her age group and second overall in Belgium, and in Malaysia she finished second overall. Her cycling prowess is being recognised domestically, with Anna being a current member of the Western Sydney Academy of Sport and the latest recipient of the Penrith Valley Sports Foundation Junior Sportstar award. She also received a New South Wales State Representative Award, having represented both Australia and New South Wales in cycling. The sport of cycling seems to cycle in the family, with her father, Pierre, a top cycling coach whilst her brother is also heavily involved in the sport. I congratulate Anna and wish her continued success in her endeavours.

#### MUSLIM WOMEN AUSTRALIA

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (16:58):** Last year Muslim Women Australia [MWA] reached a very significant and special milestone: its fortieth anniversary. Established in 1983 as the Muslim Women's Association, its work has changed many lives, helping women in my community through various initiatives, programs and continued advocacy. Its Linking Hearts program is crucial to the vision of stopping domestic violence at every level of society, supporting families through multicultural homelessness and domestic violence services. The MWA's unwavering advocacy for women's equality has created a catalyst for positive change and empowered women's voices. Its members' profound dedication creates unity, belonging and a safe space. As they celebrate four decades of incredible work, let us acknowledge and congratulate them on that great achievement. Muslim Women Australia members have made a real change in my community, and I thank them for their extraordinary efforts and congratulate them on their 40-year anniversary.

#### ASHLEEN KHELA

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill) (16:59):** Today I recognise Ashleen Khela, an inspiring 11-year-old who attended Kenthurst Public School. Ashleen and her family travelled to India, and during that trip Ashleen met underprivileged children who were living in rural Punjab. The visit inspired Ashleen to help underprivileged children. Ashleen discovered a love of writing at a young age and is now the proud author of *17 Stories*, an inspiring and imaginative collection of stories that takes the reader to a land of fantasy and adventure. Ashleen not only wrote and illustrated the book but also worked hard collecting drink cans, plastic and glass bottles that she took to recycling stations to fund the publication costs. India's Punjab education Minister, Harjot Singh Bains, described *17 Stories* as entertaining and inspirational for many readers worldwide. Ashleen is Australia's youngest female published author, and she will be donating the proceeds from her book to the Cancer Council of Australia and the Starlight Kids Foundation, as well as contributing funds towards the underprivileged children of India and other developing nations. I recognise and congratulate Ashleen on her wonderful and imaginative publication. I am sure this will be the first of many publications by such a talented young author.

#### KOREAN SOCIETY OF SYDNEY

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (17:00):** On 26 January I had the privilege of attending an Australia Day event hosted by the Korean Society of Sydney in Croydon Park. I met with many in the Australian Korean community and a range of diverse community members. I thank Ms Esther Kim, the president of the Korean Society of Sydney. Also in attendance were the Consul-General of the Republic of Korea, Mr Taewoo Lee, and the Hon. Tony Burke, MP. The relationship between Australia and Korea is dynamic, strategic and forged in war and peace. In my speech I paid homage to the many Australian service members who fought for Korea's democracy, including the 281 Australian soldiers buried at the United Nations Memorial Cemetery in Busan. The Australian Korean community is our nation's most valuable link to the economic powerhouse that is the Republic of Korea. In today's world and in modern Australia, Korean art, culture, media, business and technology are everywhere. This community has also given us some of our sporting legends, such as Minjee Lee and Min Woo Lee. A growing number of Korean Australians, such as Felix Lee, Dami Im and Roseanne Park, have become

world-renowned musicians and entertainers. I am proud to recognise the contribution of the Korean Society of Sydney.

### WESTERN RURAL CONNECT

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (17:01):** I acknowledge the committee of Western Rural Connect, a group formed in July last year to bring together those who live in, work in and love western New South Wales. The committee features some amazing rural women, including Keiley Noble, Maddy Preston, Emily Walker, Celia Cummack, Imogen Kennedy-Todhunter, Gabby Rau, Sara McCarthy and Emma Oriel. They successfully held the Harvest Cut Out Ball in Narromine on New Year's Eve, raising just over \$5,000, which was donated to the Narromine Hospital Auxiliary to purchase vital health equipment. Since the ball, the group has received some grant funding to run other events, including Western Women Doing Business in the Bush, a long lunch as part of Women's Week funded by the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal. On Tuesday Keiley and Maddy were both invited to share the Western Rural Connect story at Parliament House in Canberra as part of the ABC's Trailblazers program. I commend the Western Rural Connect members for their passion, proactiveness and ongoing commitment to their community. I congratulate everyone involved.

### CLASSIC BAKERY

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Winston Hills) (17:02):** I take this opportunity to acknowledge a long-serving family business in the Winston Hills electorate, the Classic Bakery in Winston Hills Mall. The Classic Bakery has been a highly popular bakery for residents in the Winston Hills community for close to 30 years. Over that time, Tina, Van and the staff have become friends with thousands of local residents as the top pick for their fabulous pies, freshly baked bread and amazing range of sweets. Unfortunately, the Classic Bakery in Winston Hills recently had its last day of trading in the mall, with many members of the community supporting the business right up until the final hour. Having spoken to countless locals over the past month, there is a feeling of great loss at the closure of the Classic Bakery. I take this opportunity to thank Tina, Van and the Classic Bakery team for being a cornerstone of the Winston Hills community for so many years. I wish them all the very best in their future.

### *Private Members' Statements*

### PLANNING POLICY

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (17:03):** Two proposed housing policies of the Minns Government have been hidden by being officially revealed only a few days before Christmas, and they will impact every dwelling in my electorate. The first policy is the Transport Oriented Development Program, or the TOD, which the Government says will commence in two months time without any process of public consultation despite its dramatic impact on people's homes. I will focus my statement on the tainted TOD process. The TOD will allow all low-rise properties within 400 metres of 31 nominated railway stations to be turned into six- or seven-storey apartment blocks. Locally, that will mean that four proposed TOD sites will be around the Roseville, Lindfield, Killara and Gordon railway stations.

The TOD policy has been rushed. It has not included proper consultation with communities and councils, and there has been no proper process or proper investigation of the capacity of local infrastructure in these areas to carry the load. When my local council asked the planning department for that information, the answer was that the information was Cabinet in confidence. What is the Minns Government trying to hide? If the analysis says the infrastructure can cope, then the information should be willingly released and not hidden. But, very importantly, within the past 24 hours information has come into my possession to show that this flawed process has a further dimension and, specifically, that proper probity checks have not occurred, which has already led to corrupt conduct by at least one public official.

I have information that I have been able to verify through discussion with a whistleblower with relevant knowledge, corroborated by documents. Around the time that the National Housing Accord was signed by the Minns Government, a senior official from the planning department purchased a property within one of the proposed TODs on the North Shore. I have been able to confirm that using title searches of the property in question. The official paid well above the median suburb price. There are reasons to conclude that the property was not purchased for the needs of the official, as the person's previous property appeared suitable for their immediate needs. A strong circumstantial case that the property's acquisition was motivated by inside information as to the planned TOD policy can be made out.

Shortly after living in the neighbourhood, the planning official then communicated with neighbours about banding together to sell their properties to a developer, promising a significant uplift on its current value because of the Government's likely housing policies. There is credible evidence that in the course of communications the planning official used confidential information before it came into the public domain and passed that information

on to residents in an attempt to make them become part of a property syndicate that the public official wants to put together. I have documented evidence to confirm this.

A public official should never use confidential information given to them as a public official for their own personal gain. Eddie Obeid and others did that the last time that Labor was in Government, and I cannot believe that the Minns Government has been so lax with probity and process that it is happening again. What is particularly concerning is that the public official in question not only was lacking in ethics but also has sought to draw their neighbours into their web of corruption to become part of a criminal conspiracy to trade on inside information. I am told that this person's conduct has had the tendency to coerce neighbours by using the person's senior position in the department as well as the implied threat of being dominated by an overdevelopment of the neighbourhood if they did not join the syndicate.

Although I have them, I am being deliberately careful as to the specific details of names, suburbs and addresses to protect the identity of my confidential informant and other neighbours. The informant is concerned about retribution if they were to be identified. This corrupt conduct requires a thorough judicial inquiry conducted in public with the powers of a royal commission, with which my informant will fully cooperate. Is the planning official I know about acting alone, or are there other persons in the department acting in a similar corrupt manner? Was the uploading of the policy on the department's website in early December for a short time really an accident? Why have the processes of the department allowed the official to operate in this brazen manner?

It is incredible that no processes were put in place by the Minns Government for this multibillion-dollar property policy to ensure that confidential information was not abused, that insiders were properly scrutinised and that people were not tempted by the millions of dollars that could be obtained by acting corruptly. How can the TOD proceed without a full inquiry? An independent inquiry is the only way that confidence can be restored in the integrity of the implementation of the Government's policy. I call on the Premier to immediately act to restore confidence in this process.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (17:08):** I trust that the member for Wahroonga has reported this to the relevant authorities, as is the requirement under the law, rather than just coming into this place to make that allegation. The member was unclear in his contribution. I hope it is the case that his first action was not to come in here but to report it to the ICAC, as is required under the law if he has these kinds of allegations to make.

### PROSPECT ELECTORATE HEALTH CARE

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (17:09):** In 2023 the Bureau of Health Information revealed that 77 per cent of admitted patients spent over four hours waiting at an emergency department in New South Wales hospitals, and one in 10 patients spent more than 11 hours waiting. My community in the electorate of Prospect is facing significant challenges accessing essential health care after 12 years of neglect by the previous Liberal-Nationals Government. It is unacceptable. A strong and adequately funded healthcare system is central to the wellbeing of our community. Unfortunately for many, the reality is either deferring a doctor's appointment because the money is needed elsewhere—such as to pay increasing household bills—or not attending a hospital because no-one can care for their children while they wait, ill or in pain, for hours at an overcrowded emergency department.

To some members opposite, these may seem like trivial challenges but, for the Prospect community, they are the very barriers preventing access to sufficient, quality and timely health care, especially for those from vulnerable refugee and other ethnic backgrounds. In neighbouring suburbs, such as Merrylands, there are 0.6 full-time general practitioners to every 1,000 residents. Comparatively, the ratio in Mosman is 1.8 full-time general practitioners per 1,000 residents. Health data also shows that 83 per cent of patients in Western Sydney rely on bulk-billing. We must prioritise accessible and affordable health care for Western Sydney communities. In the electorate of Prospect and across New South Wales, we are fortunate to have dedicated healthcare professionals. Our extremely capable nurses, doctors, paramedics, specialists, allied health professionals and health facility staff go above and beyond every day to care for our community. However, growing population demands and inadequate resourcing—concerns that were not addressed by the previous Liberal Government—impose significant pressures on our dedicated hospital staff every day to deliver quality health care in our community.

Doctors and nurses need to prioritise patient care in emergency departments. Category 1 patients facing life-threatening illness must receive the critical care they need. Unfortunately, other patients with less severe conditions then face longer wait times. Between April and June 2023, our dedicated New South Wales paramedics responded to some 357,491 calls, of which only about 177,594 were considered emergencies. However, urgent care clinics, such as the Wentworthville Medicare Urgent Care Clinic within the electorate of Prospect, offer a credible healthcare solution, easing pressures on hospital emergency departments and paramedics, and reducing

wait times. Including triage, treatment and discharge, the average patient journey at one of New South Wales's Medicare Urgent Care Clinics is only one hour and 27 minutes. The Wentworthville Medicare Urgent Care Clinic provides free, immediate, high-quality health care for non-life-threatening illnesses. Doctors, nurses and staff at our local clinic are pivotal to our healthcare system, working alongside hospitals to offer timely treatment.

For example, I talk about Ashley, a 10-year-old patient at the Wentworthville Medicare Urgent Care Clinic. At 4.38 p.m. Ashley presented with headaches and dizziness after colliding with a friend when jumping into a local swimming pool. At 4.41 p.m. Ashley was triaged by an urgent care nurse. At 5.00 p.m. Ashley's GP treatment and review commenced, including an electrocardiogram, Glasgow Coma Scale assessment, urine analysis and observation. At 6.43 p.m. Ashley was discharged and her parents were given patient education materials. Altogether, Ashley received comprehensive care in just two hours and five minutes.

I recently visited the Wentworthville Medicare Urgent Care Clinic with the Minister for Health to learn about how a Minns Labor Government can support the delivery of more urgent care clinics. I take this opportunity to thank the Minister for Health for helping deliver a \$550 million upgrade to Fairfield Hospital—the biggest redevelopment since it opened in 1989. Our local community also received \$120 million from the Minns Labor Government to fund 60 new hospital beds at Blacktown Hospital. The Minister has been a proactive advocate for the provision of quality health care in my community, visiting my electorate of Prospect to learn how best to offer support. The Minns Labor Government will not take adequate access to health care for granted. It understands the importance of investing resources in our healthcare system so that everyone, regardless of their socio-economic status, ethnicity or geography, can access timely and comprehensive care.

*[Interruption from gallery]*

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** Order! I direct the attendants to clear the public gallery. I apologise to the member for Prospect for the interruption.

#### **TRIBUTE TO TERENCE "TERRY" SEMLITZKY**

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (17:17):** I pay tribute to Terry Semlitzky, who sadly passed away on Sunday 7 January 2024 at the age of 80. Terry lived in Panania and was committed to serving his community. He lived in the East Hills area his entire life and was always doing his best to give back to the local community. He worked in the newspaper printing industry and was a very proud and active trade unionist. He loved his sports and was a footy fanatic. He was a tragic Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs supporter and played for the East Hills Bulldogs, along with famous entertainers Col Joye and Kevin Jacobsen of Australian rock-and-roll fame.

Terry was the third-longest serving Revesby Workers' Club director, having served 25 years as director. He joined the Revesby Workers' Club on 13 April 1966 and was elected as a director on 26 September 1993. He served as director until 28 October 2018. In his first election, Terry received over 90 per cent of the votes, which is a testament to his hard work and popularity in the community. Terry supported my election to the board of the Revesby Workers' Club after he stepped down from his long commitment to this community club. He was an integral part of the Revesby Workers' Club and served as the liaison director for the Revesby Workers' Club's billiards and snooker, darts, domino, softball, bowling and fishing clubs.

Terry was an avid sports fan and a darts champion. His active involvement in both darts and fishing social clubs saw him compete in and win many team championships, including the first Bankstown open singles in 1978, the club doubles with Bill Woods in 1985 plus various other State fours and sixes competitions. He won the C-grade snooker championships in 2000 and B-grade in 2001. One of Terry's proudest wins was with his son, Dean, when they won the men's doubles in 2006. Terry was also a skilled angler, and he won the fishing club championships six times. He even managed to catch the biggest fish of the year when competing in 1986. He was later granted life membership of the Fishos. In 2003 Terry was awarded life membership of Revesby Workers' Club for his considerable and ongoing contributions to club. Terry and his wife, Sue, were hugely instrumental to the success of the Bill Bullard Charity Foundation. Terry ran its charity trivia nights, which helped to raise more than \$55,000. The events were a bit of a family affair for Terry and his daughter, Vanessa, who also assisted.

In 2020 Terry was recognised by Canterbury-Bankstown council as its volunteer of the year, with Mayor Khal Asfour recognising his selflessness and longstanding commitment to the local community. Mayor Asfour added that he hoped Terry's commitment inspired others to pursue different types of volunteer work. I read an interview that Terry gave in the local newspaper, *The Torch*, around the time that he received his volunteer of the year award. There is one quote he gave that has resonated with me. He said, "It doesn't feel like volunteering when you get so much joy out of it, particularly when the end result is bettering the lives of others." I think this quote best sums up Terry's personality and his humble nature. His selfless dedication to his community, union and sporting groups over many years was remarkable and made him a well-deserving recipient of the award.



Terry's charitable efforts did not slow down as he grew older. He continued his service, proving that age is no barrier to supporting your community. He volunteered regularly at various aged-care facilities, playing guitar and singing at various local nursing homes including Yallambee, Betty Sussman and Rendu. Terry even shared his musical talents with the young children at the Tree House Early Childhood Centre in Revesby. At the time, Terry said it was a pleasure to entertain the kids as they responded enthusiastically to his music. I express my deepest condolences to Terry's family during this difficult time. My thoughts are especially with his wife, Sue, his children, Dean and Vanessa, and his granddaughter, Bonnie. I thank Terry for his wonderful contribution to our community. I know he will be sorely missed by many in my electorate of East Hills.

### EXPRESS COACH BUILDERS

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley) (17:22):** Promises are only as strong as the person who gives them. I hate to be the one standing before the House pointing out the obvious, but the Minns Labor Government has been insensitive, and it seems that when it delivers a promise, it delivers it broken. Over the past two months I have witnessed Premier Minns and Transport for NSW gambling with the lives of honest, hardworking people whose blood, sweat and tears go into producing high-quality infrastructure that we all use and take for granted. I witnessed the Government failing regional New South Wales again and only daring to lift a finger when the media circus started conducting its show. Image, after all, is everything; promises, clearly, are not.

On 12 October 2023 I was contacted by Express Coach Builders in Macksville about a governmental hold-up impacting the way that the longstanding regional bus company produces its vehicles and what orders fell into its pipeline. This hold-up, better known as Bus Procurement Panel 4, is an approved manufacturers list with updated building guidelines. Like everything, buses come with an expiration date and, without the new specifications, any future orders will be delivered under old standards. This is where the vicious cycle began. Buyers wanted to purchase new buses under new standards, but the Minns Government delayed releasing the guidelines. So orders started to stall, and with no orders there is no work.

On 22 November I met with the transport Minister and senior ministerial staffers in her office to flag those concerns. The Minister shook my hand, looked me directly in the eye and promised that Express Coach Builders would have Bus Procurement Panel 4 before Christmas and that regional buses would be released. I left that meeting believing it was productive and built on mutual understanding and a willingness to keep regional businesses afloat. Clearly, they were empty words. Fast-forward a month, just days out from Christmas and there was not a single word from the Minister or, unfortunately, Transport for NSW. What is usually a time for relaxation and creating memories with loved ones at Christmas became a nervous, nail-biting wait to see whether the manufacturer would carry on into the new year.

To cut a long story short, the guidelines were not released before Christmas. It was then the middle of January and delays crippled Express Coach Builders' workforce, forcing management to whittle down staff. Even dedicated tradesmen walked away to find job security. One of Macksville's top employers and trainee providers lost a quarter of its workforce waiting for Bus Procurement Panel 4 to be issued. Express Coach Builders has been a staple of the Macksville community for almost three decades, and it has provided training opportunities for more than 100 apprentices. It has expanded capability from 20 vehicles to 75 per year, which, I might add, include those much-needed school buses. By the way, there are 97 school buses still in need of replacement across the State today. For the first time since the Labor Government took over, this business is facing the possibility of closing its doors.

We gave the transport Minister or Transport for NSW every opportunity to set the record straight and do the right thing. Was there a phone call? Was there an email? No. What we got was a department that did not show even an ounce of courtesy to a regional community, because ignoring an issue always makes it go away. After waiting day after day for some semblance of respect—even just a phone call—the only avenue left was the media. It is not easy sharing your grief and anguish for your neighbours to see, nor for your family to be in the headlines, but the men and women of Express Coach Builders took it in their stride and fought for their jobs and their right to a fair go. When the media applied the pressure, the department issued deed paperwork just two days later and, instead of an honest answer to our questions, we heard the carefully crafted, politically spun answer that covered its tracks and discredited the pain of regional workers by saying that it was on track for March. I did not realise Christmas was in March.

While the circumstances may be on the mend with Express Coach Builders, it was still a long, hard battle to have the department recognise its mistakes. I thank every person involved in making that situation right, from Mark Forster and Sally Heather to my colleague Sam Faraway and, most importantly, the dozens of workers at Express Coach Builders who did not give up over the past six months. I leave the House to ponder this: How can we trust a department that does not show common courtesy and contact the people whom its decisions are hurting? If you make a promise, keep it. [*Time expired.*]

### ROCK TO ROCK WALKING FOR ROB

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast) (17:27):** One of the great traits of our communities is mateship. This is a story of mateship—supporting a mate who is in trouble. On 20 January I attended a two-day event at One Mile Beach in the electorate of Port Stephens. The event was to raise funds for one of my constituents who has a tragic story that I will talk about a little later. The name of the event is Rock to Rock Walking for Rob. It is a fantastic event that was organised by friends Dan Fletcher, Paul McNamara and his brother-in-law Michael Hamilton. The event attracted between 70 and 100 people to raise money for Rob. Those people only knew Rob through staying at a caravan park together at Christmas time each year. They had been doing it for a long time and they felt so strongly about supporting one of their mates that they put an event together.

The fundraiser got a lot of sponsorship from local organisations, including the caravan park, and far exceeded their expectations. They raised quite good funds. I will tell the story of what happened to Rob, whose story shook my community to its very core. One Saturday evening a car driven by a 17-year-old male crashed into a caravan in a residential street. Rob and his son went out to help the person in the accident. While trying to help, they were confronted by three males who had been attending a party down the road. One of them coward-punched him from behind. He fell and hit his head on the ground, knocking him unconscious and putting him into a coma. Rob was a normal person. He had a great life. His family owned a local business. He worked in the local club industry on the Central Coast. He went out to help someone in need and suddenly his life was changed. He was critically injured and was airlifted to John Hunter Hospital where he underwent brain surgery to relieve pressure on his brain. At one stage they were not sure that Rob was going to live and, certainly, his prospects of a full recovery are still very distant.

The good news is that Rob is currently at home, but he has a long pathway ahead. Unfortunately he will not recover from his injuries and will have significant changes to his functional independence moving forward. He is unable to use his left arm and leg at this stage and is currently in a powered wheelchair with someone driving it for him. He has amnesia and has difficulties with orientation, remembering new memories and self-management. The good news is that the three individuals were arrested and are facing charges, which I think is appropriate, but that is never going to help Rob. His life and the life of his family are changed forever.

But that is where the good stories start, and that brings me back to the start of my speech. Rob's mates and his community have rallied around him. They set up a GoFundMe page which has attracted 455 donations and raised \$38,000 so far. But his rehabilitation, the help and work that he needs, is beyond the family's means and they will need more help. One of our colleagues Anthony Roberts, who knows the family, and I have offered our assistance to help with fundraising. I went to the event at One Mile Beach with my wife and my daughter. We walked for four hours. It was about 14 kilometres, and it was great to be with a group of people who really care about their mate. It is a really good story from a really tragic event. I thank all of those mates who got together and put this event together, all of the people who attended the event and the whole community that wants to support Rob Seddon and his family moving forward. I look forward to those further fundraisers in support of his rehab.

### MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (17:32):** Today I talk about the heartbreaking issue of the war unfolding in the Middle East, which a number of constituents continue to raise with me. Unfortunately we have seen the conflict cause division and a rise in antisemitism, Islamophobia and other forms of racism in the community. Today I had to request police to remove antisemitic graffiti in my electorate. On October 7 last year Hamas launched a series of brutal and gratuitous attacks on people in Israel. Over a thousand innocent people, including 695 Israeli civilians, 36 of whom were children, and 71 foreign nationals were killed. Hundreds of innocent civilians, including about 30 children, were taken hostage, and numerous accounts of rape and sexual assault by Hamas fighters have been reported. The attacks terrified the world for the people of Israel and for the stability and safety of all in the region.

This Parliament, this State, and this nation acted swiftly and rightly to condemn the attack and show compassion for the Israeli people and the State's Jewish communities during this difficult time. It was also a distressing time for Palestinian Australians, those who support Palestinian independence and many others as they were unfairly and cruelly linked to the terrorist group Hamas and accused of supporting its brutality. Palestinians with friends and family in the region feared that the safety of their innocent friends and families in Gaza would be threatened, and they were right. Across New South Wales many also expressed their concerns for Palestinians. New South Wales thrives on its diversity and the contribution of our Jewish, Muslim, Arab, Israeli and Palestinian residents, none of whom are to blame for the violence and war that is raging and all of whom need our support and compassion. I acknowledge the work of the Minister for Multiculturalism to that end.

In our response to the war in the region, we must not conflate our support for the people of Israel with unconditional agreement with the State of Israel and its government's actions. Israel is a rare example of a liberal democracy in the Middle East—the only place in the Middle East I would feel safe as a gay man—and Australia's closest ally in the region. As such, we must expect more from the Israeli Government and a better response than the brutal and indiscriminate killing of thousands of innocent people and the destruction of homes, infrastructure and essential services in both Gaza and the West Bank. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs estimates that between 7 October and 7 January at least 23,000 Palestinians were killed in Gaza, a huge proportion of them children as well as many journalists. During the same period, 58,000 Palestinians were reportedly injured. Israel has also suffered further deaths in both armed forces and civilians.

Israeli and Jewish people in Australia and around the world are also concerned over the Israeli Government's military response to the Hamas attack and deeply worried about its hardline approach. Political voices within Israel are arguing for a deal that will bring home the hostages and work towards peace. I continue to be contacted by constituents and others from across the country still horrified by the deadly Hamas attack on Israel, by the mass destruction and loss of life in Gaza and by the long and protracted failure to secure peace and safety for all in the region. War is horrific. Many of us have family stories and family experience of war and its terrible impacts, including my family during the Second World War. Right now there are Israeli and Palestinian partners, parents, children, families and friends who do not know if their loved ones are alive. No amount of war, bombardment or killing will resolve this conflict. War is the failure of politics, and I fear that, in the current geopolitical environment in the region, continued militarised actions are making lasting peace impossible and further mass deaths inevitable.

But we cannot give up. There is growing global pressure for a negotiated ceasefire, which I strongly support, and the restoration of talks for a permanent solution that acknowledges the right of both Israelis and Palestinians to a home and self-determination. History shows that this is much easier said than done, but Australia and our allies must do all we can to keep this goal in sight until it becomes a reality. Australia and New South Wales can start by being leaders for peace and unity on our soil. As parliamentarians, we must recognise the hurt, fear and humanity of all our constituents, be they connected to Israel, Gaza or the West Bank or not. While this Parliament will not be able to achieve peace in the Middle East, we can achieve harmony amongst our communities in New South Wales, and that must be a priority for all of us.

#### ROCKDALE ELECTORATE ROAD SAFETY

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport) (17:37):** I update the House on the serious issues of speeding, hooning and associated antisocial behaviour that have plagued my electorate of Rockdale for many years. I first informed the House of those problems in May 2018 and provided updates in September 2020, March 2021 and February 2022. I now update the House again. During the time of the previous Government, the mayors of Bayside Council, members of my community and I all made multiple requests for measures to crack down on excessive speeding and other dangerous and antisocial behaviours at the known hooning hotspots in my electorate. Measures to deal with burnouts, wheelies, gunfire exhausts and antisocial gatherings in the small hours of the morning were all requested, but most of all we asked over and over again for speed cameras to be installed on the Grand Parade near Bay Street at Brighton-Le-Sands and near Ramsgate Road at Ramsgate Beach. Again and again, those requests were denied or ignored by previous governments, to the endless frustration of everyone in my community.

Sadly, last year a tragic vehicle incident occurred on the Grand Parade at Monterey that resulted in the deaths of two young boys. I cannot say more on that incident as the details are before the courts, but many members of my community are wondering if it might have been prevented if the safety measures we were calling for years ago had been implemented at the time. I can report to the House that the new Government is installing the fixed speed cameras that were asked for so many times in the past, with the exact positions based on expert technical advice. Those new fixed cameras are coming into operation now and will be backed up by an ongoing program of mobile speed camera enforcement as well.

I also update the House on the work being done to deal with the outrageously loud exhausts that deprive residents of my electorate of sleep at night. I have spoken before about the problem of modern electronically switchable exhausts which can be made legally compliant with the push of a button the moment a highway patrol car is spotted only to be made extremely noisy again moments later. I am pleased to report that last year the Government asked the Environment Protection Authority [EPA] to begin developing technical standards to enable new vehicle noise detection cameras to be introduced in New South Wales. Those standards are essential to ensure that the future use of the cameras will stand up in court, and I am pleased that the Government is taking the time to get them right. In December, the EPA issued a request for tender for the supply of noise camera hardware for

a real-world trial. That tender closed a few weeks ago and I look forward to updating the House on the outcome soon.

Finally, I highlight the work being done by Bayside Council and its outstanding mayor, Bill Saravinovski, to deal with burnouts, wheelies and general antisocial behaviour. As well as closing a number of car parks every night and installing traffic calming devices where it can, council has used its initiative to develop a network of automatic number plate recognition cameras that capture those sorts of illegal behaviours and feed the footage to the NSW Police Force. Council has now rolled out those cameras at Brighton-Le-Sands, Vanston Parade and Sanoni Avenue at Sandringham, and they are in the process of expanding them to Waterside Drive, Sans Souci. Wherever they have been installed, antisocial behaviour has plummeted. I congratulate Bayside Council on its efforts to expand the network. These issues have a long and dismal history in my electorate. I hope that, with the actions being taken by this new Government and Bayside Council, we might finally be within reach of some long-term solutions. I look forward to reporting back to the House as they come into place.

### **MARS WRIGLEY FACTORY, ASQUITH**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (17:42):** In my electorate of Hornsby, we are proud to have one of the world's leading manufacturers of chewing gum, mints and fruity confections. They manufacture widely known branded products, including Skittles, Juicy Fruit, Extra and Eclipse. I was delighted to recently visit and have a tour of the impressive Mars Wrigley operation at Asquith. In 1958 the Wrigley Company began operating in the suburb of Asquith on a road they developed and named Michigan Avenue, derived from the Michigan Avenue in Chicago, where the Wrigley Company has its head office. It was a bold move to come to Asquith, as Wrigley had formerly been located at Rosebery in the industrial heartland of Sydney, where it was established in 1918. A great deal of research went into selecting the new site, and it was concluded that Asquith was the ideal location. Challenges such as distribution and labour availability were all recognised and ways to overcome them were found.

In the early stages there was a degree of misinformation circulating and misunderstanding from local residents that initially resulted in a protest. However, as soon as all the facts and environmental concerns were explained, the level of disquiet dissipated. Hornsby Chamber of Commerce and the Asquith Progress Association expressed its support for the proposal. Hornsby Council was also unanimously in favour, convinced that it was a splendid opportunity to establish a more desirable type of industry in the district.

The planning stage was meticulous. Expert engineers, landscapers and technicians were contracted to design the Wrigley factory with a focus on cleanliness, maintaining the natural beauty of the surrounding environment, and providing comfortable amenities for the employees. Due to the steep terrain of the area, it proved a challenge to provide a sealed vehicular access. Soil excavated to form the road was used to landscape the premises and to grow native trees. Hundreds of trees and shrubs were set in rockeries, lawns and parks. Plants were gathered from all over Australia to ensure that flowering shrubs would be in bloom all year round, and many are still growing on the site.

On 3 December 1958 the Wrigley Company was ready to commence production. Many of the Wrigley staff from Rosebery relocated to the surrounding suburbs, and some of their families still reside in the area today. Their loyalty to the company as well as their pioneering spirit contributed to the population of the area at a time when Hornsby seemed a long way from anywhere. My own family has a connection to the facility from that time. My grandfather Jack Kean would visit the place regularly in his role as clerk at the Commonwealth employment office. My father, Noel, can remember his dad bringing home boxes of chewing gum, and I was pleased to do the same for my own son after my visit recently—all declared, of course.

One major hurdle for the manufacturer to overcome was a lack of water. The factory had an elaborate fire sprinkler system installed, and it was found the water pressure was inadequate. Therefore, a specially designed water tower was built to accommodate the needs of the site, and it could be seen for many kilometres in all directions. The water tower's ball could hold up to 190,000 litres, but it later became redundant and was demolished in 2015.

Over the years tens of millions of dollars have been invested into upgrading and modernising the Wrigley factory. Recent projects have included building an energy-efficient warehouse, installing a massive rainwater harvesting system, and upgrading production equipment towards a more sustainable and carbon-neutral future whilst expanding its production capacity. Recycling practices have been in place at the Wrigley factory at Asquith since the early 1980s, and the company is proud to have been an early leader in that field. The Wrigley factory has also been recognised as one of Australia's best places to work and in 2018 was ranked as the number one manufacturer in the Great Place to Work Awards. A high percentage of its employees have worked at the factory for multiple decades.

Over the years Wrigley has been associated with many local activities and organisations. For example, the company used to open its gates annually to display its impressive native garden. Visitor donations were collected and donated to the Hornsby district hospital. Between 1991 and 2007 Wrigley donated over \$177,000 to Hornsby hospital as well as making other regular donations to local Rural Fire Service brigades. Late 2005 saw the opening of a vast new warehouse facility built onto the back of the existing factory. With this improvement Leighton Place now services the new warehouse via the Hornsby industrial area, meaning that all heavy vehicle traffic enters and leaves the site through this route, completely avoiding the residential area. Much research went into the construction of the new warehouse building, with consideration for occupational health and safety issues and environmental awareness key to its design.

By 2008, the company's fiftieth anniversary, 90 per cent of the gum produced in Australia came from the Asquith site, and it employed 381 people, generating \$254 million in annual revenue. This made it one of the largest companies in the Australian confectionery manufacturing industry. In the decade from 2008 to 2018 the company invested over \$80 million in improvements to its Asquith factory and facilities. I congratulate Mars Wrigley Australia general manager Andrew Leakey, Asquith plant director Daniel Firth and their entire team for the company's significant investment resulting in impressive improvements to their operation, particularly in the areas of work health and safety and their goal of net zero emissions for both Mars Wrigley and its suppliers.

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (17:47):** Despite the assertions from the multiple right-wing factions of the Liberal Party, it can now be confirmed that the member for Hornsby can walk and chew gum.

### LION DANCING

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (17:47):** In recognising and celebrating the upcoming Lunar New Year, I speak on the age-old tradition of lion dancing. This vibrant and energetic art form celebrates the Lunar New Year, weddings, community events, festivals and business openings. It symbolises good luck, prosperity, protection and fortune. Beyond being a spectacle, lion dancing is a form of expressing cultural heritage and unity. It is passed down from generation to generation, providing an avenue for children to discover their roots and practise their cultural customs. It plays a vital role in the preservation of Asian culture, especially Chinese, Vietnamese and Korean culture, in a modernised world.

My electorate is proudly home to multiple lion dancing teams, some of which are qing fong, yun yee tong, trung han qun, dragon style, dong thanh, dong tam and others. I have had the pleasure of meeting many of those teams and have witnessed their performances live at our Lunar New Year, moon festivals and other community events. The teams are comprised of dedicated members ranging from age eight to 50 and above. They allocate many hours to refining their craftsmanship, performing acrobatic acts and stunts for our viewing pleasure. Each performance is complemented with elaborate music to convey a unique narrative catered to the event.

Lion dancing costumes consist of large, ornate lion heads with colourful and shimmering bodies. The heads have moveable jaws and animated eyelids. The entire lion is manoeuvred by two dancers, thus requiring collaboration and synergy to imitate a lion's pounce, strut and personality. The accompanying music team involves drums, cymbals and gongs played with precision, power and speed. The movements of lion dancing require skilled individuals to master stunts on poles and stilts. Performers must possess incredible strength and coordination as these stunts are performed by two people—a head and a tail joined at the waist—acting as one.

Lion dancing serves as a bridge connecting our first-generation children to their immigrant parents and cultural heritage. It can be disheartening when first-generation children are unable to communicate with their hardworking immigrant parents due to language barriers, a lack of common interest and differences in values. Participating in lion dancing teaches children the history and traditions behind their culture. It acts as a form of communication with their parents and grandparents. It allows them to recognise the significance of events, such as the Lunar New Year and the beliefs that are tied to it, including wearing nice clothes, going to the temple or church, sharing meals, exchanging gifts, paying respects to ancestors and thoroughly cleaning the house to welcome the new year.

To adapt to modern society, lion dancing has also developed from a cultural tradition into a competitive sport. The performances are evaluated based on the team's movement, harmony, creativity, uniforms, props and skill difficulty. For participants, this can add purpose and ignite passion for their training and performances. By achieving goals and refining their craft together, teams foster a sense of belonging and community. In young lion dancers, this can have an immense impact on their sociability and confidence, while experienced lion dancers are continually invigorated and devoted to improvement. Lion dancing is a sport that preserves ancient Asian cultures and traditions. It is a symbol of cultural expression and unity. For many participants, their lion dancing team is a safe home and second family. For the audience, lion dancing is a representation of luck, good fortune and celebration. I encourage people to look out for lion dancing events in their local area and discover this art form for themselves as we welcome the New Lunar Year in two days time—the Year of the Dragon.

## RENEWABLE ENERGY

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst) (17:51):** I bring to the attention of the House the devastation that is currently being experienced by many communities in regional areas of New South Wales because of renewable energy projects. These projects are popping up like mushrooms across regional New South Wales. Nobody is against renewables, but people are saying that the renewable projects are being put in the wrong place at any cost. It does not seem to matter what communities think or say; these projects are continually being given the tick of approval. Our planning system in the State is broken. The parameters in relation to why renewables were set up has also changed. I cite the example of a project that was approved only last week in my community of Glanmire.

The community feels betrayed by the Government, the department of planning and the Independent Planning Commission that only last week approved a 60-megawatt solar farm seven kilometres outside Bathurst. The project has been heavily rejected by the landholders and the community, which has set up a group known as the Glanmire Action Group. Over 100 objections in writing were submitted against the proposal and people turned up to the Independent Planning Commission's hearing. Yet the project still got the tick of approval. It seems to me that the decision on this project has set a new precedent in New South Wales whereby all of New South Wales is considered to be a renewable energy zone.

It seems that overseas businesses, such as the United Kingdom's Elgin, will be given the green light to decimate regional communities by pen-pushing bureaucrats who live in Sydney and do not listen to the needs of these communities—the people who will be most affected. We have planning bureaucrats who do not understand regional and rural New South Wales. We have people who sit on the Independent Planning Commission who represent Greater Sydney and places in metropolitan areas. They do not live, breathe and work in our communities, yet they seem to think it is okay to tell our communities what is right for us in our own backyards.

As I said, these projects are popping up right across New South Wales like spot fires. Our communities are continually having to defend themselves against renewable factories. The Glanmire community has spent over \$100,000. Individual farmers came together and spent \$100,000 to fight an overseas company that could afford the challenge. That is not fair and it is occurring continually. Right now across the State, farmers have a target on their backs and they are in for a fight for their lives. Nowhere is safe from money-hungry companies that are ready to chew up agricultural land. These communities have clearly stated they do not want anything to do with solar or windfarms. They are farmers of food and fibre not energy.

Does anyone remember why we began moving towards renewable energy? It was to save the environment, not destroy it. It is not a renewable project; it is a ruinable project. It is a project that ruins lives, communities and livelihoods. If Labor plans to reach renewable energy targets, it would need to instal 40 seven-megawatt wind turbines every month and 22,000 500-watt solar panels every day. How many more farms will we lose in the process? This is a city-focused Government that has a failed planning system that will result in any project being rubberstamped. It is not fair and it is an unrealistic target that we are all going for. It is a cash grab at the expense of regional communities. I will continue to advocate for those regional communities who do not want these industrial factories in their backyards.

I challenge those who do not care about these communities to talk face to face with people who are being impacted by these projects each and every day. The former New South Wales Government created regional energy zones [REZs] for a reason. These are the locations that have been identified to best suit the needs of renewable projects. Proposals that appear outside the zones and gain objections from the community should never be approved. It is that simple. Those who live near the REZs need greater protection, better benefits and their voices being heard. Our farmers will not back down. Our regional communities will not back down. We do not want energy factories on our farms. Put them in the REZ, where they belong. We would not be standing here to discuss wind turbines off the eastern coastline. Everyone would be jumping up and down and screaming about it. We cannot treat regional communities of New South Wales as second-class citizens whose concerns at this point are being treated as less than those of their city cousins.

## WARATAH FLORIST

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (17:56):** This evening I take the opportunity to offer my most sincere and heartfelt congratulations to Waratah Florist, which is a family business in Earlwood, on recently celebrating its 50-year anniversary. Ever since the florist shop was opened by Pauline and the late Paul Bertuzzi in 1973, Waratah Florist has been a community favourite and an enduring presence in Earlwood. The community supports the business for all occasions, including weddings, engagements, graduations and other decorative events. I know many people go to Waratah Florist, particularly for those very sad moments in their lives, such as a death in their family or of a friend.

But Waratah Florist is not simply a florist. It is a rich piece of migrant and family history. For Pauline Bertuzzi, Earlwood has always been her home, as she was born, raised, married and established her family home and business there. Pauline's parents, Panagiotis and Evdokia, moved to Earlwood and opened the Earlwood Fish Market in 1940. Prior to opening his own shop, Paul worked in his uncle's florist in Paddington. Today this family baton is proudly passed on to Pauline and Paul's daughter, Anne Andrades, with the support of family and friends. Anne had worked there for close to 40 years, and she even helped her parents out when she was still at school. It is always fantastic to see local businesses in the Canterbury community, especially local family businesses, being recognised for their excellence, quality and perseverance. Over time local businesses become key pillars in the communities that they serve. Staff and customers become a part of the family and they represent the very best of our communities, bringing locals from all walks of life together. The past few years have also been incredibly challenging for local businesses.

The anniversary is testament to hard work and dedication, and the community in Earlwood have benefitted immensely from having Waratah Florist as an enduring presence. I congratulate Waratah Florist on behalf of the many P&Cs, businesses and charities that approach Waratah Florist for a raffle prize or a voucher or for support during their fundraising activities. I thank Waratah Florist staff for their continuous support of our local community. I know that they contribute to many charities, but they do not make a big song and dance about it—they get on with their business. For 50 years their contribution to our local community and their support for locals doing it tough, charities and our P&Cs has made them a shining example of the Earlwood village community.

Many migrant families have moved into Earlwood over the past 50, 60 or 70 years. It is a very multicultural community. Everybody knows each other and Waratah Florist is very nearly the centre of Homer Street. All of us who attend as customers, who know the family or who have been recipients of their flowers, such as the local P&Cs, are grateful for their support. On behalf of our community, I congratulate Waratah Florist, its wonderful owners, their parents and their family on its momentous fiftieth anniversary. May there be many more anniversaries to come.

## ROZELLE INTERCHANGE

### ROZELLE PARKLANDS

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (18:01):** I speak on the ongoing issues experienced by my community as a result of both the Rozelle interchange congestion and the Rozelle Parklands asbestos contamination. For years our community has faced significant disruptions from the construction of the WestConnex toll network. There has been excessive noise around the clock, properties damaged by tunnelling—the owners of which are still trying to be fairly compensated—and there are thousands of heavy trucks still on our local streets and extensive delays because of roadworks. It has been an extremely challenging time for the people of the Balmain electorate.

With the completion of the Rozelle interchange, the last stage of WestConnex, it finally felt like we were nearing the end of that challenging period. We had been promised significant improvements to our local community to offset the problems faced during construction. "It will all be worth it," we were told. "You will have the beautiful Rozelle Parklands with places for children to play, new fields for the local sporting clubs and better connections to make walking and cycling easier for our community." That is certainly not what we have been left with. Instead, locals who suffered through years of disruption are stuck in traffic with travel times two or even three times what they used to be.

I have been contacted by local residents, who are effectively locked in their suburbs. They leave their driveways only to find bumper-to-bumper congestion on their local streets. For those who still try to get across the Anzac Bridge, there are long waits due to congestion and endless traffic lights that are mostly red. Others who have the option have abandoned what was once a short 10- or 15-minute trip across the bridge to rat run through local suburbs searching for a faster route or drive long, circuitous journeys that take them through Glebe or all the way to Parramatta Road, which is not near their houses. It now takes 30 or 40 minutes to get to the same place.

Many people in my community would love to be able to catch public transport instead, but the reality is that public transport in Sydney lags far behind other world-class cities. The buses that service my electorate are unreliable and are often caught up in the congestion themselves. The ferries and buses are not well-connected and there are frequent cancellations of services, or the buses are full. On my journey in to Parliament on Tuesday my bus was full and it did not stop; I could not get on. I could see the city but I could not get to it, and it took me over an hour and 20 minutes to get here. That is the kind of journey that people face every day in my electorate. A lot of people just give up and get in their cars. Until we have decent, reliable transport in this city, people will continue to make those short journeys by car so that they can get to work or school in a reasonable amount of time. That is the reality that we face. Just this week I received a message from a resident who is struggling to deal with the congestion and the impact that it is having on her and her family. She said:

There are so many hurdles now to leave Annandale—long wait to get into the Johnston St lights, the new (?) left light, the merge and the staggered lights with long waits at every stage. And while being late for work we can look at the park we can't use! Do we just choose education or work? Can we get a dispensation from truancy rules? Because I no longer know how to have a job and have my kids attend school.

Her experience is not an isolated one. I am receiving messages like that each and every day. The Government needs to act now to fix the mess. As noted in that resident's message, the problems continue with the discovery of asbestos in the recently opened Rozelle Parklands. The parklands opened on 17 December and our community had less than a month to enjoy that space before the shocking discovery of bonded asbestos in several locations in and around the park led to its sudden closure on 10 January. Questions must be asked about how that was allowed to happen, and I welcome the Environment Protection Agency investigation. I have been contacted by many local residents who are rightly outraged and concerned about what that means for their children and other children who used that playground. One resident wrote to me, saying:

When we were there, there was a kid's party of probably 20 toddlers all over the garden beds—I can't stop thinking about it. I just think someone has to be held accountable for this.

After the parklands opened, I took my own family there many times. No-one in our community expected that our long-awaited park would be delivered to us with contaminated mulch. It is clear that there are broader regulatory issues at play, and an investigation into the process followed by the former Government, the present Government and their contractors is vital. We need to understand what happened with this project so that our community and others across Sydney and New South Wales can be confident that there will never be a repeat of finding asbestos in our public parklands.

The upper House inquiry into the Rozelle interchange and the Rozelle Parklands announced yesterday has been welcomed by my community. They are looking to the inquiry to get to the bottom of the issues, to determine how we got here and to identify solutions to help fix the mess. I will be working closely with my colleague Cate Faehrmann in the other place to ensure that the inquiry achieves those aims. My community deserves answers and it deserves real solutions to fix the mess.

## ROSEBERY ESTATE

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (18:06):** I discuss the continuing effect and relevance of the covenants in force on many parcels of land within the Rosebery estate. The estate was influenced by the British garden city movement, which was a movement of egalitarian philosophies emphasising the right of all to live in healthy, residential urban landscapes. Those ideals contributed to the reformation of urban development principles and set the stage for more experimental planning projects in Australia. One such project, the Rosebery model and industrial suburb, also known as the Rosebery Workingman's Estate, was embarked on by developer Richard Stanton, who was the creator of the Haberfield garden suburb, and architect John Sulman, who was the designer of the Daceyville estate. Their ambitious vision for Rosebery encompassed a fusion of industrial productivity with residential spaces and community and recreational facilities to cultivate a symbiotic relationship between work, home, social interaction and wellbeing. It sounds like very good planning.

Consequently, the historic industrial sector in Rosebery made a profound impact, facilitating economic growth and shaping the suburb into an embodiment of coexistent industrial and residential vitality. The workingman's estate was later subdivided, at which time the Rosebery covenant was applied to those parcels of land. It set forth specific land-use parameters to preserve the suburb's aesthetic, stem haphazard development and ensure a harmonious architectural reflection of our shared values. Within the covenant's clauses lie a commitment to environmental stewardship, architectural integrity and a deep respect for Rosebery's past, while forging a sustainable future. It is more than a set of guidelines; it is a reflection of the collective aspirations of our residents. It is an undertaking to valorise our green spaces and community bonds, which resonates deeply with Rosebery residents to this day.

Even in the midst of a housing crisis in New South Wales, the Government recognises that those values provide a crucial foundation upon which modern planning initiatives are to be developed, balancing Sydney's need for more housing supply with our ardent desire to avoid poor quality developments. After more than a decade of the former Government's half-hearted, politically skewed and, frankly, classist urban activation quotas, we have been left with a dire undersupply of housing. That has driven up both rents and mortgages and given oxygen to fuel the fire of a rising cost of living.

That is why the Government has initiated an array of strategic measures to alleviate the housing crisis gripping the State. Those plans are meticulously designed to increase affordable housing stock while ensuring sustainable community development. Through initiatives like the affordable housing scheme, support for medium-density projects and our proposed Transport Oriented Development State Environmental Planning Policy [SEPP], the Government is committed to transforming the housing landscape to deliver more homes around under-utilised, well-serviced transport hubs. Those measures are sympathetic to the existing urban fabric of areas



like Rosebery, which are not targeted for growth by the SEPP, and address the challenges young people, in particular, face without sacrificing our cherished community ethos.

The Government's proposed changes to housing supply controls aim to overhaul the current system, starting by streamlining the process for obtaining building permits. By reducing bureaucratic hurdles and expediting permit approvals, the goal is to accelerate housing development while regulating construction. It also requires continuous evaluation and adaptation to ensure that any changes are positively impacting housing supply and affordability.

The measures do not intend to impact the efficacy of unique land law principles like the Rosebery covenant. Knowing how important the covenant is to residents of Rosebery, I have consulted a senior counsel on the matter. His view was that, without legislation to specifically void the covenant, not only does it remain relevant but it also remains enforceable, despite the council's assertion that it lacks standing. It is important that the land law continues to apply restrictive covenants in areas like the suburb of Rosebery as part of Green Square. It is an example of what should apply to the rest of Sydney in selected areas to deal with the State's housing crisis. [*Time expired.*]

#### ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR JOHN PARDEY

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek) (18:11):** I congratulate Associate Professor John Pardey on his retirement and thank and commend him for his exceptional service to our community in the field of obstetric and gynaecological care. Associate Professor Pardey served as a medical practitioner for over 41 years, including 34 years as an obstetrician and gynaecologist at his practice, now known as A/Prof. John Pardey and Associates, situated near Nepean Hospital and Nepean Private Hospital. As of November 2023 he had performed over 10,058 private deliveries. That does not include countless others that he delivered at Nepean Hospital, where he practised as a visiting medical officer. While his practice is in the neighbouring electorate of Penrith, Associate Professor Pardey has cared for many patients from my electorate of Badgerys Creek. I am sure there are families all over the world whose children were delivered by Associate Professor Pardey. Some of his more recent patients were themselves delivered by him in the early days of his practice.

Associate Professor Pardey's qualifications and accreditations are second to none. He graduated from the University of New South Wales, obtaining his Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery in 1979. He is accredited as a teacher by the Australasian Gynaecological Endoscopy and Surgery Society [AGES] as well as the College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. He is one of the very few doctors accredited at the highest level of difficulty for both hysteroscopic surgery and laparoscopic surgery. Associate Professor Pardey's commitment to his patients led him to pioneer maternal-assisted caesareans in Penrith, which revolved around the mother assisting in the delivery of her baby and then maintaining skin-to-skin contact with the child throughout the rest of the procedure. That is an option for patients with essentially uncomplicated pregnancies requiring caesarean section as their mode of delivery. Initially, the idea of maternal-assisted caesareans met with some reluctance to change. However, with Associate Professor Pardey's tireless advocacy for his patients, it afforded them an autonomy never before available to mothers experiencing delivery by caesarean.

Through his practice, patients also have access to infertility support, IVF and mental health services. Associate Professor Pardey's amazing contribution extends beyond those he delivered and includes those he taught and continues to teach. He founded and runs the Nepean School of Gynaecological Surgery, which seeks to enhance the education, training and skills of local junior doctors at no expense to the trainees. He is regularly invited to lecture, present and give workshops for the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists at their annual scientific meetings, for AGES forums and for the Asia-Pacific Association for Gynaecologic Endoscopy and Minimally Invasive Therapy. Associate Professor Pardey teaches advanced trainees in their last years of training in the speciality of gynaecologic surgery and will also be teaching surgery in the Solomon Islands. He is also currently developing a YouTube channel to promulgate improved surgical skills and enable access to a broader medical training audience. Considering his qualifications and experience, his students definitely learn from the very best there is.

I fully appreciate and understand the significance of family members in one's career and journey. I recognise and commend Associate Professor Pardey's wife, Heather, and their three daughters for the important role they played in Associate Professor Pardey's career and his contribution to the broader society and our local community. I am pleased that Associate Professor Pardey will now have more time to spend with his family. I thank and commend Associate Professor Pardey for his continued service to our community and those beyond. Countless families, including mine, are better off for his work, his expertise and his compassion. I dare say many people can thank him for their very lives.

Future generations of babies and families will continue to reap the benefit of Associate Professor Pardey's investment in the education of his students. His legacy will continue through the ongoing practice of A/Prof. John Pardey and Associates. I wish Associate Professor Pardey all the very best in his retirement. On a personal note,

I publicly state how exceptionally grateful my husband and I are for Associate Professor Pardey's expertise, which enabled us to eventually have our little Harry. There are nine years between our first and our second child. If it was not for his compassion, patience and expert knowledge, I dare say that Harry would not be amongst us. Associate Professor Pardey, thank you.

### **WATER SAFETY**

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (18:16):** During the recent Christmas break I was shocked and really saddened to receive a sudden phone call from the principal of one of our local public schools advising me that the father of one of the students who had recently graduated from year 6 was one of the unfortunate individuals who had drowned during the summer break. It has been another deadly summer at our beaches, waterways and pools, and that is especially the case for migrant communities. A recent study by UNSW has found that nearly half of those who drowned on Australia's beaches were migrants—47 per cent of drowning deaths over the past 15 years were people who were born overseas. Indian migrants are the highest proportion of that number. My Strathfield electorate is one of the most diverse in New South Wales. Over 58 per cent of people in my electorate were born overseas, particularly from China, India, Nepal and Korea.

Within my electorate sits the Strathfield local government area, where 11.7 per cent of people were born in India. I pay my deepest respects and condolences to the gentleman who passed away and to his family. I understand that his wife does not work, and I am sure that our community will rally together to provide whatever support we can to the family in their darkest of times. We have to do everything we can to assist migrants who come to live amongst us to develop basic life-saving skills—how to swim, how to float, how to read the water, how to make sure that they do not get themselves into difficulty and, when they are in difficulty, how to get themselves out. Among the best things about Australia are our beaches, our outdoor lifestyle, our waterways and our wonderful natural environment. But that dream can turn into a nightmare so quickly when people cannot read or do not know the dangers.

Although the challenge is significant, the response from government and non-government organisations to tackle this issue has been picking up. The New South Wales Government has a range of supports and grants for water safety, including a growing focus on migrant and culturally and linguistically diverse [CALD] communities. The TAFE NSW Adult Migrant English Program is teaching vital water safety skills to the Yizidi migrant and refugee community in Armidale through a partnership with the University of New England. Surf Life Saving NSW, the Royal Life Saving Society, Swimming NSW and St John Ambulance, which is headquartered in Burwood within my electorate, all have water safety programs and, increasingly, programs that focus on CALD and migrant communities.

Local government, which manages many of the State's pools and aquatic centres, is taking the issue of migrant water safety seriously as well. The Enfield Life Saving Club, supported by Burwood Council, has played an active role in our community in this area, and I commend the club for its ongoing efforts. Cumberland City Council has partnered with Royal Life Saving NSW on a number of resources to educate diverse communities on the importance of water safety and has delivered that in numerous community languages, including Arabic, Chinese, Nepalese, Tamil and Turkish. Cumberland City Council has also run free learn-to-swim programs specifically for residents with refugee and asylum-seeker backgrounds.

There have been many efforts to improve water safety for migrant and CALD communities. However, there is still a lot of work to be done. We are a coastal nation, with over 87 per cent of the Australian population living along the coastline. Learning how to swim is crucial. That might not mean learning how to be a fantastic swimmer; it might just mean learning survival skills like how to float and how to call for help. I sincerely hope that more Australians, and more Australians from migrant and CALD communities, will be able to learn and possess those vital life skills.

### **MARINE RESCUE FORSTER TUNCURRY**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes) (18:21):** When contemplating emergency services, which ones immediately come to mind? Is it the police, the fire brigade, or perhaps the ambulance service? What about Marine Rescue? How often is it front and centre? This evening I recognise the unsung heroes of our waterways, the dedicated volunteers of Marine Rescue, and specifically acknowledge the Marine Rescue Forster Tuncurry unit. It is easy to overlook the critical role played by those selfless volunteers, who work tirelessly to ensure the safety of all those who venture into our coastal and inland waters. Many of their rescues transpire quietly, away from public attention.

Marine Rescue NSW recently concluded its busiest year on record. In 2023 alone the volunteers carried out an astounding 4,786 search and rescue missions across the State. That marks an 18 per cent increase in the number of rescues, reflecting the growing popularity of our waterways and the corresponding increase in incidents

requiring intervention. The challenges faced by Marine Rescue units are diverse, ranging from mechanical issues and fuel shortages to emergency responses in the most demanding conditions. In 2023 the Mid North Coast region had 390 search and rescue missions, including 213 emergency responses, and 907 people were safely returned to shore. The locations of highest demand were Forster-Tuncurry, Port Macquarie and Coffs Harbour.

The Forster Tuncurry unit, which serves the Myall Lakes electorate, responded to an impressive 4,465 logons, 1,161 Marine Rescue app uses and 3,304 radio calls. Those statistics underscore the important role played by Marine Rescue Forster Tuncurry in safeguarding our community. Its 103 vessel assists, including both inshore and offshore missions, demonstrate its commitment to ensuring the safety of over 11,150 individuals on board various vessels. In the two weeks since the commencement of the new year, Marine Rescue Forster Tuncurry had already assisted more than 10 vessels, showing the ongoing need for its services. It is important that we recognise the dedication and commitment of the more than 100 volunteers at Marine Rescue Forster Tuncurry who selflessly contribute their time and expertise to keep our waterways safe.

Maintaining a base like the Forster Tuncurry unit costs around \$100,000 a year, with \$35,000 allocated solely to boats. The maintenance and repair of boats falls on each individual unit. Marine Rescue Forster Tuncurry relies on local support and fundraises through various avenues, such as the monthly Tuncurry markets, a barbecue trailer at the races and local farmers' markets and the sale of raffle tickets. Those volunteers work diligently on and off the water to ensure the operational continuity of their unit. Training is an ongoing activity to keep the radio room and vessels manned. In 2023 the training team qualified four radio operators, two watch officers and one boat crew. The Forster Tuncurry unit rescue base is manned 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It operates two vessels: the *Forster 20* for lake assistance and the *Forster 30* for sea assistance. Both vessels experience issues, with *Forster 30*, at 10 years old, due for an upgrade to internal fittings and its Axiom system. The unit relies on government grants to cover those expenses.

Last month I attended a Blessing of the Unit, a tradition originating in Mediterranean fishing communities that symbolises a wish for a safe journey. Marine Rescue chaplain Allan Bates blessed the Forster Tuncurry unit with a prayer. Following the blessing, Rodney Percival and Tony Breen both received national medals for 15 years of service. I congratulate them and I thank them for their ongoing service to those communities. There are many benefits to volunteering with Marine Rescue NSW. The volunteer will meet new people, learn new skills, serve their community and help in the mission of saving lives on the water. There is a job for almost everyone at their local unit, whether it is monitoring and maintaining radio communications, crewing an offshore search and rescue vessel or providing fundraising, administrative or other support. I have the greatest appreciation for the volunteers of Marine Rescue Forster Tuncurry. Their commitment to the safety of our waterways, often unnoticed, deserves our collective acknowledgment and gratitude.

### MILLER SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE MASTERPLAN

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (18:26):** The Miller Social Infrastructure Masterplan was developed and endorsed by Liverpool council in February 2021 in response to the decision by the council to endorse a conditional master plan for the renewal of the Miller town centre in 2016. The master plan identifies the need for local government to pursue the provision of new social infrastructure such as public libraries, community facilities and services, cultural activities, events and festivals, open space, and sport and recreation facilities. I will share some metrics to give the House an understanding of why the master plan is so important.

The population of Miller is expected to grow by 74.7 per cent by 2036. Those aged 85 and over will feature the greatest growth of all age groups. Some 30 per cent of households in Miller are lone households. Miller and the 2168 catchment are considered relatively more disadvantaged than the Liverpool local government area [LGA] on the Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas [SEIFA] Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage. Miller and the 2168 catchment has a lower proportion of residents aged 15 and over who had completed year 12 compared with the Liverpool LGA overall. The catchment has a much higher proportion of households living in social housing compared with the broader Liverpool LGA, and residents of the 2168 catchment are slightly more likely to speak a language other than English at home. Residents also have a significantly lower median weekly household income in Miller compared with residents of the Liverpool LGA.

For all those reasons, public infrastructure is crucial to facilitate social connection and improve equity for the broader community. The broad recommendations of the social infrastructure master plan were that a new multipurpose community hub integrated with surrounding public open spaces at Miller Square over three stages was to include a library with adaptable programming spaces and other initiatives; a new, safe, pedestrian-friendly space; a staged redevelopment of the Michael Wenden Aquatic Leisure Centre; and a method of creating connections among various destinations and facilities within the region. The plan revolved around the following principles: active streets and spaces, community living room, connection and inclusion, and health and wellbeing for all.

The social infrastructure findings within the Miller and 2168 catchment area found that, while accessible, the high number of standalone facilities was not very conducive to social connection, as the clustering of facilities in a single area can help to improve connection and collaboration. It also found that community facilities within the 2168 catchment needed to support the forecasted growth and include at least one integrated multipurpose community facility of at least 2,000 square metres, as well as an expansion of the existing library services to meet community needs. It also recommended that to meet the benchmarks for local facilities in the catchment, upgrades and expanding of the facilities are required.

There were a number of recommendations about the need for open space and recreation. A review found that 50 per cent of current public open space is land with compromised public open space outcomes and 81 per cent of public open space sites have only fair or poor passive survey residence, which is leading to a variety of social and other issues. There was a mixed range of quality across the public open space network, where park infrastructure lacked consistency and there were many other major elements that require renewal. The Michael Wenden Aquatic Leisure Centre is a highly valued community facility, and many components of the facility are not meeting the needs of the community. The facility is coming to the end of its useable life. It was recommended that a staged redevelopment be progressed to ensure that long-term community health and wellbeing outcomes are achieved.

Despite extensive engagement with the local community since the council election in 2021, it has been crickets from council in relation to meeting the needs of the 2168 community. Big promises were made in the lead-up to the election and nothing has been delivered since then for one of the most vulnerable and highly valued communities within the broader Liverpool local government area. I call on Liverpool City Council to give the 2168 catchment and Miller the important facilities it needs.

#### **WAKEHURST ELECTORATE HOUSING AFFORDABILITY**

**Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (18:31):** It is a sobering fact that Sydney has the second-most expensive housing in the world, outstripped only by Hong Kong. Runaway house prices over recent decades have and will continue to reshape our society, exacerbating inequality and making life harder for many. Personal wealth and quality of life no longer depend on education and hard work but are more of a lucky dip based on parents' wealth. It is a very different Australia to the one that most of us and our parents grew up in. A stable long-term home gives a sense of belonging, giving a base from which to participate and contribute to the world. New research this week found that fewer than half the children born in Sydney today will ever be able to buy a home here. We are robbing our young people of this foundation for a good life. While there are some massive winners from sky-high property prices, we lose collectively.

The psychological toll of this housing precarity is very clear in feedback from my constituents. The northern beaches is a desirable place to live, and property prices reflect that. For key workers on average incomes—teachers, nurses, bus drivers and cleaners—the strain is particularly stark. But people of all occupations are under increasing pressure, having to work more hours, move away from family support and constrain non-working parts of a happy, fulfilled life, such as volunteering to coach your kids' sports teams. In the face of this reality, I commend the New South Wales Government for making it clear that facilitating more housing, and more diverse housing, is a top priority. But it is not the only solution to the housing crisis that we find ourselves in. Many issues are creating this problem. Supply is an important one, and I do not deny that, but it is not the only issue.

We all understand the political convenience of the emphasis on increasing supply. Clearly, high rates of immigration, and Federal tax settings that make owning property more about wealth accumulation than home creation, are fundamental drivers. The State Government does not control those levers, but it should not be silent on them. Increasing supply is not the only solution, but it is critical, as is infill development, which increases density in strategic locations. It is important that I address that because the Government has made it a clear priority. I support the intent of the proposed State environmental planning policy [SEPP] currently on exhibition to increase low- and mid-rise development in residential zones. I make it clear that I support the intent. Many people want to downsize from big houses into either large apartments, terraces or villas. It is not just downsizers but small families and executive couples, for example. I have had many people approach me over the years about wanting to have a duplex on their property to allow their kids an opportunity to remain in the area or to house their folks in retirement.

I understand the Government's desire to act decisively to bring on more dwellings as soon as possible, but the enthusiasm must not recklessly ignore core principles of effective strategic planning. The blanket, one-size-fits-all approach currently being proposed to lift density across R2 and R3 zones is unacceptably blunt. As currently proposed, I cannot support the reform. If fully, or even partially, utilised in my area, the changes will result in a population increase in my electorate and local government area far in excess of the pre-existing housing target for the northern beaches, which was 12,000 dwellings by 2036, based on the judicious strategic planning

by the Greater Cities Commission set out in the North District Plan and reflected in the 2021 Northern Beaches Local Housing Strategy.

Last year I voted in support of keeping the Greater Cities Commission because of its district-based strategic planning, which was very valuable and thought holistically to set a vision about environmental, social and economic outcomes over the long term, tailoring growth to local geography and infrastructure capacity. The constraints on further housing density and population increases on the northern beaches are not ideological but based on very material infrastructure limitations like roads, public transport, sewerage, water, schools and sportsgrounds. There are well over 100,000 dwellings on the peninsular, but infrastructure has never kept up. Whether it is the poor planning of decades past or politics, you name it, we have copped it. But we still live in the best part of the world, the insular peninsula.

With the Beaches Link tunnel being cancelled, the capacity for the northern beaches to increase housing is limited. With no tunnel, the 6,000 dwellings planned around the Northern Beaches Hospital is now just 2,000. The uplift of housing in Brookvale is capped at around 1,300 instead of over 3,500 dwellings until the intersection outside Officeworks is upgraded. Any increase in population must come with funded infrastructure planning to accommodate growth, as it should across all local government areas and electorates. It is lazy politics from both sides to dismiss the individuals, local councils and community groups that are thinking critically about these reforms as selfish nimbys. The proposed reforms will touch the lives of millions of people, creating the built environment where people will live, work and play for decades to come. I urge the Government, through its consultation on the proposed SEPP, to listen and work with Northern Beaches Council and other councils across the State to deliver increased density in strategic locations, consistent with infrastructure constraints, such as on our beautiful peninsula and, ideally, via the soon-to-be-updated local environment plan.

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (18:36):** I acknowledge the contribution of the member for Wakehurst and thank him for his advocacy for his community. I also thank him for his collaboration with the Government. He knows that whether it is the Minister for Local Government, the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces or the Minister for Transport, the Government is committed to finding a balance and reducing the disparity between the investment in infrastructure and urban planning. All members are experiencing that in their electorates as population continues to grow. I have only one correction: I am not sure about this "best place in the world" peninsula. It sounds like it is nowhere near Campbelltown. Other than that, I thank the member.

#### LEPPINGTON SPEEDY SEEDLINGS AND SUPPLIES

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (18:37):** Late last year I visited a major business in my electorate, Leppington Speedy Seedlings and Supplies. It is a family owned and operated seedling growing business located across six adjoining properties in Leppington. It is the largest commercial nursery of its type in Australia. A hidden gem, the farm sits not far off Camden Valley Way in the heart of the south-west growth corridor—a region becoming more well known for housing growth and growing communities than for market-leading agriculture. The business began growing seedlings in the mid-70s to sell to farmers at local markets and has now turned into one of the biggest suppliers of seedlings in the country. It grows almost 300 million fruit and vegetable seedlings annually, which are for sale to commercial growers. It supplies major national supermarkets like Coles and Woolworths, as well as independent greengrocers, food processors, local markets and for export overseas.

It is not an exaggeration to say that much of the fruit and veg eaten daily begins its journey in Leppington at Speedy Seedlings. In one sense, it is a food bowl of the nation. The business employs 62 trained workers, increasing to 80 in peak season. It is a significant business for not just the local economy but agriculture along the eastern seaboard. It also has a keen eye on the future, with the third generation of Vellas busy in the onsite laboratory. It is there that Leppington Speedy Seedlings and Supplies are collaborating with international corporations and universities, undertaking innovative research into areas such as gene splicing and trials of emerging crops such as hemp and disease-resistant fruit and veg. All of that ensures that farmers both here and abroad are better able to increase crop resistance and harvest output. It is perfectly located in a semirural area but it is close enough to urban amenities such as water supply, electricity, NBN and major transport corridors. It is also perfectly situated to benefit from the future agriculture precinct at Western Sydney airport.

However, while I have encouraged several of my colleagues to come out for a site visit and see the amazing and innovative work this family business is doing, my purpose was not purely to spruik one of the many great businesses in my electorate. Leppington Speedy Seedlings and Supplies is under threat from urban sprawl. A proposed road extension is earmarked to pass through its property, including the business's main dam. To state the obvious, without the dam the business will become unviable. In the words of its owner, Dr John Vella, "It is vital to the survival of the entire business. Not having control of the water supply and water quality will be fatal to the entire plant production process and consequently the entire business." Under the proposed road extension, its water storage facility and land is to be used as a drainage reserve. Urban pollution from the proposed upgrade

and nearby development will make its water unusable, especially as they must adhere to strict water standards under Freshcare.

The Leppington Speedy Seedlings and Supplies team were given assurances by former MPs and the council over the past decade. It was told its property would not be affected when the final stages of the upgrade come to fruition. Yet when more detailed designs were released, they were surprised to find that the plan had not changed to protect their business. They have invited Camden Council planners to visit the site to fully comprehend the scale of the operation and the impact the road extension will have. I have had discussions with Camden Council in attempt to find a reasonable resolution to the issue, and I look forward to its response.

I note that the Premier has recently spoken about the need to build up and not out. When he has done so, it has generally been in reference to the housing challenges of an ever-expanding Sydney: construction costs, access to amenities and jobs, and getting a grip on urban sprawl. Tonight I have presented another reason why we should stop filling out and should instead build up: We need to maintain businesses and food supply in the Sydney basin. It is good for the economy, it is good for the environment and, more importantly, it is good for our bellies. Leppington Speedy Seedlings and Supplies is the heart of the horticultural value chain. It generates employment and value for other businesses in the sector and then on to the end consumer. I ask that businesses like this and others on Sydney's fringe be preserved and protected from urban expansion, and I call on Camden Council to reconsider its plans for the extension of the road through its property.

### CASTLE HILL ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY CEREMONIES

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill) (18:42):** On Australia Day we celebrate our rich history and the values of our society which have endured to this day. We have much to celebrate, whether we were born here or in another country but have made the decision to call Australia home. At many events on Australia Day I joined residents of my electorate and of the wider Hills Shire Council area. I attended the flag-planting and flag-raising events hosted by the Castle Hill and District RSL Sub-Branch. The events were attended by local service personnel and veterans as well as the sub-branch president and members. At the Castle Hill Cemetery, the ceremony included planting flags at the final resting place of service men and women. At the Castlebrook Memorial Park, many sub-branch members, service men and women, and veterans attended a solemn flag-raising and flag-planting ceremony. We plant the Australian flag to honour those who have served and sacrificed to defend our nation. I honour, recognise and thank the president of the sub-branch, Cheryl Hill, and members of the sub-branch for hosting both events.

Next I attended the flag-raising ceremony held annually at Castle Hill Heritage Park. The ceremony is hosted by the Castle Hill Rotary Club each year. At the ceremony I joined the Federal member for Mitchell, Alex Hawke; my parliamentary colleague Ray Williams; the Deputy Mayor of the Hills Shire Council, Councillor Mitchell Blue; and other councillors. Castle Hill Heritage Park is nationally significant, being the site of the third government farm. The farm was also the staging point for the first ever convict rebellion on Australian soil. The rebellion occurred on 5 March 1804. The Australia Day spirit next took me to the John Benyon Rotary Park at Kenthurst. Each year the club hosts speeches and a flag-raising ceremony, which the Kenthurst community turned out in force to witness. With the Federal member for Berowra, Julian Leaser, the Mayor of the Hills Shire Council, Dr Peter Gangemi, and many of the Hills Shire councillors, we were treated to songs from local singer James McGraw.

I commend local students Bree Collins, from Galston High School, and Amiya Raileqe and Jack Romeo for their wonderful contributions to the Australia Day ceremony. I also recognise resident Melissa Monteiro, who spoke about her journey from Mumbai to Australia and the cultural significance of Australia Day to migrants and refugees. Lastly, I thank, recognise and commend Kenthurst Rotary member Samantha Ellis for contributing to the day as the wonderful master of ceremonies. The last flag raising was at the neighbouring suburb of Annangrove. The ceremony is an annual event which is hosted by the Annangrove Progress Association. I joined the member for Kellyville, the Mayor of the Hills Shire Council and councillors at the flag-raising ceremony. I commend Councillor Reena Jethi for speaking on the importance of Australia Day at the event. The five flag-planting or flag-raising ceremonies were completed by midday. The next important ceremony I attended was the annual citizenship ceremony at the Hills Shire Council chambers, where 129 residents proudly became Australian citizens.

When I spoke to some of our new citizens, it quickly became clear that they were overjoyed at becoming proud citizens on our national day. Councils should always hold citizenship ceremonies on Australia Day. It is respectful to give those who have travelled from overseas the choice of becoming citizens on our national day. There is no doubt that, given the choice, most new members of our society consider it a privilege to become citizens on Australia Day. The Hills Shire Council also held its signature Australia Day celebration at the historic Bella Vista Farm Park. The signature event this year was attended by about 4,000 persons. Those who attended were treated to an extravaganza of events and entertainment ranging from Dorothy the Dinosaur for kids to songs

from *The X Factor* winner, Samantha Jade. The celebrations for Australia Day in the Hills, attended by many people, clearly demonstrated the importance of Australia Day events to the Hills community. I thank the Hills Shire Council, the Rotary clubs, progress associations and members of the community for wonderful ceremonies and celebrations this year.

### GOVERNMENT CLEANING SERVICE

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (18:47):** This year marks the thirtieth anniversary of the outsourcing of government cleaning contracts. My party predecessors at the time condemned that decision as heartless and contemptible. It came after substantial improvements to the Government Cleaning Service which, from 1989 to 1993, showed a profit. The privatisation led to not only poorer working conditions but also job losses. Many of the 7,500 Government Cleaning Service employees were middle-aged and older women, and they were often from non-English speaking backgrounds—they generally have a harder time finding jobs than other demographics. It was also pointed out at the time that the government of the day neglected to look at previous privatisations of government cleaning services.

Under the Kennett Government in Victoria, post-privatisation, schools were hit particularly hard because many cleaners undertook many other duties at the school, including minor repairs and opening up. They often lived locally and had children in those schools. The Kennett Government did this solely to slash operating hours and to save money. Instead, it left the service to suffer and parents to fill the void. As is always the case with privatisation, government services that had been neglected, run-down and underfunded for years were declared to be inefficient, and it was claimed that those problems could only be fixed by the private sector. As we have seen time and time again, selective facts and false economies were used to justify conservative dogma. It was never about what is best for schools or service provision. Like much that comes from Kennett, both then and now, it was misguided, ideologically driven, partisan nonsense.

A lot has changed in 30 years, with the IT revolution, digitisation and the proliferation of apps and cloud-based services. What were once expensive and difficult-to-maintain systems and processes can be downloaded by anyone on their personal device. The efficiency with which governments can procure has also improved with technology, as has governance and process. With these improvements, there is no reason why procurement processes and working conditions for school cleaners should not also improve. Instead, sadly, the troubling truth is that school cleaners 30 years on are still facing the impact of privatisation.

They face impossible workloads as cleaning hours are cut down. In a recent statewide survey of around 300 school cleaners, it was reported that they are expected to perform an average of 600 tasks each day under the existing privatisation contract. The survey also showed that 37 per cent of cleaners reported workplace injuries, as they rush from job to job. Those injuries are not minor, with respondents saying they have suffered a fractured knee, broken ankle or broken wrist.

I had the pleasure of meeting with a number of local cleaners from my electorate late last year. They shared with me the harsh reality of their working conditions under privatisation, detailing injuries, tools of the job in poor condition and unreasonable working hours. Previously schools that had five full-time cleaners now have one full-time and two part-time cleaners. Cleaners have had to contest with a lack of supplies, with some waiting up to three months simply for a mop. Winter shirts have to be used in summer. The buffers they use to clean the floors are from the days prior to privatisation. Yes, that is 30 years ago. The equipment used by the cleaners is not only older than every student; it is also older than some of the teachers. This sometimes forces cleaners to bring their own equipment, which then leads to them being reprimanded.

Many of the cleaners are trusted and well-liked members of the school community, so much so that some schools have hired their cleaners to be school general assistants, or GAs. In an absurdity created by privatisation, schools can directly hire GAs, while cleaners are contracted centrally. Cleaners face job insecurity every time the contract is put out to tender. Most egregious is that more than half of the school cleaners report they had not received the right pay, and one-third reported they had faced bullying, harassment or discrimination. That is exactly what my predecessors in this place predicted 30 long years ago.

That is why I welcome the Minns Government's commitment to a review into the existing privatisation of school cleaning. The New South Wales parliamentary review, in its early stages, is being chaired by the member for Campbelltown, Greg Warren. I look forward to the outcomes of the review and note that the Australian Capital Territory has brought cleaning in-house. Victoria is ahead in bringing cleaners back in-house, while Western Australia, Queensland and Tasmania have always kept their cleaners in-house. Cleaners' rights should be represented and respected. I thank the cleaners who I met with for sharing their stories, and the United Workers Union for its advocacy on this important issue.

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (18:52):** I commend the member for Leppington for his proactive approach and his engagement with stakeholders, his constituency and everyone else in relation to the school cleaning issues and concerns. The review is well underway and much consultation has taken place with stakeholders, unions, the department and local members of Parliament. We are looking forward to seeing a speedy outcome and seeing what can be done for this very important workforce in our schools that does very important work. It cannot be underrated. During COVID we learnt the importance of hygiene, looking after workers and making sure the industry receives the support it needs and deserves. That is ultimately what the review is set to achieve.

### DAVIDSON ELECTORATE REZONINGS

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (18:53):** In January 2024, hundreds of constituents in the Davidson electorate who live within 400 metres of Roseville, Lindfield, Killara and Gordon stations started receiving notifications that their homes are part of a snap rezoning. Residents found this out by receiving letters and calls and even being doorknocked by property developers, interested in purchasing their property. That is right—contacted by property developers about a rezoning this Government secretly announced in December 2023. That is no way to treat our community. Equally concerning is that the people in those suburbs have no opportunity to have their say about the snap rezoning. There is zero consultation on the proposed Transport Oriented Development [TOD] State Environmental Planning Policy, which is scheduled to come into effect in April 2024.

Recently, a resident asked me, "Matt, are you a yimby or a nimby?" We all know what those acronyms mean: "yes in my backyard" and "not in my backyard". They are two diametrically opposed positions. To box in individuals based on an absolute position and to call individuals names, particularly in a liberal democracy, is not exercising leadership. I am not just simply an "insert term" in my backyard". I am a believer in the power of local communities and community-mindedness. This aligns with my Liberal values.

Our society is founded on communities. I believe that New South Wales needs more housing. I believe the New South Wales Government owes it to our communities to put the "plan" into "planning department" by directly listening to our communities. I believe the New South Wales Government needs to work directly with local decision-makers, which is local government. I believe in the power and public policy of inclusion. Inclusion means taking the community on the journey, particularly when decisions are to be made that directly affect that community. I call on Premier Minns and Minister Scully to listen, to be inclusive and to work in partnership with local communities and local government.

The National Cabinet's Planning Reform Blueprint, signed by the Prime Minister and Premier, details planning, zoning, land release and other measures to improve housing supply and affordability. The blueprint includes two important points. The first is improving community consultation processes. The second is adequately resourcing built environment professionals, including planners, in local government. The two points are clearly not being adhered to under the Minns Labor Government's two State environmental planning policies that deal with TOD and low- to mid-rise housing. Those planning policies will directly impact the Davidson electorate, both Ku-ring-gai and Northern Beaches local government areas.

Because Premier Minns and Minister Scully refuse to listen to communities, they will miss out on what the community has to tell them. The first point is that every community, including the Davidson electorate, needs to take its fair share of housing supply. Everyone agrees that more housing supply will assist in tackling housing affordability, but it is not a one-size-fits-all approach. The second point is that when we add more housing, we need to invest in infrastructure like schools, hospitals, roads, water and sewerage, public transport and public spaces such as green space. Disappointingly, in November 2023 the Minns Labor Government, via Transport for NSW, cut \$9.8 million from commuter car parking at Lindfield. At the time, I called that decision a "kick in the guts". I thank the 1,034 people who have signed the community petition, and I will keep fighting for that infrastructure. The third point is to respect the natural and built environment.

The Davidson electorate has wonderful built heritage, including Eryldene in Gordon and Woodlands in Killara. Heritage is inclusive of heritage conservation areas that include properties on the national and State heritage registers. The 400-metre TOD zone in Killara is inclusive of 83 per cent of heritage. The Minns Labor Government's plans, according to Ku-ring-gai Council's expert planners, will destroy over 4,000 heritage sites. The Property Council—my former employer—said, "The Government needs to explain why some areas with heritage constraints are included, while others are not, and why some new metro stations have been included and not others. Otherwise, it looks more like a planning map based on politics, not policy." The Davidson electorate is also home to natural heritage. The Minns Labor Government's plans, according to Ku-ring-gai Council's expert planners, will destroy over 40,000 local trees and reduce the tree canopy from 30 per cent to 7 per cent in the TOD zone.



The key question now for the Davidson community is what can we do and what is the call to action? The first call to action is to sign my community petition that outlines what I have raised today. Visit [mattcrossmp.com.au](http://mattcrossmp.com.au) and sign the petition now. The second call to action is to share your concerns with me, so I can directly share those concerns with the relevant Ministers. The third call to action is to write a submission, due on 23 February 2024. The final call to action is this: Look out for each other and take care of each other. We are in this together.

### ROZELLE INTERCHANGE

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne) (18:58):** I highlight the traffic gridlock caused by the Rozelle interchange, which continues to impact my community. At the end of last year, the Minister said that all options would be on the table to ease traffic congestion, and I hope that is still the case. Yesterday I met with representatives of Transport for NSW to discuss the congestion, and I am hopeful that the message was heard. It is not acceptable to hold up traffic and clog up local streets. It is a safety issue above all, and I cannot fathom that the department thinks that allowing rat running to occur in local streets is acceptable. In local streets, students are walking to school, and the elderly, parents, people walking their pets and cyclists are going about their day. In local streets, residents struggle to get out of their driveway safely, and local businesses are seeing a downturn in foot traffic and patronage because people are either avoiding Drummoyne or do not stop because they are stuck in traffic.

I make it very clear that my community will not accept any purported solution that makes our streets more crowded. It is no longer a reasonable response for the Government to blame others for the problems of traffic congestion in the Inner West and Drummoyne. This Government has been in power a year. It is on them to respond and find solutions. We know there are real problems with bottlenecks and congestion along Victoria Road. People are telling me that all the time. They are telling my colleague the good member for Balmain too. People who are stuck in their cars and on buses are fed up with the tit for tat blame game.

I have asked Transport for NSW to meet with the City of Canada Bay Council to talk about real traffic mitigation solutions. The executives of Transport indicated they were open to that. I hope this will lead to a comprehensive local traffic study to identify traffic mitigation solutions that can be implemented quickly and also into the long term. Transport for NSW must look at traffic light sequencing, potential fixes like spreading flows coming onto the Anzac Bridge as well as adding an additional lane to the on-ramp at Victoria Road, Rozelle, heading city bound.

I understand that this is a complex problem, but we must all work together to deliver real solutions. People are late to work, late to school and university, and late to family gatherings. It is having a real impact on the lives of local residents. They are fed up and they are angry. It was only compounded this week with the end of the holidays and the start of back to school and work traffic. *The Sydney Morning Herald* journalist, Matt O'Sullivan, highlighted the chaos on Tuesday morning:

... it has taken us one hour and four minutes to crawl about 3.8 kilometres during the morning peak. It would have been faster to walk ...

Lynn of Drummoyne told me:

It was extremely stressful trying to take my daughter to school each day. Sitting in traffic for 45minute-1 hour every day for a drive that should take anywhere between 5-19 minutes. This is incredible.

Natalie of Drummoyne said:

Turning into Drummoyne now is always backed up with traffic. Catching a bus on Victoria Road is painful. The buses were usually able to move through the lights faster. Now I wait an extra 15 minutes because the buses are waiting at the lights longer. This impacts my ability to get to work in a timely manner. I'm now considering moving to another suburb because it's no longer efficient.

Michelle of Russell Lea raises another important point:

Transit traffic is now taking back streets due to poor access to Victoria Road at key traffic light intersections, give our suburb back to locals.

And she is right. All GPS and map apps now regularly direct people in the morning peak through the back roads. It is dangerous and it is unacceptable. I call on Transport for NSW and the Government to listen to residents who are crying out for change to fix this mess.

*Bills***SHERIFF AND COURT SECURITY AMENDMENT BILL 2023****Returned**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the bill without amendment.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 19:03 until Tuesday 12 March 2024 at 12:00.**

*Written Community Recognition Statements*

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

**BIRTHDAY GREETINGS TO WOLLONDILLY'S NONAGENARIANS AND CENTENARIANS**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—It is an honour to extend my birthday wishes to the Wollondilly residents who have reached milestone birthdays. Celebrating a century, I was delighted to join veteran Mr Raymond Robinson of Thirlmere as he turned 100 on the 12th December. Another centenarian is Mr Philip 'Pip' Harding Smith of Bowral, who turned 100 on the 17th December 2023. Mr Charles Alfred Beurle of Bowral recently turned 90 on the 9th January. Embracing a centuries worth of memories, Mrs Betty Kopetko of Thirlmere turns 100 on the 5th February. There must be something in the water in the beautiful Southern Highlands town of Bowral, as we also have Mrs Ivy Challinor of Bowral incredibly turning 105 on the 13th February and I'm getting in early to congratulate Mrs Elaine Jennings, also of Bowral, turning 100 on the 16th March. As we celebrate these remarkable individuals let us reflect on the depth of their experiences, and the profound impact they've had on their families and loved ones.

**OXLEY COLLEGE'S 40 YEAR CELEBRATION**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—2023 marked the 40th year anniversary for the well-respected Oxley College school in the Southern Highlands. Driven by excellence in education and fostering the broad interests necessary to help well rounded students to thrive, Oxley deserves its reputation as a welcoming and dynamic learning community. The speech night held on 7th December 2023 was led by Mr Scott Bedingfield, Head of College, and was a joy to attend. The musicians and choral performances were an equally moving and impressive display of youthful talent. In attendance on the night was outgoing Chairman of the Board of Governors Dr Stephen Barnett, and newly elected Chair of the Board of Governors Mrs Jane Crawley. The leadership and academic achievements of the students are something to celebrate and I extend my congratulations to all current students as well as the school leavers of 2023. I wish them the best as they face their futures armed with a foundation of empathy, academic rigour and community spirit that their time at Oxley has provided.

**WINGECARRIBEE SHIRE COUNCIL LIBRARY'S SUMMER READING CLUB**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—The Wingecarribee Public Libraries, supported by Friends of Wingecarribee Libraries are hosting the Summer Reading Club for children aged 5 to 16 years old, as part of their ongoing work to promote literacy among children. The event endeavours to encourage reading, and fostering a positive relationship with books from an early age. The library staff are instrumental in creating an inclusive and welcoming environment for young readers. The Summer Reading Club exemplifies the library's commitment to literacy promotion and community engagement. I'd like to acknowledge the staff in their ongoing efforts in facilitating educational and enriching experiences for children and families, providing opportunities for kids to engage with libraries, throughout the year with their Lego, craft and story reading sessions. Always welcoming and helpful, the library staff make our libraries such a great asset. The Summer Reading Club is just another example of the great work that our Public Libraries do, and I thank you for all your hard work. The Wingecarribee Libraries' Summer Reading Club is a great example of the significant impact of our libraries in nurturing a culture of reading and lifelong learning within the community, starting in childhood.

**CASTLE HILL PLAYERS, AN INSPECTOR CALLS**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—The Pavilion Theatre has been a hidden treasure located within the grounds of the Castle Hill Showground. This year will mark seventy years the Castle Hill Players have performed wonderful plays which have enthralled and delighted our community. Last week I had the pleasure of joining Members from the Carlingford Rotary Club, Norwest Sunrise Rotary Club and the Zonta Club of Sydney Hill to watch the Castle Hill Players delighting audiences with the performance of J.B. Priestley's 'An Inspector Calls.' The play describes class driven behaviour highlighting the social realism of different classes which existed in the British Empire between the two World Wars. Director Dave Went has been with the Castle Hill Players since

1996 said that he was drawn to the sense of mystery and drama running through *An Inspector Calls*. I recognise and congratulate the cast, Thomas Southwell, Steve Rowe, Leigh Scanlon, Caitlin Clancy, Michael Doran, Jem Rowe, Chelsea Widdicombe, Babs Went, Laura Asten-Smith and Thomas Southwell. The performance raised funds which will be provided to Days for Girls Castle Hill. I look forward to the next play which will Donald Macdonald's quintessential Australian Comedy, 'Caravan.' Thank you, Castle Hill Players.

#### **LIFELINE CASTLE HILL OFFICIAL OPENING**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—I would like to recognise before the house today the work of Lifeline and the success of a new Lifeline Shop in my electorate. Last year Lifeline Macarthur and Western Sydney opened a new shop on 6 December 2023. The new shop was opened in the Castle Towers Shopping Centre in the heart of Castle Hill. The work that Lifeline does for our communities and for our country cannot be understated. They provide necessary crisis support services for vulnerable members of the community experiencing emotional distress and for people grieving lost loved ones. From their 13 11 14 helpline to counselling to support groups, this organisation, with caring and selfless volunteers, provide a light in the dark for vulnerable Australians. I would like to thank all those at Lifeline and all those who do their part for suicide prevention. Congratulations to Lifeline Castle Hill manager, Margaret Templeton and the volunteers at the new shop. I encourage the local and wider community to support this amazing organisation, and if you're in Castle Hill, give the new Lifeline Shop a visit.

#### **VALE NONA HENDERSON**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I pay tribute to Nona Henderson, formerly of Caringbah, who passed away in August aged 97. Nona started her life of service as a young woman during war time when she was taught to put out incendiary devices using a bucket of sand. After marrying, Nona moved to Caringbah in 1965 and dedicated more than 40 years of her life as a volunteer, firstly as a founding member of what is now the Caringbah Thistles Netball Club. Nona was awarded life membership of the club for her service, which included a 20 year run as secretary. Nona's interest turned to politics and after joining the Liberal Party she was secretary of the Woollooware branch for 20 years. I got to know Nona well during this time and appreciated her extraordinary work ethic and skills as secretary. Such were her administrative skills as a volunteer that, at age 70, she had to politely decline an offer to work in the office of then Cook MP Don Dobie. I recognise Nona Henderson's volunteer service and extend my sympathy on her passing to her family and friends, particularly her children Murray and Diane.

#### **VALE JANETTE GOULD**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—Well-known Cronulla singing teacher Janette Gould passed away in December aged 90. Janette was born in Broken Hill in 1933 into a musical family. Her grandmother's ABC radio program called *The Melodists* featured many talented performers. Janette first sang on radio when aged three. She performed on stage from a young age, competing successfully many times in singing and piano at the Sydney Eisteddfod. In 1949 the family moved to Penshurst. Janette later married Max Gould, moving to Oatley. Janette used to visit the Double Bay home of Madame Marianne Mathy, head of Opera at the Conservatorium, for lessons. In 1969 Janette moved to Cronulla. She started teaching singing there, using the Marianne Mathy method. She quickly became popular and at one stage had a 12 month waiting list of people wishing to take lessons. Janette taught singing well into her 80s. She performed numerous leading roles with the Regals Musical Society and Sutherland Shire Light Opera Company, and performed on the Sydney club circuit. With Shirley Ball, she formed the Jay Gee Entertainers, allowing students to develop skills and confidence and perform around the Sydney clubs. Janette was a great friend, teacher and mentor to many.

#### **LAPS4LIZZY SWIMMING CHALLENGE**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I recognise the inspirational efforts of Lizzy Sargeant, Miccy Sargeant, Luke Maggiore and Lara Saunders to support the McGrath Foundation, which provides care and support to women and men experiencing breast cancer. Cronulla's Lizzy Sargeant was diagnosed with stage 3 breast cancer last year and has shown great strength through surgery, chemotherapy, radiotherapy and immunotherapy. She told me she has had "incredible support" from her McGrath Foundation breast care nurse Kim who has been there for her so far and will continue to be through all aspects of her treatment. Having seen this support firsthand, Lizzy's daughter Miccy, together with her friends Luke and Lara, completed the Laps4Lizzy challenge in December, each swimming 21 kilometres within seven hours at Caringbah pool. The choice of seven hours highlighted that one in seven women will face a breast cancer diagnosis. Laps4Lizzy was a great success and has raised around \$37,000 for the McGrath Foundation. I congratulate Miccy, Luke and Lara for completing the swim and for their willingness to help Lizzy and others diagnosed with breast cancer. I recognise Lizzy Sargeant's advocacy for the McGrath Foundation and wish her the very best as she continues her fight against breast cancer.

### NANCY ROSSER

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—If you ever needed an example of the benefits of an active lifestyle, look no further than my constituent Nancy Rosser. You could say Nancy, who lives by the mantra 'use it or lose it' has gained an almost cult following in Orange where she conducts her 'revitalise' fitness classes at the PCYC three times a week. Nancy herself provides the inspiration as she closes in on her 93rd birthday in August. A former physical education teacher and avid tennis player, Nancy started to go to the gym around 50 years ago and happily stepped up to lead when asked to by a local gym owner. Now, Nancy encourages older people to get up and have a go in a warm, friendly environment. Apart from the fitness benefits, Nancy's classes also provide a valuable and fun social outlet with friendships formed. Nancy, who has been acknowledged at Orange's Australia Day celebrations, also inspires younger generations who train alongside her in spin and Pilates classes. In 2022 Nancy lost the love of her life, husband of 63 years Norm but she remained committed to her clients through this sad time. I congratulate Nancy on her inspirational work.

### LINDY MAURICE

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I wish to congratulate my constituent Ms Lindy Maurice on being named the thoroughbred industry's National Racing Woman of the Year for 2024. Ms Maurice was presented with the award at a function in conjunction with the Magic Millions carnival in January. It was the first time the award has been presented, although most people attending were well-acquainted with Ms Maurice's work within the industry. An avid campaigner for creating pathways towards employment in the thoroughbred industry, Ms Maurice established Thoroughbred Industry Careers [TIC] about five years ago. With two decades' experience working in the equine sector, Ms Maurice, while watching her children at Pony Club, started thinking about how youngsters could be encouraged to turn their love of horses into a career. Since then the TIC has gone on to provide a solid strategy when it comes to recruiting a workforce for the racing industry, which covers much more than race days. To shine a light on the TIC, Ms Maurice also created the National Pony Racing Series which gives young riders an opportunity to experience the thrill of racing. I thank Ms Maurice for her work, which helps ensure thoroughbred racing has a strong future.

### ORANGE REGIONAL MUSEUM

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I would like to commend the Orange Regional Museum on its success in the Museums and Galleries of NSW IMAGinE awards for 2023. Dedicated to curating exhibitions with a link to its diverse community, the Orange Regional Museum was named the winner of one category and earned a highly-commended honour in another. Its exhibition *Mulaa Giilang: Wiradjuri Stories of the Night Sky* was a winner. The work of members of the Wiradjuri community, led by curator, knowledge holder Ian Sutherland, it featured contributions from Elder Uncle Neil Ingram, artist Kylie Tarleton, film production by Jack Steele and music by Ricky Ah See. The visually beautiful exhibition of the night sky reflects stories of the Dreaming and the Wiradjuri people's unique link and care for the land they live on. The Museum's 'Sharing the Music of the Dunera Boys', was a collaboration by the Orange Regional Museum and the Orange Regional Conservatorium and featured musical performances inline with the *Enemy Aliens: the Dunera Boys in Orange 1941*, and featured music by Dunera internee Mad-Peter Meyer. It was highly-commended by the judges. I congratulate Orange Regional Museum on its success.

### WINGHAM SHOW SOCIETY

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to recognise the Wingham Show Society on the successful running of the 2024 Wingham Summertime Rodeo, an event that has been a tradition for more than 30 years. This year's Rodeo is believed to be the biggest turnout yet, the capacity at Wingham Showground is 5000 - 5500 people and not one ounce of grass could be seen from the arena. Competitors took part in events which included the ladies barrel race, novice saddle bronc, bareback, team roping, juvenile and junior steer rides, juvenile and junior barrel races, and of course, the crowd favourite, the bull rides. Entertainment throughout the night included amusement rides, mechanical bull, stalls, food vendors and a live band. This year there were no accidents with riders or animals. Congratulations to the president Carl Schubert and your committee of volunteers for putting on a hugely successful event, year after year and cementing Wingham as the 'rodeo capital of the coast.'

### TUNCURRY FORSTER JOCKEY CLUB

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to acknowledge the achievements of Tuncurry-Forster Jockey Club. From establishing plans in 1980 to obtaining a racing license in 2008, the club has evolved significantly over the years. Their inaugural meeting in 2009 drew a substantial crowd, and this year, they earned the Category B/C Country TAB Race Club of the Year at the NSW Country Racing Awards. The award, based on factors like betting turnover and crowd figures, reflects the success of the club. Racing NSW's recognition is a fitting tribute to their efforts in building an institution that not only hosts races but creates

memorable events for the community. Congratulations Tuncurry-Forster Jockey Club for your ongoing success, I hope your future endeavours are as successful as the races you host.

#### **TAREE RSL SUB-BRANCH**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to acknowledge Taree RSL Sub Branch for their Vietnam Veterans permanent Memorial at Club Taree, in remembrance of those from the Manning Area who served in the often-overlooked conflict – the Vietnam War. We honour those who have served and those who paid the ultimate sacrifice. This memorial is a reminder of that sacrifice, and it stands as recognition for our departed comrades. The memorial pays tribute to: Sapper Peter J Bramble; Captain Robert B Milligan; Lieutenant Kerry P Rinkin; Private Allen J Wallis; L/Corporal Michael P White. May their sacrifices never be forgotten. Lest We Forget.

#### **JACK LANGLEY**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—Congratulations are extended to Narrandera local Jack Langley, who was named as one of the ten emerging grain professionals in the Grain Growers Limited 2024 Australian Grain Leaders Program. GrainGrowers' Australian Grain Leaders Program [AGLP] is a bespoke year-long leadership program that offers professional development training to young emerging industry leaders. The program equips participants with the skills to build and lead a more profitable and sustainable industry for Australian growers. In addition to his work as a solicitor, Jack is a volunteer Director and current Chairman of Narrandera District Investments Limited, the operating company of Bendigo Bank Narrandera & District, which has a key focus on boosting economic development in the area. In his spare time, Jack is also involved in his family's mixed cereal cropping and merino sheep enterprise. With deep roots in the region, Jack is a motivated advocate for the agricultural community. He is incredibly passionate about rural and regional Australia, family farming enterprises, and what agriculture offers for the next generation. I wish Jack all the best for his upcoming training session in March and the year ahead. Congratulations again, Jack.

#### **CONGRATULATIONS JASMINE**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—Jasmine Thompson of Temora is currently undertaking studies for her Bachelor of Nursing, and recently received the Executive Dean's Award for 2023 from Charles Sturt University. Just like her father, Shaun, one of our very own Temora Ambulance Officers, Jasmine has a true passion for caring for others during their time of need and is well on her way to achieving her goal of becoming a nurse and, one day, a Midwife. Currently working as an Assistant Nurse at the Temora & District Hospital, I know Jasmine is among a dedicated and well-trained team that will provide her with the guidance and professionalism to ensure she is one of the best nurses in our state. I am so pleased Jasmine's hard work and dedication to her studies in her career have been recognised. Congratulations Jasmine, we are very fortunate to have another compassionate and dedicated nurse in the seat of small communities.

#### **QUANDIALLA PUBLIC SCHOOL SAYS THANK YOU**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—While the end of the school year marks a milestone for many and a call for celebrations, 2023 saw the staff and students from Quandialla Public School wish their principal of eight years, Mrs Kate Johnson, all the best as she heads into retirement. Mrs Johnson, a local from West Wyalong, began her teaching career at West Wyalong Public School and then moved to other schools across regional NSW, including Grenfell Public School in my electorate. Mrs Johnson has dedicated the last 31 years to educating our future leaders. She has had a profound and positive impact on the lives of all her students, taking on the dual role of principal and teacher. Congratulations, Mrs. Johnson, on a distinguished career that has positively impacted the lives of numerous individuals.

#### **VINTAGE FM**

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden)**—In celebration of World Radio Day, I would like to celebrate a local radio station that still goes strong today. Vintage FM first broadcast in 2009 to the Penrith area before expanding in 2014 into the Macarthur region. Vintage FM plays music from the 50's, 60's and 70's. Songs that are over 40 years old and were originally released on vinyl. On their website they proudly display that they play music from the Beatles, Chuck Berry, Rolling Stones, Elvis, Queen, Abba, Bee Gees, Elton John and many others. The team at Vintage Fm work extremely hard to put together quality music radio that everyone can enjoy, even if it caters more to an older audience. I would like to acknowledge Kevin who does breakfast from 6am to 10am, John Bond with the afternoon show, Wilmo and Kevin, the team behind weekend mornings, Dennis Mitchell with his famous Breakfast with the Beatles every Saturday morning, Artie Stevens with the Top 40: 50 Year Flashback. The staff at Vintage FM are what make the station such a fantastic part of our community.

**BONNYRIGG HIGH SCHOOL - 2023 END OF YEAR PRESENTATION DAY**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—Bonnyrigg High School, guided by relieving Principal Ms Kim Allford, is recognized for its commitment to academic excellence and leadership development. The Tri Vo Leadership Awards, were given to students by me, with the aim to honour those who have demonstrated exemplary leadership qualities. Construction of Bonnyrigg High School commenced in 1960 and was completed in 1969 when E Block was constructed. The first 360 students were moved into classes in March 1961 after boarding at Cabramatta High School during 1960. Mr C Westlake was the founding Principal. In the latest awards ceremony, the deserving recipients were acknowledged for their outstanding leadership across various year levels: Year 7: Ruby Nguyen; Year 8: Celine Ablou; Year 9: Henry Vo; Year 10: Dahlia Issa; Year 11: Nia Hagarty. These students epitomize the school's dedication to nurturing well-rounded individuals who not only excel academically but also exhibit exceptional leadership skills. I thank the relieving Principal Ms Kim Allford for her kind invitation and support of the awards. Furthermore, I congratulate the award recipients, teachers, staff, parents and the school for the successful year.

**CABRAMATTA HIGH SCHOOL - 2023 END OF YEAR PRESENTATION DAY**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—Cabramatta High School, led by Principal Mr Lachlan Erskine, is renowned for its dedication to academic excellence and leadership cultivation. The Tri Vo Leadership Awards, presented by me, is intended to honour students who have showcased outstanding leadership qualities. The school first opened in 1958, and since then, has been providing quality education to the students of Cabramatta and the neighbouring suburbs. Many of whom are from Non-English Speaking Backgrounds. In the recent end of year award ceremony at Cabramatta High School, the deserving recipients were as follows: Year 7: Danny Kou and Laura Kou; Year 8: Vitale De Thierry and Angel Le; Year 9: Eric Tran and Estelle Huynh; Year 10: Kevin Huynh and Kim Ly; Year 11: Kevin Cao and Minh Thu Pham; Year 12: David Kouch and Natasha Huynh. These students exemplify the school's commitment to nurturing well-rounded individuals who not only excel academically but also demonstrate exceptional leadership skills. I thank the Principal Mr Lachlan Erskine for his kind invitation and support of the awards. Furthermore, I congratulate all the award recipients, teachers, staff, parents and the school for the successful year.

**PAL BUDDHIST SCHOOL 2023 - 2023 END OF YEAR AWARD PRESENTATION DAY**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—Mr Pal, the founder of Pal Buddhist School seeks to impact young lives. Pal Buddhist School aims to provide a safe haven where students receive wholesome education - a protective and preventative measure nurturing both the heart and the mind. Pal Buddhist School, under the guidance of its leadership, places a strong emphasis on academic excellence and the development of leadership qualities. The Tri Vo Leadership Awards, presented by me, to commend students who have displayed exceptional leadership. In the recent awards ceremony at Pal Buddhist School, the following students were recognized for their outstanding leadership: Harnoor Arora (Year 9); Ren Jie Hum (Year 9); Leon Nguyen (Year 6); Angela Truong (Year 4). These students exemplify the school's commitment to fostering well-rounded individuals who not only excel academically but also exhibit remarkable leadership skills. I thank Mr Pal the Principal and Ms Helen Lam the Head of School for their kind invitation and their support of the Awards. In addition, I congratulate the award recipients, teachers, staff, parents and the school for the successful year.

**INNER WEST COUNCIL - SUMMER HILL SOCIAL**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)**—I encourage everyone to come down to the Summer Hill Social on Sunday 10 March between 11am and 5pm. The Summer Hill Social combines some of the best aspects of life in the Inner West – great food, great tunes, and a generous, friendly, supportive community. Celebrating our vibrant community culture with a day of fine and delicious food, accompanied by grooving tunes, the Summer Hill Social is a key date to mark in everyone's diary. The event will see Lackey and Smith streets transformed into a pop-up long lunch precinct. Everyone will have the opportunity to dine from one of the many outstanding local cafes and restaurants. Treat your tastebuds to an array of delicious delights and soak up the sights and sounds of Summer Hill Social! Congratulations and thanks to Inner West Council for putting on such a great community event!

**WELCOME PELICAN**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)**—The vibrant café culture of the Inner West is just one of the many reasons that we love our local neighbourhood and I am happy to welcome a great new addition to the scene in Pelican. Co-owned by Oleh Sokolovsky and Anthony Lot, Pelican has transformed a former humble shopfront on Illawarra Road in Marrickville and turned it into a bright, welcoming space for old, young and our furry friends alike. Furnished with refurbished furniture from Oleh's vintage store Juliet's Balcony in Dulwich Hill, the café features a countertop made of recycled plastic by local group Defy Design. Overlooking

Steel Park Pelican is the perfect stop for a pre-game or half-time coffee hit and also serves a unique Brekkie hot dog along with pastries, muffins and other tasty treats. Bringing a sense of fun as well as great food and drink I congratulate Oleh and Anthony and wish them well in their new venture.

#### **COMMUNITY SPORT - GEMMA BEALL**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)**—I want to acknowledge Ms Gemma Beall for her contribution to community sport in the Inner West through her years of commitment to the Summer Hill Lakers Netball Club. Community sport offers a myriad of benefits to individuals and communities alike, from fostering a sense of belonging and creating supportive friendships, to improvements in physical and mental health. However, we all know that behind every successful community sporting club are dedicated volunteers like Gemma who selflessly contribute their time and effort. They serve as coaches, referees, administrators, and fundraisers, ensuring the smooth operation of their club. Gemma's passion and commitment has played a pivotal role in creating a positive and nurturing environment for participants. Gemma has been involved with Lakers for over eight years and has been President for three years, recently handing over the reigns for 2024. Not content just for her own contribution it has been a true family affair with husband Justin also contributing as Registrar. Congratulations Gemma and Justin and thank you for your time, hard work, and care in helping sustain community sport in the Inner West.

#### **LISA HARNUM FOUNDATION**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—I would like to recognise today the work of the Lisa Harnum Foundation and particularly the work of the Board. I recently attended the Foundation's AGM, where the members of the Board were all reappointed to their positions. Congratulations to Frank Sedmak, Julliana Creswell, Evelyne Wilton, Maria Valenzuela, Philip Watson, and of course to Aileen Mountifield, CEO of the Lisa Harnum Foundation, for your reappointments. The Lisa Harnum Foundation was named in honour and in memory of Lisa Harnum, who was tragically killed due to domestic violence in 2011. The Foundation's goal is freedom from domestic violence and abuse, a "...world where women and children can thrive without fear or abuse..." The Foundation offers many services to help people affected by domestic violence, including Case Management, Counselling, Education, Support, Safe Rooms, Transitional Housing, Group Work, and general information services. This year in May the Foundation will have its ten year anniversary. It has only been able to run due to the dedication and passion of the Board, the foundation's volunteers, and donations from generous community members. Thank you to Aileen Mountifield and members of the Board for your continued work to rid society of this scourge.

#### **RITA SULLIVAN**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises Rita Sullivan owner of Knickerboxers in Kiama. After more than twenty years running Knickerboxers, Rita Sullivan is finally putting her feet up and selling the business she started in 2003. Located in Edessa Arcade on Terralong Street, Kiama, Knickerboxers sees itself as more than just a lingerie store. Rita has helped countless women not just with stylish garments, but by providing a much-needed service to women who have undergone breast cancer surgery, helping to restore confidence and provide comfort when it's most needed. Rita's services also include a great team of staff who travels to Bowral, Ulladulla, Narooma and the Shoalhaven region. The team also collects women's items in good condition and donates them to women in Fiji following breast cancer surgery. A huge congratulations and well done to Rita Sullivan from Knickerboxers in Kiama. Rita is a much loved and respected local member of our Kiama township who has made a distinguished and outstanding contribution to our region over the past two decades and I wish her all of the very best for her future endeavours and adventures.

#### **ALL SAINTS ALBION PARK ANGLICAN CHURCH**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises the All Saints Albion Park Anglican Church. On Sunday 4th February 2024, I was extremely pleased to attend an official celebratory event with representatives from All Saints Albion Park Anglican Church. After securing \$25,000 Community Building Partnerships program funding for the church to replace its carpet in the main church auditorium and meeting rooms, I was delighted to see the finished result and what a difference this has made. I acknowledge the Senior Minister Rev. Robin Vonk, Youth Minister Steve Inman, Preschool & Children's Ministry Worker Meagan Ho, Office Administrator Val O'Regan, Safe Ministry Representative Beryl Nash and Wardens David Dobbs, Ian Nicholls and Jono Willett. I also acknowledge from the Albion Park Men's Shed Coordinator Mr Ken Morgan. I also acknowledge Mr Ron Dryburgh. The Albion Park Men's Shed first opened in February 2012 and Ron was the original coordinator. I was delighted to attend the official celebratory event with Senior Minister Rev. Robin Vonk and so many others at All Saints Albion Park Anglican Church on Sunday 4th February 2024. It was a great service and celebration.

**DR ROBYN DALLEY**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Dr Robyn Dalley has decided to retire after an impressive 45-year medical career spent serving our Gerringong community. She grew up in rural NSW and has always embraced rural living, her journey to medicine began from a young age. Dedication, passion and hard work are all crucial aspects to making it through the extensive training required. Dr Dalley has always worn many different hats as a doctor, a wife, and a mother, she has volunteered her time, been active in rotary clubs and our community. She has been involved in health education programs, community groups and volunteer initiatives. Dr Dalley is particularly proud about opening Gerringong Medical Centre. The practice opened on the first day of lockdown in 2020 with the support of the Gerringong area. Throughout the years, Dr Dalley has witnessed the development of her Gerringong medical practice. Dr Dalley has seen her 20-year-long vision come together and grow from a practice with two doctors, a secretary and no nurses to the thriving medical practice. I thank Dr Robyn Dalley for her distinguished career in medicine and for the 45 years she has assisted and enriched the Gerringong community.

**MAITLAND MERCURY**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Congratulations to the team at the Maitland Mercury, Australia's third oldest regional paper, who have been named the Australian Community Media's top non-daily masthead at a ceremony to celebrate excellence in regional and rural journalism across the country. Editor Donna Sharpe was particularly praised for her strong editorial leadership and her team were acknowledged for demonstrating a consistent eye for quality local news, and approached stories such as the Hunter Valley bus crash tragedy with deep thought and compassion. The Mercury was also a winner in the Newroom Collaboration category where the editorial teams from the Maitland Mercury, Singleton Argus and Newcastle Herald won for their team approach during the difficult coverage of the Hunter Valley bus tragedy. As ACM editorial director Rod Quinn said newspapers such as The Maitland Mercury profoundly impact our local community. They cover stories that would otherwise go untold and do so with diligence, passion and a deep commitment to our city. Congratulations to the Maitland Mercury on their award success.

**MAITLAND HSC STUDENTS OF MERIT**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Congratulations to Maitland HSC students who have been recognised in the 2023 HSC Merit List for their outstanding results. Taylor Earl who attends OneSchool Global at East Maitland achieved first in the state for the Financial Services course, congratulations Taylor! Fellow students Declan Thrush came second, Jasmine Thrush third, and Georgi Henderson, Fergus Noakes and Bracken Wallace fourth. All Saints College's dux Ryan Hodges came third in the state in Drama, with fellow student Arianwen Dastoor placing seventh. Arianwen also made the all rounder list, for students who achieved the highest possible band in 10 or more units, well done. The all rounder list also featured Maitland High School student Lachlan Jack Findlay and Hunter Valley Grammar School student Finnegan Slattery-O'Brien. Hunter Valley Grammar School students Taylah Percival

**100TH BIRTHDAY OF THE CPH3 TRAIN**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—On 17 December last year, I had the opportunity to join the Rail Motor Society in Paterson to celebrate the 100th birthday of the iconic City Pioneer Heritage 3 [CPH3] train. Created at the Eveleigh Carriage and released in December 1923. The CPH3 train served the people of New South Wales faithfully for over six decades before its retirement. In celebrating the centenary of the CPH3 train, we pay tribute to the visionaries, engineers, and workers who contributed to its success. Their dedication and unwavering commitment to excellence have left an indelible mark on the history of transportation in New South Wales. The CPH3 train serves as a reminder of the progress we have achieved over the past century. As we reflect on its remarkable journey, let's also look forward to the future of rail transportation, in NSW where innovation and sustainability will continue and advance. Thank you to the Rail Motor Society in Paterson for your tireless work in preserving this incredible piece of our State's history. Happy Birthday CPH3!

**SOFTBALL CAMPBELLTOWN 45TH YEAR ANNIVERSARY**

**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)**—The Macquarie Fields electorate is home to many sporting groups that provide inclusive spaces for recreation and foster community spirit. Softball Campbelltown celebrates 45 years of being a fixture of the community and promoting athleticism, sportsmanship and camaraderie. Softball Campbelltown was founded in October 1978 as the Campbelltown and District Softball Association at what is now Milton Park Softball Complex in Ingleburn. Beginning as a humble community association, Softball Campbelltown has now become one of the finest softball groups in NSW with more than 600 members ranging



from young to old. The association has also had strong competitive success. Softball Campbelltown are reigning back-to-back champions in Under 12 Boys/Mixed State Championship, having won in 2022 and 2023. I am proud to be a patron of this amazing association. I commend the efforts of everyone involved in helping Softball Campbelltown reach this home run of a milestone.

#### **LYN LARSEN AM - AUSTRALIAN CRICKET HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I have long admired Lyn Larsen AM's stellar career as an international cricketer, sports administrator and all-round great ambassador for Lismore and the Northern Rivers. Over the summer break, I was delighted to learn of Lyn's induction into the Australian Cricket Hall of Fame during the Boxing Day Test Match between Australia and Pakistan at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. This year's only other inductee was former Test batsman Mike Hussey. While Lyn could not make it to Melbourne, she was given an in-person on-ground presentation at the Gabba Test between Australia and the West Indies. Lyn grew up at Tuntable Creek near Nimbin and started playing cricket for Norths in the Lismore Women's Cricket Association as a teenager. Lyn Larsen made her Australian debut in India in 1984. Other career highlights were: Australia's youngest cricket captain aged 22 in 1986; Leading Australia to World Cup victory in 1988; Fifteen Tests with a batting average of 41 runs and a leg spin bowling average of 18.73; Australia's most successful captain, winning five and drawing five out of 10 Test Matches. Supremely talented, always modest about her glittering achievements ... our Lyn Larsen.

#### **SALUTING A NEW COHORT OF JUNIOR DOCTORS**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I recently visited Lismore Base Hospital, where I welcomed 14 medical graduate interns, part of a larger cohort of 28 junior doctors who have started work in local public hospitals. It was inspiring to hear their stories as they embark on their medical careers. Interns are medical graduates who have completed their medical degree and are required to complete a supervised year of practice in order to become independent practitioners. The new doctors are receiving formal and on-the-job training in networked hospitals under the Rural Preferential Recruitment Program. They receive two-year contracts to rotate between metropolitan, regional and rural hospitals to ensure the diversity of their experience. I thank the Northern NSW Local Health District's Manager Media & Corporate Communications Fiona Baker for her kind invitation to meet with Bradley Shea, Adam Hudson, Jacob Miller, Sherridan Warner, Gaia Herrmann, Lydia Beaton, Sinead Ahern, Callum Gover, Emily Freeman, Dylan Kalas, Chelsea Moeller, Keenan Drever, Maire Playford, Gen Crotty, Jasmine Drayton and Andrew Greig. Lismore Base also is hosting five international medical graduates who were on orientation as well. I take this opportunity to wish all of our junior doctors every success for the future.

#### **FOODIES WIN CHEF HAT HONOURS**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—Congratulations to local bistros and restaurants in our Lismore Electorate who featured in the Australian Good Food Guide (AGFG) Chef Hat Awards for 2024. Murwillumbah bistros Tweed River House and Bistro Livi were judged as having 'food quite out of the ordinary' and being 'worth a stop on the way'. Mavis's Kitchen at the base of Wollumbin-Mount Warning and Frida's Field at Nashua were commended as good restaurants in the Modern Australian restaurant category. In total, there were 19 eateries across the Northern Rivers region who were awarded for food, focusing on six key attributes – ingredients, taste, presentation, technique, value and consistency. Topping this regional list were Pipit at Pottsville in Tweed Shire and Rae's Dining Room at Byron Bay who were singled out in the Modern Australian restaurant category. Both were judged as having an 'exceptional quality of cuisine' and 'worth a detour'. AGFG National Operations Manager Joseph Steele summed up this year's awards, saying it wasn't just about accolades; it's a narrative of innovation, sustainability and cultural storytelling through food. "Their achievements are a testament to the vibrant and ever-evolving story of Australian food," Steele says. These prestigious awards were introduced in 1977.

#### **GREATER HUME AUSTRALIA DAY WINNERS 2024**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to congratulate the following constituents who received recognition at the Australia Day Award Ceremony for the Greater Hume Community, held at Wymah: Citizen of the Year – Allison Scott (Henty); Young Citizen of the Year – Tahlie Weston (Henty); Sports Person of the Year – Lucy Grills (Holbrook); Sports Volunteer of the Year – Jada Murphy (Henty); Community Event of the Year - Holbrook's Festival by the Sub, and Henty Streetscape. In addition, the following students were honoured with School Citizenship Awards: Brocklesby Public School - Lucinda Severin; Burrumbuttock Public School - Tierre Lindner; Culcairn Public School - Lacey Hocking; Gerogery Public School - Zara Byrne; Henty Public School - Allira Cocking; Holbrook Public School - Jasmine Purcell; Jindera Public School - Lily Vroomen; St John's Lutheran School - Victor Wang; St Mary MacKillop College - Toby Smith; St Joseph's Primary School - Chloe Meacham; St Patrick's Primary School - Willow Hulme; St Paul's Lutheran Primary School - Micah Klemke; St Paul's College - Natasha Beckett; Walbundrie Public School - Ernest Lieschke; Walla

Walla Public School - Charlotte Ryall. I commend each for their outstanding contributions, and I celebrate their dedication and positive impact for our local area.

#### **BUSINESS WOMEN ALBURY - WODONGA GRANT NIGHT 2024**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to congratulate the following six finalists announced on January 18, 2024 at the Business Women Albury Wodonga Grant Night: Dash Cakes and Espresso Bar, Nurture Midwifery Care, Olive Health Foods – Albury, Red Elk Beverage Co, Sacred Women's Retreats and Sol Padel. These six finalists progressed to the second round -- the 'Pitch Event' – an achievement which in itself is held in high regard. The Pitch Event provides an opportunity to speak publicly of the passion the finalists hold for their business, and outline their plans of how grant funding can help realise their business aspirations. The grant provides financial support to eligible female business owners within our community. This initiative aims to provide growth and resources whilst building a sustainable small business in our local economy. I also extend my gratitude to the generous sponsors for their financial support: Starfish Marketing, Dream Accounting, Nordcon Land, Peta Stewart Property Conveyancers, and Pro Flor Pty Ltd. Thank you BWA, sponsors and finalists for being a driving force, shaping the landscape for businesses in our regional community.

#### **FEDERATION COUNCIL- AUSTRALIA DAY**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to congratulate the following constituents who received recognition at the Federation Council, Australia Day Ceremony held at the Paradise Palladium Theatre in Morundah. Leo Anic – Federation Council 's Citizen of the Year; Performer Dylan Forge – Young Citizen of the Year; Howlong Community Progress Association and Country Women's Association of NSW Oaklands Branch – Community Group of the Year (Joint Winners). In addition, the following students were honoured with the Federal Council Student Achievements Awards: Boree Creek Public School – Cooper Patey and Geoffrey Strong; Corowa High School – James Frazer and Tamir Richardson; Corowa South Public School – Ashton Powzyk and Stella Patten; St Mary's Primary School Corowa – Oliver Mathews and Cienna Dickins; Howlong Public School – Kylah Matthews and Kai Mount; Mulwala Public School – Finn Angwin and Nevaeh Rosmulder; Oaklands Central School – Aurora Butler and Melissa Smith; Rand Public School – Cooper Kuhne and Lexi McCall; Urana Public School – Alexis Finch and Max Fealy. Thank you also to this year's Federation Council Australia Day Ambassador, filmmaker and author Anupam Sharma. I commend the individuals and groups for their outstanding contributions and achievements and am proud to celebrate their dedication and positive impact for our local area.

#### **ST CLAIR BJP PHYSIE**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I commend and congratulate St Clair BJP Physie, a not-for-profit physical culture club, on their extraordinary success throughout 2023. Physie is a synchronised, team-based, dance and aerobic activity for all ages. I'm proud that the club obtained outstanding achievements throughout 2023. Ariana Tantalos won the title of 6 Year National Champion at the Junior National Championships, making her the youngest national champion in the club's history. Chelsea Cahalane finished 2nd place in the Open U33s Ladies section at the Ladies National Championships, whilst Tahlya Johnson obtained 2nd place in the 15 years section at the Senior National Championships. The club's team spirit was on full display with both the 7/8 Years and 9/10 Years teams winning 1st place in A Grade at the Junior Teams Competition. This is a remarkable level of achievement and I congratulate everyone at St Clair BJP Physie for the role they play in the club's victories. I wish the club continued success in the years ahead.

#### **SUSAN MURRAY AND CHRIS PEHAR**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I acknowledge partners Susan Murray and Chris Pehar for lighting up their home in Glenmore Park over Christmas, in order to brighten up people's lives and to raise money for the Make-A-Wish Foundation and Wounded Heroes, an Australian organisation that supports military soldiers and their families. The lighting of their home and charitable work is an old tradition for Susan and Chris, although this time around it took place at a different home in the same suburb of Glenmore Park. Susan and Chris also announced that they had added Santa's very own free express mailbox, with anyone able to post a letter straight to Santa and receive their very own personal letter from him in return, free of charge. The generosity of Susan and Chris lightened up the Christmas of many in our community and beyond. I thank and commend them both and I also extend my gratitude to everyone who supported their charitable work.

#### **THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME AUSTRALIA**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I commend and congratulate The University of Notre Dame Australia for opening a new study Centre in Oran Park. The new, state-of-the-art facility features a reception area, kitchenette, 40 seat open learning space, and audio-visual equipment to assist with remote learning. I'm delighted that this new facility will provide more education and training opportunities to residents in our community and

will also attract visitors to our area. I understand that The University of Notre Dame Australia places a great emphasis on growing access to education in critical skills areas and including the experience of faith as an integral part of the student experience. Our community welcomes these ideals with open arms. The opening is timely, with the Western Sydney International (Nancy-Bird Walton) Airport soon scheduled for arrival, ensuring that there is a growing local and visitor population to cater for. I congratulate The University of Notre Dame Australia and look forward to their ongoing contribution to our region.

#### **AUSTRALIA'S SILENT FILM FESTIVAL IN ROSEVILLE**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—Australia's Silent Film Festival is coming to Roseville Uniting Church in February! This is in conjunction with Ku-ring-gai Council and the Film Heritage Academy. I am looking forward to this event, that includes live organ music in order to capture the compete atmosphere of films. The first of these films will be a screening on 10 February 2024 of the classic 1920 silent movie Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, starring legendary Hollywood actor John Barrymore. One of the earliest full length feature films and based on Robert Louis Stevenson's novella, the drama and tragedy of Dr Jekyll and his alter-ego Mr Hyde will be brought to life by Graeme Costin on the organ. This will be followed by film screenings of Clash of the Wolves, featuring Rin Tin Tin in March; and Peter Pan in April. I recognise the co-directors of Australia's Silent Film Festival, Ronnie Farrar and Sharon Jackson. We are looking forward to hosting you in Roseville for this very exciting event!

#### **CHINESE NEW YEAR – YEAR OF THE DRAGON**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—On 10 February 2024 we celebrate Chinese New Year and the year of the Dragon. In the Chinese zodiac, the Dragon is the most powerful of the animals. It represents strength, wisdom, luck and prosperity. The dragon also represents the five elements – wood, fire, earth, metal or water. 2024 is the year of the Wood Dragon, the most creative and visionary of the dragons. The year ahead is expected to be a time of visionary leaders, innovators and problem solvers. Welcome attributes in today's world. I will be celebrating several Year of the Dragon events locally hosted by our local and vibrant Australian Chinese community. In particular, events include SHARE SMR Inc hosted by Councillor Barbara Ward; the Lions Clubs of Sydney Compassion and Chatswood Business hosted by Michelle Lam and Michael Li; CASS Seniors Group in Gordon; and the many events hosted by Ku-ring-gai Council that will include myself having an introduction to Tai Chi in St Ives. These events will help bring our community together! I am proud and honoured to share Chinese New Year festivities with and in my community.

#### **PLANTING A TREE OF PEACE AT NORTH SHORE SYNAGOGUE**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—On 2 February 2024 – Shevat 23, 5784 in the Jewish calendar – I attended the Shabbat service at North Shore Synagogue in Lindfield. Before the service, I helped plant a tree for peace with Rabbi Lewin, with the assistance of fellow elected colleagues Julian Leeser MP, Alister Henskens MP, Councillor Simon Lennon, and Councillor Martin Smith. May this tree, with its branches, leaves and roots, be a symbol of life, growth and calmness. Planting a tree was very appropriate given the North Shore Synagogue is informally known as the 'garden synagogue'. It was established as the first synagogue on Sydney's North Shore in 1947, and has served the community in its present location since 1951. I recognise and thank Rabbi Lewin and President Mironne Golan, whose kind invitation allowed me to share their Shabbat service together with a Kiddush, the Jewish benediction preceding a meal and the opportunity to meet members of the North Shore Synagogue community. The Davidson electorate is blessed to be home to the North Shore Synagogue and a vibrant Jewish community. I am proud to represent this community in the Parliament of NSW.

#### **KAREN NEW YEAR 2763**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—I was delighted to join Sydney's Karen community on 11 January 2024 to welcome in Karen New Year 2763. This celebration is more than just the dawning of a new year; it's a chance to reflect on the past year, acknowledge our challenges and victories, and step forward with renewed hope and aspirations. It's a time to come together as a community, bound by our unwavering resilience, strong faith, and commitment to preserving our cultural identity. This Karen New Year celebration takes place amidst a challenging time in Myanmar. However, the spirit of Thingyan also embodies resilience and hope. Throughout history, the Karen community has faced many struggles, yet they have persevered through their unwavering spirit and commitment to their traditions. Let this celebration be a reminder of that strength and a source of hope for a brighter future. As we move forward, let the spirit of Thingyan guide us. May this year be filled with good health, prosperity, and abundant blessings for all. Let us strive to build a future where the Karen community continues to thrive, its culture flourishes, and its spirit remains ever vibrant. Thingyan Mubarak!

### CUMBERLAND TAMIL SOCIETY

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—I was delighted to attend the Cumberland Tamil Society's Thai Pongal celebration at Auburn Town Hall on 20 January 2024. Pongal, a harvest festival marking the new year, resonates with gratitude for nature and hope for prosperity. Its growing presence in Australia reflects the vibrant Tamil community enriching our nation. From Bhogi's cleansing to Kaanum Pongal's joyful gatherings, each day holds significance. Pongal reminds us of our connection to nature, the importance of family, and the strength of community. I commend the organisers for a marvellous event. You promote cultural understanding, friendship, and integration, connecting Australians with Tamil heritage. The gathering, made possible by dedicated volunteers, embodies the spirit of Pongal – gratitude, joy, and togetherness. As someone who has enjoyed years of celebrating with local communities, I am always inspired by this beautiful display of community. I wish you all a joyous Pongal filled with blessings and prosperity. May the new year bring good fortune and happiness to all.

### COMMUNITY HEROES NOMINEES

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in congratulating the nominees for the 2024 Ryde Citizen and Young Citizen of the Year awards! To Yehansa Dahanayake, Charles Ward, Angelina Bonifacio, Mandy Ho Man Van, Rochelle Keshishian, Youn Kyung Lee, and Lucy Leonardi, your impact reaches far and wide, touching the lives of those around you. Each of you embodies the spirit of community service and has made a lasting impression on the City of Ryde. In your own individual ways, your exceptional contributions and dedication to our community have not gone unnoticed. These awards are a testament to the outstanding individuals who enrich the fabric of our local community, and it is humbling to see individuals represented from across the spectrum of community activities and organisations, including sport, fundraising, environmentalism, culture, creative arts and social justice. Thank you for your tireless efforts and the positive influence you continue to exert in our community. Your dedication is commendable, and we are grateful for the positive mark you leave on the City of Ryde. Here's to your continued success and the lasting impact you make in our community. On behalf of the NSW Parliament, congratulations on being exemplary citizens!

### AREG GRIGORIAN - YOUNG CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in congratulating Areg Grigorian, Ryde's Young Citizen of the Year! Areg's journey in community service began at the age of eight when he inspired the Walk, Ride, Share campaign following his brother's bicycle accident. His altruism further shone in 2018 with a Christmas appeal for Westmead Children's Hospital, reflecting his compassionate spirit. As a dedicated member of St John's Ambulance Juniors, Areg cultivated a passion for first aid, which led him to pursue a Bachelor of Paramedicine. His commitment to community welfare is truly commendable, and he sets an inspiring example for young citizens. Ryde's recognition of outstanding contributions by individuals is a testament to the vibrant spirit of our community. Areg, your achievements exemplify the values of Young Citizen of the Year, and your impact on the City of Ryde is immeasurable. Your selfless dedication to the community and the pursuit of knowledge in paramedicine make you a beacon of inspiration. Congratulations, Areg Grigorian, on this well-deserved honour! May your journey continue to inspire many others in our local community.

### LYN MANN - RYDE CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in congratulating Lyn Mann, the esteemed winner of The Citizen of the Year in Ryde! As the Joey Scout Leader at East Ryde, Lyn's remarkable 40 years of dedication to scouting has left a strong impression on our community. Her tireless efforts in providing valuable training and activities for young boys and girls have shaped countless lives. Even during the challenging times of the pandemic, Lyn's commitment shone through as she continued to support families through online meetings. Lyn's invaluable contribution to the adult leader team has played a pivotal role in making 1st East Ryde Scout Group one of NSW's largest and most successful Scout groups, boasting over 150 members. This recognition is a testament to her enduring commitment to community service and the positive impact she has had on the lives of countless individuals. We are truly fortunate to have Lyn Mann as a beacon of inspiration in our community. Her selfless dedication and unwavering commitment make her deserving of The Citizen of the Year. Congratulations, Lyn, on this well-deserved honour, and thank you for your outstanding service to the City of Ryde!

### CHRISTIAN BROTHERS' PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENT LEADERS

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)**—On behalf of the Newtown electorate, I would like to recognise the incoming Christian Brothers' School Primary Student Leadership Team. Their 2024 Student Leaders include Michael D'Arrigo, Michael Hamad, Sebastian Ferraina, Sebastian Lopes, Aziah Harb, Hamish Fineran, Nikolas Serci, Corbin Elliott, Joseph Nasr, Riley McIntyre and Flynn Hunter. Becoming a representative for your school is a highly rewarding way of contributing to the strength and connection of our community - whether at school,

in our neighbourhoods, or around the world. 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.

#### **DR RAY HODGSON**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Today I recognise Dr Ray Hodgson, a respected, gynaecologist in Port Macquarie for his lifechanging humanitarian efforts in establishing a dedicated maternity hospital in Nepal. Dr. Hodgson has embarked on a mission to transform the lives of Nepalese mothers and babies through the construction of Dolakha's first maternity hospital, located in the mountains, 180 kilometres east of Kathmandu. Inspired by his visit to Nepal twelve years prior, Dr Hodgson was confronted with the distressing scene of young women and babies dying from the lack of healthcare facilities in Dolakha. Many of these women were suffering from a genital prolapse, treatable but with little options for surgery in their community. Sadly, it is not uncommon for mothers in Nepal to haemorrhage during labour. An idea to establish a dedicated hospital with modern surgical equipment, electricity and a team of trained, medical experts was born and set in motion. Costing \$1.9 million Dr Hodgson sought assistance through Rotary and private donors securing \$1.8 million for the hospital, just \$100,00 shy of the target. The hospital will literally save thousands of lives and I am in awe of Dr Hodgson and his team for achieving this milestone in women's health.

#### **GORDAN GRAY OAM**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I am excited to have the opportunity to inform the House that Bonny Hills local Gordon Gray has been honoured with an Order of Australia [OAM] accolade as part of the 2024 Australia Day Honours List. This honour recognises Gordon's impressive volunteering record with various organisations including Marine Rescue Camden Haven, Rotary International, Lake Cathie Bowling Club, Catholic Care of the Aged, St Vincent de Paul, Surf Lifesaving and the list goes on. Described as an integral member of Marine Rescue, Gordon has held the Training Officer position for 25 years. In 2018 he received the Long Service Award and in 2022 was recognised with Life Membership. Gordon is also a Rotarian of more than fifty years. In this time, he has chaired the Polio Plus Subcommittee and served multiple Director positions with Maclean, Yamba and now Laurieton Rotary Clubs. In Yamba, Gordon held the Treasury position of St Vincent de Paul and was a committee member at Yamba Junior Surf Lifesaving Club. He also did a ten year stint as a Director of Maclean District Hospital between 1975 and 1985. An inspirational man who has lived by Rotary's mission of 'Service above Self'. Congratulations Gordon!

#### **NOEL HIFFERNAN OAM**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I take this opportunity to recognise Noel Hiffernan who is a 2024 recipient of an Order of Australia Medal acknowledging his service to people with a disability and to the community. Noel, who is a Camden Haven resident has been working in service of, and advocating for, people with disability since an accident in 1971 left him a mid-thoracic paraplegic. I am privileged to know Noel personally as a fellow Rotarian and have witnessed first-hand his ability to identify gaps and inequities for people with disabilities, act with determination and find a way to build an improved and more inclusive community. His commitment to driving actionable change over the last forty years for people with disabilities has been relentless. Noel's achievements have included chairing Greystanes Disability Services from 2002-2014, serving on the Australian Council for Rehabilitation of People with Disabilities [ACROD], taking on various roles within sub-committees, including Access to the Skies where he helped develop the first skychairs and accessible toilets on 747's. Noel has been a member of the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal/Administrative Decisions Tribunal and a founding Board Member of People With Disability Australia. Congratulations Noel!

#### **CAROLYN NEWMAN**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—Beresfield Public School cleaner Carolyn Newman has retired after 27 years. At a special Christmas breakfast on 19 December, she expressed surprise at the length of her stay, but more importantly her love of the school and how much she will miss the convivial environment and friendly students and staff. Carolyn started as Canteen Manager, moving on to Canteen Treasurer, and spending thirteen years there while her three children attended the school. Carolyn eventually became a cleaner fifteen years ago. A quiet, humble person, she is recognised for going above and beyond with her cleaning. Her colleagues are so appreciative of her meticulous cleaning in the canteen. For Carolyn, the cleaning had to be "just right". Carolyn has enjoyed the work but nonetheless is looking forward to not having to be woken by an alarm so early in the morning. She plans to travel around Australia at some time in the near future with her husband, David. My thanks, Carolyn, for your contribution to Beresfield Public School over 27 years and I hope that your travels around Australia will give you the relaxation and peace that you deserve.

### UNION OF AUSTRALIAN WOMEN

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—The Union of Australian Women Newcastle Branch, formed in 1950, will close its doors this year. Secretary, Lynda Forbes, said it will host a final International Women's Day dinner - a tradition since 1954 - a special event, including an exhibit depicting the branch's history. Newcastle and coalfields women formed the Union of Australian Women Newcastle Committee, with the platform of a decent standard of living for all, equal status and equal pay for women and World Peace. They were active in flood relief for families, the cost of living, campaigning for lower prices in supermarkets, supporting Price Watch, marching against the H-Bomb, and the organisation of International Women's Day. They visited people to help with plights like lack of sewer and mine safety issues, organising rallies - protesting against the Vietnam war and conscription, campaigning for the re-introduction of the scrapped Medibank scheme, walking down Hunter Street in twos or threes wearing aprons, scarves or shopping bags bearing anti-bomb slogans, hiring a bus to NSW Parliament to raise issues affecting families and setting up the Campaign Against Rising Prices [CARP]. Congratulations on a fine history of service to the local community.

### SHORTLAND SANTA RUN

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—The Shorty Santa run provides magical moments, smiles and excitement for both kids and adults alike - memories that last a lifetime. They make their way through the streets of Shortland and Birmingham Gardens, throwing lollies to the local children. Kids listen out for them travelling around playing Christmas tunes, and can't wait to see Santa's Sleigh. Kim Hillery-Marjoribanks has been organising and running the Shorty Santa run for over 20 years, with Brian Witt as Santa every year since the local soccer club took over from the fishing club. Cathy Abraham has been a familiar and friendly face on the boat for many years, along with Lynne Powell from the Shortland Netball Club. Glenn Barrett did a wonderful job in his first year as sleigh driver and got into the spirit of the day by dressing up as the Grinch. This year Chloe Abraham served as navigator, Mark Hoy donated the use of his "boatsleigh", and Shortland United Junior Football Club and Shortland Hotel have once again donated the lollies for this wonderful community tradition. Many thanks and appreciation go to all involved with the Shorty Santa run each year – your community thanks you!

### ST EUPHEMIA SICLE GREEK LANGUAGE COMPETITION – JORGE KAFFES

**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 Jorge Kaffes from St Euphemia College for achieving 2nd place in the Stage 2 category at the SICLE Greek Language Competition 'Greek and Me'. The SICLE Greek Language Competition celebrates the Greek language and its cultural significance, providing a platform for students to showcase their proficiency in Greek language skills through various competitions and activities. This competition provides a valuable opportunity for students to immerse themselves in the Greek language, gain confidence in their language abilities and foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of the Greek language and culture. Jorge's dedication and hard work are an inspiration to others and the Bankstown community is immensely proud. This incredible achievement is a testament to her exceptional language skills and his passion for Greek culture and heritage. As a community, we celebrate your achievement and recognise the importance of language learning and cultural preservation. Your accomplishment not only brings honour to yourself, your family, and your school, but it also contributes to the richness and diversity of our community. Congratulations once again Jorge on this outstanding achievement.

### BERNADETTE HABKOUK

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—I would like to congratulate Bernadette Habkhouk on her incredible achievements in being nominated for the Western Sydney Women Entrepreneur of the Year and Career Woman of the Year. At the age of 33, and a mother of three, Ms Habkhouk is a well-respected industry leader, who continues to make a positive impact in the supply chain and logistics sector. Despite being in a male-dominated industry, Ms Habkhouk has been in managerial roles from the age of 19 and has gone above and beyond to make the needed changes in her field. She has won many awards both domestically and internationally. Her awards include a global innovation award she received in Paris which led to her successfully managing a global project. She has powerful and encouraging words for young women who are aspiring to climb the ladder. She stated, "The worst case is if you fail but tried, which is better than failing because you didn't try." This inspirational quote has had a positive impact on the young women she encounters. I would like to thank Ms Habkhouk for her hard work and the dedication she puts into uplifting young women in our community.

### JOSHUA TAMER

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—Congratulations to Joshua Tamer for being New South

Wales' top Arabic student in his HSC. Joshua was one of 128 HSC graduates across NSW to gain a First in Course award. Despite it being his weakest at the start of Year 11, Joshua topped the state for Arabic Extension. Completing your High School Certificate is one of the most stressful times of your high school pathway. Many students believe that recovering a high ATAR is the only way to accomplish your career. But students need to understand that there are many pathways to take to enter university and to take on your chosen career, it's not the end of the world if you don't achieve the mark that you wanted if you tried your hardest. The St Charbel's College, Punchbowl, graduate says that St Charbel's Maronite Catholic parish his "second family", and he truly has made them proud. Joshua hopes to pursue medicine at university but will continue studying Semitic languages. Once again congratulations Joshua on your amazing achievements and good luck with your medical degree, you have made our community proud. I would also like to congratulate every student who completed their HSC.

### COOMA SHOW AWARD WINNERS

**Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education)**—The Cooma show is coming up, and the rural achiever and young woman of the year have been announced. Congratulations to Louise Doyle, this year's rural achiever, and Emily Rowson the 2024 young woman of the year and the 2024 Zone 3 finalist. Agricultural shows play an important part in building and connecting rural communities. I'm delighted to see that these two women from Eucumbene and Jindabyne have such a positive impact and message for their area. Ensuring a love of agriculture is passed on through the generations is what keeps these industries and areas alive. While it may be a little late, I'd also like to congratulate Florance McGufficke who was named The Land Sydney Royal AgShows NSW Young Woman of the year for 2023. Florance is a Cooma local who grew up on her family's Merino sheep farm and is completing her degrees in agriculture and business at the University of New England. Florance has a bright future in agriculture, and we all look forward to seeing what she does.

### EMILIA BURFORD

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to congratulate Emilia Burford, from Shell Cove, for starring in the new the upcoming Paramount series Paper Dolls. With the release of her new R&B single Stacks, and a TV show where she stars in one of the lead roles, the triple threat, who goes by the name Emalia these days, has accomplished in her young years. The drama series, Paper Dolls, is about five aspiring singers in a manufactured girl group, set in the early 2000s and launched on 3 December, 2023. Over 300 young women auditioned to fill the roles of the five band members, but 26-year-old Emalia's powerful vocals and determination led her to get the lead role of Izzy James. She said Paper Dolls explored many sides of the music industry, as five young women navigate the dark side of a glamorous industry determined to commodify them. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Emilia on her amazing achievements and wish her well in her future performing endeavours.

### TIANA VASSALLO

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to congratulate Tiana Vassallo, from Shell Cove, for starring in the new Amazon Prime series Dance Life as an in-demand dancer. The Amazon Prime original series is about a group of students battling through their final year of training at the elite Sydney dance studio Brent Street. Getting a place at Brent Street was always a dream for Miss Vassallo who has been dancing since she was two-years-old. The determined dancer didn't really have the time to be a normal teenager, devoting every spare minute to training in a dance studio. Throughout Dance Life, the group of students work towards their end-of-year grad performance in the hope of securing an agent and professional dancer's future. Despite the fierce competitiveness in the series, Miss Vassallo said there's so much room in the industry for different career options. Dance Life exclusively premiered on Prime Video on Friday, January 19. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Tiana on her amazing achievements and wish her well in her future dancing endeavours.

### ANNA COOK

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to extend my congratulations to Anna Cook and her organization, Oak Flats Community Garden, on the successful soft launch of their project, the Oak Flats Community Garden. I am confident that this wonderful initiative will strengthen our community bonds and provide food for those in need. It is a commendable endeavour and an excellent utilization of the open green space at Hippisley Park. My heartfelt thanks go to Anna and everyone involved in this remarkable community project.

### SUE CHILVERS - GRIFFITH

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Today I would like to recognise Mrs Sue Chilvers, whose dedication to the field of education spans an impressive 40 years in the Riverina region. Sue's teaching journey began in Pleasant Hills, before transferring to Yoogali Public School. After having kids, she began at Yenda Public, where

she has been for the past 26 years. Sue is adored by both her students and co-workers. As a pioneer in the implementation of Reading Recovery, an intensive early intervention program for struggling Year One students, Sue has improved countless lives by fostering essential literacy and numeracy skills. Currently serving as the Assistant Principal, Curriculum and Instruction, she plays an integral role in mentoring fellow teachers and shaping the school. This year marks Sue's retirement from teaching, her presence will be missed, however her legacy will undoubtedly endure. Beyond her educational contributions, Sue is an Anglican Priest for the Coleambally and Darlington Point parish, where she is involved in fundraising and assisting disadvantaged individuals. Mrs Sue Chilvers is an asset to the community and deserves to be commended for her contributions.

#### **LIBBY TREMBATH - GRIFFITH**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Today I would like to recognise Libby Trembath for her volunteer contributions to the community as president of Griffith Soroptimist International. Libby's work with Soroptimist International is focused on educating, enabling and empowering women and girls in the local community and worldwide. As part of the organisation's 100th birthday last year, bikes were gathered from the Griffith community to send to young girls in Samoa to get to and from school. Libby and her team are strong activists against gender-based violence. Recently they collaborated with Griffith Domestic Violence Committee and created a series of flags, raising awareness and encouraging people to speak out against violence which are on display down the main street. Libby and the Griffith Soroptimists work tirelessly to fundraise and promote equity for women in the local community. She organised a visit to the local high school to celebrate International Day of the Girl and help educate and empower young women. Libby and the Griffith Soroptimists are an asset to the community, and I would like to acknowledge their efforts to make Griffith a better place.

#### **RUTH MCRAE - JERILDERIE**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Today I would like to recognise Cr Ruth McRae for her commitment to local government and the Murrumbidgee community. Ruth has been a councillor for over 19 years, elected as mayor of Jerilderie Shire Council in 2014, then re-elected as Mayor of the amalgamated Murrumbidgee Council in 2017 where she has remained since. She entered public office to represent Jerilderie and the wider region. This stemmed from her interests in education, early education, health, disability access and services, aged care, sporting clubs and water. Cr McRae has a genuine passion and is motivated to do the best she can for the community. She is happy to work with whoever can best assist her communities, not letting politics get in the way of this. This year, Cr McRae was awarded with an Order of Australia Medal in the King's Birthday Honours List for her long-standing dedication to local government and the community. Cr Ruth McRae is to be commended for her determined approach to Local Government. She is an inspirational leader in the community who is well deserving of her achievements.

#### **TRACY DUDDING - BYTH AM**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle)**—Conjoint Professor Tracy Dudding-Byth has been appointed as a Member of the Order of Australia for her significant service to medical research, particularly genetics, and to the community. Professor Dudding-Byth has devoted her career to studying rare diseases, namely neurofibromatosis type 1, which affects 1 in 2500 people by making them at risk of developing tumours affecting the skin and nervous system. Her research goal is to find a way to treat these tumours. Professor Dudding-Byth is a strong advocate for those living with rare diseases, having founded Rare Voices Australia, the national peak body for the 1.5 million Australians with a rare disease. She is also a Member of the Medical Advisory Committee at the Steve Waugh Foundation and Ambassador at Syndromes Without A Name. Her service to people living with disability and rare disease is highly commendable. Congratulations Professor Dudding-Byth, you are very worthy of this appointment.

#### **PROFESSOR KELVIN KONG AM**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle)**—Professor Kelvin Kong is one of the most inspiring people in the country, as Australia's first Indigenous surgeon, the 2023 National NAIDOC Person of the Year, and now he has been appointed as a Member of the Order of Australia in the 2024 Australia Day Honours. Dr Kong is a proud Worimi man and a renowned Otolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgeon at the John Hunter Hospital and John Hunter Children's Hospital. In addition to working at Newcastle's local public hospital, Dr Kong is in a research group at Hunter Medical Research Institute investigating hearing loss caused by middle ear disease, which affects First Nations children at a much higher rate to any other group in the world. His passion for closing the gap in health outcomes for First Nations children is admirable. Dr Kong is also a Fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons and the Chair of its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Advisory Committee and a Professor at the University of Newcastle, educating the doctors of tomorrow. Congratulations Dr Kong and thank you for your compassion and service to Newcastle and all of Australia.



**JENNY GORE AM**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)**—Well done to Professor Jenny Gore on being appointed as a Member of the Order of Australia for her significant service to tertiary education. Professor Gore is a Laureate Professor in Education and the founder of Quality Teaching Rounds [QTR], and innovative and teacher-oriented approach to professional development. Since its establishment, QTR has been implemented in over 2,500 private and public schools across Australia. The approach has been foster a more positive learning environment and improve teaching quality and educational outcomes of the school. Professor Gore has come a long way from the PE teacher she was when she began her career. This appointment is very well-deserved. Congratulations Professor Gore.

**GRANVILLE RAILWAY DISASTER - 1977**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)**—The date 18 January marked the 47th anniversary of the Granville Railway Disaster and I am sure many in the House, remember that day vividly. On that day in 1977 at approximately 8:10 am, 210 people were injured and 84 people tragically lost their lives when a Blue Mountains train from Mount Victoria derailed and collided with the Bold St rail bridge on the approach to Granville Station. Tragically, hundreds of lives were changed forever, from those involved in the crash to emergency service workers to bystanders who witnessed the event. The resultant trauma and pain is still felt by families and friends who lost loved ones. I want to acknowledge and commemorate those we lost on the 18th of January 1977 and in particular I would also like to acknowledge and commend the valiant efforts of those survivors of the event who have dedicated their lives to promote better safety regulations and protocols on our railways and in our infrastructure, to reduce the risk of a similar event every happening again and inflicting so much irreversible pain and grief on so many innocent people.

**VALE ERIC TWEEDALE**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)**—Today I honour the life and recognise the passing of one of Parramatta's favourite sporting sons and World War II veteran Eric Tweedale. Eric was born on 5 May 1921 in Lancashire, England and emigrated with his family to Australia in 1924. After his family settled in Merrylands, Eric attended Guildford Public School and Parramatta Intermediate. Eric studied at the Metropolitan Business School which gave him the skills to secure a job at the Shells Oil Company at Camellia. Eric joined the Royal Australian Navy in 1941 during WW II. He served 4 years as a convoy signalman and protected essential Australian assets from being destroyed by the Japanese submarines. Following the war, he returned to Parramatta. Surrounded by a competitive sporting scene in Parramatta, Eric pursued a career in Rugby Union. Growing up, he played club rugby for Parramatta Two Blues, going on to represent NSW in provincial rugby. Following his service in World War II, Eric played at the international level for the Wallabies on 10 occasions from 1946 - 1949 as a prop. Eric's contributions to the Parramatta community and his country will forever be remembered and celebrated.

**NORMA POTTER**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)**—I recently had the pleasure of attending a very special gathering - Norma Potter's Birthday Party. On November 22nd Norma turned 100 and I was honoured to share in the festivities. Norma grew up in North Parramatta and has lived for 40 years in Kingsdene. She has witnessed some of the most seismic changes to society and technology in her time, and through them all she has brought resilience, love and commitment. Norma has always been engaged in her community and was a founding member of the "Friends of Mays Hill cemetery" and she is passionately committed to the preservation of the site. Norma has such a zest for life, she's sharp as a tack, spritely and insightful. She is an inspiration to so many of us of how to live life to its fullest and never let tragedy or adversity get the best of us. Our Parramatta community is that much richer in spirit for her presence. My congratulations to Norma on reaching the remarkable milestone that is becoming a centenarian. Thank you for all you have done for our community, your friends and your family, we all appreciate it.

**13TH ANNUAL TOY DRIVE DONATED TO SAHSSI**

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast)**—I am beyond proud to highlight the generosity from the big-hearted people in my electorate of Keira and the broader community of the Illawarra, individuals, local business and ever supportive clubs for their community spirit in providing gifts for children this past Christmas. A record-breaking number of donations were received and donated to SAHSSI, (Supported Accommodation and Homelessness Services Shoalhaven and Illawarra) an organisation that supports vulnerable women and families. This overwhelming kindness ensured that hundreds of children across the region woke up to presents under the Christmas tree. I want to acknowledge the wonderful organisations Woonona Bulli RSL, Wests Illawarra, SAHSSI, Gonglug and the

Bungalow Group for their kindness and continuous support. Also, my humble gratitude goes out to all of the hardworking people who assisted with allocating the gifts to ensure children impacted by domestic violence received a gift this Christmas. This generosity and collaborative effort epitomises community spirit and that we can make a difference in the lives of others.

#### **ANNIE JIA WANG- RECOGNITION OF SERVICE**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—I wish to sincerely thank Annie Jia Wang for her service to the Electorate of Prospect. Annie has been an invaluable member of my team, supporting both my Electorate and Parliamentary Office for over 8 years. A natural advocate, Annie has given countless hours to support individuals and community groups. Taking an intersectional lens, she helped drive key initiatives to benefit our community. Guided by her faith, Annie embraces every task with genuine empathy and care. A highly capable and tenacious person, Annie is a true role model for the next generation. My longest serving Electorate Officer, Annie commenced work in the Prospect Electorate as a student at Prairiewood High School. Whilst supporting me throughout my tenure as the Member for Prospect, Annie completed tertiary studies at the University of New South Wales. With her passion for providing education and opportunity to all, I am very pleased that Annie will continue contributing to our community as a High School teacher. Annie, I thank you for your years of hard work and support. I am proud of all you have accomplished and wish you every success as you begin this new chapter.

#### **PARRAMATTA AND DISTRICT REGIONAL LAW SOCIETY – ANNUAL DINNER**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—On 18 October 2023, I was proud, as Parliamentary Secretary to the Attorney General the Hon. Michael Daley, to attend the Parramatta & District Regional Law Society Annual Dinner. The Parramatta & District Regional Law Society provides a voice to local solicitors, to support them to serve our local community. The Society promotes local legal initiatives, advocates for key issues impacting practitioners and provides education and training opportunities. Through collaborative efforts and an unwavering commitment to justice, equity and accountability, the Parramatta Law Society is a key to the provision of high calibre legal services in Western Sydney. The Annual Dinner gathered members of the judiciary, barristers, solicitors, dignitaries, and practitioners to reflect on the role of law and justice. Across Western Sydney, we are fortunate to have many committed practitioners, striving to provide equitable legal solutions. The Dinner connected society members to celebrate professional successes, discuss issues facing Western Sydney and foster connections to champion initiatives for change. Thank you to Stephen McAuley, President, and members of the Parramatta Law Society for organising this wonderful event. Your dedication to providing fair and accessible legal outcomes for our community is truly commendable.

#### **KRYSHTOF PARADEAUX**

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)**—I congratulate another Liverpool resident who was part of Australia's Winter Youth Olympics team in South Korea. Kryshtof Pradeaux competed in the figure skating pairs division in the long and short program. A Hammondville local who practices at the Liverpool Catholic Club skating rink, Kryshtof's commitment to his 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 Kryshtof and the entire Australian Winter Youth Olympics team for making us proud. May their achievements continue to inspire generations to come.

#### **LIVERPOOL AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS**

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)**—On Australia Day Liverpool City Council hosted a citizenship ceremony and their annual Australia Day Awards, where the great work of community leaders and volunteers were celebrated. Mayor Ned Mannoun, Deputy Mayor Fiona Macnaught and Australia Day ambassador Terry O'Connell OAM presented Kirsty Parkes as the Citizen of the Year, Bella Ma as Young Citizen of the Year, Allan David James as Senior Citizen of the Year, Nedal 'Skinny' Hussein as the Sports Award winner, Associate Professor Rajeev Jariam for the Health Award, Liverpool Nutrition for the Health Award, Elders Coffee Club for the Fraser Environment Award, Amy Eldridge for the Cultural and Arts Award, and the Meals on Wheels for the Macquarie Award. Congratulations to all of these individuals and organisations for their work, I look forward to working with them into the future as they make Liverpool a better place to live through their community spirit.

#### **40TH ANNIVERSARY OF NORTHBRIDGE ROTARY CLUB**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—I warmly congratulate Northbridge Rotary Club on the occasion of its 40th anniversary. The Rotary Club of Northbridge was chartered by Rotary International on 5 December 1983 followed by a formal charter night on 3 February 1984. In its four decades of existence, Northbridge Rotary has much to celebrate with its generous contribution to our community and wider world. At the local level, the Club has helped the less fortunate in our community through its annual food drives, Tree of Joy, and the ever-popular

Northbridge Fireworks, together with supporting local charities including Taldumande Youth Services, Hope in a Suitcase, and Streetwork. Helping those abroad, Northbridge Rotary has sponsored a whole host of humanitarian projects from disaster relief in Tonga to supporting Ukrainian refugees. To celebrate its 40 years of 'service above self', the President of Northbridge Rotary Club, Luke Keighery, invited rotarians and community leaders to join them for a celebratory dinner at Kirribilli. I convey my warmest congratulations and gratitude to all members of Northbridge Rotary who have done our community proud.

#### **MY FRENCH SCHOOL**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—On Saturday 16 December 2023, I had the pleasure of been invited to the Christmas celebrations at My French School in Crows Nest. A boutique language school, My French School was established in 2018 to offer French classes to English and French speakers. Catering for children from two to seventeen years old, it also offers French language classes for adults. Committed to unlocking the artistic potential of its students, the School offers courses in French art history, music classes, drama classes and French holiday camps. As well as catering to members of the French-speaking community, the school offers native English-speakers the benefits of a bilingual education. The School appreciates the great merits of learning another language for both cognitive development and the fostering of cross-cultural understanding. It was a joy to be with founder Delphine Nougatine, teachers, students, parents, and Santa as we said and sang Joyeux Noel.

#### **JEWISH ARTS INC**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—Jewish Arts Inc is a wonderful community organisation dedicated to fostering and showcasing Jewish culture through the visual and performing arts. Identifying more as cultural than religious, Jewish Arts provides the Jewish and general community with opportunities to enjoy and learn about Jewish culture. After twenty years of serving the community, I was sorry to hear that Jewish Arts will be closing its doors by mid-2025. This organisation can be very proud of what it has achieved and to celebrate its work, it will stage a 'long farewell' through a series of events. One of these key events will be a 'Community of Choirs' to be held at the North Shore Temple Emanuel Synagogue on 23 June 2024. The concert will be a feast of multicultural choral music, performed by a diverse group of choirs. In the past, these have included Spanish, Jewish, Korean, Bosnian, and Arabic choirs. I would encourage members of the Willoughby community to support this concert for not only its beautiful music, but as a way of giving thanks for the work of Jewish Arts Inc.

#### **SOUTH NARRABEEN SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB – BUSH TO BEACH 2024**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—I congratulate the South Narrabeen Surf Life Saving Club on the success of the Bush to Beach 2024. Each year, around 35 kids from northwest NSW are invited to participate on a 3-day surf camp, providing them with the opportunity to learn new skills, build confidence and, for many, enjoy the beach for the first time. Established by Jack Cannons AM in collaboration with elders and members of the Brewarrina community, the program is offered as a means of recognising students who have demonstrated good school attendance and behaviour throughout the school year. Now in their 19th year of hosting, South Narra's Bush to Beach program has seen almost 1000 children from communities including Brewarrina, Bourke and Goodooga visit Pittwater's beautiful Narrabeen Beach. This program changes lives for the better. Thank you to Surf Club President, Duncan Schieb, Kristen Wright for providing her Educate Resuscitate Project and service for several years, and all the volunteers involved in the 2024 program, from swimming at North Narrabeen rockpool, to beach cricket to learning about safety, I know all involved will remember their experience for years to come.

#### **CLAREVILLE KIOSK**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—I pay tribute to the Clareville Kiosk, a culinary institution in the Pittwater community for 41 years. Many locals still remember when the Clareville Kiosk was a place to buy newspapers and lollies, until, under the direction of restaurateur Annie Parmentier, it became a wonderful dining destination. The Kiosk is often credited as the epicentre of the sticky toffee pudding, which quickly became a popular menu item in Sydney restaurants and cafes during the 80s and 90s. Despite its distance from the Sydney CBD, Clareville Kiosk had been a longstanding fixture on the culinary map and has enjoyed decades of success thanks to the various talented owners and chefs who have worked within its walls. Thank you to owners, Nathan and Jess Boler, for your service since 2015, our community wishes you all the best in your future endeavours.

#### **CAREEL BAY TENNIS CLUB**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—I recently had the opportunity to visit the Careel Bay Tennis Club and meet with their executive team. Over the last few years, the club has enjoyed record jumps in membership numbers, and they are eager to continue to expand and engage with our local community. It was a privilege to witness the enthusiasm and devotion the team has to ensuring the club is always improving and innovating. Their plan to upgrade their facilities, implement new initiatives to attract more members, is to be admired. Thank you

to Club Captain - Michelle Lusty, Vice President – Steve Koolloos and Malcolm Wallace for hosting me at the club. I wish the entire executive and committee, particularly President – Graeme Saunders, every success. I'm sure Careel Bay Tennis Club will continue to make significant contributions to our community.

#### **BYRON ENVIRONMENT CENTRE**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—Today I recognise the extraordinary contribution made to the community in Byron Shire and the Northern Rivers by the Byron Environment Centre. The Byron Environment Centre has been a voluntary organisation since its inception in 1989 and is a cornerstone of the local environmental ethos and activism within our region. It was incorporated in 1992 and has been engaged in countless successful efforts to protect the lands and waters of the Byron Shire since its establishment. The Byron Environment Centre is a mainstay for rallies and notices of action, as well as providing education and general information for local and regional environmental concerns. Its volunteers also service the community by initiating and working on a wide range of rehabilitation projects and campaigns. Big thanks to John Lazarus, Convenor of the Byron Environment Centre, who stepped down after nine years of serving, and the flag has been passed to Emma Briggs. Congratulations and thanks are offered for the time and efforts of these dedicated humans on behalf of our local ecosystems.

#### **TOM CAREY AND KYLIE CAREY**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—Today I recognise the efforts of Tom and Kylie Carey, who make up the dynamic new management team of the Ballina Shire Farmers and Produce Market. This hardworking couple have helped revitalise this iconic regional market – Both Tom and Kylie are farmers, and Kylie comes from a family that has been farming in the Ballina Shire for almost 50 years. The Ballina Farmers Market is the Far North Coast's longest running market, starting in the 1980's with just a few stall holders. This market has grown into a lively riverside event for both the community and for tourists to gather and enjoy the literal fruits of local labour. I would like to congratulate this duo, and the stallholders, for building a hub for community and tourist alike to gather and experience the incredible array of offerings the local growers of the Ballina Shire have to offer.

#### **MOSMAN LOCAL FEATURES IN NSW SENIOR STORIES**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I recognise Mosman local Daryl Pratt who is featured in the NSW Senior's Stories that was published last year. Over one hundred seniors have put their pen to paper to share their personal stories in a writing competition that is aimed at celebrating the lives and contributions of seniors by giving them the opportunity to share their own short stories about their life experiences. And that's exactly what Daryl has done. Daryl who describes himself as a sprightly 76 year old retired financial planner, who is going to regale readers with tales of the good old days throughout the 1940's, 50's and 60s. Daryl outlines the surviving some of the hardships faced such as walking to school and economic depressions, having fun without technology, making gourmet meals out of cans of tin beans, and relying on laughter to keep spirits high. Daryl finishes his reminiscing with a message to our 'dear young men and women' to step out into the world and experience all the joys and challenges that life has to offer. Congratulations Daryl on featuring in the Senior's Stories, and for a wonderful trip down memory lane.

#### **SHORE STUDENT COMPETES IN WINTER YOUTH OLYMPICS**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I recognise the outstanding achievements of Shore student Duncan Cowan who was selected to represent Australia at Gangwon's 2024 Winter Youth Olympics. While many students were enjoying their summer break, Year 12 student Duncan set off for South Korea for the multi-sport event, cultural event, and fourth edition of the Winter Youth Olympics. Duncan proudly represented Team Australia as Flag Bearer at the 2024 Winter Youth Olympics which is an immense honour and something that I am sure Duncan will remember for the rest of his life. Duncan went on to compete in the Men's Ski Cross event, and places him among a select few Shore boys who have risen to hold the mantle of Olympian. Congratulations Duncan on this outstanding achievement, and I know we can expect great things from you in your future thanks to your commitment, skill and dedication. Good luck.

#### **KOGARAH STOREHOUSE MANAGER**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I would like to acknowledge and congratulate Kogarah Storehouse General Manager Ms Lala Noronha, who was recently awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia, for her distinguished service to her local community. Ms Noronha is well-known to the St George community for her tireless work at the Kogarah Storehouse which has become a centre of friendship for many in need. Since becoming General Manager in 2015, Ms Noronha has led the organisation through a period of unprecedented growth. She has grown existing programs, delivered new ones and expanded its outreach programs. The Storehouse provides over 3,300 free food parcels a year, hosts free Wednesday community lunches and offers payment assistance for electricity, gas, water and other bills for people in need. Ms Noronha was also named 2020

Kogarah Woman of the Year for her ongoing commitment to helping those who are less fortunate. I wish to thank Ms Noronha for her outstanding contribution to the community of St George and express my deepest appreciation for the remarkable impact she has made in her role as General Manager.

#### JACQUELINE KEIR

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I commend and congratulate Jacqueline Keir who recently graduated from St Ursula College in 2023 with an absolutely outstanding HSC result. Jacqueline achieved a remarkable ATAR of 99.4, scoring within the top 1 per cent of the state. She is also on the Distinguished Achievers list for Chemistry, English Advanced and Physics, having received Band 6s in those courses. These outstanding results are reflective of Jacqueline's immense talent, hard work, time, and energy she has put into her studies. I also want to pay tribute to the efforts of her family and community who have supported Jacqueline in achieving this fantastic result. Moreover, it is important to recognise the tireless hard work and support of Jacqueline's teachers during both her HSC journey and throughout her entire schooling experience. In large part, Jacqueline's success is also a result of the consistently high expectations, collaborative competition and high-quality teaching which St Ursula's College has provided for her. Jacqueline's immense dedication to her studies and work ethic is an inspiration to us all. I have no doubt that Jacqueline will go on to achieve amazing things at university and her career beyond high school and wish her all the success in the future.

#### BEN ACHESON

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I would like to acknowledge and congratulate much loved community veterinarian, Ben Acheson. Mr Acheson is celebrating 20 years of service at Benny and the Pets, Kogarah Veterinary Hospital. For two decades, Ben has worked incredibly hard to keep the pets in the community of Kogarah safe and healthy while providing a friendly and warm environment for them. Ben not only provides much needed healthcare to animals but also is renowned for supporting owners through difficult times. Mr Acheson has helped more than 600 dogs brought to him by Golden Retriever Rescue and supports numerous charity organisations. Throughout the years, Ben has touched the lives of so many people in Kogarah with his incredible dedication and passion for providing veterinary healthcare. To celebrate his service and dedication to the community, residents gifted a leather-bound book of thanks, with messages of gratitude from those who have known him across the past two decades. It is such an honour to be able to recognise Ben's selfless hard work supporting our community. I wish to sincerely thank Mr Acheson for his amazing work he does to provide important healthcare and to support our community, for which we are extremely grateful.

#### STAR CLUB EQUESTRIAN PROGRAM

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—I would like to recognise the official launch of the Star Club Equestrian Program in Dubbo under the very experienced leadership of local Kate Edwards. Star Club Equestrian Program is a not-for-profit association which has been providing equestrian opportunities for riders with an Intellectual Disability, Acquired Brain Injury, Cognitive/ Behavioural Impairments, Autism and Mental Health for the past 5 years and now thanks to Kate and her passion for people and horses, Dubbo can access this wonderful program too! The Dubbo Star Club is now the 8th Star Club program to open in NSW alongside Singleton, Mandalong, Milbrodale-Broke, Tamworth, Merriwa, Port Macquarie and the Illawarra. Focusing on developing skills, riding ability, individual goals, horsemanship, socialisation, health and wellbeing and inclusion, the program is open to all ages and riding ability and can significantly improve the lives of the participants. Congratulations Kate for your commitment to this wonderful program and embarking on impacting the lives of people in the Dubbo electorate. I can't wait to hear many success stories to come!

#### MIRANDA SIMPSON

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—I would like to recognise Miranda Simpson's remarkable achievement as the Trainee of the Year Award recipient from the Aboriginal Employment Strategy. Completing a school-based traineeship while managing the demands of the HSC is truly commendable and reflects her dedication and hard work. Miranda's commitment to her business services traineeship at the National Australia Bank's Dubbo Branch, along with her positive impact on the local community, showcases her as a role model for others. It's heartening to know that both her school and employer have acknowledged her character and work ethic. The Aboriginal Employment Strategy's support for Indigenous youth in the Dubbo region through school-based and full-time traineeships has made a significant impact since its launch in 2003. Congratulations to Miranda on this outstanding accomplishment, and may your success inspire and pave the way for more young individuals in the community. Wishing you all the best in your future endeavours!

#### NARROMINE CRICKET CLUB

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—I would like to recognise the Narromine Cricket Club who were awarded the Cricket NSW's Community Club of the Year in 2023. Just three years ago, Narromine, the hometown

of Aussie cricket superstar Glen McGrath, did not have a junior cricket club, with players having to travel to Dubbo to play. A group of local parents decided to take action and came together to revive the sport in their hometown. Since the reintroduction of the sport there has been in excess of 100 players join the club across junior and senior cricket. This includes players from surrounding townships such as Gilgandra and Wellington. Whilst the growth hasn't been without its challenges, President Greg Kerr, Treasurer Kate Elder and a dedicated group of committee members are committed to creating a pathway from cricket blast right through to the senior ranks. On day four of the Pink Test in Sydney early this year, Greg & Kate enjoyed a day at the cricket, which was awarded to them as part of being the Community Club of the Year, a day which I'm sure inspired their love for the game even more! Well done to everyone involved!

#### **RACHEL ALLWORTH**

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills)**—I am thrilled to acknowledge a very important and respected achiever in sport from my electorate of East Hills. Rachel Allworth, founder of Panania Park Run and who proudly carried the Commonwealth Games baton in 2018, is currently participating in RedFeb to raise awareness for heart disease. Rachel was 45 years old and in the prime of her fitness when she contracted a mysterious illness. She attributed it to the tension and stress associated with Covid 19. Rachel unfortunately felt ill and was hospitalised for more than ten days when her regular fit and healthy heart rate quickly and suddenly increased to 266 bpm. She was sadly informed by doctors that she would never be able to run again when she was diagnosed with a type of cardiomyopathy. Rachel is now promoting awareness of heart illness, which is unfortunately the biggest single cause of deaths in Australia. Heart Research Australia is inviting everyone to wear 'red' for someone close to their heart in February to help keep families together and raise funds for research. I extend my warm wishes to Rachel and thank her for her contributions in raising awareness for this very important cause.

#### **SYDNEY SURVIVORSHIP CENTRE – CELEBRATING 10 YEARS**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—One of the first cancer survivorship clinics in NSW celebrated 10 years of providing dedicated support to patients and their families following a cancer diagnosis. I recently visited the Centre at Concord Hospital to join the clinic for its tenth anniversary celebrations. It is a special achievement, marking ten years of the clinic supporting patients and loved ones, undergoing cancer treatment. Established in 2013, the Sydney Survivorship Centre at Concord Hospital aims to help survivors at all stages of the cancer journey. It focuses on helping people make positive lifestyle changes, including improving their physical activity and nutrition, as well as providing psychological support. I take this opportunity to recognise Professor Janette Vardy, Director of the Sydney Survivorship Centre who has worked tirelessly to help and support people living with a cancer diagnosis. Janette helped to establish the Sydney Cancer Survivorship Centre and over a decade, the clinic has supported almost 1,000 cancer patients. I sincerely thank and congratulate Janette and all clinicians and staff at the Sydney Survivorship Centre for their remarkable work. I wish them all the very best for the future.

#### **MR CARMINE SCELZI - 100TH BIRTHDAY**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I warmly congratulate my local constituent Mr Carmine Rocco Scelzi of Chiswick, who will be turning 100 on 14 February 2024. I sincerely wish Carmine all the very best on this very special occasion. I hope that he has a lovely time celebrating this special milestone with family and loved ones. Carmine's birthday falls on Valentine's Day, and I know he will be celebrating a century of memories and joy with his wife Maria. On behalf of our local community, I extend my best wishes to Carmine and his family. I sincerely wish him all the very best.

#### **BRIARS WOMEN'S RUGBY TEAM – 2023 EMIRATES DUBAI 7S**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I take this opportunity to acknowledge the Briars Women's Rugby Team which recently competed in the 2023 Emirates Dubai 7s. I sincerely congratulate the team on placing third overall at the International Tournament. I know it takes a lot of preparation and training in the lead up to a competition like this, and their hard work and determination has paid off with this terrific result. Congratulations to Team Co-captains: Kate Mateffy and Annabel Woo. And congratulations to the Team Members: Pui San Lai, Chloe Bromage, Keisha Lotoaniu, Jacinta Tui, Ruthie Mose-Aunei, Taylah Watson, Bianca Bennetts, Ameena Kanj, Emily Eden and Olympia Plummer. I also acknowledge and congratulate to Team Coach David Lannan, Team Manager Courtney Miller and Team Physiotherapist Alicia Ludkin who play an important role in the team's success. Before the competition, Briars set the goal, 'Winning Dubai the Briars Way: Train Hard, Play Hard' and together they have accomplished this. Once again, I would like to sincerely congratulate Briars Women's Rugby on the recent achievement at the Dubai Rugby 7s tournament.

**NEIL BIBBY AM**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)**—I would like to congratulate Mr Neil Bibby AM of Lane Cove, for his half century of service to our community through emergency service organisations. Since retirement in 2010 his service for the community hasn't stopped and he has chaired the Emergency Services Foundation for the past 9 years. Congratulations Mr Bibby

**PROFESSOR STEPHEN WILLIAM CALLISTER AM**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)**—I would like to congratulate Professor Stephen William Callister AM of Greenwich for significant service to the community, particularly men's mental health. A prostate cancer survivor, since 2004 he has moderated the Prostate Cancer Support Group at his hospital. These support groups are now in 130 locations across Australia. Now the National Chair for Prostate Cancer Foundation Australia his service to his community in raising awareness and funding continues strongly. Congratulations Professor Callister

**PROFESSOR PAUL ROACH AM**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)**—I would like to congratulate Professor Paul Roach AM of St Leonards for his service to Nuclear Medicine and medical research. As the Director of Nuclear Medicine and Positron Emission Tomography at Royal North Shore Hospital his expertise has saved countless lives and reached thousands of students via his 125 peer-reviewed articles. Congratulations Professor Roach.

**POPPY NOONE**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—I would like to recognise one of my younger constituents, Poppy Noone who at the young age of just 14 recently represented Australia in the Ice Hockey 3x3 tournament at the 2024 Winter Youth Olympic Games held in Gangwon, South Korea. Poppy successfully juggles her high school studies attending St Joseph's Catholic College at East Gosford whilst playing for the Sydney Bears Bantams and the Central Coast Stingrays. Having taken up the sport from the age of eight, Poppy has had many career highlights including winning gold at the 2022 Ginsberg State Championship and the 2022 Scurfield Cup Tournament. Poppy also achieved the 2022 Peewee Macquarie Bears Team Player's award. Being selected as one of the 13 players for the ice hockey team is a wonderful accolade as this was the first time an all-Australian ice hockey represented Australia at a Youth Olympics. As an athlete you have represented your country with pride and passion. Congratulations Poppy on this wonderful achievement. You are a wonderful role model for youth here on the Central Coast and we wish you all the best with your future dreams to continue to represent Australia in the future.

**LOUISE CAMERON**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—I acknowledge and extend congratulations to Louise Cameron the Lithgow City Council's recipient of the Open Volunteer of the Year Award. Louise is a very committed volunteer who has made a significant contribution to the Australian Red Cross since 2009. Her outstanding service to the community has also seen her embrace a commitment to ARC Emergency Services, Lithgow Community Transport and the Lithgow Aged Care Auxiliary. Louise's level of dedication and tireless efforts are immeasurable, and I commend her level of service and endeavours so selflessly given to the Lithgow community. Congratulations to Louise Cameron, a truly wonderful citizen.

**GLEN MUSEUM**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—I extend congratulations to the Glen Museum and the recent acknowledgement given through the Lithgow City Council's Heritage Conservation Award. The Glen Museum were given the Award in acknowledgement of the significant contribution given to the preservation of the heritage of the Lithgow LGA. The Museum is housed in the old hospital building at the former Portland Cement Works site and contains some unique and rare objects that provide an invaluable insight into rural life in a town built around one industry and one company. The Glen is managed and maintained by a volunteer committee and is emerging as a key tourist attraction for locals and tourists alike. I congratulate the Glen Museum on their endeavours and the recognition given through receiving the Heritage Conservation Award.

**OLLYVAR BAKER**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—Ollyvar Baker is the recipient of the Lithgow City Council's Young Citizen of the Year Award. Ollyvar made a significant contribution to the cultural landscape of Lithgow through his outstanding performance at the 2023 School Spectacular. His level of commitment and dedication have portrayed him as a wonderful role model for youth in the community wanting to follow a career in the arts. To attain the highest of standards in this area requires many hours of selfless dedication and Ollyvar's commitment

to his art had no boundaries to enable him to reach his goals. I congratulate Ollyvar Baker on the recognition given him through this Award and wish him every success in his future pursuits.

#### **MUSWELLBROOK AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS 2024**

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter)**—I congratulate Muswellbrook Shire Council for the recognition given to its community in the 2024 Australia Day Awards. Dr Mark Rikard-Bell and Dr Del Mullins, who have practiced medicine in Muswellbrook for more than 40 years named the Citizen of the Year award recipients. There are two Young Citizen of the Year Award recipients – congratulations Charlise Anderson and Yasmin Jimmieson. Charlise is an independent, motivated student at St Joseph's Aberdeen and represented the Upper Hunter at the National Leadership Summit in Adelaide. Yasmin has held numerous leadership positions within the SES and has volunteered for numerous youth organisations. The Open Award presented to Muswellbrook RSL Sub-Branch for the Vietnam Memorial Grove and associated facilities, Chris English recognised for his arts and sports contributions and Roohaven Wildlife, where Julie and Brad Smith rescue, rehabilitate and release all manner of wildlife. Singing teacher Samantha Cobcroft honoured with the Arts and Culture Award. Muswellbrook South Public School Environment and Sustainability Group (Green Team) rewarded with the Sustainability Award. Sport awards recipients are Charli-Rose Wilson as the Junior Sportsperson, Senior Sportsperson is Porscha Jimmieson and The Lady CATS AFL Team 2023 named the Sports Team Award winner.

#### **ST GEORGE COMMUNITY HOUSING SCHOLARSHIPS**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)**—In the words of Nelson Mandela, "education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world". Recently, I had the honour of attending and addressing the St George Community Housing Strive Scholarship Awards Ceremony at the Casula Powerhouse. Students, parents and caregivers, and local service providers attended to celebrate the achievements and future goals of some very special young people. The Strive Scholarships assist students in SGCH properties with educational costs, and are used to pay for things like school fees, stationery, computers or extracurricular activities. Since their commencement in 2006, these scholarships have assisted thousands of kids. This year, 278 students from Kindergarten to Year 12 were awarded a Strive Scholarship, directing more than \$229,000 of vital funds to those who need it most. It was fantastic to hear from Yasmine Zanzoul, a previous recipient of a Strive Scholarship who credits the program with helping her achieve her goals – and she is now teacher helping the next generation of young people to change their world. Well done Group CEO Scott Langford, and all the team at SGCH for the much needed work backing in our young people.

#### **STATE OF POLITICIANS MENTAL HEALTH REPORT**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)**—The last few years have been instrumental in shifting the dial on our community's appreciation of the importance of mental health. Often, however, the importance of ensuring the wellbeing and mental health of our elected representatives and decision makers is under-appreciated. Recently, the Apolitical Foundation produced Mere Mortals, a report on the wellbeing of political representatives. This report, the first of its kind, delves into the factors influencing the wellbeing of politicians and its impact on contemporary policy challenges. Researchers conducted surveys and interviews of current and former politicians to gauge the various impacts on their mental wellbeing and their capacity to perform their role effectively. Notably, the report highlights the current dehumanizing climate of politics, as well as the need for public recognition of mental wellbeing as a conduit for forging stronger connections between politicians and their communities. I was also interviewed by the Apolitical Foundation last year, where I shared insights about my own political journey and the pivotal role of mental wellbeing in managing relationships. I commend the Apolitical Foundation for their exploration of this under-researched topic and I look forward to the impact this research will have.

#### **KUNDABUNG COWBOY PURSUES DREAMS IN AMERICA**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—Today I congratulate our very own Kundabung Cowboy, Levi Ward, who has officially booked his ticket to America to compete in the National High School Finals Rodeo after successfully qualifying for the Australian team. Levi took out the Senior Bull Ride and came third in the Senior Saddle Bronc at the qualifier held in Bendemeer. Levi's skill and technicality shined best, earning him the title of Senior All-Round Cowboy. Levi trains almost every day and travels large distances across NSW to compete in a rodeo almost every weekend. He isn't new to the world stage either, recently competing in Las Vegas at the World Rodeo Final and at just 11 years old and finishing just short of the World Title in 2019. The junior cowboy is hoping to make the trip to America an annual event and one day wants to relocate to the country to compete in higher-quality rodeos on a regularly. With these ambitions, there is no doubt that Levi will be any less then successful in his competition. I wish him the best of luck.



### LOCAL BUSINESS WINS AUSTRALIA'S BEST YOUNG LOCKSMITH AWARD

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—I congratulate one of Australia's best and brightest, whose tinkering and service earned his businesses 'Australia's Best Young Locksmith. 'Macleay Locksmiths & Security took out the distinguished title from the excellent product, customer service and values they bring to the local business landscape. They provide our community with a sense of safety and security, and we are fortunate to have a skilled and reputable locksmith working in the heart of our home. Most importantly, this award recognises Jackson Meredith, who's displayed an unwavering commitment to the Macleay. Jackson instilled a policy in his business that prohibits charging fees for unlocking cars with children or animals instead. He believes there should never be a charge for this, especially in an emergency. I applaud Jackson for the hours he's spent building this business from scratch. It's a remarkable accomplishment and rightfully deserved. We need to encourage more young entrepreneurs, like Jackson, to establish their foothold in regional NSW and continue serving our communities. Jackson's story is an inspiring journey and demonstrates just how far ambition and dedication can go. Well done!

### FLYNN MAINEY SHINES AT NSW CRICKET STATE CHALLENGE

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—Today I congratulate Kempsey's Flynn Mainey for taking a starring role in the under-14's NSW Cricket State Challenge. The state-wide competition is the foundation for many regional cricketers pursuing an opportunity in the NSW Academy Competition team. Flynn, who represents Macleay Valley Cricket Association was the only Mid North Coast player to be selected, with the other members representing Far North Coast, North Coast, Northern Inland, and the Hunter Valley. Flynn was a standout batsman, slogging the ball for a leading score. Heading into the final, Flynn proceeded to score 15-not-out while his partner chased down the 111 runs required for victory. I congratulate the young star for his incredible achievement on the pitch and I commend Flynn for his commitment to better himself in all aspects of his cricket career from fitness and strength, to conditioning and game awareness. Aim big and reach for the stars, no doubt we will see you on the National stage soon enough – even the Big Bash League!

### ROBERT AVARD

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**—Robert Avard of Nyngan NSW has been awarded the Citizen of the Year at the Australia Day ceremony in Davidson Park, Nyngan. Robert first visited Nyngan in 1990 in which it was only supposed to be a short trip. 33 years on and Robert now calls Nyngan his home. At the Australia Day ceremony, Robert was recognised for being so involved in the community. He is the Fire and Rescue captain, chairman of Nyngan Ag Expo and Transport for NSW maintenance officer. Not only are Robert's hands tied up in all those positions, but he is also a carpenter and joiner by trade. I would like to congratulate Robert on receiving the Citizen of the Year award and for all his hard work. It is people like Robert who are a great asset to small communities such as Nyngan.

### MARBULL CATERING

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—Congratulations to Wagga Wagga's Sam and Jess Martin whose wedding catering business, Marbull Catering, has been named the best in Australia in 2023. Their success was announced at the Australia Wedding Awards in January 2024 – recognition of the couple's hard work, entrepreneurial spirit, and passion for their industry. Like many great ideas, their business grew from personal experience when their chef friends were unavailable to cater for the couple's own wedding in 2016. Jess and Sam had been involved in teaching food tech at Tumut High School and with the help of teacher Rachael Pearce, the students cooked 'amazing' food for the wedding. It gave the couple the idea to start their business, which now employs 12 people. They say the secret to their success is getting to know what their customers want for their wedding pr party, coupled with using the freshest produce and cooking it at the events. The parents of two young boys, the couple are always busy but still have time to plan for an expansion of the business, with the hope of employing more local people. Well done, Sam and Jess.

### MAY DOON

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—I would like to pay tribute to much-loved Tumut identity, May Doon OAM, who passed away in 2023 after decades of service to the community. Born in Botany in 1936, Mrs Doon – nee Deep – moved to Tumut with her new husband Bob in 1954. Of Chinese heritage, Mrs Doon and her brother Tommy Lowe started an iconic Chinese restaurant called Eastern Jade in 1966, remembered as a place of great food and wonderful hospitality. Mrs Doon lived life to the full and devoted much of her time to community groups including the Anglican church, the Tumut Lions Club, the View Club, CanAssist, the Art Society, and the Tumut Nursing Home. She was the 1991 Tumut Citizen of the Year and was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia in 2004 for her services to the community. With a strong creative streak, she exhibited her paintings and drawings and had a lifelong love of music and dancing. On a personal note, I was grateful for May's warmth and

encouragement to me. She is greatly missed by her three sons, Robert, Peter Anthony (P.A.) and Louie, her grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and her many friends.

#### COUNTRY HOPE

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—I would like to acknowledge Country Hope Wagga Wagga and 12 generous local artists who are joining forces to raise funds for local families with seriously ill children. Country Hope is a terrific organisation that provides financial support to meet travel, accommodation and other costs when children need to attend hospital in major cities. The need for help is growing, with the group supporting an average of 22 new families every year. The group's latest fundraising effort is a 2024 calendar, featuring different works for each month by the 12 artists. Local businesses are also supporting the program. Among them are Country Hope board member Andrew Walsh and his wife Louise Walsh, who have been raising money for the organisation for the past eight years. The calendar will be distributed to schools and doctors' surgeries to raise awareness of Country Hope. The artists who have lent their creative talents to the project are Debbie Wood, Grant Higginson, Julia Roche, Kay Davidson, Eileen Friedlieb, Jypsie Cronan, Amanda Hinkelmann, Juanita McLauchlan, Rebecca Hutchinson, The Keke Collection, and Lesley Looney. Well done to everyone for working together to help families through hard times.

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