

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Tuesday 12 March 2024**

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

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

### *Visitors*

#### **VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I welcome members back to the Parliament. It seems like we have been away for quite a while.

*[Interruption]*

The member for North Shore will come to order. I extend a warm welcome to guests of the member for Keira, participants in the Leadership Illawarra Program. I also welcome to the gallery guests of the member for Ryde, student leaders from Ermington Public School and Meadowbank Public School. I welcome guests of the member for Willoughby: Dr Debbie Geyer, vice president of the Lymphoedema Association Australia, and lymphoedema advocates Yvonne Hughes and Margie Malouf. I acknowledge guests of the member for Lane Cove, students from Riverside Girls High School, Gladesville, who are participating in the Legal Studies and the Legislature program conducted by the parliamentary education team.

I welcome to the gallery a guest of the member for Port Stephens, Ms Susan Watson, the chief executive officer of Fams. It is the New South Wales peak body that represents the non-government child protection, early intervention and prevention sector, ensuring that children thrive within safe, strong and supportive families and communities. I acknowledge in the gallery Lauren Stracey, Lisa Smajlov and Bronte Johns. I welcome guests of the member for Clarence, Richmond Valley Council Mayor Robert Mustow and general manager Vaughan Macdonald. The member for Lake Macquarie also has guests, being student leaders from Avondale School. I welcome them to the gallery.

### *Announcements*

#### **LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY PHOTOGRAPHS**

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

### *Bills*

#### **CRIME AND CRIMINAL PROCEDURE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2023**

#### **DETENTION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (PROHIBITION ON SPIT HOODS) BILL 2023**

#### **INSTITUTIONS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2023**

### **Returned**

**The SPEAKER:** I report receipt of messages from the Legislative Council returning the bills without amendment.

**CONSTITUTION AMENDMENT (EXECUTIVE COUNCIL) BILL 2023**  
**CENTENNIAL PARK AND MOORE PARK TRUST AMENDMENT (PUBLIC TRANSPORT) BILL**  
**2023**

**CRIME AND CRIMINAL PROCEDURE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2023**

**CUSTOMER SERVICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2023**

**DETENTION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (PROHIBITION ON SPIT HOODS) BILL 2023**

**HIGH RISK OFFENDERS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2023**

**INSTITUTIONS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2023**

**SHERIFF AND COURT SECURITY AMENDMENT BILL 2023**

**Assent**

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

*Governor*

**ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT**

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

*Question Time*

**REGIONAL CRIME**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (12:08):** My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. The Premier visited Moree on 22 February to discuss regional crime. Why did he leave the Minister behind?

**The SPEAKER:** Government members will come to order.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (12:08):** Not a lot has changed. In the past year I have been all over this State and, believe me, I have been told by the police on the ground of the problems that we have right around the State. Nobody knows better than the police and nobody can advise better than the police. I have been to Moree. It was one of the first regional trips that I took. I met with police there, and the mayor, along with other council members and with Just Reinvest NSW. I met with a whole host of people. It is on that basis that we were able to form such a strong view. Today I stood next to the Premier and the Attorney General and announced a very significant program to look at the issues that we are facing in Moree and beyond.

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

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** I will say this: I have not seen the Leader of the Opposition out and about in many places in regional New South Wales. One would think that if he were serious about regional crime and this issue then he would get himself out there and find out the facts. That is what I think he should do.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will resume her seat. The Leader of the Opposition rises on a point of order.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** It is Standing Order 129. It was a very specific question. It was not a question about whatever Contiki tour of regional New South Wales the Minister may have undertaken. It was a specific question: Why was she left behind on 22 February?

**The SPEAKER:** I thank the Leader of the Opposition. I understand Standing Order 129. I do not uphold the point of order. The question was perhaps ironic; it was certainly sarcastic. I do not believe the Minister could be more directly relevant in her answer. The Minister has the call.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** To answer the question, I am not sure that the Premier needs me to hold his hand when he travels to regional New South Wales. The Premier is quite fine doing that by himself. But if the Leader of the Opposition needs some assistance, I will extend an invitation so that he can get out of Cronulla and come along with me. I will show him what is going on. The Government is taking what is happening in the community seriously. People are frightened. We are taking it seriously. That is why we have put in place initiatives

today that will go a long way to addressing the issues that are happening in Moree. The Leader of the Opposition should get himself out there and stop playing politics with this issue in this place.

### REGIONAL CRIME

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (12:11):** My question is addressed to the Attorney General. Will the Attorney General please update the House on action the Government is taking to respond to rising crime in parts of regional New South Wales?

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (12:11):** I thank the member for Cessnock for his question. We often say in this place—and all of us mean it—that community safety has to be a paramount concern for all of us in elected life; it certainly is for the Minns Labor Government. People have a right not only to be safe in their communities but also to feel safe. That is why the Government has listened and is today taking decisive and immediate action to address those very real concerns, not only in regional New South Wales but right across the State. Many Ministers, as we have just heard from the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, spend their time travelling the length and breadth of this State—none more so than the police Minister and the Premier. In fact, the Premier, as we all now know, was recently in Moree to talk to impacted individuals directly. What he saw disturbed and concerned him greatly, so we are now taking decisive action.

It is unarguable that reports from communities and concerns from members of this place across regional New South Wales are borne out by statistics from the Bureau of Criminal Statistics and Research, or BOCSAR, that indicate that our regions have been experiencing higher rates of crime than metropolitan areas. During the 2022-23 period we know that there were specific increases in offending by young people under the age of 18 for motor vehicle and break and enter offences, and that that increase has caused great concern in communities across New South Wales, particularly in regional areas. We have also heard the concern that young people have been driving these trends with the specific behaviour of repeat offending on bail and a developing trend for young people to film themselves engaging in all sorts of crimes, but particularly in car theft and serious break and enter offences, sometimes involving weapons, to post on social media. It is hard for someone of our generation to understand that, but it is real and happening. It is a significant driver of crime.

That is why the Minns Labor Government is proposing a \$26.2 million package of reforms and initiatives to support community safety and wellbeing, particularly in regional New South Wales, including by strengthening early intervention and prevention programs for young people. Legislative reform will be coming to the House later this week. The first aspect of that is the strengthening of the Bail Act. We will amend the Bail Act to include a temporary additional bail test for young people between the ages of 14 and 18 charged with committing a serious break and enter offence or motor vehicle offence while on bail for a similar offence. That will mean that a bail authority such as a police officer or a magistrate will need to have a high degree of confidence that the young person will not commit a further serious indictable offence while on bail, subject to any proposed conditions, before bail is granted. [*Extension of time*]

That approach is a targeted and measured change designed to stop specific offending behaviour by certain young people who repeatedly engage in serious break and enter and motor vehicle theft. It will be subject to a 12-month sunset clause. The second offence relates to an aspect I spoke about a moment ago: the so-called "posting and boasting" or TikTok offences. We will introduce legislation that will create a new offence in the Crimes Act imposing an additional penalty of two years imprisonment for people—not just young people, but people of all ages—who commit motor vehicle theft or break and enter offences and share that material to advertise their involvement in that criminal behaviour. That new provision will be the subject of a statutory review that will take place two years after it commences.

I am also pleased to say that there are non-legislative responses in this package. We have developed a place-based response in Moree. The New South Wales Government will invest \$13.35 million for a targeted response in Moree to address crime, support young people and improve community safety.

**Mr Adam Marshall:** Hear, hear!

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** I thank former Minister Marshall for that acknowledgement. There will be additional judicial resources for children's magistrates, additional funding for the Aboriginal Legal Service and new bail and accommodation support services. Young Aboriginal people will be linked to Indigenous organisations, Elders and family supports. There will be an action plan within six months to optimise service delivery in Moree, working with the council to map out, coordinate and make accountable services that are on the ground there. There will be out-of-hours activities and continuing police operations, with a surge in operational resources. This is not just a knee-jerk, politically driven law and order response; this is nuanced and targeted, and it will work.

## POLICE CONDUCT

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst) (12:17):** My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. What actions is the Minister taking in relation to comments made last week by the Chief Commissioner of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission regarding oversight of internal police investigations?

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (12:17):** First and foremost, I thank the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission [LECC]. It does terrific work and is the body that oversights the police. I thank it for the independent, fierce and frank advice that it provides. The NSW Police Force constantly reviews its internal policies. It is an organisation of 22,500 people led by Commissioner Webb, a strong leader who does a great job. The commissioner meets with the LECC herself to ensure that it is constantly reviewing police practices and making sure that those practices are contemporary and in line with community expectations. I find it incredible that, every sitting period, Opposition members come here and constantly bag the cops. Why are they constantly bagging the cops? If it is the case that members opposite want to bag the cops, then why don't they actually say that to the police—

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

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

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** That is an outrageous assertion from the Minister.

**The SPEAKER:** That is not a point of order.

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** It is under Standing Order 129. The Minister has been asked a very specific question around the LECC and the chief commissioner. You don't have an opportunity to bag us about supporting the police, which we do more than you do, madam!

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Dubbo will resume his seat. It is difficult to rule on an indeterminate point of order. I ask the Minister to be more cautious about inflaming the situation. The Minister has been directly relevant to the question. The Minister has the call.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** I know it is difficult to hear, but the police are absolutely committed to reviewing themselves, and they do that all the time. I find it fascinating that those opposite constantly bag the police in this place. I know that they do not want to hear it—

**Mr Paul Toole:** Point of order—

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** —but the truth is they do. They even made the outrageous claim that the police were covering things up—

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will resume her seat.

**Mr Paul Toole:** It is taken under Standing Order 129, relevance. The Minister was asked about her actions in relation to the LECC commissioner's report. It was not about others. I asked what the Minister is doing as the police Minister of this State, and she has failed to answer to this point.

**The SPEAKER:** I ruled previously that the Minister has been directly relevant. The Minister has the call.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** I know that those opposite hate hearing it, but they hate the cops. That is a fact.

## TEACHER WORKFORCE

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (12:20):** My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Education and Early Learning. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on the New South Wales Government's efforts in tackling the teacher shortage crisis left by the former Liberal-Nationals Government?

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (12:21):** I gladly answer that question asked by the brilliant member for South Coast, who I know is constantly speaking to teachers, principals and educators in her community about how this Government is working with them to rescue the education system. Because they seem to be waving to me, I give a shout-out to the students in the gallery from Ermington Public School and Meadowbank Public School and their amazing teachers, who I am sure are with them. I reiterate to those educators in the gallery, along with every single educator across New South Wales, that this Government knows they are the most important resource for those children going forward in their lives. Those teachers are everything, so make sure you thank them today and every day.

That may be the view of members on this side of the Chamber, but the Liberals and The Nationals think differently about teachers. That is why this Government came to office. It is now accepted that it came to office with record teacher vacancies in New South Wales. That is undeniable. Resignations were outstripping retirements. There were 10,000 merged and cancelled classes every day. I do not know anyone who could possibly say, hand on heart, that that is acceptable for our children.

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

**Ms PRUE CAR:** The teacher shortage crisis that was overseen and exacerbated by those opposite is being chipped away at by this Government. I gladly report to the House that we are starting to see some green shoots because of the efforts that the Government is making in addressing the teacher shortage crisis. This school year started with a 20 per cent drop in teacher vacancies. That is a pleasing development, but there is much more work to do. Communities in rural, regional and remote New South Wales—areas that are traditionally harder to staff—are seeing a greater decrease in vacancies. They are down by 25 per cent compared with the same time last year. In Tamworth, vacancies are down by 30 per cent; in the Northern Tablelands, 21 per cent; and in Dubbo, 14 per cent. [*Extension of time*]

It is no coincidence that that comes after the Government gave teachers in New South Wales the biggest pay rise in a generation. In the past week there were schools in Victoria bemoaning the fact that they have teachers leaving Wodonga to work in Albury because this Government is offering them decent pay as an indication of the respect it has for teachers. A principal in Victoria pointed to the high rates of pay in New South Wales as the reason for losing teachers. For once, New South Wales is not the one losing teachers, thanks to the efforts and the election of this Government. It is puzzling that the member for Albury said last year that the pay rise was bad government when he is now receiving more teachers into his community as a result of the pay rise.

New South Wales now has a government that is well and truly committed to fixing the teacher shortage crisis, because all kids across New South Wales cannot learn without the expert practice of teachers. I note that the Leader of the Opposition in training, the member for Wahroonga, bizarrely claimed recently that the reason we cannot build more houses is that there is a teacher shortage crisis. He cannot have it both ways. He hates housing and he hates getting more teachers into schools. The Government is proudly tackling this issue on behalf of the children of New South Wales.

### REGIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**Dr JOE MCGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (12:26):** My question is directed to the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Education and Early Learning. Given that Wagga Wagga has a population target of 100,000 people within the next two decades, will the Minister and the Government support the commencement of planning for a new high school in the city's rapidly growing northern suburbs?

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (12:26):** That is a great question about population growth and the need for governments to act accordingly for young people. I thank the member for Wagga Wagga for his question. He is very dedicated to ensuring that his local public schools are prepared for the future. Right across the State, that is the Government's priority as well. Members have heard me talk about that ad nauseam in communities where population has grown and there has been a lack of planning for the primary and high schools, in particular—

**Mrs Leslie Williams:** How is the planning going for Hastings Secondary College?

**Ms PRUE CAR:** Hastings is well underway, as the member for Port Macquarie well knows. Across the board, after 12 years of neglect by the previous Government, the Government is finally planning for the future. I could list all of the schools, particularly high schools, that this Government is building that those opposite failed to build, but I will get to the crux of the question asked by the hardworking member for Wagga Wagga. The Government is investing, as I said in my previous answer, in tackling the teacher shortage crisis in rural and regional New South Wales, which is crucial to staffing any new school. A newsflash for those opposite: When we build schools, we need to put teachers inside the classrooms. We have to do both at the same time. We are investing in getting the right data to ensure that we plan for the future so that population projections are matched with investments in schools.

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

**Ms PRUE CAR:** Local communities and local members end up knowing that they need the primary schools and high schools. I share that frustration with the member for Wagga Wagga. I pleaded with the previous Government for schools in my community, but those opposite did not build them. The Government is getting on with the job. When it comes to high school provision in Wagga Wagga, I know that Wagga Wagga High School

continues to maintain six surplus classrooms. Previous projections have a surplus due to continue, but I have asked the department to examine those figures again because we will need to do an audit to make sure that we are planning for future high school provision in those areas. I acknowledge the growth in the member's electorate around areas such as Estella and the other northern suburbs. This is important to those communities. I do not want us to make the mistake that previous Governments have. [*Extension of time*]

There was plenty of money spent on Wagga Wagga; it is a pity it never went to a new high school. As the Minister for Education and Early Learning, who also represents communities that were let down—growing communities that need primary schools and high schools—the issue is close to my heart. I have lived it; I understand it. The member is advocating for it. We need to properly examine those figures. I understand there is huge growth in the northern suburbs of the member's electorate, and I look forward to working with him on ensuring that, if there is a need for further provision, the communities of the northern suburbs of Wagga Wagga get the first-class public education that they deserve.

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

### ROAD TOLLS

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (12:30):** My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on the findings of the *Independent Toll Review: Interim Report*?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:31):** A report into tolling in New South Wales was commissioned by the Minister for Roads. Self-evidently, Sydney is the most tolled city on earth, brought to you by the New South Wales Liberal Party and National Party.

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** Despite the Government litigating that fact for months, it became clear that we needed an independent report to look specifically at a fundamental sequence of decisions made by the previous Government that lumped the people of Western Sydney with tolls deep into the future.

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** Alan Fels and David Cousins found that New South Wales residents will plunge \$123 billion into toll-road companies over the lifetime of those contracts. In tomorrow's dollars—so in nominal terms—that is \$195 billion out of their pockets and into the pockets of monopoly toll-road companies in this State. I remind the House that in 2019 no Liberal Party member or National Party member claimed that if they won the election they would privatise all of WestConnex. None of them did that. Straight after the election campaign they privatised the people's asset. It was never their asset. It was owned by the people of New South Wales.

The Fels report found that tolls are set administratively by government with little opportunity for future amendment. Unlike the privatisation of energy assets, where the price is set by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal and takes into consideration ability to pay, prevailing economic circumstances and the impact of inflation, the deal the previous Government signed the people of this State up to means there is no negotiation. We will pay that figure for decades into the future. The tribunal found:

In nearly all cases it seems the tolls have been set at too high a level. This problem has been compounded by the rigidity of the tolling schedules over the life of the concession agreements.

Mr Fels goes on to say that Transurban has a monopoly and there has been insufficient focus on competition. This is the worst bit: You would think that infrastructure would be built to reduce congestion, but Fels found that motorists are starting to withdraw from the system and clog up other roads. It is so expensive it cannot be used, so surface roads are even more clogged than they were when the infrastructure was built. Is that the economic miracle presided over by the Liberal Party? [*Extension of time*]

**The SPEAKER:** Opposition members will come to order. I call the member for North Shore to order for the first time.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** The cynicism of the previous Government—for 14 years the toll on the Sydney Harbour Bridge never moved. In 2009 it was \$4 and in 2023 it was \$4. Guess what the previous Government did to the families of Western Sydney? In 2009 the M5 was \$12.60 and in 2023 it was \$35 for a return fare. So if you're in Western Sydney and you use toll roads, you get slammed by the Liberal Party, but they would never change the toll roads that they had the contracts for and were responsible for because they were for their own constituents.

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** The cabal that ran the previous Government, located on the lower North Shore, could not care less about Western Sydney families. If they did, who would design tolling contracts that would put the burden on working families in this city? And they have learnt nothing, because I note that the former Minister for Finance in the upper House, who is now the shadow Treasurer, had this to say when he was asked about privatisation in November 2022—

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** He said, "We make no apologies for privatisation." He believes it renovates New South Wales. Then he said, "The people of this State thank us for it." Thank you so much for unending increases in tolls for our families, for inequitable distribution of tolls and for contracts that you cannot take out. That is the previous Government's reaction. The Fels and Cousins report is returned to the New South Wales Government. We are desperately waiting for the Opposition's response, and I know what it will be—further privatisation for this State.

### HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (12:36):** My question is directed to the Minister for Transport. From next month the Minns Labor Government's Transport Oriented Development State Environmental Planning Policy will take effect, including allowing six-storey apartments or eight-storey apartments with affordable housing around Marrickville and Dulwich Hill. Does the Minister support the Transport Oriented Development proposals in Marrickville and Dulwich Hill?

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (12:37):** Yes, I do, and I am very pleased to talk about the fact that this Government is addressing the housing crisis that our State faces—a crisis that we inherited because Opposition members ignored it. In fact, they were more concerned about looking after their own backyards, be it the particular heritage interests in Ku-ring-gai, the merits of a service station in Vaucluse, or whether they are for or against public housing in Riverwood. That is what they were concerned about, not building density in places that are appropriate to deliver it in, including in the suburbs of the inner west. It is important to build housing where there are other services and, in particular, public transport services. In fact, when you really think about it—I challenge any member here to say it is not appropriate to build quality, well-designed houses next to or on top of a train station. Think about it. That's exactly what our Government is doing.

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

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** The planning Minister is leading a series of reforms to ensure that we build quality, affordable housing for the people of Sydney. Otherwise, the fact is our city will become a city without grandchildren. You do not have to take our word for it; listen to the Productivity Commission. The fact is generations are already being locked out. The dream of owning a home in Sydney is well and truly gone for so many people. They are leaving our city and our State in droves. Now people dream of whether or not they can afford to rent, anywhere near their family, into the future. If we do not do this, we will become a city that is not diverse, not inclusive, not equitable.

Our Government is taking on these challenges, and I appreciate that those opposite will just continue to look after their own backyards and political self-interest. That is what we would expect from them. But on this side of the House, we will tackle the hard challenges and we will tackle the future planning requirements that our city needs. That includes making sure that we deliver reliable, resilient, public transport services and that we deliver quality, affordable housing well located next to those services.

### ROAD TOLLS

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (12:39):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport in her capacity representing the Minister for Roads. Will the Minister please update the House on the ongoing impacts of the former Government's toll road privatisation agenda?

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (12:40):** Again, I take pleasure in talking about the fact that our Government is taking on the big challenges. I thank the member for Penrith, who knows so well what the privatisation agenda of the former Liberal-Nationals Government did for the motorists and the families of Western Sydney.

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

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** Our city is a great global city, but it is the most tolled city on the planet. That is an objective fact. The Independent Toll Review, released yesterday, shows that Sydney's toll network is a poorly functioning patchwork with numerous different pricing structures. In fact, there are 13 different toll roads under 10 different contracts. It is a system that is neither fair nor simple.

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

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** As the Premier has made very clear, over the next 35 years the people of Sydney will be paying \$195 billion in tolls to a private toll road monopoly. It was revealed that the people of Western Sydney, of course, pay the most. This report makes that very clear. If you are living in Blacktown, you spend an average of over \$95 a month on tolls; in south-west Sydney, an average of over \$87 a month on tolls; in Parramatta, \$84 a month on tolls. Compare that to Greater Sydney, where the average is around \$60. So it is very clear that this is unfair for Western Sydney road users. It did not have to be this way. It became like this because of the privatisation agenda that those opposite put in place. You cannot tell me it is a fair arrangement. There is absolutely no getting around it. For families in our city, it is a pretty hard hit to take to the hip pocket. We are talking about money that could be spent on the mortgage, on groceries, on school shoes, on sport for the weekend, on the family holiday, but instead it is going straight into the coffers of a privately-owned toll road monopoly set up by those opposite.

**The SPEAKER:** Members will come to order. The Minister will be heard in silence.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** Those opposite are squirming because the fact is they called it their "golden key". Let us remember, this golden key has locked us into \$195 billion worth of tolls. They said it would unlock access to critical infrastructure across our city. Well, it has locked us into paying for WestConnex three times over what we should have paid for it—three times over. If the Liberal Party had any shame, they would admit that their privatisation agenda has completely and utterly failed. [*Extension of time*]

It is interesting to look at what the shadow Treasurer's view is on these matters—for those following along, that is the Hon. Damien Tudehope in the other place. He is obviously someone with an objective view on this because he previously owned shares in the privately-owned toll road monopoly. Regardless, let us take a look at what he said yesterday. He said, "Let's make sure that when we do negotiate contracts, we do it with a long-term view to make sure that we have the opportunities for making sure we address cost-of-living issues."

**Mr Matt Kean:** Point of order—

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

**Mr Matt Kean:** My point of order is relevance, Standing Order 129. This has nothing to do with the question. The Minister needs some better departmental liaison officers, because this makes no sense whatsoever.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** Keep trying, Matt.

**The SPEAKER:** I will allow that to pass because the Minister received the response she was expecting. There is no point of order.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** They are predictable, Mr Speaker. There is just one problem with the now shadow Treasurer's response. Who negotiated these toll contracts? He did. Who administered them when he was the finance Minister? He did.

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

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** Yesterday he was asked whether he thought drivers were getting a good deal. He could not answer that. He was asked what he would do to reduce tolls. He could not answer that either. The fact is, it is because those opposite still believe in the golden key. They believe that their privatisation agenda has worked, and we all know that they would bring it back in an instant. But on this side of the House, we know the pain that Western Sydney families are facing. That is why we are taking action.

#### HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (12:45):** My question is directed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. The PropTrack rental affordability index, reported in Saturday's media, showed that 42 per cent of rental housing was affordable in 2021-22 for median income earners. Under this Government, this has fallen to 28 per cent in 2023-24.

**Mr Chris Minns:** It is completely our fault. None of the legacy policies had anything to do with it.

**Ms FELICITY WILSON:** I am not sure if this is a conversation or if I am meant to ask my question.

**The SPEAKER:** The Premier will come to order. I need to hear the question.

**Ms FELICITY WILSON:** Mr Speaker, shall I repeat the question?

**The SPEAKER:** I would prefer that the member for North Shore did not, but she may do so.

**Mr Chris Minns:** You can't handle it.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for North Shore will not engage with the Premier.

**Mr Chris Minns:** Come on, focus on the job at hand. Try to get this question out. Maybe if you didn't block all affordable housing—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for North Shore will repeat the question.

**Ms FELICITY WILSON:** My question is directed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. The PropTrack rental affordability index, reported in Saturday's media, showed that 42 per cent of rental housing was affordable in 2021-22 for median income earners. Under this Government, this has fallen to 28 per cent in 2023-24. When will the Minister admit that this Government has been a disaster for rental affordability in New South Wales?

**Mr Chris Minns:** Get out of the way and start backing some of the housing plans.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (12:47):** Well, it was not worth the wait, was it? It was not worth the wait. For those opposite who are not aware, I show you the record of your Government. This is the record of your Government. You may like to deny it as much as you want, but that is your record. It is your record, and your record, and your record, and especially your record.

**Ms Felicity Wilson:** Point of order—

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

**Ms Felicity Wilson:** Mr Speaker, there are a couple of standing orders I would like to bring to your attention. Firstly, could the Minister address his comments through the Chair? Secondly, could he please not continue to incite those responses from my colleagues? I would love to hear him answer calmly.

**The SPEAKER:** I uphold both parts of the point of order.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** For the past 12 years in New South Wales we have simply not built enough homes. We have not built enough homes. There is a simple equation here.

**The SPEAKER:** Opposition members will come to order and allow the Minister to answer the question. I call the member for Hawkesbury to order for the first time.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** It is called supply and demand. When you have more demand than you have supply, you get shortages and price increases. That is the record of the previous Government when it comes to housing. So, rather than coming into this place trying to argue that something which has been building up in New South Wales for more than a decade has suddenly happened in the past few weeks, the best thing that the member for North Shore could do is to get out of the way and let us get on with the task of delivering more homes.

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

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** I will go to a fact. Recently, the NSW Productivity Commissioner handed down a report that indicated that about 1,500 apartment buildings were built in Sydney between 1997 and 2021. Of those 1,500, the average was seven storeys. Had they been able to go to 10 storeys—

**Ms Felicity Wilson:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129, relevance. My question was about rental affordability. The Minister is, instead, referring to the housing approvals that he is seeking to introduce.

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

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** That was a deliberate strategy to soak up time.

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

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** Members opposite do not want to hear that they could have delivered an extra 45,000 new homes for people who need them in Sydney, had they been able to lift that height by just a little bit—nothing radical, just a little bit.

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

#### HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (12:50):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. Will the Minister update the House on the New South Wales Government's planned housing reforms?

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (12:50):** I thank the member for Mount Druitt for his question. He is someone who does not want to see Sydney become a city without grandkids. I know how much he loves his grandkids, and he would hate to have to travel hours and hours just to see them. The Minns Government is getting on with the task of confronting the housing crisis that we inherited from the previous Government. We have announced major reforms that will drive the delivery of more well-located, well-designed and well-built homes, right across Greater Sydney and New South Wales, close to transport, jobs, amenities and services—all the key ingredients for great communities.

Our Transport Oriented Development Program, with around 39 hubs across Greater Sydney, Newcastle and the Illawarra, prioritises housing growth where the infrastructure, such as water and sewerage, is there to support it. Because if you cannot flush a toilet, you cannot build a home. It is where transport is available, ready to go, and where there is plenty of opportunity for people to get involved. In addition, our low- and mid-rise housing reforms provide greater housing choice, including duplexes, town houses, terraces, manor houses and low- to medium-storey unit blocks. Those types of diverse housing were part of Sydney's past but have been blocked from being part of its housing future.

**Ms Robyn Preston:** No parking.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** There is plenty of parking. The Hawkesbury could do its bit too. There is always an excuse, isn't there? Yes, no. Yes, no. But the bottom line is no. Members opposite just do not want more housing. They want to continue the exodus of thousands and thousands of people in the key 30- to 40-year-old age group. They want to travel hours and hours to visit their grandkids.

**Mr Chris Minns:** On toll roads.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** On toll roads. That is the vision of the Liberal Party and National Party when it comes to housing. I have been a bit confused by some of the Opposition's comments, because some members oppose the reforms, some support them and some come up to me quietly and say, "Go harder. You're on the right track." I will not out them in front of their colleagues. That includes none other than the Leader of the Opposition. He started out by criticising the Government. Then, in an interview last week, he gave a ringing endorsement to the Government plans. He said, "Absolutely we want to see more houses built in New South Wales, and more apartments as well. But you get local communities, through their local councils, engaged in that process." That is exactly what we are doing. We are meeting and negotiating with councils. It does not suit their rhetoric, but it is exactly what we are doing. [*Extension of time*]

Some of this is getting lost in attempts at scare campaigns. Members might be shocked, but some members of this Chamber are attempting scare campaigns. The member for Wahoonga has been trying to whip up one about how heritage will be trashed. In budget estimates there was a big build-up. It was like Dennis Lillee on the long run-up. A big gotcha moment was coming on heritage. The shadow Minister for Planning and Public Spaces asked the Deputy Secretary of the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure a straight question about heritage protection. He asked, "There are controls at the moment regarding the demolition of contributory buildings within that heritage conservation area. They would be overridden by that SEPP, would they?" You could see him. He was licking his lips. He was ready to go, thinking, "This is my grab. This is my big moment in the sun." He was writing his headlines. It was almost like in *A Few Good Men*—"I want the truth." What did he get? "No."

**Mr Matt Kean:** Point of order—

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

**Mr Matt Kean:** My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129, relevance. The answer has nothing to do with the member for Wahoonga. The Minister should return to the question.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister may complete his answer. The Minister met the relevance threshold earlier so is now permitted some scope in his remarks.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** The deputy secretary went on and said, "There would be no change to that through the reforms that we are proposing." We can see why they are confused—a simple "No, it won't be heritage." They claim that we were coming in, like Miley Cyrus, with a wrecking ball. In truth, that is absolutely not what is going to happen. Will the heritage control be overridden by the SEPP? The answer is no. It is disappointing that tackling such a serious issue, where there is a backlog and waiting list for social housing, where renting conditions are the worst ever recorded in New South Wales, where home ownership rates are plummeting and where tens of thousands of young people are deserting this city—a city that should be great and will be great when our reforms go through—does not get the bipartisan support that it deserves. I again appeal to the Opposition to put down its scare campaign and pick up the support for housing in New South Wales.

## ROAD TOLLS

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (12:56):** My question is directed to the Minister representing the Minister for Roads. Will the Minister guarantee that no motorist will be worse off under the Government's tolling reforms?

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (12:56):** I am going to suspend my disbelief and thank the member for Willoughby for his question. He is a hardworking and earnest member. I like his banner. Has anyone seen his banner? It is pretty fancy; it is a good banner. I appreciate that he was not here for the full 12 years. I get it. I understand why he would, perhaps, want to distance himself from the full 12 years. But the fact is that he is part of a party that formed a government that created a privately owned toll road monopoly that will burden the motorists of Sydney for decades to come with \$195 billion worth of tolls, paying multiple times over for the cost of toll roads.

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

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** That is what they created. It is all very nice for them to ask questions about it now. I appreciate that their own constituencies are coming to them about the fact that their household budgets are getting hit again and again, and that their families would rather be spending the money on school shoes, school holidays, the family mortgage and groceries. I appreciate that. But the fact is they created it.

**Mr Tim James:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will resume her seat.

**Mr Tim James:** We are halfway through, and the Minister has said nothing about the question. What will the Minister do? What guarantee will she give to New South Wales motorists? Please direct the Minister to answer the question.

**The SPEAKER:** It would be helpful if the Minister was directly relevant to the question.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** Our Government was elected on a mandate to do something about the legacy we were left and the fact that we now live in the most tolled city on earth. Those opposite created an unfair and inflexible system, and the fact is that it is not working for motorists. As the Premier has rightly explained, people are choosing to use their local roads—

**Mr Chris Minns:** Surface roads.

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** Surface roads rather than toll roads. I remember the beautiful banners they strung up during the construction of WestConnex, which said "returning roads to local communities". That was what they promised. But the absolute opposite is true. The families of Western Sydney know it, and I dare say that the member for Willoughby knows it.

## POLICE RECRUITMENT

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (12:59):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is helping to keep our communities safe through the recruitment of new police officers, from Broken Hill to Bondi Beach and in my electorate?

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (13:00):** It would be my delight to do that, but first I will clear things up to stop these stupid questions being asked. I went to Moree on 24 July and 15 September. I cannot find any evidence that the Opposition leader has ever been to Moree. Opposition leader, have you ever been to Moree?

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

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will direct her comments through the Chair. That was not helpful. I will hear the point of order from the member for Wairoa.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** How question time operates is not that the Minister answers a question asked three questions ago. The Minister is supposed to answer the question that was just asked of her.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Wairoa will resume his seat. There is no point of order. The way in which the Minister commenced her answer was not helpful. It was out of order. The Minister will address the question from the member for Lismore and be directly relevant.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** Of course. Thank you, Mr Speaker. I know that the member for Lismore is a great advocate for her area and someone who supports local cops. All members should take a page out of her book. We have heard a lot of talk from the member for Bathurst and the member for Cronulla about what they

think the cops should be doing. They chatter about it all the time. However, they are suspiciously silent on their own legacy. We know what that was. Those opposite left our State many hundreds of cops short. Over the past 12 years they decimated our essential services. Not only did they introduce the wages cap, but they have made clear that they will bring it back as soon as they get a chance to.

Capping the wages of frontline workers like police at a rate below inflation for years on end effectively gave them a pay cut. Talk about a morale buster and a recruitment killer! When those opposite were elected to government, the average class size at the Goulburn police academy was 244 probationary officers. When they left office, it had dropped to 174. We know that the wages cap drove down the wages of essential workers. It drove the workers interstate; we heard that from the education Minister today. In the 12 months after the wages cap was introduced, police academy class sizes nearly halved. [*Extension of time*]

This is a shameful legacy of those opposite. What is quite clear is that they do not care about police and other essential frontline workers, and we do. I am not going to sugar-coat it: Our police are stretched. This Government is absolutely committed to supporting our police and encouraging more people to take up a career in the best police force, the New South Wales police. That is exactly why, in October, we announced that for the first time in decades we would pay our recruits to study at the Goulburn academy. This has been warmly welcomed by police and the community. Officers are telling me how much they appreciate that the Labor Government values them and their commitment to policing in this State. And it seems to be working.

Since 31 October 2023, when the incentive to pay recruits to study was announced, applications to join the Police Force have doubled. In a little over four months, around 860 people have applied to become officers in the NSW Police Force. It is a great start to repairing the damage done by 12 long years of the Coalition. I look forward to attending many more attestations as police Minister and watching the classes continue to swell in size. To all our hardworking serving officers, I say that they now have a Labor Government that absolutely appreciates the work they do, and we back the cops 100 per cent.

#### AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (13:05):** My question is directed to the Premier. Currently the Federal Labor Government is running a national taxpayer-funded advertising campaign that falsely portrays New South Wales farmers as environmental vandals. We are deeply offended. Will the Premier condemn Tanya Plibersek and his Federal colleagues for wrongly demonising hardworking food-producing families in New South Wales?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (13:05):** No, I will not condemn the Federal Government or Tanya Plibersek. I would be happy to see a copy of the advertisements. We do not want to see hardworking primary producers in New South Wales, who are responsible for a growing and important export market in the State, targeted. Obviously, if they are being portrayed as environmental vandals, that would be a concern. I would love to see the advertisement before I issue a broad condemnation of the Labor Party, of which I am a member. That would make some news if that was the case. As far as Tanyas in the Labor Party go, she is one of my favourites. I might condemn one who recently left. Did you see Pauline Hanson refer to Tania Mihailuk as "Talia Mahulik" recently? They are like that—so close. I make the point that when it comes to water buybacks, the New South Wales Government does not support—

**Mrs Helen Dalton:** Point of order: My point of order is about relevance. I think the Premier should come back to the question.

**The SPEAKER:** I uphold the point of order. However, the Premier has some leeway as he was very specific at the start of his answer.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** I apologise to the member and to all members of the House. Ms Mihailuk has been a distraction for me for 10 years, and I have been diverted again. I make clear that the New South Wales Government does not support buybacks as a solution to the environmental challenges facing the Murray-Darling system. In furtherance of that policy, the Government, through the water Minister, has released a package called *NSW Alternatives to Buybacks Plan*, which is about ensuring that, if the Commonwealth insists on returning environmental water to the system, it takes place through infrastructure projects rather than water buybacks, which I admit and fully acknowledge take away productive farmland as well as primary producing members of those communities. It is often the farmers who may get buybacks, but it is other members of the community—

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** You allowed it to happen, mate.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** I acknowledge the interjection, but at least the member for Murray is consistent in here. The member for Tamworth was a signatory to the Murray-Darling Basin agreement. The member for Murray has always been opposed to it. This suggestion of having it both ways is highly deceptive, particularly to regional communities. [*Extension of time*]

My point here—and I will respond to the interjection from the shadow Minister for Health—is that we do support the Murray-Darling Basin Plan. The member for Murray does not, but the disingenuousness of the National Party deserves to be exposed here—that is, it was a signatory to the Murray-Darling Basin agreement. After it is out of office, all of a sudden and despite the fact that there are 10 years of evidence, it suggests it is allied with the member for Murray. At least she has been consistent, unlike the National Party.

Labor's plan is to go to the Commonwealth Government and identify infrastructure projects for it to fund to return environmental water to the system. Those projects include the Restoring Murray Waterways project, the Millewa Forest Project, the upgrade of crossings at Aratula Creek and many other projects. That is where we want to start, first and foremost. I have made this point many times in the House previously: Whether Labor was a signatory to the agreement or not, it does not stop the Commonwealth from intervening and buying back from regional communities. The Government has made a decision to get around the table, direct Commonwealth funding to those infrastructure projects and ensure that we have a bright future for primary producers in regional New South Wales.

### HEALTH WORKFORCE

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (13:10):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Health, and Minister for Regional Health. Will the Minister provide an update on the New South Wales Government's commitment to deliver staffing reform in New South Wales public hospitals?

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (13:10):** I thank the member for Bega for his question and for his recent advocacy that secured a safe haven down at Bega—something that I know is very near and dear to his heart. Arguably the biggest challenge that we face at the moment—and I am sure members would agree across the Chamber—is how we properly staff our hospitals. That is why we are embarking on the largest ever reform piece in relation to the way in which we staff our hospitals in the history of NSW Health. The Government has recently come to an agreement with the Nurses and Midwives' Association and is beginning to start the rollout of our safe staffing reforms. We will be commencing them at Liverpool and North Shore emergency departments and will start the move to a ratio-based system—one to three in EDs, one to four on the floor and one to one in intensive care units [ICUs]. This is a significant reform, but it needs to happen as quickly as possible.

As a part of the reform, around 2½ thousand nurses and midwives will be recruited to NSW Health because the Government is determined not to try and build our way out of the health challenge we are facing but to staff the hospitals and the health services properly. That is what this side of the Chamber will be focused on over the next three years, because it needs to be done. I spoke to nurses like Marina, a third-year ED nurse in Bankstown. When I asked her, "What's the biggest challenge you face every day?" she said to me, without a skerrick of anything else, "It is properly staffing our wards and shifts." It was the same deal for a woman by the name of Bianca, an ICU nurse down in Wollongong: "It is properly staffing our ICUs."

The reform will take time. It is a significant reform, but the Government is embarking on it because it needs to. Our communities need to have confidence in the health services that they need and deserve. That is what we are starting to focus on. Not only are we focusing on making sure that our hospitals are properly staffed or that people like Bianca and Frank, a nurse unit manager in Shellharbour whom I recently mentioned and talked about, have the staffers— [*Extension of time*]

Not only are we committed to making sure that they have the staffing they need, but also we are determined to make sure that we have a pipeline of staff going forward. We are investing in every single aspect of the workforce because it is what the workforce will bring to the challenge that will see our health services improve. There is not a member in this place who would say that their hospital is not challenged at the moment. It is, and we understand it. That is why this historical reform cannot come soon enough.

I acknowledge the Nurses and Midwives' Association. It has fought for this reform for many years. It is something that Labor governments in other jurisdictions have delivered for their communities. Our Government will deliver it for the people of New South Wales—the largest ever and most significant reform of the way in which we staff our hospitals. It will mean one to three in emergency departments. That's where we will start because it is our emergency departments, as the front doors of our hospitals, that are bearing the brunt of significant pressure in terms of a failure in primary care. It comes with challenges around GP access and complexity of care that patients are presenting with. With big increases in triage 2 categories, there are very unwell people presenting to our hospitals. I look forward to working with the Nurses and Midwives' Association. But, more importantly, I look forward to working with the men and women who make up the New South Wales health system to make sure we deliver the health services all our communities need and deserve.

*Announcements***RECOVERY AND HEALING DOCUMENTARY**

**The SPEAKER:** With members' indulgence, I advise that tomorrow at 8.30 a.m. in the theatrette the member for Shellharbour will be hosting the State launch of the *Recovery and Healing* documentary, which was filmed during the recent Australian Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Recovery and Healing Conference. All MPs and staff are welcome to attend.

*Documents***INSPECTOR OF CUSTODIAL SERVICES****Reports**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with section 16 (1A) of the Inspector of Custodial Services Act 2012, I announce receipt of the following reports:

- (1) Report of Inspector of Custodial Services entitled *Inspection of the Metropolitan Remand and Reception Centre*, dated February 2024, received on 9 February 2024.
- (2) Report of Inspector of Custodial Services entitled *Inspection of Mannus Correctional Centre and Glen Innes Correctional Centre 2022*, dated February 2024, received on 29 February 2024.
- (3) Report of Inspector of Custodial Services entitled *Inspection of John Morony Correctional Centre 2023*, dated 8 March 2024 and received that day.

I order that the reports be printed.

**NSW OMBUDSMAN****Reports**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with section 31AA of the Ombudsman Act 1974, I announce receipt of the special report to Parliament by the NSW Ombudsman entitled *A map of automated decision-making in the NSW Public Sector*, dated 8 March 2024 and received that day. I order that the report be printed.

**PARLIAMENTARY ETHICS ADVISOR****Correspondence**

**The SPEAKER:** I announce receipt of a copy of correspondence from the Parliamentary Ethics Adviser enclosing advice provided to the Hon. Victor Dominello, former Minister, dated 18 February 2024, received on 12 March 2024. I order that the document be printed.

**NSW BUSHFIRE INQUIRY****Reports**

**The CLERK:** In accordance with section 138 of the Rural Fires Act 1997, I announce receipt of the erratum to the report entitled *NSW Bushfire Inquiry 2020 Progress Report: Implementation of the NSW Government's response to the NSW Bushfire Inquiry: Reporting Period July to September 2023*, received out of session on 26 February 2024 and authorised to be printed.

**OFFICE OF TRANSPORT SAFETY INVESTIGATIONS****Reports**

**The CLERK:** In accordance with section 46D of the Passenger Transport Act 1990, I announce receipt of the following reports:

- (1) Report of the Office of Transport Safety Investigations entitled *Rail Safety Investigation Report – Runaway and derailment of loaded grain train 3966: Dombarton (12 km from Wollongong), New South Wales, on 15 December 2020*, dated 24 January 2024, received out of session on 14 February 2024 and authorised to be printed.
- (2) Report of the Office of Transport Safety Investigations entitled *Bus Safety Investigation Report: Bus rollaway and collision Wilsons Valley: 5 September 2022*, dated 28 February 2024, received out of session that day and authorised to be printed.

**AUDITOR-GENERAL****Reports**

**The CLERK:** In accordance with section 38EC of the Government Sector Audit Act 1983, I announce receipt of the following reports:

- (1) Financial Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *State Finances 2023*, dated 15 February 2024, received out of session that day and authorised to be printed.
- (2) Performance Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *Driver vehicle system*, dated 20 February 2024, received out of session that day and authorised to be printed.
- (3) Performance Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *Flood housing response*, dated 22 February 2024, received out of session that day and authorised to be printed.
- (4) Performance Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *Effectiveness of SafeWork NSW in exercising its compliance functions*, dated 27 February 2024, received out of session that day and authorised to be printed.
- (5) Performance Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *Design and administration of the WestInvest program*, dated 28 February 2024, received out of session that day and authorised to be printed.

## INDEPENDENT PRICING AND REGULATORY TRIBUNAL

### Reports

**The CLERK:** In accordance with section 88 of the Electricity Supply Act 1995, I announce receipt of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal Annual Compliance Report entitled *Energy network operator compliance during 2022–23*, received out of session on 23 February 2024 and authorised to be printed.

In accordance with section 19 of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal Act 1992, I announce receipt of the report of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal entitled *Review of early childhood education and care Final Report*, dated December 2023, received out of session on 4 March 2024 and authorised to be printed.

### *Committees*

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY SELECT COMMITTEE ON REMOTE, RURAL AND REGIONAL HEALTH

### Inquiry

**Dr JOE McGIRR:** As Chair: In accordance with Standing Order 299 (1), I inform the House that the Legislative Assembly Select Committee on Remote, Rural and Regional Health has resolved to conduct an inquiry into the implementation of Portfolio Committee No. 2 recommendations relating to the delivery of specific health services and specialist care in remote, rural and regional New South Wales, the full details of which are available on the committee's home page.

## LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

### Reports

**Ms LYNDA VOLTZ:** As Chair: I table the report of the Legislation Review Committee entitled *Legislation Review Digest No. 10/58*, dated 12 March 2024. I move:

That the report be printed.

**Motion agreed to.**

### *Documents*

## INDEPENDENT COMPLAINTS OFFICER

### Reports

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH:** In accordance with clause 7 of the resolution establishing an Independent Complaints Officer agreed to by the House on 29 March 2022, I table the report of the Independent Complaints Officer of the New South Wales Parliament to the Legislative Council Privileges Committee and Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privileges and Ethics, for the period 1 December 2023 to 29 February 2024. I move:

That the report be printed.

**Motion agreed to.**

### *Petitions*

## PETITIONS RECEIVED

**The SPEAKER:** I announce that the following ePetitions signed by 20,000 or more persons have been lodged for presentation:

### Road Crimes

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to consider increasing the maximum penalties for serious road crimes, received from **Ms Charishma Kaliyanda**.

#### **Student Transport Concessions**

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to extend the transport concession program to all students, including part-time and international students, received from **Ms Jenny Leong**.

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

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

#### **South Maitland Rail Corridor**

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to acquire, repair and upgrade the Maitland to Austar Colliery rail corridor, commence regular passenger services from Maitland to Bellbird with existing rolling stock, and arrange for local manufacture of new clean-energy-powered rolling stock, received from **Mr Clayton Barr**.

#### **Parsley Bay Environmental Impact Statement**

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to urgently carry out an environmental impact statement at Parsley Bay, Vaucluse, received from **Ms Kellie Sloane**.

**The CLERK:** I announce the following paper petition signed by 500 or more persons has been lodged for presentation:

#### **City of Newcastle**

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to restore effective governance at the City of Newcastle, received from **Ms Sonia Hornery**.

### **RESPONSES TO PETITIONS**

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

The Hon. Paul Scully—Westmead South Land Zoning—lodged 6 February 2024 (Ms Julia Finn)

The Hon. Yasmin Catley—Random Breath Testing—lodged 6 February 2024 (Mr Philip Donato)

The Hon. Prue Car—Central Coast Child Care—lodged 6 February 2024 (Mr Adam Crouch)

The Hon. Jenny Aitchison—Kalaru to Bega Shared Path—lodged 6 February 2024 (Dr Michael Holland)

The Hon. Ryan Park—Wollongong Hospital Car Parking—lodged 6 February 2024 (Mr Gareth Ward)

#### *Business of the House*

### **BUSINESS LAPSED**

**The SPEAKER:** I advise the House that in accordance with Standing Order 105 general business notices of motions (general notices) Nos 961 to 1143 have lapsed.

*[Notices of motions given.]*

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** I shall now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.30 p.m.

#### *Bills*

### **BAIL AND CRIMES AMENDMENT BILL 2024**

#### **First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Mr Michael Daley, read a first time and printed.**

#### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (14:30):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Ensuring community safety is a key priority for the Minns Labor Government. Reports from communities in regional New South Wales, and statistics from the Bureau of Criminal Statistics and Research [BOCSAR], indicate that our regions have been experiencing higher rates of crime than metropolitan areas. Although this is consistent with trends in other States and is a long-term trend in New South Wales, we have heard the people of our regional communities when they say this is not good enough.

During the 2022-23 period, we know that there were specific increases in offending by young people under the age of 18 for motor vehicle theft and break and enter offences, and that this increase has caused our communities in New South Wales, and particularly in regional New South Wales, great concern. We have also heard the concern that young people have been driving these trends, with reports of repeat offending on bail and a developing trend of young people filming themselves engaging in car theft and serious break and enter offences, sometimes involving weapons, to post on social media. The Government is listening and is taking decisive and immediate action to address these concerns. We know that crime rates have been persistently high in the regions. We also know that this is not the first time that our communities in regional New South Wales have raised concerns about those crime rates. This bill is the first step in a suite of measures that this Government is progressing to meaningfully and comprehensively start to address these problems.

The bill introduces two targeted measures: a time-limited Bail Act amendment, which will ensure that young people aged between 14 and 18 who are alleged to have repeatedly engaged in break and enter and motor vehicle theft offences are not released on bail unless the bail authority has a "high degree of confidence" that they will not commit a serious indictable offence while on bail subject to any proposed bail conditions; and a Crimes Act amendment introducing a new offence of "performance crime", targeting all offenders who commit motor vehicle theft or break and enter offences and disseminate material to advertise their offending conduct. The Bail Act change in proposed new section 22C is a time-limited, targeted amendment. It has been purposefully designed as a "circuit breaker" to address repeated alleged offending by young people aged between 14 and 18 who have been charged with serious break and enter or motor vehicle theft offences while on bail for another offence of that type.

When committed by adults, this type of repeat alleged offending whilst on bail would attract the "show cause" test, which would require a bail authority to refuse bail unless the accused person could show cause why their detention is not justified. The "show cause" provisions do not apply to children and this additional test does not impose a show cause requirement or a reverse onus. Instead, the new test will create an additional threshold for a bail decision-maker, directed at the consideration of the risk of certain young persons committing further serious indictable offences whilst on bail. Bail authorities, including courts, are responsible for applying this new test and determining whether it has been satisfied in each individual case. The unacceptable risk test will also continue to apply.

The Government is aware that tightening bail laws, especially for young people, gives rise to concerns about the risk of increasing the number of young people in detention and the ability for the Government to meet its Closing the Gap targets. This proposed change has been approached cautiously in light of the potentially serious consequences for young people and, in particular, Aboriginal young people. That is why this change is time-limited and specifically targeted at young people who are already alleged to have committed at least one relevant offence whilst on bail for another relevant offence. It has been carefully developed to address a particular cohort of young people who may pose a greater risk to community safety as a result of repeat alleged offending, while also avoiding, as much as possible, broad or unintended adverse consequences. The provision will sunset after 12 months, with an evaluation to take place at the end of that period.

This bill also introduces a new criminal offence that targets "performance crime". We have heard troubling reports, particularly from our communities in regional New South Wales, of offenders posting footage of their offending behaviour on social media, particularly in relation to motor vehicle offending. There have also been high-profile examples of this behaviour in the context of serious break and enter offences, sometimes committed in people's homes while they are asleep. Disseminating recordings of offending behaviour online may encourage others to engage in similar dangerous criminal behaviour. It might send the message to impressionable young people, or other people in our community, that criminal acts are socially acceptable. It may also provide people with information or ideas about how to commit criminal offences.

Posting videos of crimes that involve breaking and entering into the homes of other people can also cause further harm or distress to, or re-traumatise, the victims of these offences, especially where it leads to public ridicule, humiliation or shaming of the victim. The new offence in proposed section 154K of the Crimes Act applies where an offender commits a motor theft offence or a breaking and entering offence and disseminates material to advertise their commission of or involvement in these offences. It reflects the community's disregard for conduct that encourages the commission of offences that violate the sanctity of people's homes and that place the community at risk.

Before I turn to the detail of the bill, I reiterate that these legislative measures are just the first part of the Government's significant and multifaceted response to regional crime. Addressing offending by young people, and addressing persistently high crime rates in regional New South Wales, requires a multi-pronged and long-term approach. We know that the best outcome for everyone is avoiding contact with the criminal justice system in the first place. Importantly, we recognise that our Government needs to work with the community to deliver a long-term plan that works.

These legislative amendments will work in tandem with a suite of measures and supports that aim to provide therapeutic and community-based solutions to address offending behaviour and support regional communities so that they can continue to support and care for their young people. We are expanding Youth Action Meetings, or YAMs, to nine additional police districts. YAMs enable a coordinated approach that brings together government agencies and non-government organisations to identify children and young people at risk of harm or committing a crime. YAMs develop an action plan based on the young person's circumstances, including referral to services or assistance from health and education where required.

The Safe Aboriginal Youth Patrol Program, or SAY, will also be expanded to an additional five Closing the Gap [CTG] priority locations, to be determined in consultation with communities. SAY is a safe transport and outreach service for young Aboriginal people who are on the streets late at night to transport them to a safe home or safe activity. It is modelled on a physical drop-in centre where community members with a connection and rapport with Aboriginal young people do outreach, rather than waiting for young people to reach out themselves. The rollout of \$7.5 million in justice reinvestment grants also continues, with grant funding available to recipients as early as June 2024.

In addition, the Government will be progressing targeted and important work in Moree to address crime, support young people and improve community safety. Additional judicial resources will be made available in Moree, along with additional Aboriginal Legal Service funding. A new bail accommodation and support service will be established in Moree, which will be co-designed with the community. This service will provide an alternative place for young people to go instead of being remanded in custody, will include community-based accommodation and will link young people with Indigenous organisations, Elders and cultural and family supports from their own communities. Skilled, qualified, trained and consistent staff will be on site 24 hours a day, every day, providing child-safe care. An action plan is also being developed within six months to optimise service delivery to ensure that services in the Moree area provide maximum benefit to the community.

One focus of this work will be improving the availability of night-time and out-of-hours services and youth places. We have listened to the community about the impact of a lack of activities, entertainment and community infrastructure for young people in Moree. In partnership with the Moree Plains Shire Council and Aboriginal community-controlled organisations, we will deliver out-of-hours activities for young people in Moree. Finally, the NSW Police Force will continue its surge in operations in the Moree area and continue Operation Youth Safe, which combines education and early intervention to at-risk children to meet community needs and maintain community safety. The targeted, place-based response in Moree, designed with the local community, will act as a pilot program that will inform actions to address similar concerns in other regional communities. What we learn implementing these significant measures in Moree will help to inform future projects and approaches across the State.

I turn to the specifics of the bill. Schedule 1 introduces an additional, temporary test that applies to the granting of bail to a relevant young person in relation to certain serious offences. New section 22C provides for a new test that will act as a final step in the bail decision-making process and will require a bail authority to refuse bail unless the bail authority has a "high degree of confidence" that a young person charged with committing a relevant offence on bail will not commit a further serious indictable offence while on bail. Schedule 1 [1] inserts new section 22C into part 3, division 2A of the Bail Act 2013. New section 22C (1) provides that a bail authority must not grant bail to a "relevant young person" who has been charged with a "relevant offence" alleged to have been committed while on bail for another offence of that type, unless the bail authority has a "high degree of confidence" that the young person will not commit a further "serious indictable offence" while on bail, subject to any proposed bail conditions.

New section 22C (5) defines a "relevant young person" as an individual aged between 14 and 18 years old at the time of the relevant offence. The new bail test specifically targets young people between the ages of 14 and 18, as this is the group with the highest rates of offending amongst young people for motor vehicle theft and serious break and enter offences. New section 22C (5) defines a "relevant offence" as a "serious breaking and entering offence" or "motor theft offence". A "serious breaking and entering offence" is defined in part 4, division 4 of the Crimes Act 1900 as an offence that is punishable by imprisonment of 14 years or more. This includes offences of breaking and entering into a dwelling and committing a serious indictable offence in that dwelling, and offences committed in "circumstances of aggravation" and "special aggravation" as defined in section 105A

of the Crimes Act. "Circumstances of aggravation" include where the young person is armed, in the company of another person, inflicts violence on another person or knows there is a person in the place where the offence is alleged to be committed.

A "motor theft offence" includes offences of taking a conveyance without consent of the owner, taking a motor vehicle or vessel with assault or with an occupant on board, and stealing a motor vehicle, vessel or trailer. "Serious indictable offence" has the same meaning as in section 4 (1) of the Crimes Act 1900, which is an indictable offence punishable by imprisonment for life or for a term of five years or more. This is not limited to only serious breaking and entering or motor theft offences. New section 22C (2) clarifies that the bail authority may only make a decision under the new provision after making an assessment of bail concerns to determine whether there is an unacceptable risk and after considering whether any bail conditions could reasonably be imposed to address any bail concerns or risk that the young person will commit a further serious indictable offence.

If there is an unacceptable risk, there is no need for the decision-maker to go on to consider the new test, as bail will be refused. In contrast to the "show cause" requirement, where the onus is reversed and rests on the accused, the onus for the new provision will continue to rest on the prosecution to establish that bail should not be granted. This is consistent with the recommendation of the Hatzistergos review of the Bail Act that "show cause" and the reverse onus for bail should not apply to children. New section 22C (4) specifies that the provision will sunset 12 months after commencement. This is in keeping with the intention of the proposed provision to be a short-term "circuit breaker" to immediately address the issue of youth crime. The provision will be monitored by the Department of Communities and Justice while it is in place and will be evaluated.

Schedule 1 [2] will insert into schedule 3 of the Bail Act 2013 a transitional provision that clarifies that the application of the amendments made by the bill extend to offences committed, or alleged to have been committed, or charged before the commencement of the amendment. This is necessary to capture young people who are alleged to have already committed relevant offences prior to the commencement of the new provision and are subsequently alleged to have committed a further relevant offence whilst on bail after its commencement.

Schedule 2 [1] of the bill will introduce new section 154K into the Crimes Act 1900, which is the new offence of "performance crime". A person will be guilty of the offence if their act or omission constitutes a "motor theft offence" or a "breaking and entering offence" and the person disseminates material to advertise their involvement in the offence or the act or omission constituting the offence. The offence in new section 154K is similar to an offence in Queensland in section 408A (1B) of the Criminal Code Act 1899, which targets the act of advertising motor vehicle offending on social media. The offence in new section 154K goes a step further than the Queensland offence, as it also targets offenders who disseminate material to advertise their involvement in the commission of break and enter offending. For the purposes of the offence in new section 154K, a "motor theft offence" is an offence under sections 154A, 154C and 154F of the Crimes Act. A "breaking and entering offence" is an offence under part 4, division 4 of the Crimes Act.

New section 154K defines "material" to include anything that contains data from which text, images or sound can be generated. "Advertise" is defined to mean attracting the notice and attention of the public or a limited section of the public. "Disseminate" is defined to include sending, supplying, exhibiting, transmitting or communicating material, including through social media and other electronic methods. Importantly, the offence in new section 154K requires the person to disseminate material for the specific purpose of advertising their involvement in or commission of the relevant motor theft offence or breaking and entering offence. This is to avoid overreach and ensure that the offence does not capture other scenarios, such as accidental filming of an offence by a member of the public or the filming and publication of criminal acts by journalists for a media report.

The maximum penalty under new section 154K is the total of the maximum penalty for the relevant motor theft offence or breaking and entering offence and imprisonment for two years. In other words, this provision will add a further two years imprisonment to the maximum penalty available for the relevant motor theft offence or breaking and entering offence. This approach recognises the seriousness of "performance crime" and the community's denunciation of this behaviour, which can encourage similar criminal offending by others, trivialise the harm caused by the substantive offence and re-traumatise the victim of that offence.

New section 154K (3) provides that, for the avoidance of doubt, if an offender is convicted of a performance crime offence the offender cannot also be convicted of a motor theft offence or breaking and entering offence in relation to the act or omission constituting the performance crime offence. This clarifies that, while the prosecution is not precluded from bringing alternative charges against a defendant, the defendant cannot be convicted of both the substantive motor theft offence or breaking and entering offence, as defined in new section 154 (4), and the performance crime offence in new section 154K (1).

Schedule 2 [1] also introduces proposed new section 154L into the Crimes Act. This provides that a review of the policy objectives of the new offence and the way in which the objectives are achieved must be undertaken

two years after proposed section 154K commences. A statutory review will enable the operation of this new offence to be monitored and assessed. Schedule 2 [2] to the bill provides that new section 154K only applies to an offence alleged to have been committed on or after the commencement of the section. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

## **ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT AMENDMENT (SEA BED MINING AND EXPLORATION) BILL 2024**

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 7 February 2024.**

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (14:51):** It feels a bit like groundhog day to be talking about Petroleum Exploration Permit 11 [PEP 11] in this Chamber. The fact is that the Minns Labor Government could have passed legislation in June last year when the member for Pittwater introduced his private member's bill. Instead, it chose to delay the issue and send the bill to committee. The Government also could have passed legislation with amendment after that committee reported in December but, again, it sought to delay. When coastal communities called for action from this Government, they got delay and delay again. The Government has chosen inaction over action. The sceptic in me might say that the Government chose to delay the member for Pittwater's bill so it could produce a version of its own and claim it as its own win. Surely that wouldn't happen! I am reminded of a quote from Ronald Reagan, who said, "There is no limit to the amount of good you can do if you don't care who gets the credit." I do not care who gets the credit. They can take the credit if they want because, at the end of the day, this is a win for New South Wales coastal communities.

The credit for this achievement belongs to the hardworking community advocates and community organisations like Surfers for Climate, who have worked for so long to achieve this result, as well as Parents for Climate, Environmental Leadership Australia, Australian Marine Conservation Society, Sydney Institute of Marine Science, Climate Solutions, Blueprint Institute, FrontRunners, World Wildlife Fund and so many more. Before the State election last year I remember standing with a group of those organisations. We called them "Ocean's Nine". It was a good day and we hoped that we would see this day eventuate, and I think we might today. Members on this side of the House have listened to coastal communities, and I am proud of the fact that we have made the Government act to prevent mining for oil and gas in New South Wales coastal waters. I am proud of the fact that we are helping put the nails in the coffin of PEP 11 once and for all.

The Opposition will be supporting the Government's bill, and I will come to the specifics of that in a moment. I note that while most of the bill is very similar to the one that the member for Pittwater introduced last year, it is considerably weakened by provisions which essentially give the planning Minister power to override many of the regulations and indeed the Act itself through an obscure Henry VIII clause which is, essentially, a "get out of jail free" card. We understand that amendments will be proffered today. We welcome tightening up the clause, because it effectively undermines the intent of the bill.

I turn to the purpose of the bill. Why do we need it? In essence, we need it to protect our precious marine estate. In New South Wales we are blessed to have some of the most pristine beaches and waterways in the world. Our marine estate is one of our most significant natural resources. It includes around one million hectares of estuary and ocean with more than 1,750 kilometres of ocean coastline, 6,500 kilometres of estuarine and coastal lake foreshores, 826 beaches, 44 offshore islands and 185 estuaries and coastal lakes. Our marine estate generates billions of dollars through domestic and international visitors every year. As the *Report of the Independent Scientific Audit of Marine Parks in New South Wales* succinctly stated, "The NSW Marine Estate is owned by all people and has to be managed for all people." That is what we are here today to do. We are here to protect our marine estate for the people of New South Wales.

Overwhelmingly, people in New South Wales do not want to see offshore mining and drilling in our waters. The current PEP 11 licence would involve offshore drilling as close as a few kilometres off the coast of Australia between Newcastle and Sydney. Offshore drilling would affect coastal ecosystems, intersect with whale migration patterns and devastate the environment if something went wrong. In 2009 we saw what happened with the Montara blowout, which caused a large oil spill off the coast of Western Australia. The Federal Court of Australia found that the spill spewed over 2½ thousand barrels of oil into the Timor Sea every day for 74 days. That killed seaweed crops, destroyed fishing grounds and polluted waters over more than 90,000 square kilometres—an area larger than Tasmania. A 2016 review entitled *Environmental Impacts of the Deep-Water Oil and Gas Industry: A Review to Guide Management Strategies* found:

Oil and gas operations have the potential to result in accidental releases of hydrocarbons, with the likelihood of an accidental spill or blowout increasing with the depth of the operations.

We also know that even early exploration activities such as the marine seismic air gun blasts, which reach about 250 decibels, can be heard for kilometres and can have devastating impacts on marine life. Those blasts can cause mammal hearing loss, disturb essential behaviours like feeding and breeding, and can mask communication between individual whales and dolphins.

Returning to the specifics of the bill, the purpose of the bill is to prohibit seabed and subsoil petroleum and mineral exploration, recovery and related development to ensure that development for those purposes cannot be undertaken in New South Wales. While New South Wales does have an offshore exploration and mining policy, introduced by the former Coalition Government, which states explicitly that the New South Wales Government does not support offshore mineral, coal or petroleum exploration or mining for commercial purposes or adjacent to New South Wales coastal waters, it is still possible for these activities to take place. The bill will send a very clear directive to those energy companies.

Offshore mining and exploration authorisations may still be granted and renewed under the Offshore Minerals Act 1999 and the Petroleum (Offshore) Act 1982, and developments may still currently be undertaken in accordance with the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979. The bill proposes to insert schedule 10 into the EP&A Act to prohibit the carrying out of seabed and subsoil petroleum or mineral exploration and recovery in coastal waters of the State and of other related developments in the broader State. The new schedule also prevents the granting or renewal of certain authorisations under the offshore Acts relating to development prohibited under the schedule.

As I have mentioned, the Opposition is concerned about the provision that gives the planning Minister override power. I am pleased to see that is being addressed. The Opposition believes that the original bill proposed by the member for Pittwater was stronger. We want the strongest piece of legislation we can have to protect our marine estate from seabed mining and exploration, and there is legitimate concern about the drafting of the current bill—this Henry VIII clause, which is self-defeating, potentially. We have been on quite a journey with the bill, and we have been on that journey with communities right up and down the coast of New South Wales and with everyone even beyond the coast—those inland who share our concern about our waterways and our beautiful beaches.

I hope that this is a good day. We draw the line in the sand here in New South Wales today. We are standing up for our coastal communities and we look to Canberra now, because Federal Labor could veto this with the stroke of a pen. Anthony Albanese has been silent on this matter. He has ignored his pre-election promise for too long. The Prime Minister should take the baton we are handing him today, run with it and provide long overdue certainty for our coastal communities. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (14:59):** I speak briefly in support of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Sea Bed Mining and Exploration) Bill 2024. I thank the Minister, the Hon. Paul Scully, who is in the Chamber, for introducing this much-needed bill to protect our coastal seabed. The New South Wales Government does not support exploration or mining of the State's offshore geological resources. It is imperative that we protect our coastline and our sensitive marine ecosystems. This bill will protect our coastline for future generations by prohibiting petroleum and mineral exploration and recovery in our coastal waters. The bill will amend the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 to permanently ban this activity.

The approach taken by the Government in drafting this bill has been careful and considered. Importantly, the bill does not impose a blanket prohibition but makes important exemptions for, firstly, coastal protection works; and, secondly, certain dredging activities that do not require authorisation under the New South Wales Offshore Minerals Act 1999. It is essential to include these exemptions. They ensure that works maintaining and protecting the coastal environment, assets, resources and public safety are not restricted by this bill. Examples of works allowed under the coastal protection exemption include beach nourishment, where offshore sand, soil or sediment is added onto an eroding beach; beach scraping, involving the movement of sand from the shoreline to further up the beach, which reshapes the landscape and dune formations; seawalls and revetment work—you can tell I'm from Blacktown; what the hell is that?—to reduce the impact of coastal hazards and protect coastal areas from storm damage, further erosion and flooding; and dredging for environmental purposes, which does not involve the extraction and recovery of minerals.

It is critical that these activities are permitted, to ensure that erosion and other environmental issues can continue to be appropriately and carefully managed. The exemption for certain dredging activities will also ensure that some important current practices can continue. Dredging is a routine practice with environmental and economic benefits. The types of dredging that will be exempt from the prohibitions under the bill include dredging to maintain or increase the depth of navigation channels to ensure that vessels can adequately access a port or marina; to replenish sand lost from coastal erosion; to provide for anchorages or berthing areas; and to remove sediments and pollutants to maintain clean and healthy ecosystems.

The bill also includes a regulation-making power to permit further regulations to be made to exempt other specified seabed mineral exploration or recovery activities and development if required. These regulations would only be able to be progressed in consultation with the Minister for the Environment. The exemptions are important to ensure that the bill does not unintentionally prohibit practices which are appropriate and have commercial and environmental benefits for the State. This bill is an important and critical step in the protection of our coastline for future generations. It is a sensible approach to protecting New South Wales against the harmful environmental impacts that can result from offshore exploration and recovery of petroleum and minerals. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (15:03):** I speak on the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Sea Bed Mining and Exploration) Bill 2024. I acknowledge the Minister with carriage of the bill is in the Chamber. The reasons for this bill and the detail of the legislation will be canvassed thoroughly. These issues have received widespread media coverage for years. In fact, they generated farcical scenes during the last election in Pittwater, where competing "Stop PEP 11" press conferences took place side by side. Advocates and environmental voices did not know which one to stand behind. It was at that point that we knew that something was up when it came to the views and voices of coastal communities wanting to stop PEP 11. We have managed to get to this position of furious agreement because of the hard work, often behind the scenes, of the principled, smart and, at times, brave environmental advocacy groups who have, against the trend, gone out on a limb and proactively and comprehensively engaged with conservative politicians and voices over many years. They have brought about this outcome.

These groups have had the courage to buck the trend when it comes to the archetypal environmental advocacy group. It was the gains made by those groups who were willing and able to objectively engage—or, perhaps more importantly, those who truly understood the pragmatism required to change minds, inform, influence and educate using facts—who are ultimately the ones who have effected and will continue to effect the greatest change. The passing of this bill should, rightly, have many people claiming it as their win. It has been a collaborative effort. But that effort and reward belongs to those who were willing to leave their long-held and often incorrect perceptions and views at the door and get around the table for a discussion. As my friend Anna from ELA says, "Conservation requires conversation. We have to get better at being in dialogue with people with different backgrounds and different values." Indeed, it is those groups, namely Surfers for Climate, who have led us to where we find ourselves today. There are still some coastal conservation groups and political voices on the sidelines that cannot bring themselves to believe we are at this point where a policy of the former Coalition Government to ban offshore mining is now being legislated with bipartisan support.

One of Australia's greatest economic assets is also its greatest environmental asset: the ocean. More than 85 per cent of Australians live within 50 kilometres of the sea, but Australia's ocean economy extends well beyond New South Wales coastal communities. Australia's national marine industries contribute significantly to the economy by generating more than \$110 billion in output, adding \$105 billion in value to the GDP, whilst supporting 462,000 full-time equivalent jobs. Conservation, restoration, and sustainable use and management of marine ecosystems and biodiversity is fundamental to a achieving a sustainable ocean economy. In that respect, the proposal of PEP 11, in my view, never delivered the highest and best use of the coastal waters of New South Wales and, indeed, does not align with fundamental policy decisions and directions regarding energy security, reliability or cost.

All parties lay claim to having proud environmental records. I am proud to stand here today to speak on my party's tradition in marine conservation. The Coalition ended whaling in Australian waters. The Great Australian Bight Marine Park, proclaimed in 1998, the Great Barrier Reef, proclaimed in 1979, the Solitary Islands Marine Reserve, proclaimed in 1991, and the South-east Commonwealth Marine Reserves Network, consisting of 13 marine reserves, are all State or Federal Liberal government initiatives. These are all major achievements of which we as a Coalition are proud and to which we can now add this legislation.

The message I leave for other States and Territories of Australia is that the economic benefits of conservation of our coastline presents an overwhelming and comprehensive case. This legislation should not be misconstrued as simply a means to preserve the visual amenity of a portion of the coast, because it is so much more than that. Cheaper, more reliable and secure energy is best achieved through other means. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the many coastal communities, stakeholder groups and various members of Parliament, either historically or more recently, who have delivered this outcome. Well done to all. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast) (15:09):** I am pleased to support the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Sea Bed Mining and Exploration) Bill 2024, which will effectively ban offshore oil and gas drilling and pipelines in New South Wales

coastal waters. It has been a long time coming, as members opposite have acknowledged. There was bipartisan support in the other place, where a motion passed with support across the broad spectrum of parties in opposition to Petroleum Exploration Permit 11 [PEP 11]. Our communities, particularly our coastal communities, have made it clear that they do not support offshore mining and wanted something done about it. It goes back to the old principle of risk versus reward, where you look at the potential downsides of approving something and the risks to things such as tourism, marine life, lifestyle and all the important things that our coastal communities hold very dear. In fact everyone in New South Wales holds those things very dear, because many people visit our coastline and spend a great deal of time there.

Before the election, we promised the people of the Central Coast that we opposed oil and gas mining off the coast of their beautiful home. I have been in the media over many years. Some members are only fairly new to the Parliament, but some of us have been fighting this battle for a number of years. I include my colleague the member for Terrigal, across the Chamber, although he gets a bit confused with history sometimes and tries to put the boot into us. But our position has always been consistent, at both a State and a Federal level. I acknowledge the former member for Robertson, Lucy Wicks, who was also an advocate against PEP 11. I acknowledge my State colleagues and two Federal colleagues Emma McBride and Gordon Reid. We have been totally consistent in our opposition.

Today the bill delivers on what we have spoken about. I am pleased to be part of a government that not only listens to community but also acts. Introducing this legislation is doing just that. I have spoken about this a lot locally. I contrast it with the decision made on Wallarah 2. I remember Barry O'Farrell standing on a picnic table at a place called Mardi. When it came to Wallarah 2, he said, "No ifs, no buts. We will not let this go ahead. Hand on heart, this is our promise." As soon as they won the election, it was back on the table. It is now approved and sits there over our heads and in our water supply, causing problems. On this side, we made a commitment and we have kept our commitment. We did not backflip. We did what we said we would do. I think that is very important, particularly for the voters.

No other State or Territory has acted so comprehensively to prevent the severe environmental impacts that can result from offshore exploration. The bill is about providing the community with certainty as well as protecting our coastline and marine environments. The passing of this legislation will prevent the environmental impacts that can result from offshore exploration and recovery of petroleum and minerals. It also reduces the risk of disasters like oil spills and associated climate change impacts. Under this legislation, activities will be allowed that benefit the environment. That is really important. They might include the recovery of sand for beach nourishment, which can help protect areas such as the Central Coast from erosion. Areas like ours along the Central Coast have had a really difficult time managing coastal erosion. It is an ongoing challenge. I remember the Pasha Bulker storm at Cabbage Tree Harbour, where we acted and where houses risked falling into the beautiful harbour. At North Entrance, Wamberal and right along the coast, there are places at risk. It is really important that we make sure that sand is available to replenish and nourish those coastal areas.

This legislation ensures that important dredging activities, which increase anchorage and remove sediments and pollutants at places like The Entrance and the Ettalong channel, can continue. I note that the member for Gosford is in the Chamber. The legislation also puts an end to any possibility of oil and gas pipelines in our water. We have to be very careful because some members opposite are criticising the current Federal Government for its approach. Let us be clear about what happened. A Minister from Queensland, Keith Pitt, had the carriage of the licence approval in the Federal Government. He spent months and months and did not make a decision. Unbeknown to not only the members in Parliament but also the people of Australia, the then Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, took on multiple ministries. One of those ministries was to intervene and disallow PEP 11. We might say that that was a good thing. The problem was that when those in government need to operate with "independent" processes—I put "independent" in inverted commas—they risk decision-making in the courts when they do not act properly. The overturning by Morrison went to the court and the court ruled that he had acted incorrectly. They did the wrong thing and now it is back.

The current Federal Government committed to doing the right thing and making sure that it is a proper, robust, independent process. Members opposite will criticise that. We on this side trust and advocate for the independence of the bodies to make decisions. We need to support that. We cannot be hypocrites. We need to support that independent process. Members opposite will criticise the Federal Government and Anthony Albanese, but they are criticising them for acting legally, doing the right thing and ensuring that we are not back here again, passing more laws because the proper, independent process has been circumvented.

The New South Wales Government has checked this carefully. The Minister for Planning and Public Spaces has done an excellent job, along with Minister Houssos and Minister Sharpe, in making sure that we have all the checks and balances. We know that members opposite will say that they had a bill. But they regularly stood on this spot and said, "We cannot support this because it has not been through the proper processes" et cetera.

They then stood up weeks later and introduced basically the same bill. They have a lot of history on this. In this particular case, we have to make sure that we get it right because otherwise it will go back to court. When the court rules, it gets overturned. We cannot afford that for our communities, the environmental advocates or all the people who care deeply about this issue.

This is the right approach. This is the right way to do it. The Federal Government will make its independent decision, and that is also the right thing to do. In terms of this bill, it will make sure that none of that infrastructure can enter New South Wales waters. That probably means that PEP 11 will never happen because it will be far too expensive. This is the right approach; it has my 100 per cent backing. It is a great thing that we have been able to introduce it into the Parliament. Under the previous Government we passed a motion in the upper House, which I do not think was moved by them.

**Mr Paul Scully:** No, by us.

**Mr DAVID HARRIS:** They voted for it. We said we would do it. We are here and we are doing it. I commend the Minister and all the people involved in the process. On this side of the Parliament, we are determined to get things right, legally and ethically, and to make sure that we get the best outcomes for the people of New South Wales.

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater) (15:18):** I thank the Minister for being here today and the members who have made contributions so far—the member for Vaucluse, the member for Blacktown, the member for Wyong and the member for Manly. I was very grateful to see the bill introduced in the last sitting fortnight. When I read it, it struck a very familiar tone in form and in words. When I put it through the Turnitin system at the local university, it came out at about 99 per cent similarity, because it is a very similar bill.

But I congratulate the Government on coming to the table on this issue because, as the Government will know through its discussions and the committee process, upon being elected to this place I set out to work with key stakeholders in the environmental space, environmental groups, the Coalition and the crossbench to put together a bill that would comprehensively deal with offshore gas mining and exploration in a way that no parliament in this country has ever dealt with it before. I thank the stakeholder groups, including Environmental Leadership Australia, Surfers for Climate, Parents for Climate, and Vets for Climate Action. There are any number of groups for climate. They all do a wonderful job in advocating for their views on these matters. I thank them all for working together and engaging in this process.

One of the disappointing things in this process is its politicisation. I am very new to this place, having been elected in March last year. So I like to think that on this matter I come to the table with clean hands. Opposing PEP 11 is a longstanding position of the Coalition and the Labor Party. On being elected to this place, I saw that there was no proposal to put forward any legislation to meaningfully address the issue to the extent that this Parliament could. In that stead, we worked to put together a comprehensive and thorough bill to do everything this Parliament could to end offshore gas mining and exploration for good.

When that bill was put forward, it was referred to a committee by the Government, which is what we expected to happen. One thing the committee found is that sovereignty over State waters is very much a responsibility of the Commonwealth and that it had given jurisdiction over State waters to New South Wales. The committee said that, because ultimately the Commonwealth has sovereignty over State waters, if we attempt to make laws the Commonwealth might subsequently disagree with, it might remove our power and our jurisdiction over State waters; therefore, we should do nothing and not support any bill that would do what we now propose to do in PEP 11. Having made that finding and that recommendation, the Government then introduced its own bill, which did exactly what the former bill proposed to do. We can only deduce from that that the committee, which was partisan with a majority of Government members, was not acting in a way that was truly bipartisan, which is the spirit in which this matter was brought to date.

This is a monumental day because for many years people on all sides of politics—be they Green, Coalition, Liberal, National, Labor, Independent or teal—have said they will do what they can to stop PEP 11. But it was only after members on this side of the House introduced a private member's bill that spurred the Government to action. Using a crystal ball, I dare say that if no private member's bill had been introduced from members on this side of the House or from any other person in this Chamber, we would not be having this debate today. It is a credit to those in the Coalition who supported putting forward a private member's bill that would see action on this matter. I must say that the private member's bill that will be dispensed with once this bill becomes law—and I hope that it will—was a much stronger and more comprehensive bill. There are two reasons for that.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** Make some amendments.

**Mr RORY AMON:** I welcome the suggestion of amendments. As my friend the member for Cessnock has alluded to, I am aware and very supportive of amendments. I think the member for Vaucluse said we will be

bringing some amendments to remove the Henry VIII clause, which I read about in primary school and never thought I would again. But I keep seeing them in this place, which is interesting in and of itself. The Henry VIII clause would defeat the purpose of the bill by allowing the Minister to regulate for offshore gas mining and exploration. I note that amendments will be brought to remove that and I hope that the House will support them.

There is one other matter in which I note that the Government's bill is weaker than the Coalition's bill. It is a matter of concern, but I am assured that it will be dealt with adequately in the Government's bill. I thank the Minister and his office for facilitating briefings with the relevant departmental lawyers and experts on these matters to assure us of this. But it is important to record that the Government's bill refers to relevant development being prohibited for the purposes of offshore gas mining and exploration. My concern is that it does not specify in detail what that relevant development could include but not be limited to. For a community that was led down the garden path on this matter for many years, the more certainty we have, the better.

I appreciate that the Government's position is not to provide that greater certainty, but I am assured it is there, nonetheless. I will address the matter. The Coalition's bill would have specifically set out that prohibited relevant development would include the maintenance, repair, provisioning or refuelling of vessels, aircraft or equipment used for the relevant development, being offshore gas mining and exploration, handling, refining or processing petroleum or minerals obtained from that development, and the unloading or transportation, including by pipeline, of petroleum or minerals obtained from that relevant development. That was in the original bill but is not in the Government's bill. I am told that it is all good and I will take the Government at its word on that. But I feel it is important we identify the shortcomings or perceived shortcomings of the Government's bill.

Those things said, I congratulate the Government for following the Coalition's lead on this matter. The Prime Minister said he is opposed to PEP 11 and offshore gas mining and exploration. Every member in this place said they are opposed to it. It is good to see they are on board with opposing it by way of legislation. The ball is now fairly and squarely in the court of the Federal Labor Government to ensure that it rejects the renewal of the licence for offshore gas mining and exploration and that it can never be renewed or reactivated in future. To that end, I call on the Federal Government to do more where it can. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (15:26):** Gird your loins. I find interesting the legislation we have before the House today and how it was characterised by the member for Pittwater, and his willingness to take credit for his legislation that was introduced previously when it was remarkably similar—almost word for word—to a private member's bill drafted by a former Independent member.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** The member for Pittwater has already had his say. He will come to order.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** It was almost word for word the same as a private member's bill drafted by Independent MLC Justin Field. The reality is that, in the course of the 2023 election campaign, this particular topic was incredibly important for the votes won or lost on the northern beaches of Sydney. At the time, the Independent candidates challenging the now successful Liberal candidate for Pittwater were running hard on this issue. The election result for that particular electorate—in part as a consequence of this issue, which the member for Pittwater did not seem to have much of a position on at the time—came down to a knife's edge.

After being in government for 12 years and not tackling this issue, suddenly the NSW Liberals are passionate about it because they have a brand-new member for Pittwater—who almost lost the blue-ribbon electorate to an Independent. They have uploaded a private member's bill that was floating around and they changed a couple of words. Unfortunately, a number of the words they changed and extended made it constitutionally unsound, which is sometimes an error made by those new to this place. It probably would not have won the day in a Supreme Court challenge. We now have this issue before us. In his remarks a few moments ago the member for Pittwater took all the credit for something which he was dragged into, kicking and screaming, and which the previous Government did not have much interest in for 12 years—

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

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** —and which the previous Federal Government did not have any real interest in until it got close to a new election cycle. We now have some of those newly elected persons—Liberal representatives in the Opposition—standing in this Chamber, suggesting that somehow Labor is to blame for the fact that PEP 11 continues to survive and be in the realms of contestability and possibility. There was plenty of opportunity over more than a decade, during which time nothing happened.

In fact, that is not true because the one thing that did happen, as the member for Wyong remarked a moment ago, was that the then Prime Minister—the man of many ministries—decided to make a decision on the PEP 11 application without being properly informed. I think that was the legal term used. That then meant that the company, when it took the Commonwealth Government to court, had the case to win. The previous Prime Minister

having made an uninformed choice forced the new Government to offer to the proponent that the new Government would consider, look at, account for, properly process, properly investigate, negotiate, liaise and extend every opportunity to the proponent in a fair and equitable way to put forward its case as per the law at the time it was submitted. That was the one thing that the former Federal Liberal-National Government did: It stuffed it up. And here we are.

The small number of words, if the member for Pittwater wants to put it that way, that have changed between his bill—which was Justin Field's bill—and this bill are incredibly important words. In fact, during the committee process one of the constant trigger points that we kept coming back to was that the member for Pittwater had inserted into his proposed bill and his second reading speech that he wanted to extend the reach of the New South Wales Government into the offshore waters controlled by the Commonwealth Government. He went out of his way in his second reading speech to make the point—not once, not twice but three times—that he wanted New South Wales to make a law to deliberately interfere with Commonwealth waters. He could have referred to "coastal waters". He could have put up a bill that was legally within the confines of the State, but he chose to extend it beyond that. That is the trouble with poorly crafted legislation.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** Order! Opposition members will remain silent. The member for Pittwater will come to order. The member for Coogee will come to order.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** That is why it is important to draft legislation carefully, with access to Parliamentary Counsel and with the engagement of the great legal minds who can give us excellent advice, not just about a set of words that a member might want to be true but about a set of words that will be legally enforceable. That is the significance of the bill that is before the House today. That is the difference between this bill and the bill that had previously been put. I draw attention specifically to some of the examples in the private member's bill that this bill avoids.

**Mr Rory Amon:** Are you speaking on the Government bill or against a bill that is not being debated today?

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** For the second time, I ask the member for Pittwater to come to order. I do not want to have to ask him a third time.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** The private member's bill would have exposed the State—

**Mr Rory Amon:** Point of order: It goes to relevance. We are debating a Government bill. The member for Cessnock is using his time to speak about a private member's bill.

**Mr Paul Scully:** You spent your entire time talking about your bill.

**Mr Rory Amon:** No point of order was taken in relation to my wonderful remarks, but I am taking a point of order on the remarks by the member for Cessnock.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** To the point of order—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** I do not uphold the point of order. Opposition members will cease interjecting.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** For the benefit of the new member, when a person is speaking in a second reading debate, they can address the bill, as well as comments that have been made by others. I sat quietly listening to the contribution of the member for Pittwater, during which he proclaimed his wondrous bill and how awesome it was. I am using my contribution to the second reading debate to respond to some of the comments that I have heard in the debate. That is exactly what second reading debates are about.

The prohibitions of the private member's bill applied to the recovery of sand, provided the recovery is for the end use of beach nourishment. It is unclear how that requirement would operate from a compliance and enforcement perspective because mining licences under the Offshore Minerals Act 1999 are granted with statutory rights to explore and recover minerals irrespective of the end use of the recovered resource. It is also unclear whether the private member's bill intended to prohibit the granting of licences that would allow the exploration of suitable sands for beach nourishment, as the member for Pittwater put it, because the bill only carves out sand recovery. Exploration is generally a necessary precursor to identifying a suitable source and location from which to recover. [*Extension of time*]

I further make the point that the private member's bill, in only referring to beach nourishment and not to other coastal protection practices, raises a question about whether beach scraping would be permissible under that particular bill. The private member's bill did not exclude dredging, which is an important part of routine practice that creates environmental and economic benefits. Unlike the private member's bill, this bill enables regulations to be made to avoid unintended consequences for development, such as dredging for port maintenance, which

would have been considered seabed mineral recovery within the definition of "relevant development" in the private member's bill. That is why we need to stay away from that bill.

The regulation-making power that is in the bill moved by the Minister is subject to appropriate safeguards. The Minister for Planning and Public Spaces will be required to consult the Minister for the Environment before recommending that a regulation be made in that regard. The committee that I chaired made a recommendation to the Legislative Assembly not to pass that other bill. The reason was that it could have been foreseen that some amendments had been made, which might have made it more constitutionally sound, but it is difficult to make that decision in a committee process when committee members are trying to get inside the mind of the person who originally introduced the bill to understand what amendments they might make. That is all in the context of the second reading speech by that member being explicit about wanting to reach into Commonwealth waters.

I stand by the recommendations and the work of that committee despite the fact that I do not live coastally, which somehow excluded me from being appropriate. I suspect that men in this House need to stay out of all questions about women, older members need to stay out of conversations about younger people, younger members need to stay out of conversations about older people and coastal members should not make a comment about something that happens inland, based on the logic that has previously been put to the House about the work of that committee. I stand by the work of the committee. It was fascinating, interesting, engaging, challenging and difficult. We made the right recommendations in that committee and I stand by them because we could not foresee what amendments might or might not have been made in making recommendations any other way.

The truth is that the previous bill the committee considered was constitutionally unsound. The bill that is before the House this afternoon—and that will be passed after the lot opposite whinge and then fold—is sound. It is founded on good legal advice, it is sustainable and it can be implemented in a way that allows Ministers to deal with many otherwise unforeseen consequences. You can call it a Henry VIII clause or whatever you want, but future Ministers of this State—not just the two current Ministers—will need to make important, informed decisions about minerals in our coastal waters. That is why the bill is written the way it is. I support the bill entirely and I commend it to the House. I urge those opposite to stop trying to rewrite history and to acknowledge the importance of this moment—not the importance of a private member's bill that may be before the House.

**Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (15:40):** I speak in support of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Sea Bed Mining and Exploration) Bill 2024. I also indicate that I will move an amendment to strengthen the bill, consistent with its intent, by tightening the exemption regulation provision so that in no circumstances can it be used to facilitate seabed exploration and mining for fossil fuels. Firstly, I thank the Government for its leadership in introducing this legislation. I commend it for stepping up and making it happen with the rigour and credibility of a government bill. Having said that, my hope is that this legislation can be viewed as a shared achievement of the Parliament. To have a race to the top across both major political parties, Independents and The Greens to prevent a fossil fuel development is pretty unusual and should be celebrated.

It is easy to take this unanimous position for granted, but around Australia right now there are massive new offshore gas projects that have political support to rapidly progress to production—Santos's Barossa Gas Project in the Timor Sea off the Northern Territory and Woodside's Burrup Hub containing three huge projects off Western Australia. The Victorian Government even wants to allow exploration for gas within five kilometres of the Twelve Apostles, for goodness sake. At a time when the International Energy Agency has stated unequivocally that there should be no new fossil fuel projects, the scale at which Australia is proposing opening offshore gas reserves is a disgrace.

The bill is an achievement of the Parliament. More importantly, it is an achievement of all the individuals, community groups and environmental organisations who have worked so hard to make New South Wales legislation to prevent seabed mining and exploration for oil and gas a reality. The bill prohibits exploration or mining for oil and gas in New South Wales coastal waters and stops other development within the State that would facilitate these activities in the offshore area beyond New South Wales coastal waters, making any potential projects significantly less viable. It fully utilises the levers available to the New South Wales Government under the offshore Acts and the planning Act to legitimately control matters within its jurisdiction to prevent offshore exploration for oil and gas. Most significantly, the bill sends an unequivocal and powerful message: Mining and exploration for oil and gas off our precious coastline has no social licence and no political support, and together we will take every step to make sure it does not happen.

The bill comes in the context of a live threat of potential offshore drilling for gas. This is PEP 11, an exploration licence covering an area from Newcastle to Manly, first granted in 1981 and renewed several times since. The proponent has poured tens of millions of dollars into the project, actively progressed with damaging seismic testing and continues to seek extensions to their exploration licence. For my community on the northern beaches, who have been so steadfast in their opposition to PEP 11, this ongoing state of limbo has been very frustrating. We welcome the certainty that this bill provides, while recognising that the PEP 11 exploration licence

extension is still pending. We will remain vigilant and push the Federal Government to sign it off and get rid of it. The risks of offshore seabed mining and exploration are well understood, and the Minister summarised them simply and clearly in his second reading speech:

Offshore mining activities can have a devastating impact on our marine fauna and their habitats, including the release of harmful or toxic materials, the removal of habitat and the creation of harmful sediment levels.

In particular, we know that seismic testing involved in exploration can be very destructive for marine ecosystems, particularly whales, dolphins and sharks. We have seen the consequences of offshore mining gone wrong in Australia and around the world. The 2009 Montara spill in the Northern Territory caused a major oil slick. The famous Deepwater Horizon spill in the Gulf of Mexico took an immense ecological toll. Impacts and risks can be minimised but not eliminated. Things go wrong, conditions are breached and environmental degradation occurs. There may be prosecutions and fines, but too often the damage is done.

This bill comes at a time when our coastline is increasingly vulnerable. The need to take all possible steps to protect our coast has never been more pressing. The recently released *State Disaster Mitigation Plan* is sobering reading. It leaves no doubt that, over the coming decades, our coast will face unprecedented threats—creeping sea level rise, supercharged east coast lows, coastal erosion and inundation on a whole new scale. As an aside, the plan identifies the northern beaches as being particularly vulnerable. The plan predicts that by 2060 the northern beaches will have the highest total average annual loss in the built environment—totalling \$969 million—of anywhere in the State, mostly due to coastal inundation and erosion. We all remember the images of the houses and a swimming pool at Collaroy Beach falling into the sea after east coast lows. Unfortunately, this is just the beginning. We can reduce risk to our coast—and we must.

What is more, we do not need to open new gas reserves to supply domestic needs. We need to electrify our homes, our transport, our industry and our exports at scale, powered by renewable energy. This transition offers massive opportunities for households and businesses to save money and slash emissions. Gas is expensive, it is polluting and it is not compatible with our net zero goals. Next week I am hosting a breakfast that will present recent research on electorate-based savings to households of switching from gas to all-electric appliances. I encourage everyone to attend. To give a sample of this research, in my electorate of Wakehurst there is a potential annual energy saving of \$11.9 million—\$11.9 million per year just in my electorate—and the opportunity to create 39 local full-time jobs through full household electrification over a 10-year period. This means replacing inefficient, expensive and unhealthy gas heaters, stove tops and hot-water systems with electric ones.

I want to reflect, as so many have done today, on the history and context of this bill, because it has many parents. By this point, with so much momentum and broad support, it is easy to feel like this outcome was inevitable. But I am sure it did not feel that way for all those who campaigned over many years to raise the profile of the threat of offshore oil and gas mining and called on the Government to act decisively to stop any potential project progressing. I am thinking of my friend Natalie Warren, former Greens councillor on Northern Beaches Council, who brought a motion in March 2019 that council, as a matter of urgency, write to local MPs and relevant Ministers outlining our opposition to the PEP 11 exploration licence. On this and many other occasions, the Northern Beaches Council and I, as mayor, made our opposition to the project crystal clear.

I am thinking of the many coastal community groups and environmental organisations who have been protesting against PEP 11 for many years—in particular, Surfriider Foundation and its great ambassador, my mate Layne Beachley, as well as Save Our Coast, led by the indefatigable Peter Morris, and more recently Surfers for Climate, who worked very effectively to broaden political support for New South Wales legislation. The notion of New South Wales based legislation using powers under the planning system to prohibit associated development to help prevent offshore drilling for oil and gas has been raised from time to time by various MPs and campaigners in recent years, including The Greens and others. But it was Jacqui Scruby, the Independent candidate for Pittwater in the 2023 election, who seized this idea and ran with it. She was not satisfied with the then Coalition Government's policy document opposing offshore petroleum exploration and mining. For a matter of such important community interest and clear political significance, she wanted the authority of the Parliament brought to bear.

Working with former MLC Justin Field's office and staff, and collaborating with other Independent candidates and MPs—including the now member for Wollondilly and the member for Sydney—Jacqui championed a bill very similar to the one we are debating today. Jacqui and her hundreds of volunteers ran an impressive community campaign. Jacqui is a tenacious and creative campaigner, and I acknowledge that she is in the gallery today. I thank Jacqui for her work. In response to the overwhelming community sentiment in opposition, the first bill brought by the Coalition was a private member's bill, the Minerals Legislation Amendment (Offshore Drilling and Associated Infrastructure Prohibition) Bill 2023, introduced by the new member for Pittwater. And here we are today debating the Government's own bill. Suffice to say, this issue has been the topic

of a lot of political pointscoring and posturing. During the 2023 election campaign, the Surfrider Foundation expressed frustration about it, and said:

Given that political parties across the board at both State and Federal levels oppose the project, we ask that they all STOP making announcements, work together, and ensure that this most iconic and valuable piece of coast is protected forever. Less talking and more signing of ... legislation.

With this legislation, I hope that we have answered their call. At the time I agreed and publicly called on the then Government to be recalled to get it done, as it had not yet been prorogued. Here we are 12 months later, but who cares—at least we are doing this.

The bill builds on a strong legacy in New South Wales of ruling out fossil fuel mining where it is inappropriate. In 2010 pretty much all of the State north of the Shoalhaven was covered in coal seam gas exploration licences. The vast majority are now extinguished. I hope that we can continue in that spirit and protect our best agricultural land from Santos's Narrabri Gas Project and the associated Hunter Gas Pipeline. The coastline of New South Wales is a string of jewels, from Tweed Heads in the north to the Nadgee wilderness in the south. New South Wales has over 892 beaches, stretching 1,590 kilometres. Each is unique, shaped over millions of years by the forces of nature. Under the waterline, kelp forests, rocky reefs and sea caves host an abundance of corals and marine life. In the intertidal zone, where the land meets the sea, rock shelves, headlands and sandy shores are landscapes of extraordinary natural beauty and are home to an amazing diversity of life.

In my electorate of Wakehurst, some of those special places include Long Reef and Collaroy. Everyone in this place will have their favourite spots on the New South Wales coast. Many of the best times in life are spent at the beach or in the ocean. Our beaches and marine environments are public places for everyone to enjoy, now and for generations to come. To the extent that we can, we must take every possible measure to minimise threats to the coastal environment. Today we take an important step in that direction.

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (15:50):** I support the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Sea Bed Mining and Exploration) Bill 2024. It is a really important issue for people on the Central Coast, and I acknowledge the advocacy of a number of groups on the Central Coast that have been fighting to stop PEP 11 for a long time. It is time for New South Wales to make the difference it can in its waters. Let me be clear: The Government does not support offshore mineral, coal or petroleum exploration or mining for commercial purposes in New South Wales coastal waters. The bill aims to provide certainty to the community and industry that no exploration or mining activities may be undertaken in New South Wales coastal waters, recognising the negative environmental impacts associated with those activities.

This issue dates back to last decade. The Federal member for Dobell, Emma McBride, and I paddled out with a group of surfers at Terrigal to draw attention to the issue, which is really concerning to the people impacted, from Newcastle down to Sydney and the coast. I thank Hugh Naven from Surfrider Central Coast, who was a great advocate and really got the community behind the protest to stop the mining going on in our coastal waters. I also thank Surfrider Foundation Australia and Surfers for Climate, which was mentioned by the member for Wakehurst, for their advocacy in the fight to stop mining off our coastal waters. Lucy Wicks, the previous member for Robertson and a close friend of Scott Morrison, was involved in the debacle that went on with the then Minister for—

**Dr Marjorie O'Neill:** Everything.

**Ms LIESL TESCH:** He became the Minister for everything and took over from the Minister responsible, Keith Pitt. There was a lot of confusion around that time, which did nothing to help the community's understanding of or trust in the political work that we do. It was just horrific. I speak in support of the bill and outline the penalties that will apply to any corporation seeking to contravene the prohibition clearly outlined in the bill, while also recognising the strength of the regulation-making power set out by the amendments contained.

By amending the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, the bill prohibits seabed petroleum and mineral exploration and recovery in New South Wales coastal waters, as well as other development within the State for the purpose of offshore mining. It will make it an offence to carry out the activities prohibited by the bill, with the maximum possible penalty being a tier 1 monetary penalty of up to \$5 million for corporations. The bill's offence provision is robust. It sends a clear message that petroleum and mineral recovery in contravention of the prohibition in New South Wales waters will be a serious offence.

Furthermore, the bill's regulation-making power will ensure that any unintended consequences can be overcome—unlike previous bills brought before the House, as mentioned earlier by the member for Cessnock. The bill includes a regulation-making power to enable the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces to exempt specified activities—mineral exploration and recovery in New South Wales coastal waters, and development for the purpose of petroleum or mineral exploration and recovery in New South Wales coastal waters and beyond—from the prohibition without the need for a further Act of Parliament.

That is incredibly important for communities on the Central Coast such as Wamberal, where I used to live, and The Entrance—particularly The Entrance North—where there is significant erosion. There has been significant erosion in the electorate of the member for Wakehurst, and the ability to use sand nourishment on the northern beaches is crucial as we move forward in the climate change environment. Its use in Newcastle is a great outcome that has been achieved by the Labor Government, with the dredging that has occurred in Newcastle Harbour being used as sand nourishment on Stockton Beach. That is the reality of our space moving forward. I commend the advocacy of Sam Boughton, who was the candidate for Terrigal, who got a lot of support because of the conversations he had with concerned citizens about coastal protection and where we need to be moving forward in that space. It is really important that the bill provides a space for sand nourishment to occur in the future, with oversight by the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, who is in the Chamber.

This may be necessary to ensure that certain activities—for example, the excavation of the seabed or subsoil to lay cable or pipe transits, which may be considered to be mineral recovery—can continue if they require activities in New South Wales coastal waters that could otherwise be caught by the prohibition. Pipe transits occur in my community when we have dredging in the Ettalong Channel to move sand from one place to another, so I know it is really important to have that exclusion opportunity in the bill.

The regulation-making power is subject to appropriate safeguards, as the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces will be required to consult the Minister for the Environment before recommending that a regulation be made. The regulation-making power is also limited to specified seabed mineral exploration or recovery in New South Wales coastal waters. The prohibition on seabed petroleum exploration or recovery in New South Wales waters is absolute and is not subject to any exemptions or regulation-making powers.

Importantly, unlike the flawed private member's bill previously brought before the House, the bill provides an exception to the prohibition on mineral recovery and exploration within the meaning of the Coastal Management Act 2016. That will ensure that beach nourishment practices—which play such a significant role across the Central Coast, the northern beaches and further up and down the coast as we continue to live in the impact of today's changed climate—can continue and will not be impacted by the prohibition. Furthermore, the bill includes an important exemption from the prohibition on mineral exploration for certain dredging practices—a critical process for our community living along the Ettalong Channel.

This is a really important day in the New South Wales Parliament. Once again, I thank those advocacy groups—Surfrider Central Coast, Surfrider Foundation Australia and Surfers for Climate—for their advocacy to see the change occur. The bill is robust and sends a very clear message: New South Wales does not support offshore mineral, coal or petroleum exploration or mining for commercial purposes in coastal waters. I thank the Minister for Energy, and Minister for the Environment; the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces; and the Minister for Natural Resources for their leadership in this space.

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (15:57):** I make a brief contribution to debate on the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Sea Bed Mining and Exploration) Bill 2024, and I am very excited that we get to consider the bill in the House today. I would have been more excited if we had been able to consider the legislation put forward by the member for Pittwater last year, but I am very glad that Labor members have come to the table. I congratulate them on that and acknowledge that what took the member for Pittwater only a month on first coming to this place took the Minns Labor Government a year. I congratulate members opposite on the speediness and urgency of the work that they are undertaking. I am very excited to see that they decided to have a legislative agenda in 2024, having failed to do so in 2023.

For many years there has been a view amongst all parties, groups and communities across our State and country that our oceans and our foreshores should be a place where exploration and mining do not occur, particularly close to our biggest city and some of our most populated beaches. The member for Pittwater and the member for Wakehurst have spoken about the significant challenges and risks that their own local communities face from those types of activities. I am glad that we have finally brought Labor to the table to introduce legislation that will, in effect, do what the bill introduced by the member for Pittwater sought to achieve—if not entirely meeting the standard that the member for Pittwater outlined for the rest of the State.

Currently there is a significant threat to the New South Wales coast posed by exploration and mining activities under Petroleum Exploration Permit 11, or PEP 11. The area that PEP 11 covers is 4,574 square kilometres, and it stretches from Newcastle to Manly. As we all know, because there has been a lot of discussion about the genesis of this legislation and the genesis of the policy that it is seeking to achieve, the Coalition made a commitment leading into the last election that, if re-elected, it would legislate to ban drilling for offshore gas in New South Wales waters once and for all. We all had a really enjoyable day up in Pittwater—I had to look at my notes, because it is pretty far from home for me—overlooking the Mona Vale basin. It was beautiful.

Although I get to enjoy water surrounds in my own community along with people in my electorate every single day, there is something particularly profound about our oceans and the importance that our oceans have for our health and wellbeing, for the planet and for humanity. The impact of ocean health flows into the harbour, which I get to call home. When we think about biodiversity and marine ecosystems, we know that these are all interactive systems. That means the health and wellbeing of the oceans affects the health and wellbeing of our harbours and the quality of our own health and lives as human beings.

I am really glad that Labor is joining us on this issue, but I acknowledge that the legislation proposed today is weaker than the bill proposed by the Coalition through the member for Pittwater. Those issues were raised by people within my own party room through the committee process and the environment and planning committee, noting that they are not being addressed in the bill. I have a lot of love for Cessnock, having been born there.

**Mr Adam Crouch:** That explains it.

**Ms FELICITY WILSON:** It does explain many wonderful things about me and the member for Cessnock. We are both big advocates for Cessnock itself. I fully respect the way that the member for Cessnock approached the committee process, and I have a great deal of respect for him for trying to ensure that he got a really good outcome from this. But, regardless of my great affection and respect for the member for Cessnock, the outcome of that committee inquiry produced a diminished quality of legislation compared to what we would have seen if the member for Pittwater's bill had progressed. But we have to accept the good rather than the perfect. We are glad that we are seeing something coming out of Labor, even if it did take it a year.

The threats posed by exploration and mining exist, and those activities exist in our communities. The current licence, which stretches along some of our most popular beaches, is proposing to commence surveying activities, likely including things like seismic blasting as close as a few kilometres off the coast of New South Wales. Members will be aware that this stretch of coast is an area abundant with diverse marine life, not limited to but including whales, dolphins, seals, penguins, rays and sharks. The extraction and transportation of oil and gas underwater poses a significant risk of leaks, spills and explosions. Accidental spills of petroleum products and chemicals during gas exploration and drilling also pose a significant risk to marine ecosystems. They can contaminate water and the sediments can affect entire food chains.

This issue has broad community support. I echo what a number of members on both sides of this Chamber have said today in recognising the community effort and advocacy to achieve this outcome. This is probably the only time in my life that I will be this complimentary to the member for Pittwater, but I once again congratulate him on his legislation. That legislation was very strongly supported by a range of groups and stakeholders. I congratulate and thank Surfers for Climate, the World Wildlife Fund Australia, Surfrider Foundation and the Australian Parents for Climate Action, among many more. Many community organisations and groups up and down the coast—even, as the member for Cessnock would say, into inland Australia—regardless of demographics or geography or age or location, care about and are concerned about these issues.

This is a win for community activism and the voices of people fighting for the wellbeing of our coastal environment. We want to make sure that this legislation will mean no seismic testing, no drilling platforms, no pipelines and, most importantly, the healthiest environment possible for our oceans and our marine creatures. I do welcome the Labor Government coming to the table on this issue. We will forgive them for looking over our shoulder and copying the homework and presenting it as their own. However, I am very glad that we have finally achieved bipartisan support on this issue. I commend the bill to the House.

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (16:04):** I speak in support of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Sea Bed Mining and Exploration) Bill 2024, better known as the "Stop PEP 11 Bill". The Government is incredibly proud to bring the bill before the House. Let us be very clear: This is not a new policy position. This Government has never supported offshore mining. The Offshore Exploration and Mining Policy, which was published in February 2022, provided unequivocally that the New South Wales Government does not support offshore mineral, coal or petroleum exploration or mining for commercial purposes in or adjacent to New South Wales coastal waters, and it does not support offshore petroleum exploration and mining as the potential impacts on sensitive marine environments, Indigenous heritage, commercial and recreational fishing, and other recreational activities outweigh the potential benefits. However, the Government will support offshore sand recovery for beach nourishment purposes, which is incredibly important.

The bill will implement that policy legislatively. It will ensure that a prohibition on those activities is unable to be overcome without a further Act of Parliament. It will ensure that the community and the mining industry has certainty that no exploration or mining activities may be undertaken in New South Wales coastal waters. The environmental impacts of seabed petroleum and mineral recovery carry the risk of significant impacts on marine life and sensitive marine habitats. That includes the impact of noise and disturbance from seismic exploration, water pollution and impacts on Aboriginal heritage. Offshore recovery also carries the risk of major

environmental disasters such as oil spills, and potential climate change impacts such as greenhouse gas emissions associated with petroleum extraction.

New South Wales is leading the way with this prohibition. No other States or Territories have taken action to prohibit seabed petroleum mining in their coastal waters. In 2021 the Northern Territory prohibited seabed mineral mining. This bill is in the best interests of our State. It makes the Government's position very clear: There will be no offshore mining on our watch. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (16:06):** Our coastline is a fundamental part of our lifestyle and identity. It is where we swim, surf, snorkel, scuba dive, fish, play beach volleyball and cricket, sunbathe, run, hike, sail, whale watch and connect with the sun and outdoors. It is a major tourism drawcard for the State. But the coastline is a fragile environment supported by vulnerable ecosystems that are under pressure from a range of threats, especially climate change, pollution and development. One of those very serious threats is the proliferation of offshore petroleum exploration and mining.

A licence to explore for gas wells off the coast of New South Wales between Newcastle and Sydney has operated for more than 10 years under the Petroleum Exploration Permit 11 or PEP 11, as it is widely known. In 2022 an application to extend and expand the licence was knocked back by former Prime Minister Scott Morrison—in one of his many portfolios at the time—but the courts overturned that decision, and the matter has been awaiting determination by the State and Federal Joint Authority. PEP 11 is widely opposed by coastal communities, environmentalists and the wider New South Wales community. People do not want heavy industrial activities occurring along our beautiful coast, which boasts the world's largest whale migration route and supports species like the Manly colony of little penguins. They do not want to swim, surf, dive and snorkel 50 kilometres away from seabed oil and gas wells. They do not want to compromise the long-term environmental sustainability of the coast.

At the outset, I acknowledge that we would not be dealing with this important legislation to stop offshore drilling if it had not been for the work done by former, current and aspiring Independent members of the New South Wales Parliament, and the advocacy of Federal Independent members. The legislative proposal that we are debating today is based on a proposal drafted by Mr Justin Field in the last Parliament. It was supported by the Independent candidate for Pittwater, Jacqui Scruby—who I note joins us in the gallery today—the member for Wakehurst, Michael Regan, and me during the last State election. We made a commitment to bring that legislation to this Parliament. Federal Independent members Dr Sophie Scamps, Allegra Spender, Kylea Tink and Zali Steggall have also advocated for the reform, because offshore exploration and mining for oil and gas pose significant risks to the marine environment from oil spills, gas leaks, sound, traffic and physical disturbance from activities and infrastructure like anchor chains, drill cuttings and drilling fluids.

Fossil fuels also contribute to climate change, which leads to ocean warming and acidification and rising sea levels, further impacting on ocean ecosystems and life. It is hard to fathom that such a heavy industrial activity has ever been contemplated along our beautiful coast. I welcome the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Sea Bed Mining and Exploration) Bill providing certainty that those activities will no longer be permitted along our State's coast. By prohibiting seabed petroleum and mineral exploration and recovery in State coastal waters, and banning onshore development for the purposes of offshore drilling and mining, the bill will ensure that the PEP 11 licence cannot continue and that no future offshore fossil fuel exploration or mining will proceed in New South Wales coastal waters.

There is bipartisan support for stopping the PEP 11 licence; however, reform has been fraught by interactions between Federal and State laws and water authorities, and a proponent willing to pursue court challenges. I acknowledge the work of the Opposition and the member for Pittwater in introducing a bill. I referred that bill to a committee to assess the constitutional issues, and the inquiry's findings led to the Government's bill that is before the House today. I acknowledge the work of other members on stopping PEP 11, including the member for Wakehurst, who will move amendments to ensure that regulation-making powers do not provide a loophole for fossil fuel projects. The Minister has worked cooperatively with the member for Wakehurst, the member for Lake Macquarie and me to establish workable amendments. I thank the Government for responding to the inquiry and the community's concerns about protecting the State's beautiful and delicate coastline from oil and gas development by introducing the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (16:11):** I contribute to debate on the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Sea Bed Mining and Exploration) Bill 2024 to share the simple message that my community has been shouting for years now: Stop offshore drilling and mining; protect our beautiful coast. The bill seeks to ban offshore mineral and petroleum exploration in New South Wales coastal waters. The bill will stop offshore drilling and mining and protect our coast. The threat of offshore drilling has loomed over the pristine coast of Newcastle and the wider coastlines of New South Wales for decades. Over the years, thousands of

Novocastrians have rallied in Newcastle numerous times against offshore drilling projects like Petroleum Exploration Permit 11 [PEP 11].

I have consistently voiced my opposition to offshore drilling and mining throughout my almost 10 years in this place. It is clear that a majority of my constituency share my concerns and have thrown their support behind the legislation. We made that clear some years ago. The member for Sydney alluded to the circumstances around recommendations to the Federal Parliament, and former Prime Minister Scott Morrison assuming ministerial appointments behind others' backs to put forward his views before elections in a political manner. If he had not done so in such a manner, perhaps we would not be doing this and we would not have to do it all again for the Feds either.

The bill proposes to insert new schedule 10 into the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act to prohibit the carrying out of seabed and subsoil petroleum or mineral exploration and recovery in the coastal waters of the State, and other related development in the broader State. The new schedule prevents the granting or renewal of certain authorisations under the offshore Acts relating to development prohibited under the schedule. The prohibition is subject to limited sections where there is a broader environmental benefit, including coastal protection works such as beach nourishment. That is vital, as the Minister knows, for places such as Stockton, where sand has already been taken and distributed on Stockton Beach. We intend to do a lot more of that over the coming years. It also includes certain dredging activities, which involve moving, but not removing, minerals.

A regulation-making power is included to ensure that any unintended consequences of the bill can be overcome. The Minister for Planning and Public Spaces may only recommend the making of regulations following consultation with the Minister for the Environment. That may be necessary to ensure that certain activities can continue—for example, the excavation of the seabed to lay cable or pipe transit for wind farms. That is a much better use of resources and a much better solution for the people of our coast, in particular the Hunter, in terms of cheap electricity, jobs and future emissions from this State and this country.

The bill gives legislative effect to our policy, prohibiting seabed and subsoil petroleum and mineral exploration, recovery and related development in New South Wales. Many organisations have supported the Government's position on this, including Surfers for Climate, which opposes offshore drilling and mining, and conducted a survey asking its tens of thousands of members what they thought of PEP 11. The result, unsurprisingly, was that 100 per cent of its members in Newcastle and the wider Hunter and Central Coast region did not support offshore drilling. It brings me great pleasure to support the bill, finally seeing an end to the threat of offshore mining and exploration off Newcastle's beautiful coastline. While my contribution to debate may be brief, it is because it does not take long to communicate that Newcastle has always said no to offshore drilling and exploration, and always will say no. Let us protect our coast. Let us pass this bill.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (16:16):** I speak in support of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Sea Bed Mining and Exploration) Bill 2024. It is better late than never. It seems like it was only yesterday, but it was a year ago, that we were discussing this very issue. The member for Pittwater has been in and out of the Chamber this afternoon. I commend him for his tireless work on this bill. I am not a new member of this place; I was privileged to be elected in 2015. There has been a lot of commentary about new members of this place doing things in this Chamber. I commend the member for Pittwater for doing what he did as quickly as he did. Let us be clear that the Government had no agenda to bring forward this sort of legislation. The only thing that precipitated the actions of this Labor Government were the actions of the member for Pittwater to move this issue forward.

I have been proud to be a vocal opponent of the Petroleum Exploration Permit 11 [PEP 11] project since 2017. In my electorate of Terrigal, the people of the Central Coast have made it clear, in no uncertain terms—as did I—that they would not and did not accept offshore exploration projects like PEP 11 in our beautiful region. We have talked about the history. We must remember that PEP 11 was given life in 2001 by the former Carr Labor Government. Had that not been welcomed by Bob Carr, this whole project, debate and fiasco could have been avoided in the first place. Let us remember who the architect of breathing life into PEP 11 in the first place was: the Carr Labor Government. I remember trawling through clippings about this issue because I thought, "Who in their right mind would possibly think that it was a great idea to have offshore rigs off the coast of New South Wales?" It was Bob Carr. He said that it was a great investment in the economic future of New South Wales, or words to that effect.

When I started trawling through the history of the issue, I found it staggering that it could have all been avoided back in 2001 had Bob Carr not signed off on support for the PEP 11 project in the first place. That is part of the history. Let us remember who created this monster that has been breathing down the necks of the people of New South Wales for 23 years now. Nobody wanted it and nobody welcomed it. We had a Labor government at the time that was not listening to anyone. I am pleased that the current Labor Government has taken on board the recommendations from the bill of the member for Pittwater. The fact that we had to have a committee hearing

about it, which kicked it down the road for months and delayed it, was one issue. Government members then did not have the guts to debate the bill in the Chamber before the end of last year. As I said last time, if they do not like a bill, they should vote it down. That is what we come to this place to do.

**Ms Liesl Tesch:** You should have done it 12 years ago. You had 12 long years.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** You have had your chance to speak, member for Gosford. If a member does not support a bill, they can vote against it or move amendments to it in this place. That is the way the Parliament works. I heard the remarks about "12 long years" and "Don't forget you guys created this mess in the first place." But let me be clear. I was part of a government that rejected PEP 11 twice under the legal framework that was put in place. I thank the two former Deputy Premiers who supported our community in rejecting the PEP 11 renewal project twice. Before the member for Gosford was even elected, we rejected it once. Then we did it a second time. We had a record of rejecting PEP 11 because we knew it was the wrong thing for the people of New South Wales.

I am pleased that we are finally voting on a piece of legislation, but we should have had this debate last year. Sadly, members opposite did not even want to have the discussion. The member for Pittwater would have been more than willing to look at any amendment that the Government suggested, which would not have delayed this process by almost a year—a year in which the Government, because it kept kicking it down the road, again breathed life into a company that thought it might have a chance with PEP 11. I do not think the member for Pittwater was even asked to make a contribution to the committee.

**Mr Rory Amon:** I did not even get a phone call.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** He did not get a phone call; that is the first part. Secondly, it was interesting—we talk about the committee structure—that there was one coastal member on that committee, and that was the member for Vacluse.

**Mr Paul Scully:** You don't have to be on the coast to be on the committee.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** Having them sit on the committee certainly helps in understanding the concerns of coastal people. It is an important part of taking their views into account. I thought it was interesting that the only coastal member sitting on the committee was also the only member of the Opposition on the committee, which goes to show that the Government was not that interested in the outcome. It was all about driving the agenda. That is fine. I do not really care because, at the end of the day, we finally have a bill, albeit 12 months late. The Government should have been drafting the bill the day after the election rather than the member for Pittwater bringing a private member's bill.

**Mr Paul Scully:** You should have written it 12 years ago.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** We rejected the project twice, and you know it.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** The Clerk will stop the clock. Government members will cease interjecting. They should know better. The member for Terrigal will not be provocative.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** It is pretty easy to provoke them, Madam Deputy Speaker.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** The member will try hard not to do so.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** It is a target-rich environment. The Government was caught on the hop; it had no agenda whatsoever to deal with this issue. Thankfully, the member for Pittwater, along with so many community advocates who have been championing this, whether it be Surfers for Climate, Solutions for Climate Australia, Blueprint Institute and all the organisations—it was not the Government they approached, funnily enough; it was the member for Pittwater. That tells us who was really listening on the issue. I am pleased that we were able to spur the Government on to finally do something about it, albeit 12 months later. In November 2021 the now Prime Minister stood at Avoca—we all stood in that spot and thought, "That was a joke," and it certainly was. Since then, the Federal Government has blamed the former Federal Government. That was 2021, but still to this day the Federal Government has done absolutely nothing, so the State Government has had to deliver this bill.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Wollongong will not yell across the Chamber. It is inappropriate. Again, I ask the member for Terrigal to cease being provocative.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** The truth hurts for them, Madam Deputy Speaker. We have a Prime Minister who has done absolutely nothing on this issue for years. Two years down the track, you cannot keep blaming the former Government. The reality is that Labor has had years and has done nothing federally. Because of that complete inability to deal with the issue, it has had to be dealt with at a State level. The Government has had

plenty of time but has done nothing. The framework was put in place. The former State Government rejected PEP 11 twice, which was the right thing to do because that is what the people of New South Wales expected. A private member's bill was brought by the member for Pittwater, which suddenly galvanised the Government into action, although it moved at glacial speed. It has taken a whole year to get to this point.

It is great that the bill has bipartisan support. I welcome the sensible amendments to be proposed by the member for Wakehurst, which will make the bill better. It is interesting that those amendments will be taken into account. That is the right thing to do, but we did not even have a debate about amendments to the private member's bill. I draw members' attention to the stark differences in approach. It is sad that we have seen unnecessary delay and fear in our community about PEP 11 for more than 12 months. That could have been avoided. A government must govern, not sit around for 12 months, kick issues off to committee and try not to deal with them. I remind Government members that Labor created PEP 11 in 2001. Labor was in government for 16 years and did nothing to change it, so Labor members should not lecture me in this place about not dealing with issues. Labor had 16 years and did nothing except create PEP 11.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** The Clerk will stop the clock. I will call Government members to order if they continue to interject. The member for Terrigal continues to be provocative. He will try harder not to provoke Government members.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** I will do my very best, Madam Deputy Speaker, but, as I said, it is a target-rich environment. I do welcome the bill, which is a ChatGPT-inspired copy of the member for Pittwater's original private member's bill. I thank members from both sides of the Chamber who have spoken in debate on the bill. Everybody would like to take credit for protecting the people of New South Wales, but we have done it collectively. That is important because people do not want to see members in this place kick issues down the road and not deal with them. That is not what they elected us to do. They also expect us to have strong, robust debate on every issue, and not avoid it. There was a fear of having this debate, and so it was avoided in the first place. That should never have happened because this place is for robust discussion. Members should be able to put across their view on an issue and vote either for or against it.

That was the disappointing part of what we saw last year. The Government was embarrassed because it was caught on the hop and unprepared. It has taken 12 months to get there, but it is good that we got there in the end—better late than never. This is a good piece of legislation because all members know that it will protect the people of New South Wales and our pristine beaches. It is important that sand nourishment is part of beach restoration and regeneration up and down the New South Wales coast. We all sat in the recent briefing about the risks of coastal erosion. I thank the Minister for putting that session on. [*Extension of time*]

In the briefing we heard about the threats facing New South Wales communities. At the moment, the Central Coast is top of that list. By 2061 we will have taken the number two spot after the northern beaches, as the member for Wakehurst pointed out. We are acutely aware of the dangers that our coastal communities face, and we all know that we need to look at long-term solutions for managing coastal erosion which encompass everything on the table, including regular sand nourishment, whether in my electorate or in the electorates of Newcastle, The Entrance, Wakehurst or Pittwater. Our communities are facing those challenges now and they will continue to do so well into the future.

East coast lows strike fear into the hearts of people up and down the New South Wales coast. They are unpredictable and extreme, and we know that sand nourishment goes part of the way towards protecting our communities. I listened to the member for Wakehurst intently. We all remember those pictures of Collaroy. They will be etched in his mind and many others. Wamberal experienced a similar situation where people's homes were teetering on the brink. Moving forward it is a challenge that we, as a Parliament, have to deal with in a mature, responsible and legal way.

Again I thank the Minister for the departmental briefing, because working collectively across all sides of Parliament on such issues is the mature way to do it. No-one wants to see anybody lose their life in a storm incident with coastal erosion that could have been avoided by having the necessary safeguards in place. Both North Entrance and Wamberal on the Central Coast are coastal erosion hotspots. Sadly, again, we have seen politicising of at least one of those areas, but we need to look at the greater good and work collectively on every avenue at the State and local government levels. Councils play a huge part as the authorities that often have to manage the heavy lifting when it comes to storm events and coastal erosion. Central Coast Council has borne the brunt of that.

The fact that the Central Coast is number one for natural disasters does not surprise me. We have the beach, the bush and everything in between but, sadly, that also makes us very vulnerable. One of our biggest fears is the potential for future damage to the pristine marine life living off the Central Coast. I am very proud that the wreck of ex-HMAS *Adelaide* is one of the most popular dive sites in New South Wales. It now has pink coral growing on the bow and is home to the endangered White's seahorse. That project is providing a safe haven for endangered

seahorses. We have new offshore reef which provides a home for a proliferation of sea life in our region. Go for a walk anywhere on the Central Coast's beaches or look at drone footage and you will witness the valuable sea life that we have in our beautiful region—as do all coastal MPs.

It is important that we, as legislators, do everything humanly possible to protect the incredibly valuable and irreplaceable marine life habitats that we are the custodians of here in New South Wales. We should all be very proud of it. One of our biggest economic drivers is the tourism dollars being delivered through the experiences that people have on our pristine coastlines up and down New South Wales. Again, I acknowledge and thank the Minister for bringing the bill on. It took a while, but we got there.

**Mr Tim Crakanthorp:** Twelve years for you. You did nothing.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** Thanks to the peanut gallery, as well, for their contribution.

**Mr Paul Scully:** They're your colleagues. How rude!

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** I also thank all of the people on this side of the House who helped drive the agenda to deliver this for the people of New South Wales—

**Mr Tim Crakanthorp:** Twelve long years, mate.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** —and who made it very, very clear that this needed to be delivered for everybody in New South Wales because it is for the greater good. It sends a very clear message to proponents of projects like PEP 11—and anyone else who is thinking this could be on their agenda—that it will never, ever, happen in New South Wales. Take your goods and chattels and go somewhere else; it will not be accepted. I have been very proud to stand by my community in objection to PEP 11 since 2017 and even earlier. It was the right thing to do for the hundreds of thousands of people who live on the Central Coast and the millions of people who would have been affected negatively by the project. I commend the member for Wakehurst. I look forward to supporting his amendments to the bill, and I commend what will hopefully be the amended bill to the House.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (16:31):** In reply: I make some brief remarks to close off this debate on the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Sea Bed Mining and Exploration) Bill 2024. I thank the members for the electorates of Vaucluse, Blacktown, Manly, Wyong, Pittwater, Cessnock, Wakehurst, Gosford, North Shore, Coogee, Sydney, Newcastle and Terrigal for their contributions to this debate. I also acknowledge Coco and Josh of Surfers for Climate, who came to see me recently to discuss this bill.

The bill has a simple objective of prohibiting the carrying out of seabed petroleum and mineral exploration and recovery. This activity cannot be undertaken in New South Wales coastal waters. This is a very clear Government policy. The passage of this bill in the Legislative Assembly today, and I hope in the Legislative Council by week's end, will send a very clear message that the Government, and the Parliament, does not support offshore mineral and petroleum exploration or mining for commercial purposes either in or adjacent to New South Wales coastal waters. This Government is confident that there is no doubt that there is legislative power by the Parliament to pass this bill. It is constitutional and addresses those issues.

As I did in my second reading speech, I acknowledge the many members of this House who have raised this issue in this place. I consider that the concerns of all members are reflected in the Government's position outlined in the bill. In conclusion, I thank the officials from the Cabinet Office and my department for their work in drafting, consulting and providing factual briefings to the Opposition, the Independent crossbench and The Greens, including in the other place, since the bill was introduced. Some of those officials are in the Chamber and will be again when this bill moves to the Legislative Council for debate later this week. I appreciate and acknowledge the work and efforts, on behalf of the Government and the House, of Celia Barnett-Chu, Ben Lusher, Katherine Frank, James Conroy, Jarrod Emanuel, Madeleine Thomas and Matt Riley. With those felicitations, I commend the bill to the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

**Consideration in detail requested by Mr Michael Regan.**

#### **Consideration in Detail**

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** By leave: I will deal with the bill in groups of clauses and schedules. The question is that clauses 1 and 2 and schedule 1 be agreed to.

**Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (16:35):** By leave: I move my amendments Nos 1 and 2 on sheet c2024-011B in globo:

No. 1      **Exemption regulations**

Page 4, Schedule 1, proposed Schedule 10, clause 3(1)(b), lines 5 and 6. Omit "sea bed petroleum exploration or recovery or".

No. 2      **Exemption regulations**

Page 4, Schedule 1, proposed Schedule 10, clause 3. Insert after line 9—

(3)      In this section—

*mineral* does not include coal and oil shale.

Clause 3 of proposed schedule 10, set out in schedule 1 to the bill, includes a regulation-making power that would allow the Executive side of Government to unilaterally make regulations directly at odds with the objective of the bill, which is to prohibit the carrying out of seabed petroleum and mineral exploration and recovery, and related development. This Henry VIII clause is unnecessary, and it must be amended to safeguard the intent of the bill.

Amendment No. 1 omits seabed petroleum exploration or recovery from clause 3 (1) (b), limiting the exemption regulation to only be used for seabed mineral exploration or recovery, not petroleum, which covers oil and gas. Amendment No. 2 makes clear that the definition of mineral does not include coal and oil shale. Together these amendments will mean that this exemption regulation-making power cannot be used to exempt exploration of mining for any fossil fuel. This amendment has been developed in collaboration with the member for Lake Macquarie and the member for Sydney. I thank them both. I also thank the Minister's office for their cooperation in reaching agreement. I am grateful that the Government and the Opposition have indicated their support. Let's do this.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (16:36):** This bill, once passed, will have the effect of immediately prohibiting a broad range of mineral and petroleum exploration recovery activities and related development in New South Wales coastal waters. It is important that this prohibition is thorough. However, it is also important that this prohibition does not unintentionally prohibit activities which are of benefit to the State, whether due to their environmental, economic or other benefits.

As is clear from the exemptions provided by this bill, there are a number of activities which would technically fall within the prohibition but which are clearly not damaging our coastline and must be exempted. This includes critical coastal protection activities under the Coastal Management Act 2016, including the recovery of sand for the purposes of beach nourishment works to protect our beaches from the impacts of erosion; exploration for the purposes of beach nourishment, which is a necessary precursor to identifying a suitable source and location from which to recover minerals for the purposes of beach nourishment; and beach scraping, which involves removing a layer of sand from the foreshore and transferring it to a different location rather than bringing sand in from another location. This allows the upper part of the beach to be strengthened to prevent dunes and cliff systems from erosion.

It also includes certain dredging activities, which are important and routine activities. This includes the dredging of sand, silt and mud to prevent the accumulation of pollutants, and to keep our waterways clean and our coastal ecosystems healthy. It also includes dredging to maintain or increase the depth of navigation channels, anchorages or berthing areas. This is an important and routine practice for our coast, which is a vital economic zone. If these practices were to be unintentionally prohibited there would be significant and immediate impacts for our New South Wales coastal zone and the complex mix of carefully balanced activities which take place within our State waters.

If this Parliament agrees that imposing a broad prohibition on seabed mining is appropriate, it is only sensible that there is a means to make sure that activities which are unintentionally caught by the prohibition can be considered, assessed and, if appropriate, exempted from the prohibition as quickly as possible, without the need for a further Act of Parliament. It is highly possible that there are well-accepted and beneficial practices in the areas of environmental protection, industrial and commercial activity, tourism or recreation that will require a regulation to be made. It is also possible that the impact of climate change, which is modifying coastal processes, hazards and risks, will lead to changes in the way we manage our coast. Those future practices may also require exemptions.

We are not aware of any activities that would require a regulation to be made today. However, the regulation-making power will allow those unknowns to be addressed in the future, if appropriate, and only following careful consultation with the Minister for the Environment. Any regulations will, of course, be subject to the usual requirement to be tabled in both Houses of Parliament, following which either House may pass a disallowance motion if it appears that the regulation is not appropriate. Sustainable management of the coast often involves balancing a diverse range of challenges. This legislation must ensure that that careful balancing act can continue.

The first amendment proposed by the member for Wakehurst is intended to limit the scope of the regulation-making power in the bill by removing the power to make regulations with respect to "specified development for the purposes of sea bed petroleum exploration or recovery". The intention of the regulation-making power is to make sure that regulations may be made to exempt specified development from the prohibition when the development has more than one purpose. This would be possible, for example, when a development has multiple uses. The provision was included to make sure that any unintended consequences of the prohibition on development can be quickly addressed, if required. I indicate that the Government accepts the amendment.

The second proposed amendment is a suggested change to the definition of "mineral" in new section 3 of schedule 10. The earlier version of the amendment provided that for the purpose of the regulation-making power, the term will not be considered to include a hydrocarbon-containing substance, such as coal and oil shale, that can be burned for energy. I note that that has since been amended. The Government intended to support the original intention of the earlier drafting, which was to make sure that the regulating power cannot be used to circumvent the prohibition on the recovery of petroleum, oil shale or coal for commercial purposes. Work has been done after further discussions to amend the original wording using alternative wording, which has been proposed and is before the Chamber now. The Government agrees with and will support that final version of the amendment.

I thank the member for Wakehurst, the member for Sydney and the member for Lake Macquarie and their advisers for engaging with me, my office, the Cabinet Office and my department, and for negotiating this outcome in good faith, which I believe will be for the betterment of the bill.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (16:42):** I thank the member for Wakehurst for moving the amendment. It significantly improves the legislation by closing a potential loophole that was flagged with the member for Wakehurst, the member for Lake Macquarie and me, which was not intended by the Government but would have potentially allowed for exactly the type of mining that this legislation seeks to prevent. We were able to work extremely well with the Minister and his office to reach agreement on how to close that loophole and tighten the regulation power to make sure it is not used for anything that goes against the bill's intent. I also commend the member for Wakehurst for moving his very first amendment, which will significantly improve the legislation. I am sure there will be many more in this Parliament.

**Mr Paul Scully:** Don't encourage him.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH:** I always encourage my crossbench colleagues to amend and improve legislation, as members well know.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** I thank the member for Sydney. I call the member for Lake Macquarie.

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (16:43):** The member for Strathfield, and Assistant Speaker gets a commendation from the Speaker.

**Mr Paul Scully:** He is doing an excellent job.

**Mr GREG PIPER:** I will not speak to much more than the amendment itself. For the benefit of Hansard, I am holding up a page with maybe 100 words on it. It is a very simple amendment that supports a better legislative outcome. There were unintended risks with the way in which the original legislation was drafted and the power of the regulations. Of course, this legislation is overwhelmingly supported by coastal communities. The member for Newcastle, member for Charlestown, member for Vacluse, member for Pittwater, member for Terrigal, member for Wollongong and member for Gosford are in the Chamber. Every one of our communities has been brought into this debate in some way or another.

I was very pleased to work with my crossbench colleagues and the Minister and his staff to come up with what I consider to be modest but significant surety in this change to the legislation as regards regulation. I thank the Minister and his staff who have assisted us. It is good to see Gino again—I do not know how many times I have seen him today. It was good to work with the Minister and his staff on getting better outcomes for our communities. I acknowledge the member for Wakehurst, who has done a lot of work on this issue. I am not going to play games with it. The member for Pittwater also did an awful lot in this space. I thank everybody. We are all on the same page, even if we got there slightly differently. I commend the amendment to the House.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** The question is that amendments Nos 1 and 2 on sheet c2024-011B of the member for Wakehurst be agreed to.

**Amendments agreed to.**

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** The question is that clauses 1 and 2 and schedule 1 as amended be agreed to.

**Clauses 1 and 2 and schedule 1 as amended agreed to.**

### **Third Reading**

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

## **AGEING AND DISABILITY COMMISSIONER AMENDMENT BILL 2023**

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 29 November 2023.**

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (16:48):** I lead for the Opposition and speak on behalf of the shadow Minister for Families and Communities, and shadow Minister for Disability Inclusion, the Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones, MLC, in debate on the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Amendment Bill 2023. The Opposition does not oppose the bill. However, we have an amendment to the bill, which will be moved in the other place by the shadow Minister to establish a joint parliamentary committee to monitor and review the functions exercised by the commissioner. The bill amends the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Act introduced by the Liberal-Nationals Government in 2019 to investigate and stamp out the abuse and neglect of vulnerable people. New South Wales led the country in establishing the dedicated role of Ageing and Disability Commissioner, with the purpose of protecting older people and adults with disability from abuse, neglect and exploitation, as well as protecting and promoting their rights. The Ageing and Disability Commission [ADC] addressed a crucial void in responding to allegations of abuse, neglect and exploitation of people with disability and older people in their homes and in the community that was not previously addressed by other complaint and investigative bodies in New South Wales.

In October 2022 the former Minister for Families and Communities and Minister for Disability Services, the Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones in the other place, and the former Minister for Seniors, the Hon. Mark Coure, commissioned an independent statutory review of the Act pursuant to section 36 to determine whether the policy objectives of the Act remain valid and whether the terms of the Act remain appropriate for securing those objectives. An independent review was conducted by Mr Alan Cameron, AO, and was tabled in Parliament on 25 May 2023. I thank Mr Cameron for his efforts and acknowledge the role of the Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones and Mr Mark Coure, the member for Oatley, in commissioning the review. The review received 17 submissions from individuals and organisations in response to the discussion paper issued as part of the public consultation. It also considered five submissions to an online survey, three reports on focus groups conducted with people with lived experience and face-to-face and online consultations undertaken with key stakeholders.

The bill introduces the following key changes. It allows the Ageing and Disability Commissioner discretion to refer relevant reports to other bodies and to not refer reports if the adult does not wish the information to be reported. It expands the circumstances in which the commissioner may investigate allegations without the consent of the relevant adult to cover situations where the commissioner cannot obtain access to the person. It broadens information sharing with organisations and individuals that provide supports to adults with disability or older people. It permits official community visitors to provide advice to the Minister, the commissioner, the Department of Communities and Justice and the NDIS commissioner. It requires service providers to notify the Ageing and Disability Commission about their contact details and any new visitable services or location changes to existing visitable services. Finally, it requires that the Ageing and Disability Advisory Board include two or more older adults.

The Government has decided not to implement two of the independent report's recommendations, including recommendation 11, which was to appoint a parliamentary committee to monitor and review the functions of the commissioner. In the second reading speech the Minister for Families and Communities said the Government is not implementing recommendation 11 "as the commissioner is already subject to parliamentary oversight through existing provisions in the Act and the committee process". The Ageing and Disability Commission has a different perspective on the matter. In its submission to the independent review, the commission notes that although it reports directly to the New South Wales Parliament, it currently lacks oversight by a parliamentary committee. Despite being a small agency, it emphasised the potential benefits of accountability that would be provided by a standing joint parliamentary committee.

The sentiment expressed by the commission finds support from the New South Wales official community visitors, recognised by the Minister as her eyes and ears in its latest annual report. In its submission it highlights

the perceived gap of a direct line of communication from the ADC to a bipartisan parliamentary forum. It advocates for addressing the gap by recommending the establishment of a joint parliamentary standing committee for the ADC, aligning its functions with those of similar integrity organisations. The need for oversight is also shared by the independent reviewer in their report.

A joint parliamentary committee would align with established practices and bring the commission in line with similar agencies currently reviewed by the Parliament including the Ombudsman, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission, the Crime Commission, the Health Care Complaints Commission and the Office of the Children's Guardian. Taking that into account, there is sufficient merit in amending the Act to designate a parliamentary committee for monitoring and reviewing the functions of the commission, which is why, in the Legislative Council, the shadow Minister for Families and Communities, the Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones, will be moving an amendment to the bill to that effect.

The bill builds on the legacy of the Liberal-Nationals Government and its strong commitment to the care and protection of people with disability and older people. Opposition members are determined to see a society that is inclusive and that ensures we can all live safely and with dignity. Unfortunately, evidence shows that the number of older people facing harm or distress from those they trust is increasing. The commission's 2022-23 annual report shows 14,025 calls to the Ageing and Disability Abuse Helpline—a 12 per cent increase. Similarly, statutory reports have also increased by 7 per cent to 4,258, and the commission notes an increase in reports from Aboriginal and culturally diverse communities. It is crucial that the Government responds decisively to the rising statistics. Prioritising the enhancement of protections for this sector, implementing community education initiatives and increasing awareness about the challenges faced by older adults are imperative actions.

The Opposition commends the commission's strategy that incorporates caregivers and the supportive, educative approach employed to address reports of abuse or neglect. The approach recognises the intricate dynamics of family and caregiving relationships. On behalf of the Opposition, I thank the former Ageing and Disability Commissioner, Robert Fitzgerald, AM, for his commitment to protecting adults with disability and older people from abuse, neglect and exploitation. The Opposition also extends gratitude to all stakeholders who actively contributed by submitting inputs during the statutory review or engaging in targeted consultations on the draft bill. Their valuable insights have played a pivotal role in shaping and refining this critical legislation.

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (16:56):** I contribute to debate on the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Amendment Bill 2023. I contribute both as the member for Charlestown and the Minister for Seniors. The Government values the work of the Ageing and Disability Commission. It is a sad fact of life that seniors and people with disability in our community are particularly vulnerable to suffering abuse, neglect and exploitation. When perpetrators take advantage of older Australians and people with disability, they do so with the knowledge that their victim has limited to no capacity to defend themselves. The Ageing and Disability Commission is there as an advocate for those vulnerable cohorts and is doing outstanding work to protect their interests.

The commission is responsible for a range of functions including responding to reports of abuse; neglect and exploitation of adults with disability and seniors; inquiring into and reporting on systemic issues relating to the rights of adults with disability and seniors; taking action to protect adults with disability and seniors, including by making application to the court in respect of the adult; consulting with the Ageing and Disability Advisory Board on matters relating to abuse, neglect and exploitation of adults with disability and seniors; raising awareness about abuse, neglect and exploitation of adults with disability and seniors; coordinating the Official Community Visitor scheme in settings where adults with disability and seniors are in full-time care of service providers; and monitoring, assessing and reporting on the implementation of Australia's disability strategy in New South Wales. As Minister for Seniors, I want to see the Ageing and Disability Commission empowered to safeguard older adults and adults with disability to the best of its ability. I am proud to be part of this New South Wales Labor Government, working to strengthen the institution in the future. I congratulate the Minister for Disability Inclusion on the work that she is leading in this space.

As the House is aware, Alan Cameron, AO, led a review into the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Act. The review was tabled in Parliament on 25 May 2023. The review was conducted in line with section 36 of the Act to ensure policy objectives of the Act remain valid and the terms of the Act remain appropriate. The process included consultation with a broad range of stakeholders adding their input to the review, including people with lived experience of ageing and disability and their families and carers, agencies representing seniors and people with disability, agencies representing vulnerable and disadvantaged ageing and disability population groups—for example, Aboriginal, CALD, regional, rural and remote, and LGBTQI+ people, ageing and disability community service providers and the general public. Submissions were considered by organisations, including Carers NSW, Law Society of New South Wales, Disability Council NSW, Council for Intellectual Disability,

Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association, and more. The review considered 17 submissions from individuals and organisations in response to the discussion paper issued as part of the public consultation. It also considered five submissions to an online survey and three reports from focus groups conducted with people with lived experience of ageing and disability.

Having outlined a broader level of consultation, I now touch on some of the findings to flow from the review. A key issue was whether the commissioner should remain mandated to refer reports of abuse, neglect and exploitation to other agencies, like police. It is about mandating that referral. The review noted that New South Wales was the only jurisdiction to have mandatory referral requirements while other jurisdictions do not specify this in legislation or the legislation says they may refer to other bodies. While there were some mixed views on this, the mandated requirement has led to some cases being reported to police against the wishes of the adult. Accordingly, the review recommended that the commissioner should instead exercise discretion as to whether to refer reports to other agencies. This will bring New South Wales into line with other jurisdictions and ensure that the commissioner can have confidence that they are acting in line with the wishes of the adult.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** It being 5.00 p.m., debate is interrupted for the public interest debate. I set down resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a later hour.

*Public Interest Debate*

**ROAD TOLLS**

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (17:01):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that the interim report of the Independent Toll Review found that toll road users will pay \$195 billion in toll costs over 37 years until 2060.
- (2) Notes that the privatisation agenda of the former Liberal-Nationals Government means, of the \$195 billion, WestConnex alone accounts for around 52 per cent of the estimated toll figure in today's dollars. Based on these figures, users will be paying for the cost of this scheme three times over in tolls.
- (3) Notes that the interim report of the Independent Toll Review stated that, "The current structure of tolls is producing inequitable results, with motorists from Western Sydney spending the most and having fewer alternative options."
- (4) Notes that, due to the former Liberal-Nationals Government's privatisation agenda, Sydney is now one of the most tolled cities in the world.

It is a fact that under the Liberal-Nationals Government Sydney became the most tolled city in the world. The recently released interim report of the Independent Toll Review conducted by Allan Fels and David Cousins found that toll road users will pay a whopping \$195 billion in toll costs over the next three to four decades. I repeat that figure of \$195 billion, which is slightly more than the debt we inherited when we came to government. The contracts created by the former Liberal-Nationals Government, based on its delusional privatisation agenda and economic mismanagement, were the cause of this State's cost-of-living crisis and will continue to be a significant contributor to it for decades to come.

WestConnex alone accounts for more than half of the projected toll figure relative to today's prices. I remind the House that the former Government lauded WestConnex as a very strong result, and indeed recently declared that, given time, it would do it all again. The real question is: Who was it a strong result for, and who does it continue to be a strong result for? It is certainly not the people of New South Wales and certainly not the people of Western Sydney. The people of Western Sydney, under the former Government, were treated with the utmost disregard. It was easy for those opposite to throw all the new housing developments into the north- and south-west, without transport, without schools, without roads and, of course, without hospitals.

Does it come as any surprise that the people of Western Sydney have to pay the price of the former Government's love affair with privatisation? And what is that price? It is three times the cost. The people of Western Sydney are being dealt a double blow. Our non-toll roads were not upgraded to cope with the additional population that we were forced to absorb, and exorbitant toll pricing is forcing many motorists back onto the regular roads, congesting them even more than they were before. Let's see the exploitation of people in Western Sydney in action. As the Premier mentioned today during question time, the toll on the Sydney Harbour Bridge remained at \$4 between 2009 and 2023. In that same period, a \$12.60 toll for the M5 increased to a whopping \$35—

**Mr Matt Cross:** We own the Harbour Bridge.

**Mr WARREN KIRBY:** I acknowledge the intervention because we also own the M4 and the M5, and, to be clear, we are not proposing to take back the cashback on the M5. For me to travel into the city via the M7, the M2, the Lane Cove Tunnel and the Harbour Bridge and to return home again costs \$44.47 a day—almost \$50

a day. For the average worker, that represents almost a day's pay per week being handed to a private company with a monopoly. It is unequivocally a tax on Western Sydney. It simply is not fair on young families, who are already struggling. Amidst the backdrop of this inequality and financial strain, the interim report of the Independent Toll Review comes to us as a much-needed beacon of transparency. It sheds light on the complexities of toll pricing and unveils a path forward for reforming Sydney's tolling system to make it fairer. As we delve into the details of the report, it becomes evident that addressing the tolling crisis is not merely a matter of convenience but a fundamental issue of fairness and economic sustainability, particularly for the people of Western Sydney.

The tolling landscape in Sydney is a product of decades of policy decisions and infrastructure investments, and the influence of private interests. Toll roads, once touted as a solution to congestion and urban sprawl, have evolved into a burden on the everyday life of Sydneysiders, especially those in Western Sydney. The toll review paints a stark picture of the toll road network riddled with inconsistencies, complexities and exorbitant costs. It reveals the tolling system as a patchwork of concessions and pricing structures driven by profit motives rather than public interest. As I mentioned earlier, at the heart of the toll mania lies the issue of fairness. The toll burden falls disproportionately on the residents of Western Sydney, exacerbating the already high cost of living in the region. While toll prices soar, public infrastructure lags—especially when it comes to public transport—leaving commuters with few alternatives and little recourse.

The toll review recommendations offer a glimmer of hope for a fairer and more equitable tolling system—proposals such as a declining distance charge and an infrastructure levy aimed to tighten toll prices with usage and ensure that motorists pay their fair share. Moreover, the call for the establishment of an independent body to oversee toll pricing reflects the recognition of a need for greater transparency and accountability in toll road management. By involving stakeholders in the decision-making process, the toll review seeks to restore public trust in the tolling system and ensure that toll prices reflect the true cost of the infrastructure provided. While the road reform may be long and arduous, the interim report of the Independent Toll Review represents a significant step forward in addressing Sydney's tolling crisis. It provides a road map for reform and offers concrete solutions to the pressures facing motorists in the region.

As we consider the toll review's recommendations, we must remain mindful of the broader implications of toll reform. A fairer tolling system will not only ease the financial burden on residents, but also promote economic growth, reduce congestion and improve quality of life right across Greater Sydney. The people of Sydney deserve a tolling system that is fair, transparent and accountable, and that puts the needs of motorists ahead of profit margins.

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (17:08):** I will, in a moment, seek to amend the motion, but this is extremely partisan, shamefully political and lacks perspective. Reading the motion, you would think the world began in 2011. In reading the motion of the member for Riverstone, I see that it mentions privatisation several times. I do not know whether the member has read the toll review, but how many times does it mention privatisation? How many times do you think? The answer is zero. It does not mention privatisation once, and yet the motion would have members believe that the report talks about that.

If members opposite want to talk about toll roads, let us go through all the toll roads that were approved under Labor. The first one is the Sydney Harbour Tunnel, commissioned under the Unsworth Labor Government. The M2 was opened under the Carr Government in 1997. The Eastern Distributor was commissioned by the Labor Government in 1997 and opened by the Carr Government in 1999. The Cross City Tunnel was commissioned by the Carr Government in 2002 and opened by the Iemma Labor Government in 2005—with a toll. Westlink M7 was commissioned by the Carr Government in 2003 and opened under the Iemma Government in 2005. The roads Minister in 2005 was none other than Joseph Tripodi, a Labor luminary. Finally, the Lane Cove Tunnel was commissioned by the Carr Government in 2003 and opened under the Iemma Government in 2007. Every one of those roads is a toll road.

The motion would have members believe that tolls only happen under one party, but they happened under the Labor Government. Unlike the member who moved the motion, who clearly has not read the report, I found some very interesting reading in it. One of the roads that I mentioned, the Cross City Tunnel, was commissioned and opened under Labor. What does the report say about the Cross City Tunnel, a Labor road? It states:

The Cross City Tunnel has had relatively high tolls ever since it commenced operating, and this has no doubt contributed to its long-term under-use.

There we go—the Labor Government's own report is criticising toll roads that were commissioned and opened under a Labor government. It also has two recommendations. The first is the discontinuation of the M5 South West cashback. I am an honest broker in this House. The Premier has said that he has ruled that out, and I am being honest about that. However, another recommendation is for "two-way tolling on the Sydney Harbour Bridge, the

Sydney Harbour Tunnel and the Eastern Distributor" and the Premier has not ruled that out. That should be up for debate today.

Professor Fels' report creates two scenarios: Network Tolling A, which has no subsidy, and Network Tolling B, with a subsidy. Let us go through all the roads that have no subsidy but will be increasing in price. The first one is Rouse Hill to domestic terminal, with an increase in toll of \$5.83. Parramatta to Maroubra—where are the member for Parramatta and the member for Maroubra? They are not here. The toll increase is \$2.70. Where is the member for Heffron? Rosebery to Mount Druitt will increase by \$2.70. The toll for Rosebery to Blacktown—the member for Blacktown is in the Chamber—will increase by \$2.70. The Premier said two interesting things when he became leader. The first was that he was opposed to "slapping new tolls on roads that have already been paid off". That is interesting with respect to the Sydney Harbour Bridge. The second thing he said was:

Going forward there should be no more new tolls on existing roads and no more signing contracts that increase tolls faster than inflation.

But here we have the Independent Toll Review. I move:

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

- (1) Notes the former New South Wales Labor Government placed tolls on the Eastern Distributor, Cross City Tunnel, Westlink M7 and Lane Cove Tunnel.
- (2) Notes that the former Liberal-Nationals Government successfully delivered city-shaping transport infrastructure including NorthConnex, WestConnex, the light rail expansion and the Sydney Metro after 16 years of infrastructure failure by Labor.
- (3) Notes that Labor wants new tolls, higher tolls and more bureaucrats.
- (4) Calls on the Premier to honour his words before the election that "going forward there should be no more new tolls on existing roads and no more signing contracts that increase tolls faster than inflation".

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (17:13):** We live in the most tolled city on earth. People from the Central Coast coming to work for the day pay over \$50 return if they come in peak hour—250 bucks a week. The cost-of-living crisis is out of this world; it is sky-high. Labor has committed to try to decrease the toll mania that was delivered to us by the previous Liberal Government. The privatisation of roads that belong to the people, which will cost the people of New South Wales \$195 billion over the term of their contracts, is absolutely ridiculous, and trying to undo it is a hugely complex process.

I thank Professor Allan Fels for his Independent Toll Review. The toll roads, as they are at the moment, are not working. People cannot afford to get to work and are taking the backstreets to try to undo some of the grief that the toll mania addicts on the other side of the Chamber delivered to the people of Sydney. Going into the election, we promised that we would reform the world's most tolled city with a new approach to toll mania in Sydney. The toll review confirms that will be a complex task but one that the State must embark on as the Labor Government provides essential cost-of-living relief through our toll cap, which will begin providing quarterly cash rebates in April this year. The report proposes a staged process to reform the toll network, which includes legislation, toll price restructure and the setting up of a State-owned tolling entity, as well as an Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART] review of toll prices.

The Liberals' toll mania in Sydney hurts those who can least afford it. I note that the Sydney Harbour Bridge toll has sat at a steady price, whereas the cost of the tolls in Western Sydney has skyrocketed—gone through the roof. The real cost benefit for those roads means that in some places they will pay for themselves three times over. In one case—I think it is the M2 east—it will pay for itself nine times over the contract. People cannot set up a mobile phone contract without being told the minimum payment, and yet New South Wales motorists signed up to almost \$200 billion in future toll costs without any disclosure under the former Government. The contracts were signed with no reference to future motorists' ability to pay. The contracts mean that tolls go up 4 per cent every year. When inflation went up to 6.8 per cent, Transurban automatically got an additional \$1 billion from the taxpayers of New South Wales because of its contract.

A 30-year-old driver today will reach retirement age at 67 before some of the existing toll contracts expire, which is why it is critical that we let the light shine in here and debate the merits and the long-term costs of how our tolling system is structured. Our Government is coming clean with the people of New South Wales on what the total toll burden will be over the coming four decades before the existing contracts expire. We need to have an honest discussion with the public about the benefits and costs of those toll roads. Long-term relief of that cost-of-living burden must be the focus of the Government now because it goes to a crucial point: Living in this city must not be a financial choice between someone staying in their community and staying in their job. Nurses, teachers and essential workers simply cannot afford to get to their places of work.

Housing reform and certainty around transport infrastructure will alleviate that pressure, but it will take time, and the pain is being felt now. It is incumbent on our Government and members in this place to work together

to deliver a fairer deal for commuters. This is the cost of the incessant privatisation commitment by members opposite. There is a concept of a toll on a road that belongs to the people and has paid for itself. I used to drive on the M4, and I was quite excited when it was paid off and we no longer had to pay the toll, and yet what did members opposite do? They reintroduced a toll on a road that had already paid for itself. Other privatisations that have occurred in New South Wales have also had the oversight of IPART to consider prevailing economic circumstances—to look at interest rates and inflation rates—and yet those opposite are happy with privatisation at the absolute expense of the taxpayers in this State. It needs to be reviewed and the Labor Government will review it.

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Kellyville) (17:18):** Lies, deceit and hypocrisy are just three qualities in a parliamentarian that are frowned upon by the public, especially in relation to promises that were made prior to an election that are not delivered, but those three qualities have become stock in trade for Premier Chris Minns and the Labor Government. We only need to look at some of the promises that were made. First and foremost, Chris Minns said that Labor would lower tolls following the election. He has done quite the opposite, and straightaway increased the tolls on both the Sydney Harbour Bridge and the Sydney Harbour Tunnel. He is now proposing to reverse the toll and put a toll on northbound traffic.

We can look at other promises that were made. The mover of the motion spruiked around his electorate about promises for a Rouse Hill hospital. Last night I had the privilege of visiting his electorate. I could not believe how many of his constituents came up to me in the first half hour and said, "Ray, when are we going to see that Rouse Hill hospital?" I had to advise them that, sadly, this Government had cancelled it and that the completion date is now 2029. That is just stock in trade for Labor members. They promise to build infrastructure and they never do it.

The member for Gosford raised an important point about people travelling from the Central Coast to the city having to pay \$50 if they were to come to the city each day. I do not know whether she meant both ways, or whether that is just one way. Let us presume it is one way. After coming off the F3 or the M1—whichever one prefers to call it—those people would travel into NorthConnex, which is a wonderful piece of infrastructure. I am yet to hear concerns expressed by a motorist about it. They would then travel onto the M2 and would probably then travel through the Lane Cove Tunnel. They would then, more than likely, travel through the Sydney Harbour Tunnel. All three of those latter pieces of infrastructure were tolled by the Carr Labor Government. On top of that, there is the M2, the Cross City Tunnel, the Eastern Distributor and WestConnex.

The hypocrisy of those opposite knows no bounds if we look at the number of tollways and tolls that were introduced by previous Labor governments. They embraced the private sector to build those pieces of infrastructure and toll those roads, but when those contracts repeatedly came up they never tried to reduce the tolls on behalf of the people of this State. The only toll that they removed was the toll on the M4. Because of the efforts of the former Coalition Government in building WestConnex, which is one of the greatest pieces of road infrastructure in this country, it costs a total of \$8 to travel from Penrith all the way to Sydney Airport. That marvellous piece of infrastructure for the people of Western Sydney is a piece of infrastructure that I gladly use each and every day. Once again, it is a piece of infrastructure that I never hear concerns raised about by the constituents who use it. It is a great addition to the way people commute around this city.

We should provide alternatives to toll roads so that people do not have to use them, but rather jump on public transport. When the former Coalition Government was elected in 2011, it inherited a \$60 billion backlog in important infrastructure. One of the greatest pieces of infrastructure ever introduced that affects my community is the Sydney Metro. I use it every day on my way to Parliament. It is a marvellous alternative. I do not pay any tolls whatsoever. I do not pay for parking. I sit back on a wonderful piece of infrastructure that the Coalition built and funded and opened in 2019. We upgraded the inner city, the west and all the other different pieces of rail infrastructure, and we widened the M5. Yes, it has a toll on it, but it was widened by us. The upgrade was promised by the previous Labor Government, but it was never done. It was part of the \$60 billion backlog in infrastructure—but it was built by us. Under Labor, one does not have to worry about paying more tolls, because it does not build any infrastructure when it is in power.

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (17:23):** I note that the member for Kellyville started with three words: lies, deceit and hypocrisy. I would like to turn to the words from the Independent Toll Review. Aside from laying bare the patchwork of poorly functioning toll roads and numerous different price structures, the report reveals information that has not previously been made public. I think it is important to get to the truth. The report reveals details of the rates of return in contracts and the toll burden of each of the roads. The privatisation agenda of the former Liberal-Nationals Government means that of the \$195 billion, WestConnex alone accounts for around 52 per cent of the estimated toll figure in today's dollars. Based on these figures, users will be paying for the cost of that scheme three times over. I do believe that tolls were first brought in to pay for the road. One of the

most disappointing things about living in south-west Sydney was the discovery that the M5 motorway had been paid for, but the toll was not being lifted. We finished our bit, but there were other parts—

**Mr Matt Cross:** Bob Carr didn't lift it.

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL:** This was under your Government.

**Mr Matt Cross:** Give the cash back.

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL:** No, do your homework. This was under your Government. We had paid for it, and it was done, and then a new road opened. The former Coalition Government was not comfortable tolling people in that community for the road, so it thought, "South-west Sydney doesn't seem to mind. Go ahead."

A survey conducted by the review found that residents in Blacktown, the south-west and Parramatta who used toll roads more than once a month spent, respectively, \$95.90, \$87.63 and \$84.35 a month on average. That would generally be poor form, but we are currently also in a cost-of-living crisis. If someone has to leave their property for which they have saved and scrimped and move all the way to south-west Sydney, Blacktown, or Parramatta and drive to work, leaving the electorate—because one of the things that did not come with all of the development in those areas were job opportunities, particularly in Camden—they will pay for the privilege to do so, and at an exorbitant amount per month.

That is higher than the Greater Sydney average of \$60.70 spent by motorists who use toll roads at least once a month. The survey highlights that Western Sydney residents pay the highest amount and have the fewest public transport options available. It is to that which I pivot now. The member for Davidson gave an extensive list of things that we had built, which is ironic because the member for Kellyville said that Labor did not build anything. What they had not built was any public transport infrastructure. Leppington train station, which was the last piece of public transport in the south-west, was designed and implemented by the Carr Labor Government.

**Mr Matt Cross:** Delivered by the Liberal Government—opened and delivered by the Liberal Government.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** The member for Davidson will come to order.

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL:** The member for Davidson is wrong. From Leppington all the way around to Campbelltown, they did. There were greenfields with the opportunity to create public transport infrastructure right through the Camden electorate, but that did not happen. We know that 70 per cent of people in Camden are in the workforce, 56 per cent of people in Camden work full time and 48 per cent of those travel to work by car as lone drivers. They go in the car, by themselves, because they have no other choice. Fewer than 1 per cent of Camden commuters go to work anywhere on public transport. We have been given no choice but to go on those roads. We have been given no opportunity, no alternative, no plan B but to go on toll roads again and again. I think it is chronically unfair—

**Ms Felicity Wilson:** Camden Valley Way has had a great upgrade under us.

**Mr Matt Cross:** Camden Valley Way is not tolled.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** Opposition members will come to order.

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL:** But we are forced to use it, all the way to the M5, the M7, the M4. In fact—  
[Time expired.]

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** The member for North Shore will come to order.

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (17:29):** I thank the member for Riverstone for introducing this important public interest debate. The thought that road users will be paying three times over for the cost of toll roads, including WestConnex, is astonishing. But nobody should be surprised. It is a privatised toll road doing exactly what its private operator says it will do and, for that matter, what it wants it to do: create a revenue stream for investors by taking money out of the pockets of working people, who have little choice but to hop in their cars and drive on private roads because the alternatives of reliable public transport and safe ways to walk and cycle have been left to wither on the vine.

The issue has been put in terms of a "privatisation agenda" this afternoon, but at the heart of this topic is the question of what we want our cities of the future to look like. The previous Coalition Government asked itself that question, and the answer it came up with was "more roads". It was not more public transport or more compact neighbourhoods with great pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, linking small village centres with great local facilities and great local jobs, but more roads—and more privatised roads at that—so that we can continue to rely on urban sprawl, with working people travelling hundreds of kilometres each week to get to and from the places they need to be.

The current Government has inherited the mess the former Government made, but the current Government supported the idea when in opposition. In my electorate of Balmain, we are all dealing with the daily stress of the Rozelle interchange, but the Labor Government has said that the problems can only be solved by building another major motorway—the Western Harbour Tunnel. The Government says it will fix everything in another three, four or five years time. That is unless, of course, it does not. In which case, what will the solution be from there? That is not to mention what we are all supposed to be doing in the meantime.

Imagine life in a city where going to work each day did not mean getting into a car, paying a toll, getting stuck in traffic and the stress of finding somewhere to park or, for that matter, cramming into an overcrowded bus or train carriage as service after service is cancelled or running late, just like the one I caught into Parliament this morning. It is a frequent occurrence on my six-kilometre commute. What should have been a short, pleasant journey turned into an hour-long ordeal. Almost every time I come to this place on the bus, as I am wedded to doing, I end up with an hour-long ordeal and with cancelled services. It is absolutely maddening. This issue can be talked about within the context of privatisation as well, because we know that the privatisation of Sydney's buses has been a disaster.

If we want our cities of the future to be served by well-functioning public transport, we need to stop outsourcing those services to those who think they can turn them into the most efficient money-spinners. We need those services to be operated in the public interest, with operators who will put our communities ahead of their bottom line—but I digress. Imagine if those billions of dollars had been spent on something instead of roads. Imagine being able to walk or cycle to a nearby transport hub where fast, reliable and affordable public transport is available to take you where you need to go. That is the kind of visionary approach that is needed for building new transport infrastructure in Sydney and across New South Wales, because fast, connected and safe public transport is at the heart of an efficient and socially just city. Privatised toll roads, on the other hand, have embedded inequity into the transport system for generations to come. That is the real story behind the interim report of the Independent Toll Review.

Our ailing public transport and traffic congestion brings stress and frustration to people across the State, which costs families precious time and has a negative impact on economic activity. Trying to fix it with more traffic-inducing tollways serves only the private companies that build and operate them. I say again that is the real story behind the interim report of the Independent Toll Review. Road users will be paying three times over for the cost of those privatised toll roads for generations to come. On the other hand, building better public transport and making it safe and easy to walk and cycle can address those issues and have a positive effect on pollution, reducing greenhouse emissions and promoting a healthy lifestyle. That is what is needed in our cities now and for the future.

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (17:33):** It is exciting that today, after one year and \$1 million of taxpayers' money spent, the Minns Labor Government has discovered that there is a cost-of-living crisis and that people are struggling under the weight of tolls. I welcome the Government coming to the party on that revelation, because it is something that members on this side of the Chamber have been working to address when in government and now in opposition. We have been pushing the Minns Labor Government to take this issue seriously. Even though those opposite seem to have finally realised that this is a challenge, we still do not know what the Labor Government's position is on tolling reforms. Is it going to undertake any reform on tolling concessions? Is it going to do anything to ease the cost-of-living pressures on commuters and drivers across Sydney and New South Wales?

The member for Riverstone seems like a decent guy. I give him credit for that. He seems well meaning. But being well meaning and decent does not mean that he is accurate in his history and his understanding of where we have come from, where Labor has taken the State in the past and where it is likely to lead it in the future. I put some facts on the table that my learned colleagues on this side of the Chamber have spoken to this evening. We know that Labor is the architect of tolling and the cost-of-living crisis in New South Wales. I look at the longest tolling concession in the history of this country—the 49-year toll that was whacked on the Cross City Tunnel. That is a longer concession than WestConnex stage 1. When that toll was first applied, there was an escalation of a minimum of 4 per cent every single year for that 49-year period.

When Labor introduced the Cross City Tunnel, it stipulated an escalation rate of a minimum of 4 per cent per annum for the first 13 years of that contract. I look at the requirement to enter the Cross City Tunnel—or the tunnel funnel, as some members may recall—to even access parts of the city. Labor's record is to toll hard and toll wide, to have high escalations and to force people to pay those tolls. It is rank hypocrisy that we are hearing from members opposite, who are criticising and attacking tolling, and complaining about the cost-of-living crisis and the impacts of tolling. Labor is the architect of the tolling regime in New South Wales that is causing this crisis for the people of our city and our State.

We cannot believe a word that members opposite say about what they will do to resolve cost-of-living and tolling challenges. What do they say when they talk about cost-of-living challenges? They say that tolls are incredibly high. They say that there is a cost-of-living challenge for each of us. The only consideration that has so far been put on the table by the Minns Labor Government is to double the toll on the Sydney Harbour Bridge and the Sydney Harbour Tunnel. In a cost-of-living crisis, where the cost imposts on families, households and commuters has been acknowledged, the only policy proposition is to double tolls. There is nothing in that to reduce the cost-of-living impacts on families, to introduce relief for households or to reduce tolling. In fact, those opposite are looking to double tolls.

My community is at the heart of one of the most egregious Labor tolling decisions—and the member for Strathfield will know this from his time living in my local community—when a former Labor government signed the deal for one of the world's most expensive toll roads in the entire world. The most expensive toll road per kilometre is the off-ramp from Military Road at Neutral Bay and North Sydney. It is a right-hand turn between Falcon Street/Military Road and the Warringah Freeway. It is a right-hand turn between two free roads that was tolled at the highest rate per kilometre in the world at that time. That is Labor's record. That is a record that we cannot trust. Those opposite are speaking out of both sides of their mouths.

I look at the 16 long years that Labor was in government last time around. We all thank God that it is only going to be four years this time. When Labor built the M5 East, it put a toll on it. When Labor built the M5, it put a toll on it. When Labor built the M2, it put a toll on it. When Labor built the Lane Cove Tunnel, it put a toll on it. As I have said, when Labor built the Cross City Tunnel, it put a toll on it. We saw the impacts it had on Cross City Tunnel patronage when Labor tried to funnel people into it. When Labor built the right-hand turn from Military Road in my electorate, it slapped a toll on it. I am not sure what this Labor Government means. Labor has a record of having the longest and largest tolling concessions in the history of Australia and the world. One cannot trust Labor when it comes to tolling and, disappointingly, cannot trust the motion moved by member for Riverstone.

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (17:38):** In reply: I thank the member for Davidson for his contribution to the debate, noting that privatisation was not mentioned in a report that was about private roads that are all toll roads. I also thank him for noting the number of roads that were built under the previous Labor Government. I thank the member for Gosford, who noted that the residents in her electorate are regularly paying \$50 a day to get into the city. She noted the ability for the operators to increase the tolls quarterly with absolutely no reference to the ability of road users to pay that and also noted the reintroduction of tolls on roads that were already paid for. I thank the member for Kellyville for his rather comical and somewhat distorted rewrite of history. I thank the member for Camden, who noted that tolls were brought in to pay for roads, not to pay for them three times over. She noted that the lack of job opportunities is forcing people to leave her electorate for work and that less than 1 per cent of her electorate have access to public transport, meaning they have little choice but to use toll roads.

I thank the member for Balmain for her insightful contribution noting that it is not surprising that a Liberal-Nationals Government would impose a toll that pays three times over to a private company, and also noting the lack of alternative transport options or clever urban design. She made the point that a six-kilometre journey from her home takes an hour via our ailing public transport system, which, curiously, was left to fall into decay while the previous Government focused on toll roads. Finally, I thank the member for North Shore, who noted the Opposition's concern about the contracts of the last Labor Government. But rather than change and reduce them, it turned around and made our city the most tolled city on Earth. I also note her concerns for the residents of the lower North Shore for having to share the load of the toll mania in this city. As I said at the beginning, this is fundamentally a question of fairness. Tolls are a tax on the people of Western Sydney, who are the people most desperately suffering with the cost-of-living crisis. Our Government is on the side of the people of New South Wales, particularly the people of north-west and south-west Sydney, not on the side of the private operators simply wanting to profit from them.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** The member for Riverstone has moved a motion, to which the member for Davidson has moved an amendment. The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....36  
 Noes .....52  
 Majority..... 16

**AYES**

Amon, R  
 Anderson, K

Hodges, M  
 James, T

Singh, G (teller)  
 Sloane, K

## AYES

Ayyad, T	Kean, M	Speakman, M
Clancy, J	Kemp, M	Taylor, M
Cooke, S	Lane, J	Thompson, T
Coure, M	Layzell, D	Toole, P
Cross, M	Marshall, A	Tuckerman, W
Crouch, A (teller)	Petinos, E	Ward, G
Davies, T	Preston, R	Williams, L
Di Pasqua, S	Provest, G	Williams, R
Griffin, J	Roberts, A	Williamson, R
Henskens, A	Saunders, D	Wilson, F

## NOES

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

## PAIRS

Perrottet, D

Cotsis, S

**Amendment negatived.**

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** The question is that the motion be agreed to.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Bills***ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS) BILL 2024****First Reading**

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

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** I order that the second reading of the bill stand as an order of the day for a later hour.

**ELECTORAL FUNDING AMENDMENT (LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL EXPENDITURE CAPS) BILL 2024****First Reading**

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

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** I order that the second reading of the bill stand as an order of the day for a later hour.

**AGEING AND DISABILITY COMMISSIONER AMENDMENT BILL 2023****Second Reading Debate****Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (17:52):** I continue my contribution to the debate on the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Amendment Bill 2023. Another matter considered in the review was the composition of the Ageing and Disability Advisory Board. Currently, the Minister is required to ensure the board reflects the diversity of the community and includes two or more people with disability; a representative of independent specialist advocacy, information and representative organisations for people with disability; a representative of independent specialist advocacy, information and representative organisations for older adults; and one or more people representing people employed in the provision of disability services or services for older adults.

Some of the submissions made the point that representation could be expanded to include older people or seniors, people with lived experience of neglect or abuse, and members of specific communities, along with other criteria. Given the Act currently requires at least two or more people with disability to be on the board, it would be sensible to apply the same principle for older people in New South Wales. While there are calls to mandate more representation of other groups, whether they live in specific regions or have specific backgrounds, it is important not to be too restrictive in terms of the composition of the board. As Minister for Seniors, I welcome the recommendation that the board include two or more older people. We know that better decisions are made when we have a diverse group of people at the table giving input into matters relevant to them, and that lived experience adds a practical element to ensure that things that matter to seniors and people with disability are front and centre.

In total, Mr Cameron's final report made 11 recommendations to the New South Wales Government, and this bill will implement all but two of them. Specifically, the bill makes the following changes: allowing the Ageing and Disability Commissioner discretion as to whether to refer reports to other bodies if the relevant adult does not wish to have the information reported; extending the circumstances where the Commissioner may investigate allegations without the consent of the relevant adult to cover specific situations where the Commissioner cannot obtain access to the person; broadening information sharing with organisations and individuals that provide support to adults with disability or seniors; permitting official community visitors to provide advice to the Department of Communities and Justice and the NDIS Commissioner, in addition to the Minister and the Ageing and Disability Commissioner; requiring service providers to notify the Ageing and Disability Commission about contact details; and requiring that the Ageing and Disability Advisory Board include two or more older adults.

This bill represents sensible and modest changes to the Act, with the purpose of improving the operations of the Commission. As I mentioned, the bill does not include two recommendations from the report: recommendation 3b, which would have expanded the circumstances in which the Commissioner can investigate without the adult's consent, and recommendation 11, which was to appoint a parliamentary committee to monitor and review the functions of the Commissioner. The reasons for not pursuing these two recommendations are sound given the potential implications for an adult's right to privacy and existing parliamentary oversight holding the Commissioner accountable.

I again put on record my admiration and respect for the work of the Ageing and Disability Commission and express my thanks to the current Ageing and Disability Commissioner, Robert Fitzgerald. His advice has been frank and fearless, driven by a deep commitment to ensure the safety of older people and people with disability. I wish Robert the very best in his new role as Australia's Federal Age Discrimination Commissioner. New South Wales' loss is Australia's gain. I look forward to continuing to work with Robert across jurisdictions.

The work of the Ageing and Disability Commission plays a critical role to ensure the New South Wales Government achieves its vision. The independent statutory review has consulted widely on the effectiveness of the Commission and reported back with several strong recommendations. The Ageing and Disability Commissioner Amendment Bill 2023 ensures the Commission is working within a framework which is fit for purpose and effective. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (17:57):** I speak in support of the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Amendment Bill 2023, a bill for an Act to amend the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Act 2019 as a result of its statutory review mechanism contained in section 36 of the Act. I understand nine of 11 recommendations are being implemented following the independent statutory review of the Act. At the outset, I want to express my total disappointment with the so-called Minister for Disability Inclusion. As the former disability services Minister

who established the Ageing and Disability Commission [ADC], and as one of the few members of this Parliament with a disability, I am stunned that the Minister did not offer me a briefing on this bill. Sadly, this Minister plays politics with everything she does, including people with disability. She may hold the title as Minister for Disability Inclusion, but she did not include me. It is disgraceful.

The person who should be the Minister for disability is sitting opposite me: the member for Gosford, who does a great job as Parliamentary Secretary. I acknowledge the great work that she does, not just in this Parliament but across other parliaments. I acknowledge her role as the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's disability delegate from this Parliament. I thank Commissioner Robert Fitzgerald, AM, for his dedicated service and congratulate him on his new role as the Age Discrimination Commissioner with the Australian Human Rights Commission. His efforts have significantly contributed to protecting the rights of vulnerable individuals in our society. I am very proud to have recommended his appointment to Cabinet and he can be very proud of the legacy he leaves. Well done, good and faithful servant.

Additionally, I acknowledge the staff of the commission for making our State safer for older adults and individuals with disabilities. As the former Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services, I introduced the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Bill 2019 and established the commission in 2019. Reflecting on my second reading speech when I introduced that bill, I mentioned my lived experiences growing up with a disability. I acknowledged that my experiences were nowhere near the cases of appalling abuse, neglect and exploitation by those charged with the trust, confidence, and care of our State's most vulnerable. Anyone can call the New South Wales Ageing and Disability Abuse Helpline on 1800 628 221, Monday to Friday, 9.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. for information and support or to make a report. People can also make that report anonymously.

In 2022-23, as outlined in the NSW Ageing and Disability Commission's *Annual Report*, there was a 12 per cent increase in calls to the helpline, 4,258 statutory reports—a 7 per cent increase—and significant increases in training and resources for the community. For context, the *NSW Ageing and Disability Commission Data Report* of 2020 to 2022 reported on trends relating to abuse and neglect of adults with disability in New South Wales. That included 2,501 reports about abuse and neglect of adults with disability, a 46 per cent increase over three years. Regional New South Wales accounted for just over half the reports, with the Hunter, Illawarra Shoalhaven and Central Coast being, sadly, the most common areas.

In relation to trends relating to reports of abuse and neglect of older people, there were 8,462 reports about older people—a 38 per cent increase over three years. The same regions, including my electorate, accounted for just over half the reports about older people. In total for 2020 to 2022, there were 38,216 calls to the Ageing and Disability Abuse Helpline—a 14 per cent increase over the three years. Those reports involve psychological and financial abuse, as well as domestic violence, which is happening all too often to women and more so than men. In relation to those trends, in concluding remarks in the latest annual report, the commissioner said:

... financial resourcing for the ADC remains a serious issue to be addressed given the increasing demand on all areas of our work, and, an increase in visitable services by OCVs.

OCVs are official community visitors. He further said:

Without adequate and sustainable funding, the risks we see in the community will only continue to grow without appropriate safeguards that can improve outcomes for older people and adults with disability.

The budget estimates committee heard on 27 February 2024 that the commissioner understands the necessity for adequate funding. That raises a pivotal question: Is the Government prepared to sufficiently fund the Ageing and Disability Commission, especially amidst ongoing housing and cost-of-living pressures?

**Ms Kate Washington:** You didn't fully fund it from the start.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** I absolutely did fully fund it from the start. I am very pleased to hear the Minister's interjection. Not only did I do that, but I also increased funding by half a million dollars. If you are going to contribute, you may want to do so in your right of reply and address that outrageous statement you just made. Don't lead with your chin, Minister. Don't bring a knife to a gun fight, seriously. Do you really want to play this game? You didn't offer me a briefing on this. You call yourself the Minister for Disability Inclusion. You didn't include me as someone with disability.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** Order! The member for Kiama will direct his remarks through the Chair.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** I simply make these comments in relation to funding because they are important. I acknowledge the comments from the Minister across the table, but there have been many stakeholders that have raised their concerns about funding. I simply reiterate that during my time as Minister I made sure that we increased funding. I acknowledge that there were concerns raised by the commissioner with respect to funding. I am sure we can always collectively do better in relation to that. Many members here will remember the past

debates and positions taken on this matter, and these concerns were considered in the statutory report conducted by Mr Alan Cameron, AO.

I note that the member for Orange then called for the Government to provide \$20 million of funding each year, adjusted annually for inflation, to non-government organisations approved by the commissioner to enable them to provide adequate services to adults with disability. I recall the then Opposition playing politics with this issue at the time. They threatened to vote down the bill to establish the commission if that matter was not resolved. As Minister I promised to fight hard for advocates, and I not only passed the bill without their help but also got the money that was needed for advocates at the time. It was \$20 million.

In spite of Labor's claim of supporting advocates, I note that the 2022-23 budget did not contain adequate funding for the disability sector, and I refer to the disappointment and concerns raised by People with Disability Australia and the National Disability Services, who remind us that 1.46 million people in New South Wales live with a disability—almost 20 per cent of the population. I urge the Government to consider the implications of the bill without the necessary funding and public awareness initiatives. The statutory review by Mr Cameron emphasised the need for sustainable ADC funding and increased public awareness to prevent abuse, as outlined in section 3 of the statutory review.

In 2019 I argued there was no proclivity on whether the commissioner could refer a matter to an agency as required. I also argued that privacy matters should be left to the commissioner's discretion, rather than prescribing them in legislation. I made it clear that I was concerned that expanding information sharing would be labour intensive to the detriment of securing outcomes for people, which is in contrast with the commission's stated objectives. I note that the ADC and the NSW Trustee and Guardian did not agree to recommendations in the statutory review that the commissioner be required to continue to report on the outcome of each referral under section 25 (3) due to administrative burdens. If the ADC is already underfunded by this Government, that burden simply exacerbates the situation and drains the resources of the commission. Schedule 1 [8] expands information-sharing powers and should address concerns related to schedule 1 [5] with respect to duplication with other agencies. Whilst there were concerns in 2019 that the ADC would be a toothless tiger, I am pleased not to have heard those arguments during this debate and the substance that came from the section 36 Act statutory review.

There has been comment by the commissioner in relation to the NDIS. I want to commend Federal Minister Bill Shorten for the work he is doing to reform the NDIS—that is beyond politics. When it comes to disabilities, there should not be a Liberal thing to do or a Labor thing to do. There should just be a right thing to do. An issue that I continue to hear from sector folk who I remain close to is that the local area coordinators are too focused on planning and not involved in things like information linkages, capacity building and ensuring that we keep people outside the NDIS. As Commissioner Fitzgerald frequently used to remind me, the NDIS was not designed for everyone with a disability. It was for the 10 per cent of people who really needed reasonable supports so they could have choice and control over their lives.

I ask the Minister, when she is meeting with her other colleagues, that they focus on what State services are lacking—education, health care—to keep people outside the NDIS and make it a sustainable system. The last thing this great social reform needs is to fall apart and not be given a chance. So far it has changed the lives of so many people for the better. People who have sat and looked at four walls for years now have the opportunity to make decisions about their lives that they never did. We cannot risk this reform; it is too important. It requires members on both sides of this Parliament to unite and to focus on supporting people with disabilities.

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (18:07):** I am delighted to make a contribution to debate on the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Amendment Bill 2023. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the Minister—who is in the House—for the bill and thank her for her hard work and effort. I also thank her team for all of their work and effort in bringing the bill before us today. Ultimately, in this place there are not many more things we should do than have provisions in place to protect those who need it most. When we look at those in our community, whilst many are very able, there are people who rely on this Parliament and legislation to provide them with the protections they require during the course of their lives. That is ultimately what the bill seeks to do.

The bill amends the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Act 2019 to implement recommendations made in the statutory review of the Act. The Ageing and Disability Commissioner Act 2019 established an independent agency to promote the rights of adults with disability and older people, and protect them from abuse, neglect and exploitation. When we look at some of the feedback we share in the Legislative Assembly, and I guess in the Legislative Council as well, it is quite a horrifying experience when people come into your electoral office seeking support due to violence, misappropriation or bad conduct towards the elderly and those with a disability in our community. They are people who, in many ways, depending on what challenges they have in their life, cannot defend themselves. Sadly, some in the community see that vulnerability as an opportunity for exploitation and, in the worst cases, abuse. That is why the bill is so important.

As required by the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Act 2019, an independent review of the Act was commissioned and tabled in Parliament on 25 May 2023. The bill implements all of the review recommendations except recommendation 3b to expand the circumstances in which the commissioner can investigate without the adult's consent, which potentially undermines privacy; and recommendation 11 to appoint a parliamentary committee to monitor and review the commissioner's functions. I understand that that point has been raised previously, but I note that the Minister addressed that in her contribution. I am sure she will also address those concerns in her reply.

The bill makes several key changes to the Act. It allows the commissioner discretion about whether to refer relevant reports to other bodies and extends the circumstances in which the commissioner may investigate allegations without the consent of the relevant adult to cover situations when the commissioner cannot obtain access to the adult; broadens information sharing with organisations and individuals that provide supports to adults with disability or older people; permits official community visitors to provide advice to the Department of Communities and Justice and the NDIS commissioner; requires service providers to notify the Ageing and Disability Commission of the contact details of visitable services; and, finally, requires that the Ageing and Disability Advisory Board include two or more older adults and makes the commissioner responsible for the board's diversity. It is a significant and important change to have seniors at the table. They may not necessarily have lived experiences that the bill is seeking to address, but I have no doubt they will have relationships or collaborations with those who have.

The NDIS was mentioned by previous speakers, and I commend our Minister, who is working hard with her ministerial colleagues around the nation and with Bill Shorten. Our Minister has a good relationship with Bill, who is working proactively and engagingly with our Minister and other Ministers to address the concerns and ongoing issues around the NDIS to make sure it is fit for purpose and serving those who need it the most. It is a great initiative but, like every initiative that is put in place through government policies, it needs to be reviewed to see how it can best work to serve its required purpose. I thank the Minister and her team. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (18:12):** I contribute to debate on the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Amendment Bill 2023. I am The Greens spokesperson for older persons, and I acknowledge the work of our disability spokesperson, Ms Abigail Boyd. The bill amends the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Act 2019 to implement all except two recommendations of the 2023 statutory review of the Act. The two recommendations that are not being implemented are recommendation 3b, which would expand the circumstances in which the commissioner may investigate other allegations without the consent of the relevant adult with respect to the issue of the adult's capacity to consent; and recommendation 11, which would appoint or designate a parliamentary committee to monitor and review the functions of the Ageing and Disability Commission.

My colleague in the other place Ms Abigail Boyd will move an amendment to implement recommendation 11. The intention of the amendment is to ensure transparency and accountability in monitoring the functions and capacity of the commission, including its ability to operate under that allocated funding. It was interesting to hear the former disability Minister talking about the commissioner himself raising some of those issues. We commend the Labor Minister for the recommendations, the statutory review and the implementation, but we do believe the bill could go further in strengthening the commission, including taking on board more of the recommendations by disability advocates. Recently, as The Greens education spokesperson, I made a submission to the upper House inquiry into disability in education, chaired by Ms Abigail Boyd, MLC. I give a shout-out to Will Black in my office, who did really good work on that submission.

Able-bodied discrimination is still rife and we are all guilty of it. There is a temptation to infantilise both older people and people with disability, which is why the role of this commission is so very important. In the national royal commission we saw the lived experiences and read the accounts of people with disability about their lives, putting ourselves into their shoes to understand how horrendous it is. Recently in my electorate the upgrade of the pools in Ballina and Alstonville was a travesty that reduced access for people with disability. Whereas before you had a little ledge that people with disability in a wheelchair could use to get themselves into and quite easily get out of the pool, now they cannot. These are people who were independent and did not need a carer but now do. What the pool has provided is a big kind of pulley system that is really onerous. It is death by a thousand cuts. There are so many experiences we are just unaware of in our communities and it is really important to open our eyes to those.

The commission was established in 2019 under the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Act 2019 as an independent agency of the New South Wales Government to promote the rights of adults with disability and older people and protect them from abuse, neglect and exploitation. I add that it can still be seen very much like a deficit model. We see the role of the commissioner and the commission to work with everyone in society to break down the stigma and able-bodied prejudices that are rife across all aspects of life.

**Ms Liesl Tesch:** Hear, hear!

**Ms TAMARA SMITH:** I note that I was a member of Parliament before the arrival Liesl Tesch, who is at the table. I saw how the Parliament was not ready for a member of Parliament in a wheelchair. There is just so much more work to be done.

**Ms Liesl Tesch:** I couldn't even sit with my legs under the table.

**Ms TAMARA SMITH:** Exactly. We know there is good work happening and we want to see that continue. The commissioner has confirmed several times in budget estimates how severely and chronically underfunded the commission is—to the extent that it is unable to fulfil its statutory duties. In the same way that we have an oversight committee of the Valuer General and other statutory entities, we think an oversight committee of the commission is perfectly reasonable. In 2022 the commissioner estimated that the funding shortfall was approximately \$9 million over the following three years, but we note that the new Labor Government has made inroads on that and we really hope that continues in this year's budget.

In submissions to the discussion paper it was very welcome to hear the voices of a range of disability advocacy organisations but also of those people living with disability. Some of those peak organisations are generally supportive of the recommendations being implemented. We support the bill, but we are seeking to include recommendation 11 of the review to appoint a parliamentary committee to monitor and review the commissioner's functions. We do not want to be setting up the commissioner for failure, especially with the lack of funding of disability advocacy services. We are not really hearing anyone in Labor talking about recurrent funding. They took it to the election.

Recurrent funding needs to be addressed; advocates and people who are doing the heavy lifting cannot wait too many more years for it to be addressed. Homelessness is particularly rife in my electorate, with older women living in cars. Byron shire has the largest numbers of rough sleepers in the State. There is so much work to be done. The Greens want to see that the commissioner has everything that they need to be a real force in the State.

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (18:19):** I contribute to the debate in support of the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Amendment Bill 2023. The bill amends the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Act 2019 following an independent statutory review of the Act. The bill makes key changes. It allows the Ageing and Disability Commissioner discretion about whether to refer relevant reports to other bodies, and to not refer reports if an adult does not wish the information to be reported. It extends the circumstances in which the commissioner may investigate allegations without the consent of the relevant adult to cover situations where the commissioner cannot obtain access to the person. It broadens information sharing with organisations and individuals that provide support to adults with disability or older people. It permits official community visitors to provide advice to the Department of Communities and Justice, the NDIS commissioner, the Minister and the Ageing and Disability Commissioner. It requires service providers to notify the Ageing and Disability Commission about contact details. It requires the Ageing and Disability Advisory Board to include two or more older adults.

The bill is an important legislative reform towards safeguarding the rights and dignity of some of the most vulnerable members of our society—our elderly and adults with disabilities. The importance of protecting the elderly from abuse cannot be overstated. Our elders have contributed significantly to our communities, shaping the world we live in today. They are our parents, grandparents, mentors and friends, who have enriched our lives with their wisdom, love and experiences. As they age, they deserve to do so with dignity, respect and the assurance that their community is looking out for their wellbeing. Sadly, the reality is that many older adults face various forms of abuse, including physical, emotional and financial abuse and neglect—often from those they trust the most.

Recognising the urgency of the issue, the bill introduces several key changes aimed at strengthening the protections for our elderly and disabled adults. First, the bill grants the Ageing and Disability Commissioner discretion about whether to refer relevant reports to other bodies and, importantly, allows for the non-referral of reports if the adult does not wish the information to be reported. That change respects the autonomy and wishes of the individuals involved, ensuring that their voices and preferences are central to any decision-making process.

Furthermore, the bill extends the circumstances in which the commissioner may investigate allegations without the consent of the relevant adult. That is particularly crucial in situations where the commissioner cannot obtain access to the person, ensuring that potential barriers do not prevent the necessary intervention and support. In addition, the legislation broadens the scope of information sharing with organisations and individuals that provide support to adults with disabilities or older people. That enhancement in information sharing is vital for creating a cohesive network of support, ensuring that all stakeholders are equipped with the necessary knowledge to effectively assist those in need.

The bill also empowers official community visitors by allowing them to provide advice not only to the Minister and the Ageing and Disability Commissioner but also to the Department of Communities and Justice and the NDIS commissioner. That expansion of advisory capabilities ensures that insights from the ground directly inform policy and practice, fostering a more responsive and informed approach to addressing the needs of the elderly and adults with disabilities. Moreover, the legislation mandates service providers to notify the Ageing and Disability Commission about contact details, enhancing the commission's ability to maintain an up-to-date and accessible database of service providers. That is a crucial step in ensuring that individuals and their families can easily access the support and services they require.

Lastly, the bill stipulates that the Ageing and Disability Advisory Board must include two or more older adults. This inclusion is a powerful affirmation of the principle "nothing about us without us", ensuring that the voices and perspectives of older adults are directly represented in the advisory board, shaping policies and initiatives that affect their lives. The significance of these changes extends far beyond the legislative text. They represent a collective acknowledgement of our responsibility to protect those who may not always have the means to protect themselves. Abuse in any form is a violation of human rights and dignity. By strengthening the mechanisms for intervention, support and advocacy, this bill sends a clear message: that abuse of the elderly and adults with disabilities will not be tolerated.

In addition to the legislative advancements brought forth by the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Amendment Bill, it is crucial to acknowledge the broader framework of engagement and consultation with stakeholders, which underpins our efforts to protect and empower our vulnerable citizens. The efforts of the Ageing and Disability Commission in New South Wales deserve our recognition and gratitude. This body has been at the forefront of advocating for and protecting the rights of the elderly and disabled. Its work is a testament to our shared values of compassion and justice.

In the East Hills electorate, the reality for many vulnerable individuals is a daily struggle against barriers that extend beyond the physical. We know from the Ageing and Disability Commission's quarterly data that our region is subject to some of the largest numbers of reports of abuse and neglect in New South Wales. Financial constraints, language barriers, isolation and coercive control exacerbate the vulnerability of our older residents and adults with disabilities. These challenges underscore the importance of the support and opportunities which strive to address disadvantage and foster a more equitable society. In conclusion, I commend the bill to the House, as it further strengthens the ability of the Ageing and Disability Commission to respond appropriately to complaints that involve the abuse of older persons or adults with disability. The Ageing and Disability Commissioner Amendment Bill is more than just a piece of legislation; it is a step forward in our journey towards a more compassionate society.

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (18:26):** I speak in debate on the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Amendment Bill 2023, which will strengthen the Ageing and Disability Commission in its critical work of protecting people with disability and older Australians across New South Wales. Sadly, the work of the commissioner continues to be critically important. As we review the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, we realise that the lives of people with disabilities in our State and in our nation are still not as they could be and will be in the future.

I sincerely thank the incredible Robert Fitzgerald, AM, for his dedication and commitment to, and absolute passion for, improving the lives of people with disabilities and our older Australians in New South Wales. He has previously been a productivity commissioner, the Community and Disability Services Commissioner and the Deputy Ombudsman in New South Wales. It is this State's loss but Australia's gain as Robert moves to the Human Rights Commission as the new Age Discrimination Commissioner. His ongoing reporting of the trends of the lives of people with disabilities and older Australians in New South Wales and the actions we need to take is crucial and has been delivered with such sensitivity, professionalism, profound passion and insight, stepping into the shoes of the people he cared for.

A strengthened Ageing and Disability Commission is of the utmost importance for seniors and people with disability across New South Wales. My electorate's population of people over 85 years old will triple in the next 10 years. This bill is of critical importance for our community, ensuring that the rights of our senior people are protected as they age. As the ageing population of our region expands significantly, the New South Wales Government is committed to ensuring that older people, alongside adults with disability, are protected from abuse, neglect and exploitation.

From a local perspective, we are already seeing the importance of the Ageing and Disability Commissioner in our region. The Central Coast region is near the top of the regions that the Ageing and Disability Commissioner responds to, being the fifth highest region in New South Wales for reports to the Ageing and Disability Commission [ADC] between July and September 2023, with 83 reports made. It is clear that strengthening the Ageing and Disability Commission means a strengthened future for the rights of adults with disabilities and older

adults across the Central Coast region and across every electorate in New South Wales. In strengthening both the safeguarding provisions in the Act and the ability of the Ageing and Disability Commission to protect and promote the rights of individuals with disabilities and older Australians, the bill makes several key changes to the Act.

The bill will strengthen the operation of official community visitors who operate under part 4 of the Act. Official community visitors play a vital safeguarding role for vulnerable people by visiting places, including accommodation services, where residents are in the full-time care of the service provider. The bill makes important changes to that scheme, including the requirement for disability providers to notify the ADC of their contact details, any new visitable services, or location changes to the existing visitable services that they operate. I sincerely thank our official community visitors. What a wonderfully eclectic group of individuals who take it on themselves, with passion, dedication and professionalism, to promote the rights of the residents that they are visiting. They not only talk with the providers and the workers in those locations but also take the time to talk to the residents in the care of New South Wales in supported accommodation.

The bill makes several key changes, including broadening information sharing with organisations and individuals that provide support to adults with disabilities or older people, and improves representation by requiring that the Ageing and Disability Advisory Board now includes two or more older adults. While there are two people with disabilities on the board, it is actually a delight to know that there will be people on the board with lived experience of being senior Australians to give input and representation as the voice of our ageing population. The bill also extends the situations where the commissioner may investigate allegations without the consent of the relative adult, to cover situations where the commissioner cannot obtain access to the person. It allows the commissioner discretion regarding referrals to relevant bodies, and to not refer reports if the adult does not wish to be reported.

Before I conclude—and despite his comments to the current Minister—I thank the previous Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services, who lives with a disability, for his passion and commitment to people with disabilities in New South Wales. I also thank him for his work seeking the advocacy funding when it was nearly cut—after a mighty protest, and I thank all the stakeholders who were involved in that protest—and also for the introduction of the Ageing and Disability Commissioner. It is a really important role, and we value their input. I also thank the Minister for Disability Inclusion and the Minister for Seniors, because their wraparound love and support for the sector is so important. As Parliamentary Secretary for Disability Inclusion, it is such an honour to work so closely with Minister Washington and her fabulous team to improve the lives of people with disabilities in this State.

In responding to the independent review by Mr Alan Cameron, AO, and implementing almost all of Mr Cameron's recommendations, the bill will strengthen the ability of the Ageing and Disability Commission to protect and promote the rights of adults with disabilities and older adults in New South Wales. I thank Mr Cameron for the review. As many members have done, I also thank Minister Shorten for his work. We have had an amazing time with the royal commission into the rights of people with disabilities and also the NDIS review. I really commend the work of Minister Washington and all the disability Ministers across Australia for their collaborative work in looking into how we can improve the governmental support structures we provide to wrap around and improve the lives of people with disabilities in this State and across our nation.

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (18:33):** I speak in support of the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Amendment Bill 2023. I commend the Minister for Disability Inclusion for her work in this space. The aim of this bill is to implement a number of recommendations arising from an independent statutory review of the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Act 2019. The Ageing and Disability Commissioner Act 2019 established an independent agency, known as the Ageing and Disability Commission, to promote the rights of adults with disabilities and older people and to protect them from abuse, neglect and exploitation. Section 36 of the Act required that an independent review of the Act be commissioned, which was tabled in Parliament on 25 May 2023. The review was undertaken with the purpose of determining whether the policy objectives of the Act remain valid and whether the terms of the Act remain appropriate. The bill implements almost all of the recommendations brought forth by the independent review, thus strengthening the safeguarding provisions in the Act, along with the ability of the Ageing and Disability Commission to protect and promote the rights of adults with disability and older adults.

The bill makes several key changes. Firstly, it allows the Ageing and Disability Commissioner discretion to refer relevant reports to other bodies and to not refer reports if the individual does not wish the information to be reported. This broadens information sharing with relevant organisations and individuals that provide support to adults with a disability or older people while balancing people's right to consent to their information being shared. Furthermore, the bill also extends the circumstances in which the commissioner may investigate allegations without the consent of the relevant adult to cover situations where the commissioner cannot obtain consent from the adult person. This provision implements recommendation 3a of the statutory review via

schedule 1 [6] to the bill. Such an amendment is intended to cover circumstances in which the relevant adult cannot be contacted, despite reasonable efforts to obtain access. This proposed change is supported by consideration of discussion with stakeholders, who considered that the commission's inability to gain access to some adults in abusive environments to seek consent was a barrier to the ability to investigate allegations.

The bill also extends the operation of the Official Community Visitor scheme to provide advice or information to the NDIS commission and to the Secretary of the Department of Communities and Justice, thus ensuring the respective jurisdictions can be given information about providers of concern or trend and pattern information about providers and visitable services. The provisions of the bill also require disability service providers to notify the Ageing and Disability Commission of their contact details, ensuring the Official Community Visitor scheme is kept apprised of new services or changes to locations of services so that they may be visited. Finally, the bill also introduces the requirement of appointing two or more older adults to the Ageing and Disability Advisory Board, ensuring the board has representation of those it advocates for.

In terms of the Fairfield electorate, such measures brought forward by the bill will make an impact. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Fairfield has the highest concentration of persons requiring assistance with core activities and a significant population of persons over 65 who have made a major contribution to society and deserve protection. Adults with disabilities and older people are some of the most vulnerable members of our society. Their interests must be protected and supported. It is crucial that we strengthen the mechanisms in place to protect these groups from abuse, neglect and exploitation. This House can make a difference here. Supporting the ability of the Ageing and Disability Commission to perform its functions ensures that it is better able to safeguard the rights of adults with disability and older people. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (18:38):** I make a brief contribution in support of the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Amendment Bill 2023. I acknowledge Minister Washington in the Chamber and thank her for bringing the bill to the House. The bill aims to amend the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Act 2019. The bill establishes the rights of adults with disability and older people. It aims to further protect them from abuse, neglect and exploitation. Currently under the Act, the Ageing and Disability Commission performs a wide range of integral functions, including responding to reports made about the abuse, neglect and exploitation of adults with disability and older adults. The commission raises public awareness about the abuse, neglect and exploitation of adults with disability and older people. It has the responsibility of coordinating the Official Community Visitor scheme in settings where adults with disability and older people are in the full-time care of service providers, as well as assisted boarding houses. The commission oversees the monitoring, assessment and reporting on the implementation of Australia's disability strategy in New South Wales.

The bill provides the Ageing and Disability Commissioner with the discretion to refer relevant reports to other bodies and organisations, and to not refer reports if the adult in question does not wish for the information to be reported. It expands the circumstances in which the commissioner may investigate allegations without the consent of the relevant adult to cover situations where the commissioner cannot obtain access to the person. The bill also extends information sharing with other bodies, organisations and individuals that provide supports to adults with disability and older people. The bill permits official community visitors to provide relevant advice to the Department of Communities and Justice and the NDIS commissioner, in addition to the Minister and the Ageing and Disability Commissioner. It requires service providers to notify the Ageing and Disability Commission about contact details.

The bill also requires that the Ageing and Disability Advisory Board include two or more older adults. It gives the Ageing and Disability Commissioner the discretion to refer reports to other complaint bodies. That will allow more flexibility for the commission to not refer matters, such as when the reporter indicates they would rather contact another complaint body directly. The bill also provides the Ageing and Disability Commissioner with the discretion to refrain from referring reports to the police if the commissioner has reasonable grounds to believe that the adult does not wish for the information to be reported. That aligns with one of the principles of the Act, that adults with disability and older adults have the right to privacy and confidentiality.

The bill extends the circumstances in which the commissioner may report and investigate allegations without the consent of the relevant adult in situations where the adult cannot be spoken to in a confidential and safe setting in order to gain consent, such as when the adult is in an abusive situation where the alleged perpetrator is blocking access to the relevant adult. The bill adds a further requirement about the diversity of members of the Ageing and Disability Advisory Board. The board has the responsibility of advising the commissioner on any matters that they find appropriate to raise. The Ageing and Disability Advisory Board must be comprised of individuals who reflect the community. Currently, the board must have at least two members with disability, representatives from relevant advocacy organisations and at least one representative of the disability or aged-care service sector. The bill states that the board must include at least two older adults.

Finally, the bill combines the responsibility of appointing and removing individuals from the board with the responsibility of ensuring diversity amongst the board. Previously, in the Act, those responsibilities were split between the Minister and the commissioner. The bill empowers the commissioner to oversee those responsibilities and eliminates any inconsistencies in the duties of the board. The bill will increase the ability of the Ageing and Disability Commission to complete its important functions, such as safeguarding adults with disability and older adults who are at risk of or subject to abuse, neglect and exploitation. I commend the bill to the House.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** Before I call the Minister to speak in reply, I inform members that a photographer has been approved to take photographs in the Chamber.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion) (18:43):** In reply: I thank honourable members for their contributions to the debate. I thank the member for Hawkesbury; the member for Charlestown, and Minister for Seniors; the member for Kiama; the member for Campbelltown; the member for Ballina; the member for East Hills; the member for Gosford, and Parliamentary Secretary for Disability Inclusion; the member for Fairfield; and the member for Mount Druitt. The Ageing and Disability Commissioner Amendment Bill 2023 amends the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Act 2019 to implement a number of recommendations made in the independent review of the Act. I will address first the comment referred to Parliament by the Legislation Review Committee. I thank the committee for its detailed consideration and thoughtful comments on the bill, which were published in *Legislation Review Digest No. 9/58*. The committee considered three issues, which have been noted. It referred one of those issues to Parliament and made no further comment on the other two issues.

The first issue no further comment was made on was whether the absolute liability offence and matters deferred to regulations in proposed section 24A unduly trespass on personal rights and liberties. Proposed section 24A requires a service provider to give information to the commissioner about a visitable service in the community visitors scheme and is an offence provision with a maximum penalty of 50 penalty units. The information must be provided in writing and in any way required by the regulations. The regulation-making power is simply to enable minor administrative details to be specified from time to time, if needed. The committee acknowledged that this provision is appropriately drafted.

The second issue no further comment was made on was whether the commissioner's powers to conduct investigations without consent in proposed section 13 (12) (a) makes rights, liberties or obligations unduly dependent upon insufficiently defined administrative powers. The committee recognised the practical benefits for vulnerable adults in allowing the commissioner to conduct investigations where reasonable efforts have been made to access the adult to obtain consent, but the commissioner has not been able to obtain access. The issue the committee referred to Parliament was whether the bill unduly trespasses on personal rights and liberties because the bill will expand the Act's information-sharing provisions. The existing Act already contains information-sharing provisions with "relevant agencies" under section 14. This covers government sector agencies, the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal, public health organisations, hospitals and private health facilities, and a number of other government agencies prescribed in the regulation.

Proposed new section 14A will allow personal information to be shared without the consent of the individual concerned between the Ageing and Disability Commission [ADC] and "other entities"—namely, entities that provide, or are able to provide, supports to adults with disability or older adults. Those entities include disability and aged care providers, health practitioners, and financial and legal services providers. They provide essential services to adults with disability and older people, and are the key participants that can take action to protect at-risk adults. The entities that provide those services can hold important information that the commission may need in investigating a report and may also be able to act to protect the safety of an adult with disability or older adult upon receipt of relevant information from the commission.

Proposed new section 14A implements recommendation 4 of the statutory review. It has been carefully drafted to balance the right of privacy with the practical need to enable service providers to protect the safety of persons with disability and older persons, and to better enable the Ageing and Disability Commissioner to perform its protective functions. The statutory review balanced the privacy issue with the need to protect vulnerable persons from abuse and recommended that the information sharing be expanded but be limited in scope to information that relates only to the safety of adults.

This exception to privacy rights to enable sharing of information about the safety of an individual is appropriate and common in legislation. Privacy is a proportionate right, with the general principle requiring that the interference with privacy be in proportion to the aim and the least intrusive option available. The disclosure of the information is reasonably proportional to the exercise of complaint-handling functions or the investigative functions of the Ageing and Disability Commission as an investigative agency. That approach is reflected in the drafting. The proposed information sharing between non-governmental entities and the commissioner in proposed

section 14A is more narrowly drafted than the existing information-sharing provisions in section 14 for relevant agencies.

Where existing section 14 allows information to be shared to assist a relevant agency to provide services, make decisions and take actions with respect to the safety, welfare or wellbeing of certain adults, new section 14A would only allow the commissioner to share relevant information to a private entity in respect of the safety of those adults. That supports the Act's objectives of protecting adults with disability and older adults. Sharing information about reports and instances of abuse or neglect can play an important role in the ongoing safeguarding of a person. A private disability services provider may hold information relevant to a report being investigated by the commissioner and, under new section 14A, would be able to share that information with the commissioner in furtherance of the commissioner's investigative functions under the Act.

A legal or financial services provider, if receiving information the commissioner related to the safety of a person, may be able to take action to protect the vulnerable adult from, say, financial abuse by a person jeopardising their safety. While new section 14A would broaden the scope of information sharing without consent, the drafting also includes a note that cross-references the offence under section 31 of the Act. The new section makes it an offence for a person to disclose any information obtained in connection with the administration or execution of the Act without a lawful excuse. That offence is an important check on any potential misuse or inadvertent disclosure of information and requires all entities who may share information under new section 14A to carefully and lawfully hold information shared or received under the provision.

I now briefly address some matters raised during debate on the bill. I acknowledge the comments of Opposition members and the member for Ballina regarding the creation of a new joint parliamentary committee. On that issue, the Government has been clear: We fundamentally believe in transparency and accountability. The Ageing and Disability Commissioner has several avenues to raise issues publicly: to speak directly with members of Parliament, to appear before budget estimates hearings multiple times a year and to provide annual reports to Parliament. The commissioner is an independent statutory officer, and no-one could reasonably suggest that the commissioner has been prevented from dealing with parliamentarians. Nevertheless, the Government understands the concerns raised by members opposite with respect to the proposal for additional parliamentary oversight. Those concerns will be further considered in the other place, and the Government is currently in discussions with members opposite on that matter.

The bill is about increasing the protections for adults with a disability and older people, and that is what the Government plans to do. I extend my sincere thanks to the Ageing and Disability Commissioner, Mr Robert Fitzgerald, AM. Mr Fitzgerald is the first holder of the role of Ageing and Disability Commissioner in New South Wales and will shortly finish up in that role to take up his position as the Age Discrimination Commissioner at the Australian Human Rights Commission. In his five years in the role, Mr Fitzgerald has defined the commission's activities with an impressive commitment and energy. He has been a tireless and highly effective advocate for the vulnerable cohort he represents. His achievements are highly commendable, and I am confident he will do an amazing job as national Age Discrimination Commissioner. The objects of the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Act are to protect and promote the rights of adults with disability and older adults and to protect adults with disability and older adults from abuse, neglect and exploitation.

The commissioner has pursued those objects avidly. He has shone a light on abuse, neglect and exploitation of people with disability and older people. For example, the Ageing and Disability Commission "Know your rights" campaign promoted awareness of the abuse of older people and adults with disability. The campaign used a combination of radio, print and social media to reach a broad audience across metro and regional New South Wales. This year, the Ageing and Disability Commission included a series of print advertisements in *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Senior* to raise awareness about the signs of abuse and to promote the Ageing and Disability Abuse Helpline. Radio and social media targeted both English and culturally diverse audiences, including in Mandarin, Cantonese, Arabic, Persian, Korean and Hindi. The Ageing and Disability Commission has also progressed an engagement program across New South Wales to better support retirement village operators to meet their legislative obligations to implement an elder abuse prevention strategy.

The commissioner has engaged with cross-sector systemic issues and initiatives, including those related to housing, safeguarding approaches and learnings from the COVID pandemic. As a result of programs like that to spotlight, Mr Fitzgerald's role has increased in scope, with increases in reports to the Ageing and Disability Abuse Helpline; in the 258 statutory reports of abuse, neglect or exploitation that are investigated by the commission; in the resources sent across New South Wales; and in the number of training and community events conducted by the ADC, which almost doubled in one year alone.

Mr Fitzgerald brought to the role of Ageing and Disability Commissioner his extensive prior experience. He was a commissioner of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, a commissioner of the Commonwealth Productivity Commission, the Community and Disability Services

Commissioner, and the Deputy Ombudsman in New South Wales. He was also chair of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Advisory Board and has served on NGO boards for more than 40 years, including the Benevolent Society, St Vincent de Paul Society, Caritas Australia and Social Ventures Australia. He is also a former president of the Australian Council of Social Service. That list is a brief indication of the depth of his commitment to public service and to this country and State. In particular, it speaks of Mr Fitzgerald's longstanding commitment to the most disadvantaged members of our society. It is hard to imagine a career more dedicated to advancing human rights in the most practical and transformative ways. On behalf of the New South Wales Government and the Parliament, I thank the commissioner for his service and look forward to working with him in his national role.

Finally, the Ageing and Disability Commission plays an important role in protecting and promoting the rights of adults with disability and older adults, and protecting them from abuse, neglect and exploitation. The amendments in the bill will strengthen the ability of the Ageing and Disability Commission to perform its vital safeguarding functions and are in line with the objects and principles that underpin the Act. They include the important principles that adults with disability and older adults have the right to live free from abuse, neglect and exploitation; that adults with disability and older adults have the right to privacy and confidentiality; and that adults with disability and older adults have the right to exercise choice and control. The amendments have been developed in consultation with a range of stakeholders, including people with disability and older people.

I thank all stakeholders once again for their engagement with the statutory review and the bill development process. Overall, the amendments will strengthen the ability of the Ageing and Disability Commission to perform all of its vital functions, including helping older adults and adults with disability to enjoy their right to live free from abuse, neglect and exploitation. I commend the bill to the House.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

**Motion agreed to.**

### **Third Reading**

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

### *Community Recognition Statements*

#### **TRIBUTE TO JACK SEALEY, OAM**

**Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (18:58):** I pay tribute to Senior Legatee Jack Sealey, AFSM, OAM, our region's last World War II veteran, who passed away last week at 99. Jack Sealey was one of Queanbeyan's greats. He worked very hard for Legacy for almost 25 years. He was a member of the Rural Fire Service for over 60 years and received an Australian Fire Service Medal. He signed up for the air force on his eighteenth birthday and served in the Second World War. Jack was an outstanding volunteer for our local community and an outstanding character. When he went around selling Legacy badges, nobody had a choice but to buy one. He used to come to my office and say, "Steve will have one of these," and leave the \$10 badge on the counter and say, "He can pay me later," if I was not there. He managed, in his way, to really drive Legacy. Many Legacy members in Queanbeyan will miss him. I express my condolences to his three children, eight grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren on this sad occasion.

#### **NICK BOES**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (18:59):** I acknowledge the outstanding community service of 95-year-old Nick Boes, who moved to Kurnell with his family in 1958. Nick founded and has been the driving force behind the Adopt Our Historic Drive Campaign—set up in 1998 to beautify and maintain Captain Cook Drive as a scenic tourist drive—organising regular stakeholder meetings, arranging volunteer clean-ups, coordinating the clean-up efforts of businesses along the road, and publishing a regular newsletter. Nick is always advocating for improvements for visitors, and one is the large Kurnell Peninsula sign and map installed on the drive into Kurnell. He has been an active member of the Kurnell Rural Fire Service, the Captain Cook Society, the Kurnell Progress Association and the Sutherland Shire Kurnell Tourism Strategy Working Party.

Kurnell Public School principal, Joanne Graham, says Nick has been involved with the school over many decades, donating money to be used at the staff's discretion to support families struggling financially to pay for resources or school programs. Nick meets staff at the school each year to discuss the John Weir Essay

Competition, which he introduced 23 years ago, and donates money towards the prize. Joanne says that Nick is an absolute treasure and one who is becoming more and more precious every year.

#### **BOGEY HOLE**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (19:00):** The Bogey Hole is an iconic Newcastle site of great historical and heritage significance. It is the oldest ocean bath in Australia. The Bogey Hole was carved out of the wavecut rock in 1819 by convicts, under the order of Commandant Morisset. Originally known as the Commandant's Baths, the pool was built for Morisset's private use but became a popular swimming spot for all. The current name, the Bogey Hole, is believed to come from the Dharawal word meaning "to bathe". The original bath was quite different to the Bogey Hole we all know and love, with the most significant changes coming in 1884 when the bath was made seven times larger and had some safety measures installed. Despite facing numerous natural and man-made challenges, the Bogey Hole remains a cherished place for many Novocastrians and tourists alike. Now it is not only a swimming hole but also one of Newcastle's most Instagrammable places. With its listing on the State Heritage Register, I am sure many more memories are yet to be made in our beautiful Bogey Hole.

#### **MAXINE KOHLHAGEN**

##### **KEN CAPPS**

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (19:01):** Life membership of an organisation you love is a special honour reserved for only a few, so it was a proud day indeed at the Coffs Harbour Creative Arts Group when life membership was bestowed upon treasurer and long-time member Maxine Kohlhagen. Maxine has been an integral part of the group for many years and is an accomplished artist, calligrapher and porcelain painter. Her involvement with the Coffs Harbour Creative Arts Group began in the early 2000s when she enrolled for a pastel class. Maxine is a regular exhibitor in the displays at the Coffs Harbour Creative Arts Group's home at the Coffs Harbour Showground Gallery. Life membership has also been bestowed upon Ken Capps, a long-serving member at the Coffs City Probus Club. Before joining the Coffs City Probus Club in November 2006, Ken was a member of the Sutherland Men's Probus Club. In total, he has been involved in Probus for almost 21 years. Since joining Coffs City Probus Club, Ken and his wife, Myra, have been active members, filling many roles. I congratulate Maxine and Ken on their selfless service to the community.

#### **NICK LALICH, FORMER MEMBER FOR CABRAMATTA**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (19:02):** Recently I had the pleasure of visiting and spending some time with my predecessor, Mr Nick Lalich, and I am happy to advise that he is well and in good health. Born in a refugee camp in Egypt and arriving to Australia by boat, Nick's story is synonymous with many of the refugee stories I hear from those in my electorate. I believe that these experiences were Nick's advantages as a politician, because he understood what it was like to start from humble beginnings. Nick became involved in local politics in the 1970s, was elected mayor from 1993-94 and 2002-03, and was re-elected in 2004 as Fairfield City's first popularly elected mayor. In 2008 he was elected as the State member for Cabramatta and stayed on until his retirement in 2023. During his time as Mayor of Fairfield and member for Cabramatta, Nick left a vast and long-lasting impact. He is a friend to many from both sides of this House. I will strive to continue the great work he has done for Cabramatta.

#### **YERRINBOOL RAILWAY GARDEN**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (19:03):** The Yerrinbool Railway Garden is a community initiative, providing a place for locals to come together. Recently I attended the unveiling of its newest art installation: mosaics designed and installed by local artists Jan Heslop and Gale Heslop Reade. Created over five months, the mosaic project was initiated when a local resident donated four large plain-grey concrete pillars. Seizing this as an opportunity to turn a waste product into something beautiful, the group contacted Wollondilly mosaic artist Narelle Noppert to run a mosaic workshop. The mosaics are complemented by a mural on a nearby bus shelter by local artist Joe Quilter, allowing passers-by to engage with the art and celebrate the creative talents within the community. It is inspiring to see community members working together to create public art. The Yerrinbool Village Group Inc. have given their own time and resources and utilised recycled materials to create something for everyone to enjoy. I encourage any group who is looking for a way to give back and invigorate its public spaces to come forward with its ideas—and to visit Yerrinbool station.

#### **RAMADAN**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (19:04):** On the first day of the holy month of Ramadan, I extend my best wishes to everyone observing this sacred month of fasting, worship, service and communal gathering. Last week I spoke to the leaders of the Parramatta Mosque, who expressed their appreciation for the Ramadan banners flying in the city of Parramatta. It was a pleasure to initiate the installation of those banners across city of

Parramatta during my time as lord mayor. The banners symbolise much more than recognition of the holy month. Displaying the banners demonstrates that Parramatta recognises and celebrates our diversity not just through words but through actions. When those who live, work and visit Parramatta see the banners, it speaks volumes and illustrates our community's support for inclusion and respect for all. I look forward to attending my first Iftar this Friday. May those fasting experience a closeness to God and spiritual discipline that provides for considered empathy with members of our community. I wish everyone observing Ramadan a happy and blessed month. Ramadan kareem.

#### **JAMIE WINNING-KERMOND**

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (19:05):** I acknowledge Hawkesbury resident Jamie Winning-Kermond, who competed in the seventy-eighth Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race on 26 December 2023. Jamie raced aboard *Andoo Comanche*, finishing second in line honours, with an official race time of three days and 16 hours and an overall fifth placing. Jamie, a competitive equestrian, turned her attention to the high seas and spent the previous 12 months training and competing to earn her place among the crew. This was a fantastic achievement and one which extends her legacy. Jamie's dad, John "Woody" Winning Sr, is an Australian world champion in sailing and her brother, John Winning Jr, won the 2022 Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race. I congratulate Jamie on an amazing outcome. I look forward to following her future sporting endeavours.

#### **SINILIA RADIVOJEVIC**

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (19:06):** Sinilia Radivojevic, Fairfield's 2024 Local Woman of the Year, embodies selflessness and community spirit. Since migrating from Spain in 1984, she has tirelessly devoted herself to helping others. She has volunteered for various organisations, particularly the Cancer Council and the local HammondCare Braeside Hospital. For nearly 40 years, Sinilia has been instrumental at fundraising events, raising money for cancer research, participating in the Fairfield Relay For Life and much more. However, Sinilia's impact extends beyond fundraising. She spreads joy to palliative care patients every Saturday, often fulfilling their final wishes with compassion. During the COVID-19 pandemic, she delivered food and other goods to the elderly and other vulnerable people. Throughout her remarkable contributions, Sinilia remains humble, driven solely by her desire to uplift others. I thank Sinilia for all she does.

#### **ROBERT COOKE**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst) (19:07):** After serving the people of New South Wales for the past five decades, Robert Cooke has retired from the NSW Police Force. Colleagues and friends gathered at the Bathurst Police Station to farewell the popular officer, who started his career in 1974 in a job that he held for 32 years before relinquishing his position as a senior constable in 2006. It was then that he took up the post of a general administrative support officer, until his final day on the job earlier this year. For Mr Cooke, better known as Cookie to his mates, his focus will now turn to travelling around Australia and the world, but there is no doubt that he will be missed in the job. His colleagues will miss him being around too, particularly Chifley Police District Superintendent Bob Noble, who described Cookie as an esteemed colleague and a source of inspiration, not only in his longevity in the career but also for the fact he still has such vitality and great energy about him. On behalf of the wider Bathurst community, I thank Mr Cooke for his unwavering dedication to the NSW Police Force over such an extended period. Well done, Robert Cooke.

#### **TARA DEVER**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (19:08):** I congratulate the CEO of Mindaribba Land Council, Tara Dever, who recently celebrated eight years in her role. During that time Tara has strengthened Mindaribba's community partnerships and her relationships with a range of New South Wales government departments, including health, education and communities and justice, as well as training and employment services across the Maitland community. Maitland has one of the State's highest proportions of Aboriginal identified constituents, and our community is so fortunate to have Tara at the head of Mindaribba. I have often turned to her for advice, inspiration and connection. Tara's strong leadership saw her named as Maitland's 2019 Woman of the Year, but her compassionate, empathetic leadership has continued well beyond that. Tara's strength and support for our entire community was especially important over the past 12 months, and I thank her for her ongoing and gracious contribution to public life in Maitland.

#### **TRIBUTE TO SUSAN WEISSER**

**Dr JOE MCGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (19:09):** I pay tribute to the late Susan Weisser, a champion of local health services for more than 30 years, most recently as inaugural CEO of the Murrumbidgee Local Health District. Famed for her hard work and willingness to help others, she was calm under pressure and never sought the limelight. I was privileged to work with her and admired her strength and resilience. Current and former health service leaders remember her as a strong, courageous leader and a formidable advocate. Susan supported her life

partner, Philip Bain, in his sport as a target shooter, earning a life membership of the Australian Match Rifle Association, possibly the only non-shooter to do so. Susan worked hard for our future but also celebrated the past, as an author and through the Wagga Wagga and District Family History Society. She loved nature and was often seen on her beloved Lake Albert walking track. Susan is missed by Philip, her brother David Weisser and sister Julie Woolf. Susan leaves a legacy of a healthier community and the admiration of her colleagues and friends. Thank you and vale, Susan.

#### **ELLIE TAYLOR**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (19:10):** I congratulate Ellie Taylor from Shell Cove, who has been awarded the Creative Spirit International Women's Day Scholarship for Women (Art, Design, Music, Theatre, Photography, other) by the International Women's Day Illawarra Committee for the amount of \$2,000. A belly dancer, researcher and advocate for family violence awareness and family wellbeing, Ellie has a background in mental health and lived experience of family violence. Ellie has serviced communities in Shellharbour and Kiama by bringing together like-minded women to raise awareness of family violence in a unique way—through dance and the globally acknowledged ShimmyMob. Ellie is actively involved at the local level, participating in awareness building through dance performances and community fundraising for local shelters like Supported Accommodation and Homelessness Services Shoalhaven Illawarra and Carinya Women and Children's Service. With a PhD in psychology, the senior research analyst in family violence also works with the Salvation Army locally and nationally. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour electorate, I congratulate Ellie Taylor on this wonderful achievement and wish her well in her future endeavours.

#### **AGRICULTURAL SHOW VOLUNTEERS**

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (19:11):** I pay tribute to the hundreds of volunteers who commit hundreds of hours to make our agricultural shows a very special time. In Tamworth, Barraba, Manilla, Gunnedah and Quirindi, our show committees are incredibly hardworking, dedicated people, and I thank them for all they do to promote agriculture and keep the culture of ag shows alive and well. The show pavilions include cooking, farm produce, preserves, handicrafts, horticulture, photography, school exhibitions and poultry sections—the cattle, prime lamb and stud sheep judging, wool classing, horse events with hack classes, the six bar show jumping, the sensational yard dog trials and demonstrations, the woodchop, rodeo events, the mighty ute muster and, of course, the grand parade, not forgetting side show alley. The 2024 AgShows NSW Young Woman of the Year Competition has been a standout, the young entrants sharing their dedication and passion for their communities. To everyone involved in our shows, our communities say thank you very much and, of course, we look forward to next time.

#### **BUNNINGS WEST GOSFORD**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (19:12):** It is my absolute joy to acknowledge one of our most iconic shops on the Central Coast—Bunnings West Gosford. Australians pride themselves on a strong work ethic and community spirit—values that our local Bunnings has at its core. As a DIYer, I am both proud and excited about this topic. Bunnings West Gosford is not a usual hardware store because the team always goes above and beyond to put a smile on people's faces. They boost community connection by organising massive Christmas events for families, with indoor go-karts, fun crafts and interactive stalls for emergency services to involve and educate families about the available supports. In addition, they also facilitate DIY and creative workshops for both children and adults throughout the year. What a wonderful way to foster a strong work ethic in young children. This Bunnings store has always been an exemplary business when it comes to sponsoring our local charities and not-for-profit organisations. A better way to describe the store would be "a business with a heart". I sincerely applaud the Bunnings West Gosford team for their dedication to providing the best service and support to our fabulous community, and I thank them very much.

#### **TRIBUTE TO LAWRIE SULLIVAN**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove) (19:13):** I recognise and pay tribute to the late great Lawrie Sullivan. Lawrie Sullivan, a dear friend and pillar of the Lane Cove community, spent his life contributing so much to our local community. Whether it be through his dental practice in Lane Cove Plaza or his devoted volunteer work with Rotary and Lane Cove Community Aid Service, Lawrie truly was a man determined to make a contribution to his community. One might say he brought beaming smiles to all walks of life. Lawrie was truly a man for others and will be sorely missed. Vale, Lawrie Sullivan.

#### **PACIFIC WOMEN'S PROFESSIONAL AND BUSINESS NETWORK**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (19:14):** Earlier this month I attended the Voyage to Leadership: Pasifika Young Women's Symposium organised by the Pacific Women's Professional and Business Network [PWPBN]. The symposium was a fabulous opportunity to discuss how Pacific women's involvement in

decision-making and leadership can be supported across business, industry and community. My parliamentary colleague the member for Gosford and I shared our insights into effective communication, public speaking and leadership. I note the importance of events like this, given the limited professional networking opportunities for women and girls in Western Sydney. I recognise the great work of the PWPBN more broadly in filling those gaps. Role models are worth their weight in gold and I am glad young women can now see themselves where they would like to be one day. I extend my congratulations to the Pacific Women's Professional and Business Network, with particular kudos to chair, Loau Donina Va'a, and panel moderator, Sigrid Yaru. They are doing work that will ripple across generations.

#### **AAROHI BANSAL**

**Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (19:15):** I am delighted to recognise Aarohi Bansal as a recent finalist in the Women of the Year Awards the Ones to Watch category. Throughout 2023 Aarohi devoted an impressive 160 voluntary hours to vital causes such as the Special Olympics Australia, food drives for homeless shelters, Foodbank and fundraising for the Kids' Cancer Project. Beyond local initiatives she has been published in UN Youth NSW's *Global Advocate* magazine, participated in the Harvard Model United Nations and was involved in the global non-profit Memory Project to support orphaned children in Afghanistan. She is a co-founder of a war on waste organisation at her school, has completed the lance corporal course at Australian Army Cadets and has received the John William Langston Epping Memorial Scholarship in 2019. It is with great admiration and gratitude that I commend Aarohi Bansal for her outstanding efforts, which continue to enrich the lives of others and inspire positive change.

#### **EAST HILLS GIRLS TECHNOLOGY HIGH SCHOOL**

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (19:16):** I congratulate East Hills Girls Technology High School on a recent visit by the *Today* show. As the only girls' technology school in the State, East Hills Girls was showcased on *Today* for not only its dedication to innovation but also empowering its students for success. On 29 February *Today* toured its brand-new multipurpose centre, which features state-of-the-art facilities. The school's dance team also showcased their talents on the day. The segment featured the Wellbean Cafe, where students can volunteer for work experience and learn valuable real-life skills. The show also explored the art therapy program and the immersive tech centre with the labs and robotics areas. Those all demonstrate the school's commitment to innovation and learning. In its seventy-first year East Hills Girls Technology High School continues to set the standard for excellence in education. I congratulate it on its success.

#### **MANLY WARRINGAH WARATAHS**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (19:17):** Today I recognise the Manly Warringah Waratahs women's cricket club and congratulate them on their outstanding achievement of being crowned champions of the NSW Women's Premier Cricket competition for 2023-24. To secure a club championship in only their seventh year of running the women's program is a phenomenal effort and a testament to the depth of talent and dedication of the entire playing group, coaching staff and all those involved. As the second-oldest existing district cricket club in New South Wales, Manly Warringah has made history yet again, paving the way for women's cricket on the northern beaches from the grassroots to first grade and beyond. Once more, I congratulate Manly Warringah Waratahs women's club and wish them every success for next season.

#### **CAMDEN HOSPITAL AUXILIARY**

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (19:18):** I acknowledge Camden Hospital Auxiliary, a not-for-profit with volunteer members who raise funds to purchase equipment and services for Camden Hospital. It holds its meetings at Camden Girl Guide Hall on Elizabeth Street in Camden. Recently, I had the privilege of attending its first meeting of 2024 to discuss this year's plans and what its wish list is. It follows from 2023, when the auxiliary was able to raise \$29,000 to purchase a Panda Warmer and donate it to the Camden Hospital emergency department. To start the year, the group will have a stall at Camden Show this weekend selling homemade items, which locals will know so well from the organisation's regular stalls outside Blooms on Argyle Street and at Narellan Bunnings. I encourage everyone who is able and wishes to join the group to sign up and help the members, who do such a fantastic job for our beautiful Camden Hospital.

#### **LEICHHARDT WOMEN'S COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE**

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (19:19):** Today I recognise Leichhardt Women's Community Health Centre, an organisation that has been doing remarkable work in the Balmain electorate since 1974. Just last week the centre celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. With a rich history of advocacy and community engagement, Leichhardt Women's Community Health Centre provides safe access to medical and complementary health care, educational resources, counselling, and groups that provide support, skills and therapy. The centre opened in 1974, on International Women's Day, as the first dedicated women's health service in Australia. To mark this important

occasion, an exhibition was held last week entitled *The Thread Between Us*, with many portraits, images and photographs highlighting 50 years of activism and achievement. I congratulate the centre's current staff and board, including centre manager Dr Ses Salmond and chairperson Marta Vasquez, and all the kind, caring women who have had a hand in establishing the centre and its 50 years of operation.

#### SUE MCGARRITY

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (19:20):** I am humbled to acknowledge the Campbelltown Local Woman of the Year, Ms Sue McGarrity. She is an amazing woman, not just because of her 15 years as an educator with the Department of Education—and even through to the departmental level—but because of her heavy involvement with 24 Hour Fight Against Cancer Macarthur since its formation in 2005. Sue has served as deputy chairperson and secretary since 2006, and she works tirelessly to support this great cause and the team of volunteers to bring world-class cancer treatment facilities to the Macarthur area. She has also done a whole heap of other things, particularly as secretary of the Macarthur Collegians Bridge Club, which is a position she has held for a number of years. She can be found every Thursday morning honing her skills and enjoying the community that she is an integral part of. Sue is a wonderful woman and a great representation of the many wonderful women in Campbelltown.

#### ADAM BLATCH

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (19:21):** I congratulate Adam Blatch of Miranda on being named a Westfield Miranda Local Hero for 2023. Adam is the chief executive officer of Feel the Magic, a not-for-profit organisation that has been helping families to grieve in a healthy and positive way since 2013. Feel the Magic offers families who have suffered loss access to evidence-based resources through their grief resource hub covering topics such as parenting through loss and parents' self-care. Each year Feel the Magic offers 500 children face-to-face and virtual camps that are run by mental health professionals and developed by clinical psychologists to help them talk about their grief and feel part of a community. Westfield local heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with three finalists per Westfield centre being awarded a grant for their organisation. Thanks to this funding, Feel the Magic will be able to accommodate an additional 50 families at its Feel the Magic camps. I commend Adam for being named a 2023 Westfield Miranda Local Hero and I thank him for his important work in our local community.

#### RANDA KATTAN

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (19:22):** Last week we celebrated International Women's Day and tonight I make special mention of the Granville Local Woman of the Year for 2024, Ms Randa Kattan. Randa is incredible. She is the CEO of the Arab Council Australia, a secular non-profit independent community organisation established in 1979 to support the Arab community. She has been the CEO for more than 25 years—since the late 1990s—and has transformed that organisation into an incredibly well-respected institution that makes huge contributions to policy dialogue and to the community it serves. Even through the huge challenges of the Cronulla riots and COVID, she provided incredibly brave advocacy based on the needs of the community rather than giving easy answers or telling us what we want to hear as government. I commend Randa for her incredible efforts.

#### COURAGE TO CARE

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (19:23):** Today I acknowledge the twenty-fifth anniversary of local organisation Courage to Care, which has been informing and educating Australians about the danger of prejudice, racism and discrimination. Courage to Care—an initiative of B'nai B'rith—runs school programs that communicate important values such as compassion, empathy and tolerance. Volunteers, including Holocaust survivors, travel all over New South Wales to deliver these powerful programs. It is a testament to their hard work that 85 per cent of schools they visit ask them to come back the very next year. I am pleased to see that this year it is launching a new online program for remote schools. I worked for eight years in education before entering Parliament, so I understand the importance of programs like this that empower and change young lives. I very much enjoyed last year's event, but today I am in the New South Wales Parliament, so I extend my sincere congratulations on its twenty-fifth anniversary and send special thanks to its volunteers. May the work of Courage to Care continue for many more decades.

#### MACIE WILSON

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (19:24):** I recognise Macie Wilson, an 11-year-old student from Gunning Public School who has proudly demonstrated her enthusiasm and inspirational determination to participate and compete in swimming and athletics, which has been encouraged through the support of her parents, school and coach. Macie was born with cerebral palsy, which mainly affects her lower limbs, and is able to compete in the disability class known as multi-class or para class. Macie participated as a seated thrower for discus and shot-put whilst in the process of recovering from leg surgery that made her wheelchair-dependent for a period

of time. Macie's achievements are impressive; she was awarded the Ginninderra Athletics Club Colman Trophy in 2020. The award recognises the athlete who most epitomises the meaning of Little Athletics. Macie has been selected to represent New South Wales to compete at the Australian primary school swimming championships and represent the South Coast region at the New South Wales primary school athletic championships. She is a powerhouse of strength and courage and continuously inspires others to compete. Well done, Macie.

#### **BROTHER NICHOLAS PATRICK HARSAS**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (19:25):** I recognise the three-decade contribution of Brother Nicholas Patrick Harsas to the Catholic education sector. At the end of last year, Brother Nicholas finished his tenure as the principal of Holy Spirit Catholic Primary School at Carnes Hill in my electorate. His three decades of service to Catholic education has seen him teach at schools across Sydney and impart his knowledge and wisdom on thousands of students, including the current member for Fairfield. His service to education and the Catholic faith was recognised with a Dempsey Medal in 2018 and an Order of Australia medal in 2020. December 2023 was a big month for Brother Nicholas; not only did he finish up at Holy Spirit to take up a senior role in the Patrician Brothers, but he was also awarded the Croce Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice, or the Cross for the Church, by Archbishop Anthony Fisher on behalf of Pope Francis. On behalf of the community of Leppington, I thank Brother Nicholas for his service and wish him all the best in his new role.

#### **CAOIMHE BRAY**

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (19:26):** I bring marvellous news from the Upper Hunter. It is about a young athlete by the name of Caoimhe Bray. She comes from an excellent family—a beautiful family who are well known and well respected in the township of Denman. It is the latest chapter of a most amazing level of achievement. Caoimhe has scored 471 runs in her last three matches of the NSW Premier Cricket under 18 women's competition. She is only 14 years old and she was a member of the Greater Hunter Coast team in the Brewer Shield grand final played in Newcastle last weekend. She scored 146 off 143 balls, 123 from 134 balls and—the recent one—202 runs from 134 balls. What an amazing athlete. Good luck, Caoimhe. Keep it up.

#### **BITE AND BABBLE**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (19:27):** In early December I had the pleasure of cutting the ribbon to open Bite and Babble. Bite and Babble is a paediatric speech pathology clinic in Narellan servicing the growing south-west, including my electorate of Leppington. The clinic provides a holistic approach to health care from birth to high school. Director Madasyn Baldassarre and the team provide a range of services, from assessment to individual therapy and group programs. Mady is a certified practising speech pathologist and was inspired by the strong women around her growing up to take the plunge and open a small business catering to the needs of local youth. Many of those inspiring women were there in attendance, along with Mady's family and friends. I count myself amongst that group, having known Madasyn her entire life and seen her years of hard work firsthand. A fellow product of Bonnyrigg High School, I am immensely proud to see her grow into a smart and successful businesswoman. I wish her and the team at Bite and Babble much success.

#### *Private Members' Statements*

#### **CITY OF NEWCASTLE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (19:28):** Last July *Newcastle Herald* investigative journalist Donna Page uncovered serious signs of malfeasance by City of Newcastle [CON] CEO Jeremy Bath. Ms Page demonstrated extraordinary coincidences surrounding a series of letters to the editor that targeted critics of Mr Bath and his employer. The letters were always signed "Scott Neylon" unless they were signed "Scott Neylan", with an A where the O should be. He was a chameleon—a grandfather, a local pool lover, a father of teenagers—but always very defensive of Mr Bath, always highly negative towards anyone who disagreed with him and always informed about the microscopic details of local issues and Newcastle personalities. Clever Mr Neylon/Neylan was an expert on daily Wallsend life too, despite having lived in Japan since the 1990s. At the same time, the Herald reported that Mr Neylon/Neylan shared a house locally with Mr Bath.

In subsequent months, strange and eerie details came to light. Mr Neylon/Neylan has been defensive of Mr Bath to newspapers and social media for years. Whether in the pages of the *Illawarra Mercury* or on former Premier Carr's blog, Mr Neylon/Neylan never hesitated to get into a scrap to defend Mr Bath and attack his critics. All the while, Mr Neylon/Neylan lived and worked nearly 7,000 kilometres away. Many suspect that the letters and comments are from the same person. CON was requested to undertake an investigation into the scandal by the local government Minister. The internal investigation found insufficient evidence to accuse Mr Bath of wrongdoing, yet the non-disclosure and secrecy of the report into the Bath/Neylon/Neylan scandal has raised more questions than answers. Why were most of the recipients of the Neylon/Neylan letters not interviewed? Why was the Herald investigator not interviewed? Why was the community being deprived of the full report? Why was

I targeted in an astroturfing campaign aimed to undermine me and, worse, astroturf any recipient having their name and their say in the paper about CON?

At the City of Newcastle, astroturfing has its benefits it seems. At the February CON council meeting this year there was a performance review of the CEO. Apparently so impressed by the scandal and the CEO's public, scathing political attacks on me and innocent community members, the Herald reported that Labor councillors Nelmes, Clausen, Duncan, Winney-Baartz, Wood, Adamczyk and Richardson lobbied for and supported a pay rise for the highest-paid public servant in the Hunter. From what I know from the last reports, Jeremy Bath earns \$513,000 a year plus and is on the board of the airport, which is another \$50,000. Deep community frustration has fomented in a petition put together by members of the Newcastle and Wallsend communities. They have called for Mr Bath to be removed from his position. With over 600 handwritten signatures, the petition has been lodged in the New South Wales Parliament. Members of our community cannot sit by and suffer the maladministration of a petty man. They do not want to be victims of any more damage.

#### **TRIBUTE TO SOO-TEE CHEONG, OAM**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove) (19:33):** Tonight I take the opportunity to pay tribute to my treasured friend Soo-Tee Cheong, OAM, whom we lost all too soon on 31 October last year. A beloved father, husband, grandfather and community member, Soo-Tee's life and work reached far beyond the boundaries of his immediate circle. Soo-Tee was not only a highly renowned architect but also a dedicated public servant, Lane Cove councillor and mentor, whose influence resonates in the hearts and minds of those he guided. I can honestly say I would not be Father of this House without his guidance and support. In the intimate sphere of family, Soo-Tee was the cornerstone of a home built of love, resilience and unwavering support. As a husband, his commitment to his lifelong love, Mary, was evident in the strength of their bond, which weathered the storms of life and stood as a testament to the enduring power of love. As a father, Soo-Tee imparted wisdom, kindness and a sense of wonder to his children and grandchildren.

The lessons he shared and the values he instilled will continue to shape the character of his family for generations to come. He was also an older brother to me and a surrogate father to my four boys, John, Sam, Tom and Joey—or, as Soo-Tee and I often joked, Search, Seek, Destroy and baby Joe. Soo-Tee was not just a resident in the Lane Cove community; he was a stalwart public servant and dedicated Lane Cove councillor. His commitment to civic duty was not driven by a desire for recognition but by a genuine passion for making a positive impact on the lives of those around him. Soo-Tee's leadership and advocacy were instrumental in shaping the growth and development of our community. His tireless efforts to address local issues, improve infrastructure and foster a sense of unity left an indelible mark on architecture and planning.

For that reason, Soo-Tee was appointed as a commissioner on the New South Wales Independent Planning Commission [IPC], where he shone as a true leader and influencer, highly respected by all. How valuable it was that Soo-Tee could turn his architecture and planning mind to the task of making complex decisions on State significant developments. He was very dedicated, understanding well the weight of the responsibility of making significant planning decisions in the public interest. He was highly regarded in his field and by his colleagues at the IPC, where he determined cases and prepared advice for many urban and large residential and commercial developments, schools, rezonings and industrial projects. But what is remembered most is his courtesy and kindness. Watching him deal with a person agitated by a proposed new development was a lesson in how we should all treat our fellow human beings, and I will always remember the time he took to be with mutual friends who were facing great difficulties. He was truly a good person.

Soo-Tee's compassion and decency are why he was appointed to the State Parole Authority, using his skills, insights and Christian faith to ensure a second chance was given to those who deserved a fresh start. Beyond the local sphere, Soo-Tee's influence extended nationally through his contributions to the field of architecture. His innovative designs were not just structures; they were reflections of his commitment to pushing the boundaries of creativity and functionality. Soo-Tee's impact on the architectural community will continue to inspire generations of aspiring architects to dream big and think beyond convention. Soo-Tee's willingness to share knowledge, offer guidance and nurture talent endeared him to those who were fortunate enough to call him a mentor, and the legacy of his mentorship is evident not only in the buildings he designed but also in the careers he helped shape and the creative minds he ignited. May he rest in peace, knowing that the impact of his life will always reverberate in the hearts and minds of all who had the privilege of knowing him. Rest in peace, dear friend. Vale, Soo-Tee.

#### **ANNUAL SCHOOL LEADERS MORNING TEA**

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion) (19:37):** Hands down, my favourite event of the year is my annual school leaders morning tea. Every year since 2019 I have invited school leaders from every primary and secondary school across my electorate to join me, connect with one another, be recognised for their efforts and be inspired in their

leadership journey by a guest speaker. This year I was delighted to welcome school captains, vice captains, student representative councillors and some Aboriginal Education Consultative Group leaders from across Port Stephens to this year's host school, St Philip's Christian College in Salamander Bay. We were welcomed to country by St Philip's director of Aboriginal education, Mr Jonathan Lilley, and the cutest little future leaders from Gilibaa. They welcomed us in Gathang, the traditional language of the Worimi. Their message was an important one: to listen to the Elders, for they have wisdom to share.

Given we had more than 200 young leaders in the room, I figured there was a lot of wisdom from the young people in that room too. As students shared their thoughts on what leadership meant to them, that proved to be very true. I asked the student leaders what leadership means to them—what does leadership look like? Here is some of what we heard. They said, "resilience", "kind words and actions", "patience", "integrity", "being approachable", "setting a good example", "making others feel safe" and "tenacity". Those are coming from student leaders. Then there was one that blew me away: "accountability". That came from a young fellow over on the side. I could not really see him and was trying to look. I said, "You're at primary school?" He was. Then we had "being someone others can trust", "courage", "not needing recognition for the things we do", "caring about others", "encouraging", "listening to others", "being yourself", "being honest" and, finally, perhaps my favourite suggestion of the day, "being able to sit through boring meetings". We can all take some lessons from these young leaders. I am always so impressed by them. Time and again they demonstrate that they have a much better grasp of the responsibility of leadership than I had at their age.

Every year at these events, I arrange guest speakers to share their experiences and inspire the students. My friend the member for Gosford was the inaugural guest speaker many years ago, when she shared her experience as a Paralympian. Since then we have heard from ear, nose and throat surgeon Kelvin Kong; WesTrac's general manager of operations, Danielle Bull; and molecular nutritionist Dr Emma Beckett, from the University of Newcastle. This year I welcomed Lia and Ryan Pereira, founders of Irukandji Shark and Ray Encounters in Port Stephens, as well as leaders in the not-for-profit rescue group Sea Shelter. It was wonderful to hear about their journey as local tourism business leaders as well as dedicated volunteer coastal water warriors and marine animal rescuers, and for them to share lessons with the students.

Lia and Ryan's story speaks for itself. They had a crazy plan to create a business from swimming with sharks and rays. Whilst they are still working on realising the full vision of their dream, they have established a much-loved local business which delights young and old visitors alike, connecting them to creatures many do not think fondly of until they visit Lia and Ryan's place. Visitors are not bitten by the sea creatures they swim with there, but they are bitten by the passion Lia and Ryan have for our environment, something they shared with students at our leadership morning tea. Through their not-for-profit Sea Shelter organisation, students now have a way of getting involved in local action to care for our beautiful coast and all the varied creatures who call it home.

The impact of the inspiration shared by Lia and Ryan at the morning tea was evident just last week, when I attended the opening of Shoal Bay Public School's parliament. The students democratically selected their school's charity of choice for the year. They were given a list to choose from. Of course, as a consequence of the morning tea and the conversation there, Sea Shelter was selected and was by far their favourite. This is what I love about the school leaders morning tea. You never know what ripples will be started and what waves they will become. I like to think that we may have inspired some students on the day to become marine biologists or environmental warriors or even local representatives. Who knows what lies ahead for these local school leaders, but I reassure this Parliament that the confident, caring and thoughtful school leaders in Port Stephens will see that our future is in safe hands. I thank St Philip's for hosting the school leadership morning tea this year and all of the principals and teachers who accompanied their students. I congratulate all of the amazing student leaders and wish them well for a successful 2024.

#### **JOHN GRAHAM TEMPLE, OAM**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes) (19:42):** It gives me great pleasure to recognise a truly incredible man from Myall Lakes, Mr John Graham Temple, OAM, and share his story. John has lived a most extraordinary life, which makes it difficult to sum up in just five minutes. For most of his life he has been a successful businessman. He lives with cerebral palsy, but that did not stop him from achieving all his goals. John has never felt like a disabled man. He describes himself as an able man in a unique body, always independent and able to care for himself and those around him.

Born in 1943 with cerebral palsy, John defied societal expectations from the beginning. His parents' decision to care for him at home instead of institutionalising him set the stage for a life characterised by independence and a fierce drive to succeed despite his disability. Growing up in the 1940s and '50s, John faced not only the physical challenges posed by his condition but also the prevailing attitudes towards disability at the time. Those with disabilities often faced discrimination and limited opportunities for education and employment.

However, John's parents' support of and belief in his abilities instilled in him a sense of self-worth and determination to prove himself in a world that often underestimated him.

At the age of 18, John faced a pivotal moment when he was deemed eligible for a disability pension. Refusing to accept that label, he made a bold decision to pursue employment and financial independence. The initial pension payment cheque that was sent to John was returned to the Government unspent. John was disappointed to be considered unemployable at such an early age. It was the beginning of being seen as a less than capable person, and the beginning of his efforts to show the world he would do better than what was considered achievable.

John's professional journey saw him navigating various roles and industries. His first job was at Beutron Buttons alongside his father. When he started, he was paid just \$8 per week and was on a "slow worker" pay rate. John sat for his forklift licence. Although those in attendance laughed at him, he completed the training and topped the class. He later secured employment at Lane Cove Engineering as a forklift driver. He purchased his first home, paid it off within 18 months, and was able to help support his parents and have them live with him. John then worked at James Hardie, operating forklifts for 18 years before taking a redundancy to enable him to care for his mother, who had developed dementia.

John was friends with a barrister of the Federal High Court, Michael McKew, and would often attend Parliament in Canberra. When planning for the build of the new Parliament House, Mr McKew enlisted John's help in setting out the parking sections for the disabled. John was also involved with planning the disabled parking right here at the New South Wales Parliament when extensions were added to the rear of the building. John dedicated himself to advocacy work for people with disabilities throughout his career, starting from his time driving community buses for various organisations. He would use his annual leave to help people with a disability take holidays locally and interstate. He was vocal about discrimination and worked hard to promote integration and acceptance.

John wrote letters to Parliament and local councils, addressing the need for employment opportunities for the disabled and breaking down barriers. He even spoke in Parliament and met Bob Hawke to discuss all those issues at a time when not many would speak out about the poor treatment of the handicapped. Despite his speech difficulties, John's advocacy extended to public speaking engagements, where he campaigned for road safety and the closure of institutions for people with disabilities, advocating for better living conditions. John's dedication earned him the Medal of the Order of Australia in 1987, which he received at Government House in New South Wales.

Today, John resides in an aged support village in Taree, where he continues to inspire others, including me. John is a man who does not seek recognition—but, boy, does he deserve it. I thank John for defying societal expectations and for challenging discrimination and promoting inclusivity. I thank him for never giving in and never giving up. His journey is an inspiration to us all, and I am so very proud to have been able to share it for him.

#### STOCKTON CENTRE

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (19:47):** Last week the Labor Government announced that it will refurbish seven of the homes at the former Stockton Centre for use as transitional housing for people who are currently experiencing homelessness. The number one issue that my constituents contact me about is access to housing. Over 1,000 Novocastrians are currently experiencing homelessness, and roughly 50 people sleep rough each night. The difference is that those who are experiencing homelessness are often staying with a friend, couch surfing or sleeping in their car, whereas those who are rough sleeping are on the street without a roof over their heads. Due to the transitory nature of homelessness, it is difficult to gauge these numbers accurately, and I am deeply concerned that the figures could in fact be much higher. As they threaten to creep up, there are almost 2,000 Novocastrians on the social housing waitlist.

Since coming to government, we have wasted no time in taking action on the housing and homelessness crisis. Finding a "meanwhile" use for the disused houses at the former Stockton Centre is just one example of this Government's responsiveness. The Stockton Centre was officially closed in 2020. Rather than find a use for the space to help vulnerable community members, the former Liberal-Nationals Government instead decided to let the place go to rack and ruin. All those empty houses were left to rot. In June last year I visited and inspected the site alongside the Minister for Disability Inclusion. What we saw at the time was distressing. It was uninhabitable and decrepit. The Stockton Centre was yet another victim to the former Government's 12 years of neglect.

It is such a relief to me and my constituents that this Government has found a way to use the Stockton Centre as transitional accommodation for people experiencing homelessness. We will invest \$2 million to bring these seven homes up to a suitable standard of living so tenants can live comfortably and with dignity. The seven

homes include five five-bedroom homes, one two-bedroom unit and a one-bedroom unit, and they will accommodate up to 25 people. All the homes have been assessed, with seven houses deemed suitable for refurbishment. At this stage the remainder of the site is not suitable for refurbishment. The seven homes are under a "meanwhile" use arrangement—short-term use of the buildings while the Government investigates and develops a long-term plan for the Stockton Centre.

The Stockton Centre once housed about 400 people. It is just disgraceful that the former Government allowed the centre to reach this state of disrepair. From Opposition my colleagues and I lobbied the former Government to turn the Stockton Centre into transitional housing for people experiencing homelessness. I am sure that if they had taken action during their stint on this side of the House, we would have been able to salvage more homes and house more people. While I am not aware of any immediate plans for the other houses in the centre, I will advocate to see this space used for the betterment of my community. The Stockton Centre announcement has been welcomed by community members, homelessness advocates and support services like Soul Hub, which provides meals and other essential services to our most vulnerable community members. They recently opened their new premises—a comfortable, clean, fit-for-purpose space. At the opening I spoke to some of the guests, many of whom do not have stable and secure housing. I listened to their stories and I heard about their journeys.

I also recently announced the 2024 Newcastle Local Woman of the Year: the inspirational Sister Carmel Hanson, the founder and coordinator of the House of Hospitality refuge and a fantastic advocate for housing and homelessness issues in Newcastle. When asked about her greatest wish, Sister Carmel said, "I would like to see a time where every homeless person has a roof over their head." I know that this is only a small step, but it is a significant step and a move towards making Sister Carmel's dream become a reality. Fixing the New South Wales housing and homelessness crisis will be a long and arduous task, but this Government is up to the challenge and is not wasting a second. The homes at the former Stockton Centre will have a huge impact on the lives of many of our most vulnerable community members. I cannot wait to open its doors.

#### WESTMEAD HOSPITAL

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (19:52):** If we were to play a word association game with Westmead, we would come up with "health" every time. Westmead Hospital, the Children's Hospital at Westmead, the centre for dental health, Westmead private, Cumberland Hospital, the Westmead Institute for Medical Research, the Children's Medical Research Institute and many associated centres are focusing on infectious diseases, cancer, heart and respiratory research, and more. As a result of the collaboration between our teaching hospitals and research institutes, Westmead is at the cutting edge of research and development. Until recently, the missing piece has been manufacturing—but not any longer. Thanks to the vision and hard work of many, along with the support of successive State and Federal governments, the Westmead Health Precinct can now boast a world-leading viral vector manufacturing facility, the first of its kind in Australia. Overall, the New South Wales Government has committed \$134.5 million to establish the facility.

Viral vectors are a key component of gene therapies and are increasingly used in therapeutic and preventative health interventions, including vaccines. The facility is located right in the heart of Westmead and will manufacture viral vector products for research and clinical trials. The new company will be a for-profit proprietary company, wholly owned by the New South Wales Government. It will manage the operation of the Westmead-based manufacturing facility as it manufactures therapies on a commercial scale. It will manage relationships between research teams, universities, pharmaceutical companies and other stakeholders. The need for this company and its facility to manufacture viral vectors and gene transfer formulations for human clinical use at what is known as "good manufacturing practice" standard is immense.

Viral vectors are a key component for delivering trial therapies for patients with genetic diseases, cancers and viral infections. The facility will have the capacity to treat hundreds of patients per year. Viral vector technology uses viruses that are harmless to humans to carry genetic therapies to the target organs and systems that cause significant human diseases. On the day that I visited the site with the Minister for Health and the Treasurer, Professor Ian Alexander, the head of gene therapy at the Sydney Children's Hospital, explained that the way we can fix genes now is more precise, with the ability to go in and fix errors in existing genes. That is simply miraculous.

The need for that investment was brought home to me when I met Megan Maak and her children, Isla and Jude, both of whom live with Sanfilippo syndrome, which is a devastating, incurable and rare form of genetic childhood dementia. The condition is caused by a single gene that means that the body is unable to break down certain carbohydrates, leading to progressive brain damage. Research teams overseas had a drug that could have drastically slowed the disease's progress in her children, but it is very hard to get into trials when they are based overseas. Her children were not able to receive the gene therapy, partly because of the infrastructure not being available to produce the therapy. The Viral Vector Manufacturing Facility will work towards ensuring that

therapies and clinical trials can be delivered locally, in Parramatta, and sooner for families like Megan's, particularly when early intervention is absolutely critical to save lives.

I pay tribute to Megan and her advocacy. She is now head of the Childhood Dementia Initiative, supporting around 2,800 children born with conditions that cause childhood dementia. We need the local manufacturing capacity so that the long-held vision for Westmead as a centre for research and development goes that step further to include manufacturing to the world and securing future research and development and manufacturing jobs for the next generations. We need this capacity to keep in step with the expansion of treatments for serious disease, because there is a worldwide shortage of manufacturing capacity for those life-changing drugs. To all those who are part of the Viral Vector Manufacturing Facility and its affiliated hospitals, medical doctors, researchers, advocates and university academics, I commend your work to the House.

### MANLY ELECTORATE ABORIGINAL HERITAGE

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (19:57):** One of the truly extraordinary features of Manly and, indeed, much of the northern beaches is the extent to which those areas are steeped in rich Aboriginal cultural heritage. Manly was the site of the Aboriginal warriors Bennelong and Colebee being captured in 1789 and Governor Phillip being speared in the shoulder at a whale feast at Manly Cove in 1790. Unfortunately, it is a history that is not shared well enough, despite the best efforts of some. The enduring significance of that heritage is embedded in the fabric of Manly's past, present and future. It resides in the abundance of sacred sites and rock carvings found within the landscape and the deep sense of ritual and spirituality that they resonate. It endures in the unique native vegetation, bushland and coastal areas and the profound synergy that those areas share with Aboriginal practices, customs and beliefs.

The importance of Aboriginal cultural heritage in our local communities cannot be understated. But this heritage is finite, fragile and irreplaceable. Imperative to its conservation for future generations, in the way that the traditional owners of the land intended, is the role that education and promoting awareness must play. Tonight I recognise an extraordinary individual and member of the Manly community who has championed that protection and awareness of Aboriginal heritage, Ms Karen Smith. Karen is a Dharug woman from the Boorooberongal clan of the Hawkesbury region and has lived in the Manly area with her family for many years. In her role as education officer for the Aboriginal Heritage Office, Karen has dedicated her working life to sharing her knowledge and expertise of Aboriginal history and culture with residents of and visitors to the northern beaches. Whether it be through leading guided tours of local Aboriginal heritage sites or devoting her time to speaking to schools and community groups, Karen's passion for facilitating interest and community engagement with Manly's Aboriginal heritage is to be applauded.

In 2017 Karen was honoured by the Rotary Foundation in recognition of her efforts and the positive impact she has made in educating others on the diverse practices, customs, beliefs and technologies that sustained her people for thousands of years. Through her commitment to education, her gift for music and storytelling and her connection to country, Karen has helped preserve Manly's rich Aboriginal heritage for generations to come. I thank Karen for her outstanding contribution to the Manly community and the important work she does in preserving the Aboriginal heritage of our beautiful area. Her work is valued by more people than she knows. On behalf of a grateful community, I say thank you to Karen.

### SHELLHARBOUR HOSPITAL

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (20:00):** I give an update to the Parliament and my community on the progress of the new Shellharbour Hospital. Back in 2016 I joined with my local community to condemn the former Government's plans to privatise the existing Shellharbour Hospital, for which the member for Kiama was the poster boy and the leader of the cheer squad. Essentially, the plan was to deliver a hospital upgrade under a public-private partnership. Without any community consultation, members opposite decided to, effectively, privatise our local hospital. My community was not going to have a bar of that. I note that the member for Maitland, who is in the Chamber, was also a part of that effort.

A campaign spearheaded by the Nurses and Midwives' Association, the Health Services Union and Arthur Rorris from the South Coast Labour Council that included numerous community meetings, rallies and rolling stoppages of service led to over 12,000 signatures being gathered on a petition opposing the former Government's plans to privatise Shellharbour Hospital. The campaign was successful. By 2018 the previous Government was forced to abandon its privatisation plans and the fight began to ensure that it began to plan a new public hospital. That fight was certainly worth it, and now in 2024 construction for a new hospital will soon begin in Shellharbour, in the heart of the Illawarra.

It was such a joy to join our wonderful Minister for Health—and my fellow Illawarra MP—the member for Keira at the site of the new hospital earlier this month to meet workers and inspect the progress of the new

hospital build, which is being delivered as part of the more than \$700 million New Shellharbour Hospital and Integrated Services project. We were joined by the Hon. Stephen Jones, MP, the member for Whitlam and a Minister in the Albanese Government, which is contributing \$128 million for this much-needed, state-of-the-art hospital.

Any project of this size will cause some disruption for the local community. I thank the residents of Dunmore and Shell Cove for their patience and understanding as construction continues. Shellharbour City Council is working hard to ensure that local issues are dealt with as they arise. I thank Councillor Rob Petreski for assisting our community by advocating so strongly on their behalf. The new Shellharbour Hospital is on track for the next phase of construction, with early works nearing completion. As the Minister for Health announced that day, the new hospital will be wonderful for the community and the staff who will work there. Those staff will benefit from a broad range of measures designed by the New South Wales Government to strengthen the State's health workforce, including safe staffing levels for nurses and midwives and improved salary packaging.

The new Shellharbour Hospital will serve the entire Illawarra community, including residents of the Kiama electorate, who are blessed to have such a wonderful advocate in Dr Sarah Kaine, MLC, the Labor spokesperson for Kiama. Residents of the fast-growing areas of Albion Park, Calderwood and Tullimbar are well served not only by Dr Kaine but also by our wonderful Shellharbour City Councillor from ward A, Maree Duffy-Moon, who is a fierce advocate for the community that she represents.

Pending the planning approval, the main works contract for the hospital is expected to be awarded in mid-2024, with work to commence soon after. Construction of the new hospital is expected to be complete in 2027. I could not be more excited about being there for the opening then. Currently, the new Shellharbour Hospital will include an expanded emergency services department, increased surgical capacity, rehabilitation and aged-care services, acute medical services and expanded mental health services. It will also have a new drug and alcohol unit, renal dialysis unit and outpatient care services. As the Minister for Health already knows too well, I will continue to advocate for a maternity unit, a full suite of women's services and a palliative care unit for under-18s. I am confident, as the population continues to grow in the Illawarra, the new hospital site will have the capacity to grow, and the number of services that can be efficiently delivered will also increase.

### COOTAMUNDRA ELECTORATE POLICING

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (20:04):** Much has been said recently regarding the need for an inquiry into regional crime—a proposal first put forward last October by the Country Mayors Association. The proposal is in response to the growing incidence and severity of criminal activity across rural and regional areas of New South Wales. On behalf of the communities of the Cootamundra electorate, I unequivocally support the call for that inquiry. The growing incidence of crime in regional communities is exacerbated by the unique challenges facing our police, including limited resources as well as the difficulties involved in covering vast geographical distances.

When we look at the breakdown of policing resources in New South Wales we find that there are close to 17,000 police officers in the State, and less than a third of them are living and working in our regional areas. That third is expected to cover more than 90 per cent of the land mass of New South Wales. What an inquiry may presumably reveal is not just the need potentially for more police funding but also for resources. It would also reveal other areas of government that have a role to play in that space to ensure that our police officers, who are doing the best job they possibly can under really difficult circumstances, have appropriate support and backup.

However, I want to concentrate my remarks this evening on police funding and the allocation of resources in rural and regional New South Wales, particularly in relation to the Cootamundra electorate. People are often surprised to learn that the Cootamundra electorate is almost the size of Switzerland—a bit over 40,000 square kilometres. We have 28 police stations across four police districts in the electorate, most of them with just one or two officers. None of them are open 24/7, but we do have a 24/7 policing response. However, compared to the city, we have no police stations in our electorate which have the doors open 24/7 for people to walk on in. In 2024 that is simply not good enough.

That has been an ongoing issue for the people of Cowra and surrounds for many years, with locals describing it as "a matter of urgency". Cowra business owner Lisa Coupe had this to say recently: "For a town this size and the crime that is happening, we need help ... We need help here and that cop shop needs to be opened—needs to be manned 24 hours a day." Lifelong Cowra resident Carole Doyle said, "With crime escalating and frightening, we have a great need for a 24-hour police station to provide around-the-clock protection for Cowra shire's population of more than 12,000 people." She goes on to say, "As this community has an ageing population, people are terrified. They are withdrawing, which becomes a mental and general health issue."

The need for 24/7 policing in Cowra is a perfect example of the kind of issue a parliamentary inquiry could examine and evaluate. Issues surrounding police infrastructure and the need for new or revitalised stations and accommodation should also be a key focus of any inquiry. I was pleased to welcome the police Minister to the Cootamundra electorate recently. During the visit I took the opportunity to show her around the Young Police Station, where she was introduced to local officers. Those men and women do such an amazing job to look after our communities—a job that is done under difficult circumstances, given the ageing infrastructure they are operating in. After seeing the station for herself, the Minister could surely be in no doubt about the need for a new police station in Young.

In the lead-up to the last election, the Coalition made a commitment—I made a commitment—to the community to invest \$19 million in a brand new police station for Young should we be re-elected. That obviously did not transpire, but the need for a new police station still exists. Narrandera too has a police station that is in desperate need of an upgrade, not to mention other locations where the police accommodation is in need of attention. A bipartisan parliamentary inquiry would provide more time than I have available here and now to examine those and other pressing issues around crime in our regions and the various solutions available to address what has become a growing epidemic across the entire State.

### LIVERPOOL WEST PUBLIC SCHOOL

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (20:09):** I am pleased to share with the House that just yesterday staff and students from Liverpool West Public School returned to their campus on the corner of Hoxton Park Road and Flowerdale Road. This follows weeks of extensive remediation works after a piece of bonded asbestos was discovered in the newly developed part of the school in February. Liverpool West Public School was first identified as a potential site for contamination on Friday 9 February. Assessors were sent onsite first thing Saturday morning, with a sample returning a positive result on Sunday afternoon. Although this was a small piece of bonded asbestos found in mulch in the new landscaping and therefore an extremely low risk to those onsite, the decision was made to suspend onsite school operations out of an abundance of caution. This decision was not taken lightly. We are talking about children; their safety trumps all.

What began as a couple of days of home learning evolved into a huge undertaking. It turned out that contaminated mulch had been used not just for top dressing on the garden beds at Liverpool West but also for fill, meaning that much larger remediation works were required at the campus than first anticipated. It became clear that students and staff would have to remain offsite for perhaps weeks. Families in Liverpool experienced firsthand the disruption of extended periods of virtual learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, extended at-home learning impacts parents' ability to get to work, and many families simply do not possess the necessary technology to do this for an indefinite period. It was clear that the families of Liverpool West simply could not afford a return to those days.

The Department of Education sprang into action to find another solution—enter Gulyangarri Public School. Gulyangarri Public School is a brand-new primary school in the Liverpool CBD. It backs onto the site of Liverpool Boys High School and Liverpool Girls High School, soon to be a brand-new co-educational high school for 2,000 students. Gulyangarri offered to host the relocation of Liverpool West during the remediation works. Thus, students and staff moved to Gulyangarri starting on Monday 18 March. That arrangement prioritised the health of our students and staff, ensuring that disruption to learning was kept to a minimum.

To move a school of over 600 pupils in the space of a week was no small task, and it was a massive credit to the strength of our public education system. I put to the House that this could not be done in some of our private schools. Only through a collaborative and connected public department was this outcome possible. I pay tribute to the many staff, ably led by Secretary Murat Dizdar, for their tireless work during this uncertain time. I also acknowledge Acting Director, Educational Leadership, Olimpia Bartolillo, and Deputy Secretary for Public Schools, Deb Summerhayes, for their work locally.

It is also an endorsement of community spirit in Liverpool. I pay tribute to the students, parents and staff at Gulyangarri, led by Principal Ian Tapuska, for being so welcoming to Liverpool West during their stay. The principal of Liverpool West, Lucy Martin, and the staff, parents and students of Liverpool West deserve particular appreciation. From the student leadership team creating a video tour of Gulyangarri to make the transition easier for their peers to the many other initiatives that demonstrated the true mettle of all, it was inspiring to see. I am so proud to represent these amazing people in this place.

On the first day of these altered learning arrangements, the Minister for Education and Early Learning, Prue Car, and the secretary of the Department of Education, Murat Dizdar, and I paid a visit to the students, parents and staff of Liverpool West and Gulyangarri. It was helpful to hear directly from parents. Although there was uncertainty, they were adjusting well to the new arrangements. I spoke with a mother who had conducted a trial run of her new school drop-off route the previous day. I even heard from a parent at Gulyangarri that her child

had just moved from Liverpool West Public School this year, only to be joined by friends from his former school some weeks later.

The arrangement continued for four weeks, until the green light was given for Liverpool West to return home. That was only after extensive work was undertaken to remove all the contaminated mulch and full clearance was obtained from an independent hygienist. Works are continuing onsite to reinstate landscaping materials over the coming weeks. Now that the Liverpool West community is able to return to campus, the focus turns to how this was able to happen. I acknowledge the establishment of the asbestos taskforce by the Minister for the Environment to assist the Environment Protection Authority with its investigation. I look forward to the results of the investigation so that this will never be allowed to happen again.

### GOSFORD ELECTORATE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (20:14):** Tonight I speak about early childhood education on the beautiful Central Coast. Firstly, I thank everyone in our community who completed my recent early childhood education survey. Their insights were eye-opening and their honesty was truly valued. The results of this survey were very clear; there is a need for action to deliver equitable access to early childhood education across our community. Our parents are in desperate need of continued support, and I am proud to be part of the New South Wales Government committed to delivering that support. I would like to share some of the feedback from the survey. More than 25 per cent of families reported having no access to child care at all, 93 per cent of families reported that the lack of availability of early education placements is affecting their ability to return to work, and 77 per cent of respondents reported that it was the mother whose ability to return to work was affected. One survey respondent commented:

The lack of day care options has cost us financially and emotionally. We have had to dip into our savings for an extended period of time to survive and that has put us back significantly, and our house deposit is now gone.

Another said:

We are in an extremely dire situation—close to needing to sell our home. We have three children and I have always been a full-time working mother to support my kids and contribute equally with my husband to our mortgage. Due to no access to childcare, I am unable to work full time and, therefore, my family cannot meet the requirements of our mortgage.

And another commented:

It took us 18 months to secure a spot for my eldest and I am about to go on maternity leave with my second baby. I am deeply worried about how to keep our finances afloat during this costly time and without the confidence about my ability to return to work.

The survey results showed that 31.5 per cent of respondents were on 10 to 15 waitlists for child care, 33.3 per cent of respondents had been on a waitlist for an early education placement for 12 to 18 months and 37 per cent had been waiting for six to 12 months. Women, in particular, in my community are desperately crying out for access to early childhood education and for better return to work security. Recognising the dire need for greater accessibility to early childcare education on the Central Coast, I was thrilled to announce recently that Umina Beach Public School will be the location of a new public preschool as part of a record \$759 million investment by the New South Wales Government to build 100 new public preschools co-located at public primary schools across the State.

My community has spoken about the difficulty of school drop-off, of travelling long distances to early childhood education centres and preschools, and of having to send their kids to school in a new area, removed from the support structure of friendships made in their local preschool. I am thrilled that the Central Coast will now be home to two co-located preschools: one at Umina Beach Public School and one at Tuggerawong Public School. Connecting preschools to existing primary schools will ensure that our children are ready for kindergarten, help busy working families with cost-of-living pressures and make preschool available in our local community, avoiding the need for the dreaded double drop-off.

I have heard far too often that parents, particularly mothers, are unable to return to work because they do not have a place for their little one in early childhood education. In fact, 92.6 per cent of families in my survey indicated that the lack of availability of early childhood education placements is affecting their ability to return to work. Further, 77 per cent of respondents reported that it was the mother who was affected in her ability to return to work. This is unacceptable. I note the New South Wales Government's investment of up to \$29.4 million in early childhood education scholarships, boosting the skills of existing staff and attracting talented people to the sector. In addition to this, we are delivering fee relief to make childhood education more affordable and accessible. Our early childhood educators are doing fantastic work in our communities. They not only craft developmental plans for our youngest learners but also create a loving and safe environment for our next generation to thrive in, providing them with critical social development opportunities and enabling parents to succeed in the workforce.

I had the joy of attending Goodstart early learning centre at Woy Woy last week. The educators were outstanding, and the movement was beautiful—from the babies room, the nurture and care around the little ones and the sleeping programs, to the youngsters, the bigger kids and the final steps as they move towards school. I do not know how they do it; I take my hat off to them. The wraparound support, love, appreciation and education of these youngsters was delivered with diligence and care. I thank the people at Goodstart Early Learning Woy Woy. I thank all early childhood educators across our community for the incredible work they do. Early childhood education is the founding block of future education. We really appreciate their work in our community.

### **HUME HIGHWAY, MARULAN**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (20:19):** Today I speak about a piece of crucial infrastructure in my electorate: the Hume Highway at Marulan. The Marulan bypass, a key segment of the Hume Highway, is approximately 31 kilometres north of Goulburn. Many people will know the section of the road from the heavy vehicle weigh station. Those who have driven it recently would only recognise it today as a patched-up concrete section that is horrendous to drive on. Over the years, the Hume Highway has served as a critical artery for our nation, facilitating the movement of goods and people across our State, connecting Sydney with Canberra and Melbourne. However, with the passage of time and the ever-increasing volume of traffic, the condition of the road has deteriorated. This deterioration not only poses risks to the safety of those who use it but also results in escalating and ongoing maintenance costs.

The former New South Wales Liberal Government allocated a substantial sum of \$35 million to undertake the task of repairing this section of road. This initiative was a commitment to ensuring safe and efficient transportation for the many people across New South Wales who travel on this vital route. Unfortunately, while this \$35 million remains allocated to the highway, the description of the task that the funds have been allocated to has been modified to "replace sections of the concrete pavement surface on the Hume Highway at Marulan". Transport for NSW advised residents of this last year. They were told that between Friday 13 October and Friday 3 November 2023 concrete pavement slabs were being replaced in various locations on the southbound lanes along the Hume Highway at Marulan. In the correspondence to residents, the department detailed that this work would support future rehabilitation of the Hume Highway at Marulan. But the slab replacement has the same total budget of \$35 million, with the 2023-24 New South Wales budget allocating \$27.1 million over the next four years.

By way of background, Transport sought tenders in December 2022. Before this, however, the submitted tenders did not result in a value-for-money option that Transport could accept with what was allocated. Put simply, it would cost more. Of course, in 2023 the new Labor Government was elected and presented its first budget. However, rather than funding the project in full, it was determined that the submitted tenders did not result in value for money and alternative methods to repair the road were to be considered. While Government communications detail that the refurbishment of the road is planned for the future, we have no guarantee when exactly that will be. Repairing the Hume Highway in sections will have consequences. Patchwork repairs, like those that have previously been undertaken for this section of road, are what have led to the inconsistencies in the quality of the road surface. It leaves us with a patchy, uneven road that deteriorates at different rates and is shocking to drive on.

Moreover, while it may seem cost-effective to repair this section of the highway piece by piece, I have every confidence that it will end up costing taxpayers more. These patchwork repairs will require more frequent maintenance and repairs, leading to higher overall costs over time. My greatest concern is the critical issue of safety. The uneven road surface is a hazard, created from itself. The bumpy, lumpy road is uncomfortable to drive on, and many drivers will elect to avoid the worse section, remaining in the overtaking lane when not overtaking. This is concerning behaviour that may lead to accidents. Lastly, the method of repairing the road in sections means that residents and drivers must now endure ongoing disruptions to traffic flow as different sections are closed for repairs at different times.

In contrast, fully refurbishing the entire road ensures a consistent, high-quality surface that is more durable and will require less frequent maintenance. A complete refurbishment will provide a smoother and safer road. The New South Wales Government can say that it recognises the importance of addressing these issues. But, in practice, the piecemeal approach of not fully funding the repair means that the New South Wales Government has not taken proactive steps to ensure the long-term viability of this crucial transportation corridor. I urge the New South Wales Government to prioritise this essential infrastructure project and fund the refurbishment of the damaged Hume Highway in full.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (20:24):** I respond to the honourable member and invite her to have a chat to me in person. Transport is continuing to monitor the condition of the road surface and undertake maintenance intervention. Concrete slab replacement was carried out on the southbound lanes between May and December 2023. Transport is also replacing approximately

200 of the most damaged concrete pavement slabs on the northbound lanes, along the Hume Highway at Marulan, just north of Medway Road, for about 2½ kilometres. Work commenced on Friday 23 February and will continue until 22 March this year, weather permitting. I understand that there is a funding gap. We inherited an \$187 billion debt. This work should have been done well before December 2022, because we should not have been in this situation. But I am committed to finding a solution. I am trying to find money but, as the member would be aware, there is not a lot of money there.

### ROAD FATALITIES

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (20:25):** In September last year a car carrying four people veered into the path of a truck at the Victorian town of Chiltern, and in that split second four people with so much to live for perished in an instant. It left their loved ones in Wagga Wagga and Lake Cargelligo with endless grief, a lifetime of what-ifs and holes in their hearts that will never fully heal. Tragically, this story is repeated in similar fashion almost every day. A momentary mistake leads to that most feared phone call or knock on the door by a police officer with the worst possible news—the lives of children, parents, siblings, friends or neighbours taken in a wreckage of twisted steel and shattered glass.

As a former emergency department physician, I have seen the impact of road trauma all too often—the victims added to the road toll and more numbers on a grim sheet of tragedy. But, of course, they are not just numbers. They were people with families and futures, and with loved ones left to grieve. The deaths of the two couples at Chiltern prompted one of those loved ones—a broken-hearted constituent of mine from Wagga Wagga—to seek my help in drawing attention to the horror of road trauma and seeking possible solutions. The crash happened in Victoria, but State lines mean little to those left behind.

In New South Wales, the toll spiked in 2023 with 349 deaths, the sharpest increase in 15 years. Already, in 2024, that number has reached 69—more grief, more loss and more head scratching as to how those lives could have been saved. Despite the best efforts of police and government agencies, the toll continues to rise. It is time to look again at our approach. Firstly, we must ensure that we have the police we need to undertake the tasks that can make a difference to the road toll. Chief among those tasks is that of breath testing as many drivers as possible. I was shocked to learn last year that a study by the NRMA revealed that 55 per cent of motorists had not seen a single random breath testing [RBT] activity in the previous six months and that more than one in 10 admitted to driving under the influence. That is inexcusable. It is also fixable. Simply, more resources must be made available for RBTs and radar guns.

Secondly, the condition of our roads is also a major factor, especially in rural and regional areas. Those roads must be made as safe as possible. Until that is done, we need to do as much as we can to match speed limits to road conditions. Make no mistake: Slowing drivers down on dangerous roads will make a difference. If that makes a road journey a little longer, then so be it. Finally, the issue of driver attitudes is critical. I attended a road safety summit in Sydney last month that was hosted by the Minister for Roads, the Minister for Regional Roads, who I note is in the Chamber, and the police Minister. I acknowledge and welcome the action taken by the Government and those Ministers in hosting that summit. I had discussions with the Minister about the road toll at the end of last year, and it was very pleasing to see the response.

At the summit, senior police raised the concern that worsening driver behaviour is a key cause of the rising toll. Since COVID, recklessness and selfishness on the roads is thought to have risen, with a small number of rule breakers being encouraged by rebellion against pandemic regulations to take that behaviour to the driver's seat. I am also concerned that the uproar over the removal of speed camera warning signs that occurred recently may reflect that attitude issue. Did the successful campaign mirror a complacency about the risks of speeding rather than an acknowledgement that drivers should not speed at all? Sadly, alarming data shows that the 87 speeding-related deaths in regional and rural roads in 2022 rose to 115 in 2023. That is another 28 lives lost on rural roads.

I was encouraged to hear roads Minister John Graham tell the summit that that theory of a change in driver attitude will be investigated and that, if the research proves it, the Government will act—in the words of the Minister—to ensure that "cookers" will not be allowed to break the law. As drivers we all have a role to drive so others survive. The death toll is at crisis levels. At the very least the factors that I have mentioned today must be considered and acted on. We must do it now and we must do it effectively. We owe that much to those who have already died and to their loved ones who remain. Not to do so would be a deadly abrogation of our responsibilities and an insult to those still grieving.

### MAITLAND LOCAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR AWARDS

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (20:30):** I congratulate Maitland's Local Woman of the Year. Each year I have the honour of acknowledging a Local

Woman of the Year in Maitland. At a gala event last week, which I jointly hosted with the Women's Network Hunter NSW, I was thrilled to announce that Evelyn Stonham is Maitland's Local Woman of the Year for 2024. Evelyn has been involved with football in Newcastle and Maitland for over 40 years. She has been involved with Maitland Junior Football Club for over 30 years. In 2023 the club had over 1,000 players. Evelyn said:

Of the members aged five to 65, 33 per cent of them are female, so we are really happy. However, we won't stop until we reach 50-50 participation.

Evelyn currently holds the role of secretary/registrars and her dedication to the club knows no bounds. She puts in countless hours on a daily basis just to get the players on the park. Every Friday she is at the ground from noon to 11.00 p.m.; on Saturdays, from 5.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m.; and on Sundays, from 6.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. It is a staggering workload. Having two sons who play may have kicked off her interest, but she is now involved with a number of football associations across the region, including the Jets, where she volunteers, currently managing the player mascots and, for the Jets Women, the player mascots and ball persons.

Her son Matt was diagnosed with brain cancer a number of years ago. Evelyn has linked the club with the Mark Hughes Foundation, raising many thousands of dollars for the foundation. Regular donations from members of Maitland Juniors also support Carrie's Place, a service for women and families escaping domestic violence. Maitland Juniors was also the first club to carry a banner for Dolly's Dream in New South Wales. But Evelyn's life is not all football. Amazingly, there is time for other things. She has had a long career as a registered nurse and later in work health safety. She is also a talented netballer and softball player and has been recognised with a number of awards over the years for her contributions to those sports. I congratulate Evelyn and thank her for her dedication to our community over so many years.

Four local women were also highly commended for 2024 at the event on International Women's Day. I congratulate Leanne White, whose nominator reflected that the first thing they thought when meeting Leanne was, "Wow, this woman is a dynamo." Leanne is a passionate advocate for our Indigenous community and she is on a mission to make life easier for those less privileged, offering love and friendship with a strong determination to make the world better. She has volunteered at the Maitland Neighbourhood Centre and worked with families from Rutherford to Woodberry for Rotary and the Anglican church at Rutherford, supplying food for the disadvantaged, a cuppa, a listening ear and a caring heart. She delivers care packages and does welfare checks on the most vulnerable in our community; no-one gets ignored. That amazing woman thrives on the challenges that differ from week to week.

Dr Sally Keir recognised a need for peer support for cancer patients in Maitland. Rather than lament the lack of such an organisation, Sally sprang into action and the Maitland Women's Cancer Support Group was born. She is still a pivotal and much-loved and respected member of the group who humbly shares her experience and wisdom. Without Sally's dedication and tenacity, this wonderful support for women living with cancer would simply not exist, and she has been a great support to me. Sally is also the co-founder of the Hunter/Maitland Support Group for lymphoedema patients. Sally regularly speaks about lymphoedema to the Encore program as well as to other groups as an invited speaker and reminded me that this month is Lymphoedema Awareness Month. I congratulate Sally.

I also congratulate Stacy Jacobs, whose focus is supporting young people in our community. Stacy works with many organisations and schools in the region to provide young people with experiences that they may otherwise miss, including providing free driving lessons for more than 100 young people to get their Ps. Stacy also started a free formal clothing collection for students in years 10 to 12; provides low-cost mental health first aid courses to schools; works with East Maitland Rotary Club; and manages a small library in Rutherford. In 2022 she was recognised by a NSW Youth Work Award in 2022 and holds down two jobs, one at Cessnock High School and the other as a disability support worker.

Jenny Cridland has been a pioneer in the field of palliative care volunteering in Maitland for over 33 years. Jenny was one of the first volunteers to undertake training. Throughout her remarkable journey, she has consistently provided support to clients and their families without any breaks. Despite enduring the heartbreaking loss of her husband to dementia, Jenny has remained steadfast in her commitment to helping others during their most challenging times. Jenny's nurturing nature shines through. I congratulate her. I am so proud of Evelyn and all the finalists in Maitland Local Woman of the Year in 2024.

#### DAVIDSON ELECTORATE

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (20:35):** Tonight I start with a wonderful quote from anthropologist Margaret Mead:

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

It is in that spirit that I am a believer that leadership is about solving problems. Therefore I am rolling up my sleeves to help solve the biggest problems facing the community that I proudly represent. Power comes from the grassroots up and not from the top down. Since my election, I have found that community-led petitions are so important in advocacy. The first community-led issue is that of Labor's planning proposals, which lack a proper process. They include transport oriented developments [TODs] surrounding Roseville, Lindfield, Killara and Gordon as well as the low- to mid-rise planning policy, which is a one-size-fits-all approach to every railway station, town centre and street in Sydney.

To date, zero consultation has happened on the TODs. I thank the community for attending the rally in The Domain today and the 1,407 residents who have signed the petition that calls on the New South Wales Labor Government to ensure its State planning policies follow proper process, including community consultation, environmental protection and investment in additional infrastructure. I encourage residents to sign this petition and to make a submission to the Legislative Council inquiry into the TODs. Submissions close on 28 March 2024. We are in this together.

The second community issue is cancelled bus services in region 14, in particular from Belrose, Frenchs Forest, Davidson, Forestville and Roseville Chase to the city. In the first two weeks of February, 466 services were cancelled in region 14 and that averages over 33 services a day. That is not good enough. I thank the 1,324 residents who signed the petition, Fix Frenchs Forest bus service, and Virginia Johnstone for her leadership in organising. The Government is not doing enough. The Bus Industry Taskforce is not enough. Simply saying there is a bus driver shortage is not enough. I have written to the Minister for Transport and I await her urgent response and explanation. Today I asked questions in Parliament: First, does the Government have a plan to recruit more bus drivers? Second, what is the Government doing to hold CDC NSW to account? Third, are there disincentives and penalties for unreliable and cancelled bus services? I am committed to fixing this mess.

The third community-led issue is for a new school hall for Davidson High, led by the Davidson P&C. It is an amazing school, priding itself on creativity and performing arts programs. The hall is more than 40 years old. It is not big enough and is not fit for purpose. Liz Daniels and Channel 9 recently covered this ageing infrastructure and highlighted that it has not changed since INXS went to school. The school needs a new hall, like it once needed a new sensation—pun intended. I thank the 1,434 people who signed the petition and P&C president Anahita Olsen and secretary Kate Froggatt. In the petition, residents have said, "The toilet door in the female bathrooms is so small that people can see you when you sit on the toilet!" and "Students have to vacate classrooms for lunch/recess on rainy days but have nowhere to go." Another resident said:

I cannot see my grandkids receive awards, perform at music ... I have always been involved in their school activities and now feel left out. Please build a new hall.

I have written to the Minister for Education for this inclusion in the 2024-25 budget and I will keep fighting until the hall is upgraded to a multipurpose, state-of-the-art facility.

There are several other community-led issues that I encourage the community to support by signing those petitions. The first issue is fighting Labor's cuts of \$9.8 million to the Linfield commuter car park. The second is restoring back-to-school vouchers cut by Labor at the time school went back at the start of this year. The third is monitoring road safety at the Pacific Highway, Clanville and Shirley roads intersection in Roseville at which, my community says, there are so many near misses. A red light camera needs to be installed there. The fourth is saving Active Kids vouchers that were, sadly, cut by Labor. Preventative health is so important that we must make sure our kids have every opportunity to be active.

The fifth is stopping Labor's heartless decision to cut \$249 million from palliative care. The cuts will hurt our most vulnerable. The sixth is improving pedestrian safety on Forest Way and Glen Street for our kids and our community. It is a welcome community win that fencing will now be installed on Forest Way, but so much more is needed. I thank the community—particularly Kylie Westren—for their advocacy. The seventh is saving Lizard Rock and Ralston Avenue in Belrose from overdevelopment. I await the decision of the planning officials. The final issue is supporting a footpath on Bradfield Road in West Linfield, which I will launch shortly. I thank the community for giving me the opportunity to represent them.

### **CURRAWARNA ASSISTED LIVING FACILITY**

**Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (20:40):**

I welcome the opportunity to update the House on the fabulous work that the community of Bombala has done to get the Currawarna aged facility reopened. I attended the reopening on 29 February. It was well-attended event, with the committee, many members of the community and some of the new residents of the facility in attendance. Like many people in the community, I was disappointed when the operator of what was the Currawarna nursing home decided it could not continue to operate the facility and closed it at very short notice. The decision meant

that families had to send elderly loved ones hundreds of kilometres away from their hometown and their friends and families. It was a devastating blow, but the Bombala community refused to accept it.

Members of the community rallied around and came up with a practical plan to reopen Currawarna as an assisted living facility. They did not just say to the Government, "You should fix this." They said, "We are going to fix it," and then they asked the Government for help. I am delighted that prior to being elected as a member of the Minns Labor Government I secured a commitment of \$840,000 to back that community's amazing fundraising efforts. At that stage it had raised a phenomenal \$160,000, and Labor's commitment was to fund enough to reach the \$1 million in operating funds that it felt the facility needed. Since then, it has continued to fundraise and the small community of 2,000 to 3,000 residents managed to raise \$340,000 between them. They put in an amazing effort, with fundraisers from garden parties and bowls days through to a nude calendar featuring some local identities—including the chairman of the fundraising committee, who happened to be Mr February. On opening day his image, with a strategically placed saddle, was on display around the facility,

The outcome is a facility that is a step for people who are not able to live at home but who do not need high care. It will have full-time staff, such as cooks, and support for its residents. It will receive ongoing Commonwealth aged-care funding, such as the aged-care packages that are available at levels two and three. It is a great concept from the community. There was a grey area about how it should be funded, and it was lucky that the issue was raised during the election campaign. I secured the agreement of the then Treasurer to supply the \$840,000 in funding. I am keen to see how the model works and how it can be used for the future of aged care in other rural communities. As aged-care standards have increased over the past few years and more nurses have been required in nursing homes, many rural and regional nursing homes, particularly smaller scale nursing homes, have found it difficult to find and afford those staff. There are shortages right across the aged-care sector and the nursing sector. For many communities, that has meant their facilities have had to close down or reduce services because they have not been able to find those staff.

I look forward to seeing the success of the model that the Bombala community is operating with Currawarna. The key is for people to use it. Whether they are from Bombala or Jindabyne, I urge community members from the south-east region—particularly those families with elderly parents or family members who are finding it difficult to live at home—to go and have a look at the Currawarna facility with their family members to see whether they like it. The advantage of the Currawarna facility is its location right next door to the Bombala MPS, which has high-care aged beds and will get another 20 of those thanks to funding provided by the Minns Government and the Federal Labor Government. That could provide those step-through opportunities of care in the community with people they know in the nearby area. I urge people to consider that for their elderly relatives.

Finally, I congratulate the committee behind this effort—Keith Campbell, Karen Brownlie, Rosie Gillespie-Jones, John Murdoch and Zoe Joseph—and the many members of the community who organised and participated in the fundraisers I mentioned earlier. Bombala will be a great community for aged-care options. The Kennedy Homes project is also being built there, which offers independent living facilities funded by bequest. There is a really great range of options for a small community to offer aged care in our region.

## MENOPAUSE

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (20:45):** Tonight I talk about an issue that women across the Sydney electorate have asked me to speak more about and seek more resources for: menopause. There are over two million postmenopausal people in Australia, with about 80,000 people becoming menopausal every year. Mostly they are cisgender women, but other people such as transgender and non-binary people can menstruate and go through menopause. The menopause journey usually starts with symptoms in the mid-forties—although it is not uncommon for them to begin in the mid-thirties—during a phase known as perimenopause. Menopause is reached when a person has had 12 months without a period. While about half the population menstruates and goes on to experience menopause, it is a process that has been considered taboo and associated with stigma, discrimination, assumptions and judgement, much of which has roots in ignorance and misogyny. These negative views have hindered access to accurate information, leaving many people confused about their symptoms and how to best manage them.

Menopause and perimenopause can cause over 34 symptoms that can last between a few years to more than a decade. Symptoms include hot flashes, night sweats, sleep deprivation, anxiety, depression, body aches, memory loss, heavy bleeding, frequent urinating and decreased libido. Roughly half of people going through menopause have significant symptoms. When menopause symptoms are not properly managed it can impact on health, wellbeing, relationships, everyday functioning and productivity. One in 10 people with severe symptoms stop work as a result. Poorly managed symptoms can also be costly, with people spending thousands on trial-and-error prescriptions, doctor visits, treatments, devices and products.

We all need to learn more about menopause so that we can better support people going through this journey. The first step is to raise awareness and enhance understanding among people in their thirties and forties who menstruate, empowering them with the information to properly care for themselves during this process. NSW Health has useful online tools, including the Menopause and Perimenopause Toolkit with a symptoms checklist; resources for employees, managers, families and partners; and a 10-series podcast. These need to be better publicised and should be expanded to include all 34 symptoms.

In recent years, social media and some mainstream media outlets have increased openness about menopause and perimenopause, helping to break down barriers, reduce discrimination and stigma, and encourage people to talk to each other, get informed and seek medical, psychological and social support. Notwithstanding this, resources and conversations are largely targeted at cisgender women, with trans and gender-diverse people who experience menopause left behind. Trans and gender-diverse people going through menopause often have unique challenges, such as interference between menopause medication and gender-affirming treatment.

While resources are still lacking, I hope that the growing openness will see menopause resources for trans and gender-diverse people—and the health profession caring for them—increase. Most people will be able to manage their symptoms through their general practitioners, but not all GPs have an adequate understanding of menopause and symptoms management, or when or where to refer those who have persistent or severe symptoms. NSW Health is establishing menopause services across the State through hubs, mostly based in hospitals. Some argue that the hospital approach wrongly pathologises menopause, which is not a disease but a natural part of life for half the population. Support and care are needed across the entire perimenopausal and menopausal journey, regardless of symptom severity. Hotlines with trained nurses and social workers through hubs and expanded telehealth would help. The shortage in hormone replacement therapy needs to be addressed. HRT is a common treatment for many challenging symptoms, including hot flushes.

One of my constituents tells me that she had to go to seven different pharmacies before she was able to have her prescription dispensed. I understand that the global shortage is leading to an increase in the prescription of antidepressants for menopause. While hormone replacement therapy is not suitable for everyone going through menopause, it can help some people. Everyone going through menopause in New South Wales should have clear information on and access to all treatment options so they can work out the best option for them. Treatment can be expensive and can require frequent medical trips for repeat prescriptions, making it less accessible for those on low incomes. That needs to be addressed. I look forward to the outcomes of the Federal Senate inquiry into menopause and perimenopause issues, and any recommendations to improve support and access.

Perimenopause and menopause are normal midlife hormonal fluctuations that we should accept as we do adolescent hormonal changes. Chinese medicine refers to perimenopause and menopause as a second spring. With increased openness and support that is tailored to individuals, menopause and perimenopause can be positive experiences that do not negatively impact on life. I encourage all members to talk about menopause and support their constituents.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** The member's time has expired. It was a very interesting private member's statement. I thank the member for Sydney.

### SCHOOL CROSSINGS

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (20:51):** I speak about an issue that is paramount to families in my electorate. For years kids have been unable to walk to school safely due to schools being built without school crossings. Only now do we have a government willing to invest in school crossings, encouraging children to walk to school. The evidence is very clear that walking to school offers numerous benefits for a child and can improve performance at school. Walking to school promotes physical activity and encourages independence as children learn to navigate their environment safely. Walking to school can enhance social skills and take cars off the road, reducing traffic congestion on local roads. Walking or riding a bike to school have been linked to improved concentration and attention span, helping students throughout the school day.

Investing in safe school crossings is a no-brainer to help students commute to school, and I am proud that the Minns Labor Government understands that and is investing \$1½ million towards upgrading school crossings in the Camden electorate. The previous Government did not invest in adequate infrastructure across south-west Sydney. I have mentioned that before but it should be said again. The former Government was committed to privatisation by stealth, forcing parents to send their kids to private schools because no public schools exist where the families live. In no places is that more obvious than Gregory Hills and Gledswood Hills. Over recent decades, the population of the area has significantly increased, but no public high school was built. This Government and the education Minister have got on with the job of building a new public high school for the area, which will be open on day one, term 1, 2027.

My electorate contains schools without school crossings, leaving students who live just a couple of streets from their school needing to be driven because it is too dangerous to cross the road. Those obstacles create unnecessary travel time for families and increase traffic congestion on the roads. Data shows that only 25 per cent of schoolchildren in New South Wales currently walk or ride to school, which is down significantly from the 75 per cent who did so 40 years ago. I am pleased to see that the Government has announced \$10 million in funding to encourage schoolchildren to walk or ride to and from school. The money will go towards widening footpaths, upgrading and improving safety at existing crossings, and planting trees to create shade in areas around schools. That is especially important in areas of south-west and Western Sydney, which we know traditionally get hotter than eastern Sydney. There is no sea breeze and, during the day, especially when students are walking home from school, it is not unheard of for temperatures to get to between 40 and 50 degrees Celsius.

It is so important for all schools to provide a variety of options for students to travel to school, be it public transport, being dropped off, riding a bike or walking. It is vitally important that every new school built has safe transportation access for all students, including safe school crossings at every school. I once again thank the Minister for Roads, the Minister for Transport and the Minister for Education and Early Learning for making this issue a priority across the State and especially in Camden.

### PALLIATIVE CARE

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (20:55):** The first words I spoke in Parliament for 2024 were about palliative care. This struck a chord with many in my electorate. One wrote, "This is a topic close to my heart, and for your first notice it really underpins the significance of how important palliative care is and how it needs more funding, not less." In its 2023 budget the Coalition pushed forward with expanded funding for palliative care. NSW Labor did not take long to cut this down. On 22 February *The Daily Telegraph* revealed that documents tabled to Parliament showed that \$249 million has been ripped out of funding baked into the budget by the Coalition. Funding for paediatric palliative care services at the Sydney Children's Hospital Network and John Hunter Children's Hospital, said the Telegraph, has been cut in half for the next two years. Future funding for the hospitals' paediatric palliative care programs has also been thrown into doubt.

Last November I travelled to Corowa to meet representatives of service clubs taking action to fill one of the gaps: the provision of equipment to support persons wishing to spend their last days at home. Apex, Rotary, Lions and Inner Wheel were all represented, along with others with shared interest and common goodwill. How could their community ensure that no-one had to leave their home for their last days simply due to a lack of affordable, basic items such as special beds, tables and chairs available for hire? The cost is simply beyond many. The Corowa working group members were looking at how they could fundraise to support the approximately 80 patients per year within their community who would benefit from affordable equipment to manage palliative care at home. This discussion led on to matters of the preparation of patient agreements, transportation and logistics, governance, promotion of awareness of this program, banking, payment methods and much more that could more simply be handled by a government agency operating with public funds for this purpose, rather than piled onto volunteers.

Calls for palliative care are growing at a rapid rate as the population ages and societal changes occur, with demand expected to double by 2050. Our society cannot hide from this, and the Government's role is to see that services are ready for this monumental demographic shift and its attendant needs. This is a solemn obligation and duty. NSW Labor has set its sights too low. I am hearing from my community that longer term planning, identification of workforce requirements and plans for new services that were submitted by the local health districts for funding, linked to the additional five-year investment announced in 2022, are left uncertain. I am hearing that the New South Wales Government seems only able to commit to a two-year view currently, with the understanding that local health districts will be asked to resubmit their submissions for service enhancements for 2025 onwards at a later date.

Let us not forget that investing in palliative care does more than look after the needs of those with a life-limiting illness. Think about how it also supports family members and carers and takes pressure off hospitals and costlier acute healthcare services. Earlier this month I met with Catholic Health Australia, which is seriously concerned about the Government's funding plans and the unreliability of funding. It reports that some local health areas are noting cuts to services of up to 30 per cent, which speaks to the increasing lack of accessible health care options across many areas.

Palliative Care NSW is calling for a reinstatement of the additional funding to support the planning and development of new services and the workforce requirements needed to meet the current and future demand for quality palliative care and end-of-life care; for the baseline funding for palliative care, currently at \$340 million, to continue to increase year on year; and an assurance that voluntary assisted dying funding and palliative care and end-of-life funding will always be separated to ensure the unique needs are met for each of those health areas and that the residents of New South Wales do not choose voluntary assisted dying because they cannot access

quality palliative care. I endorse those objectives. When I think back to the good people of Corowa and their recognition of the present crisis for a regional community simply wishing to see the Government support affordable aids to undertake palliative care at home, I feel compelled to join with those calling for a rethink by the Government on taking responsibility for this basic service. Australia is capable of leading the world in palliative care excellence. That is a worthy aim.

### **LYMPHOEDEMA**

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (21:00):** Lymphoedema is a chronic swelling of one or more body parts caused when lymph fluid builds up in the body. It can be a debilitating and disfiguring condition, and the chronic nature of lymphoedema also affects people emotionally and psychologically. The lymphatic system is part of our immune system. Lymphoedema occurs when the lymphatic system is not working as it otherwise should. The lymphatic system comprises a network of vessels and nodes that transport lymph fluid throughout the body, delivering nutrients and taking away viruses, bacteria and damaged cells. The lymph nodes filter the fluid to remove the harmful stuff as it passes into the blood stream. Lymphoedema can occur if the lymphatic drainage system is not developed properly due to an inherited or congenital condition or if the lymphatic drainage has been damaged due to injury or illness.

Incidentally, lymphoedema is often a by-product of the successful treatment of one of our most common cancers, breast cancer, which often involves removal of lymph nodes, damaging the lymph system. The Cancer Council reports that lymphoedema occurs in about 20 per cent of people treated for nine common cancers, including melanoma and breast cancer. March is Lymphoedema Awareness Month and a good time to learn about a condition that around 70,000 Australians live with every day. People at the greatest risk of developing lymphoedema are those with conditions such as cancer or cellulitis; those who have suffered trauma such as burns; those who have undergone venous surgeries such as having varicose veins removed; and those who have a family history and hereditary lymphoedema.

Lymphoedema needs to be diagnosed professionally to exclude other causes of swelling or oedema in the human body. Taking action quickly can reverse mild lymphoedema and helps reduce the risk of developing severe lymphoedema. Common symptoms of lymphoedema might include swelling of a body part. Before that occurs, a feeling of heaviness is common in the affected area. Skin tightness and skin feeling hotter than other areas of the body are also good early indicators, as well as aching, pins and needles, painful or stiff joints, or pitting of the skin when gentle pressure is applied and which leaves an indent after the pressure is removed.

There are three stages of lymphoedema. Stage 0 is where there is an impaired lymphatic system with no evidence of external swelling. Stage 1 represents the early onset of lymphoedema. Here, accumulated fluid in the tissue will subside when the limb is elevated. There is often pitting of the skin at this stage of the lymphoedema process. In stage 2 the swelling is rarely reduced by limb elevation alone, and pitting can be present on a more regular basis. Late stage 2 is where the swelling becomes firmer or fibrotic. Stage 3 is where the tissue becomes hard without pitting. The skin becomes thick and even darker in colour. Increased skin folds, fat deposits and warty overgrowths occur on the human body.

I acknowledge the work of the Australasian Lymphology Association and thank Dr Debbie Geyer and Yvonne Hughes for meeting with me today and discussing the condition. There are many developing treatments for lymphoedema. The key is early diagnosis and access to good treatment. We in this place have a duty to help our community to be more lymphoedema aware and also ensure that all members of our community have access to rapid lymphoedema diagnosis and good quality lymphoedema treatment and care.

### **WILLOUGHBY ELECTORATE BUS SERVICES**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (21:04):** I begin by acknowledging the remarks of my colleague the member for The Entrance in his private member's statement about lymphoedema. It was a pleasure to host leaders and advocates of the Australasian Lymphology Association today. They do a terrific job.

I once again record the deep frustration of the Willoughby community at the state of local bus services. Buses are too often late or cancelled and commuters are left stranded by unreliable services, and the response of the Minns Labor Government has been sorely lacking. We have heard lots of platitudes from Labor but very little action or change on the ground. When in opposition Labor was full of sound and fury on this issue. Quick fixes were promised. But we are now a year into this Government and it has failed miserably to deliver. It is clear that all the promised 12-month long review—which is still months away from reporting, I point out—has achieved is to delay the implementation of real and immediate solutions. This Government is obsessed with reviews. We need strong action now, not a 12-month long review to provide solutions we already know. I will continue to strongly press local bus operators, Transport for NSW and the Minister for Transport for urgent action.

I regularly stand at bus stops across the Willoughby community in the morning peak. The feedback I hear is one of frustration and anger. All too often I see cancelled buses, long waits and overcrowding, preventing commuters from boarding. There is the last-minute scramble to find alternative travel or disappointed commuters resigned to being late to their destination. Major routes through the Willoughby area, such as the 120, the 115 and the 292, do not provide a reliable, effective service for commuters. All too often buses are late or cancelled, leaving large gaps between services. When a bus does arrive, it is often full, and at some stops it sails past, failing to stop and pick up waiting commuters. The situation has gone on for too long. Parents do not have confidence that their kids will get safely to school on time and workers do not have confidence that the services will get them to work on time. It is understandably infuriating for commuters.

Let us be clear on the cause of these problems. Some would have us believe it is all about bus franchising. As a kid who caught the Forest Coach Lines bus to Chatswood many years ago, and given that the policy has successfully existed in Sydney for decades without the current problems, I can say that this is not the root cause of the issue. At its core, this is a pandemic-induced shortage of bus drivers. It is not exclusive to New South Wales nor Willoughby, but two years on from fully opening up from the pandemic, it is on this Government to deal with it.

In addition to substantial efforts to boost recruitment and improve timetable efficiency, real progress was being made under the previous Coalition Government, which sought to implement a four-point plan that included free public transport to and from work for bus drivers; waiving the fees associated with registering and training bus drivers; establishing a recruitment taskforce to attract skilled drivers from interstate and, importantly, overseas, like other jurisdictions have done; and community consultation on bus routes and timetables. The Government should implement this plan without delay. I acknowledge that the Government has, without any sense of urgency, slowly drip-fed some parts of this plan over the past year, but so much more needs to be done. After two years of disrupted service, it is time for the Government to step up and fix our buses once and for all.

A comprehensive review of bus routes, timetables and service frequencies should be conducted to reflect changed travel patterns post-pandemic, the building of new developments and the opening of significant new infrastructure, such as the Sydney Metro. The metro is mere months from opening, yet we are in the dark on changes that would fully integrate this substantial project into the wider transport network. We must make the most of this once-in-a-generation infrastructure investment by the former Coalition Government. Developments across the Willoughby electorate, such as the NINE project on Artarmon Road or the significant uplift of Mowbray Road in Lane Cove North, will put further pressure on existing services and bus capacity must be there to meet this. Our communities are being asked to take on significant population and density growth. The infrastructure, including buses, must be there in advance of that growth. We need to see a return of the east-west connection that was serviced by the former 257 service. Past decisions to abolish this route were wrong in hindsight, and this connection should be restored. We need to move away from a CBD-focused transport network.

It was also an election commitment of Labor's to reinstate route 272, yet we have seen no action on that whatsoever. The Government must immediately fund a business case to determine options to upgrade the Chatswood bus interchange, as the Coalition had committed to. It is time for concrete action. It is high time for real action. The existing interchange is at capacity, and we will fail if we do not plan for the future. Chatswood is already straining, and the planned growth in surrounding suburbs that are serviced by bus routes that funnel into Chatswood will cause a transport disaster if not addressed now. Willoughby locals expect a fit-for-purpose, efficient bus service that they can rely upon. It is time that the Government delivers that service.

### LEPPINGTON ELECTORATE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (21:09):** On the topic of the many problems left by the previous Government, in early February the New South Wales Department of Education released its enrolment growth audit. The Government requested an enrolment growth audit to understand the impact of population trends on student enrolment projections. It is particularly important for areas like Leppington and other growth electorates in north-west and south-west Sydney. The audit was a key election commitment of our Government as part of its growth areas schools plan. Unlike with the previous Government, the plan was made to ensure that families in fast-growing areas have timely access to high-quality public schools.

The audit found that the top 10 student growth areas between 2018 and 2023 were all located in Sydney's west and collectively accounted for close to 40 per cent of all student enrolment across the State. Despite those areas having been identified as growth precincts by successive New South Wales governments since the mid-2000s, planning has failed to deliver the much-needed schools. Leppington, Catherine Field, Edmondson Park, Denham Court and Bardia were identified as examples of areas where a failure to factor in the speed of development left families without the local public schools they need. The Leppington and Catherine Field catchment has grown by 173 per cent since 2018, while the Denham Court-Bardia catchment has grown by 290 per cent, placing them within the top 10 for growth in student enrolment in New South Wales.

To be honest, we did not need an audit to reveal how behind areas like Leppington, Denham Court and Edmondson Park are; one just needs to go there and talk to the people of south-west Sydney. I did that during the campaign, as did the Premier and the Deputy Premier, the education Minister. On the other hand, the previous Government ignored Leppington and the south-west. What was the result? The school that the former Government built was built on top of three gas pipelines. Denham Court Public School was built on three underground, cross-country gas pipelines which, due to risk, places a fixed capacity on the school.

Due to the obvious risk of loss of containment of gas or fire and the potential thermal radiation impact on the school site, there is an onsite limit of 1,000 people. Despite the amazing work of the fabulous teachers and staff, and the great assistance they receive from the P&C, we have a ridiculous situation where the school cannot hold a full assembly. They have to send half the school home so that they do not exceed the capacity. They bring in the parents, send that half out, bring the other half back and then bring their parents in. It is unbelievable negligence as a result of the poor planning and decision-making of the former Government.

Despite that negligence, now fully exposed by the audit, in under 12 months the Minns Labor Government has set about fixing the mess left by the Liberal-Nationals Coalition. The Government has committed to upgrading four primary schools, in Austral, Leppington, Prestons and West Hoxton. Eagle Vale High School is being converted into a specialist sports high school, and a new high school is being built in Leppington. Members will be relieved to know—but it will not come as a surprise—that those schools will not be built and upgraded on gas pipelines. It is not a good idea. That is on top of the Minns Labor Government's long-term investment to repair public education in Western Sydney and across the State.

There is a record investment of \$3.5 billion to build 24 and upgrade 51 public primary and high schools in Western Sydney alone. The Government is also investing \$769 million to build 100 new public preschools over the next three years. Again, that is a record investment by a New South Wales government. This includes five preschools in my electorate at Kearns, Robert Townson, Eschol Park, Greenway Park and Leppington primary schools. We are also committing an extra 243 support classes for students with a disability, making the New South Wales public education system more inclusive and accessible.

The Minns Labor Government is committed to building new and upgraded facilities to make sure that access to high-quality education is a right for every student in the State, no matter where they live. Targeted investment in growing communities is what is needed. Supported by this audit, we will continue to allocate investment wisely and effectively to ensure that families have access to world-class public education.

### **MOREE YOUTH CRIME**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (21:14):** A few weeks ago I welcomed Premier Chris Minns to Moree in the Northern Tablelands, where we met with local civic leaders, police, business owners, victims of crime, youth organisations, school students at a local school, and the Moree PCYC. The reason for the visit was the rising pressure from the community, its leaders and residents wanting urgent action to tackle the growing trend of youth crime, violence and anti-social behaviour.

I am pleased to inform the House that today, only weeks after that visit, the Premier responded to what he heard on the day and announced a major package of reforms backed by \$13.4 million worth of investment to tackle the growing tide of juvenile crime not just in Moree but also across regional New South Wales. The funding for Moree is huge. It is our first opportunity in a long time to reverse the growing trend of youth crime in our community. Moree is a wonderful, brilliant community with a bright future. It has some issues but they are solvable. It is my sincere hope and wish—and it will be what I am working towards—to make what the Premier has announced today work and make it as successful as possible.

I thank the Premier for listening to us and acting so quickly—simple things but something that is sometimes a rarity in politics these days. He is to be commended for that. I acknowledge the genuine way in which he has engaged and the work that he has done with me and mayor Mark Johnson and his council to make sure that the package announced today is bespoke, tangible and based on what the community wants, and suits the needs that we identified. That will be good. The legislation to toughen bail laws for young offenders is a crucial part of the package. The community and I fully support it.

The real game changer, though, will be the new \$8.75 million youth bail accommodation and support facility. We have never had access to such a facility before. It will give the courts and police more options when looking at bailing or sentencing young offenders. It ensures that when young offenders are bailed by either by the police or the local court, they are simply not put back on the streets to—statistically—reoffend in the community, because that is something that everyone has had a gutful of. Instead, they will be bailed to this facility where they will be held and where they will receive wraparound support services by a range of government departments and local community elders. Their families will also be able to visit them there.

The community will be safe because those people will not be on the streets. They will be supported and worked with before they appear in court. This alone will make a huge change but, combined with everything else, it is incredible. Sixty-three percent of the crime currently committed in Moree is by young people who are already on bail. This facility alone—and the tougher bail laws—could theoretically eliminate 63 per cent of the current crime in Moree immediately. That is a prospect that everyone very much looks forward to.

Under the new measures, there will be a second, experienced magistrate appointed to the Moree Local Court circuit, which will be brilliant. Over the next six months an action plan will be implemented to optimise service delivery in the Moree Plains Shire to ensure that the more than 70 government-funded organisations in Moree working for youth intervention actually deliver maximum benefit and are finally held to account for the money that they receive and the people they work with. It will ensure that when they work with other agencies there is collaboration, which, hand on heart, you could not say happens at the moment. There will be an out-of-hours activities trial to make sure we have more activities for young people not between 9.00 a.m. and 5.00 p.m. but after hours and on weekends. It is the same with government-funded service organisations. They will be made to offer those services after hours and on weekends when the community and the police need them to.

This is just a snapshot of a full range of programs. Again, I thank the community, the mayor and the Premier. We have some major challenges in Moree, but this is the beginning of solving them and turning the place around, which is something that everyone looks forward to. We know we have some challenges. We know we have Department of Communities and Justice caseworker vacancies—the highest number in the State. We have all sorts of issues, but this is the beginning of something positive and special, and I cannot wait to work with the community and the Government to make sure this is a success, because we cannot afford to fail.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 21:20 until  
Wednesday 13 March 2024 at 10:00.**

*Written Community Recognition Statements*

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

**VALE ERNEST (ERNIE) SCHMATT**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—Vale Ernest (Ernie) Schmatt AM PSM of Cronulla, who passed away on 23 February. Ernie was the Chief Executive of the Judicial Commission of NSW from 1989 until 2022. For services to judicial education and other remarkable public sector achievements, Ernie was awarded the Public Service Medal in 1997 and made a member of the Order of Australia in 2018 "For significant service to the law in the field of legal education and review, and through the use of technology to assist the judiciary." Before joining the Commission at its founding in 1987, Ernie held senior positions with the Nova Scotia-based Commonwealth Judicial Education Institute, the Asia Pacific Judicial Reform Forum and the International Organisation for Judicial Training. Under his leadership from 1989 the Commission became widely accepted by the legal fraternity, embodying peer-leadership and judicial independence as key elements. It became a model for similar organisations at home and internationally, recognised by Ernie's extensive international involvement across Asia. Ernie oversaw the Commission's operations, from managing finances to overseeing research, handling complaints, developing information systems and running education activities. I extend my condolences to his wife Helen, his family and his colleagues at the Judicial Commission.

**PALAWA KING**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—Mr Speaker, my support of the NSW greyhound breeding and training industry is well documented, so it is with pleasure I congratulate my constituents Jack Smith and Errol and Wendy Hughes on producing NSW's top dog – Palawa King. Bred at Forbes by the Hughes and trained there by Jack Smith, Palawa King was announced Greyhound Racing NSW's greyhound of the year for 2023 at a presentation at Wentworth Park last month. It's the second time in three years Jack's kennel has produced the state's top dog, with Jungle Deuce awarded the title in 2021. He also won the title with Irinka Barbie in 2004. A strapping black greyhound, Palawa King won three Group 1 races to secure the state award - the Queensland Cup at Albion Park in Queensland, and Victoria's Bold Trease at Sandown Park and National Distance Championship at the Meadows. Of 37 starts, Palawa King won 14 and placed 17 times across distances from 520m to 730m, proving his versatility. Mr Speaker, the Central West is a stronghold for the greyhound industry with the success of Palawa King's connections reinforcing this. I wish them further success - hopefully at Orange's proposed Centre of Excellence.

**DAN AND LANA NICHOLSON - TOPSOIL ORGANICS FORBES**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—Mr Speaker, I would like to draw your attention to the work being carried out by my constituents Dan and Lana Nicholson through their business Topsoil Organics and its Central

West Nutrient Return Centre. The recipients of Business NSW's excellence in sustainability award for 2023, Forbes' Topsoil Organics has a focus on zero waste to landfill by the end of this year, a lofty goal but one the couple believes can be achieved. The couple has a background in agriculture and soil science and is directing that knowledge towards pioneering a sustainable business model that takes excess supermarket organic produce and organic domestic bin waste to create healthy soil. In their \$4 million built-for-purpose shed, the Nicholsons are working towards turning the plastic packaging covering supermarket waste into a reclaimable resource, using black soldier fly larvae to clean that material. The goal is to turn the larvae into protein for pet food before they pupate. Mr Speaker, this is a dynamic and exciting business that demonstrates ingenuity and the Nicholson's courage to follow their ideals when it comes to true sustainability. I congratulate Dan and Lana Nicholson and wish them every success.

#### **PARIS CAPELL**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I would like to congratulate my constituent Paris Capell on breaking an almost 40-year drought for Orange in the Sydney Royal Easter Show's young woman final. Ms Capell is one of just three young women from Orange who have advanced to the Sydney finals where she will wear the district's distinctive orange sash with pride. It's been reported Orange's sash was previously worn in the Sydney finals in 1963 and 1986. Mentored by 2017 Orange Young Woman Tess Crossley, Ms Capell is now looking forward to the week-long finals where she will be interviewed, quizzed and judged as a candidate for the title of NSW Young Woman. Paris is also looking forward to the opportunity to put some of the challenges country communities face in front of the judges and industry leaders while involved in the competition. Formerly known as Orange Showgirl, the Young Woman competition produces wonderful ambassadors for rural communities, where agricultural shows remain a staple of country life. I congratulate Ms Capell on making the NSW final and wish her every success during the judging at this year's Royal Easter Show.

#### **RYDE COMMUNITY FORUM LUNAR YEAR CELEBRATIONS**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in congratulating the Ryde Community Forum for coordinating a vibrant 2024 Lunar New Year celebration in West Ryde! Despite some light rain - which I understand signifies fortune and plenty - the festivities began with the traditional eye-dotting ceremony, signifying the significance of the Year of the Dragon. The Dragon Dance followed, warding off evil spirits and paving the way for an array of performances by talented local artists. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the organising committee, led by Narelle Barker AM and Roseanna Gallo OAM, for whom there has never been an unsuccessful event! I also acknowledge the leadership of Forum Chairman Tony Tang who was successful in obtaining a City of Ryde grant for the occasion. With participants from diverse community groups, including the Chinese Australian Services Society and the Australian Buddhist Association, the festivities truly embodied unity and inclusivity. As we reflect on this year's festivities, we eagerly anticipate the continuation of this cherished tradition in 2025. Once again, congratulations to all involved for a day filled with joy, culture, and community spirit.

#### **MATA KI CHOWKI CELEBRATION 2024**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in congratulating the Indian Ocean Society of Australia on their exceptional Mata ki Chowki Celebration held at the West Ryde Community Hall. This devotional gathering - the first of its kind ever held in Ryde - was dedicated to seeking the blessings of the Goddess Durga, and showcased our community's rich cultural heritage. The event was a testament to the unity and harmony that define our multicultural community, bringing together people from diverse backgrounds to celebrate shared values and traditions. The singing and dancing performances were truly mesmerising, captivating the audience and creating an atmosphere of joy and reverence. I commend the organisers, Deepak Chauhan and Mayank Pahwa, and all the participants for their hard work and dedication in making this event a resounding success. By promoting cultural understanding and appreciation, events like the Mata ki Chowki Celebration contribute to building a more inclusive and cohesive community. As we mark Harmony Day in 2024, let us reflect on the importance of embracing diversity and fostering mutual respect and understanding. Together, we can create a society where everyone feels valued and respected, regardless of their cultural or religious background.

#### **DAPA 10TH ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Differently Abled People Association (DAPA)! Over the past decade, the Ryde community has been closely associated with this remarkable group, witnessing its unwavering dedication to enriching the lives of its members. DAPA's efforts to foster inclusivity and empowerment have been inspiring. They've continuously sought innovative ways to ensure that all individuals feel valued and included. Their commitment to enhancing the well-being of their members and the personal growth and empowerment that many have experienced is commendable and well worth recognising. As we reflect on the past decade, it's evident that DAPA's collective contributions

have significantly impacted our community. Their advocacy and support have helped break down barriers and promote a more inclusive society that we are all a part of and can be proud of. I want to extend my heartfelt appreciation to DAPA and its members for their work in the disability sector. Your perseverance, resilience, and dedication have made a difference in the lives of many. Here's to another decade of continued success and empowerment. Congratulations to DAPA President Vincent Yu, and his entire team on this remarkable milestone!

#### **LOCAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR AWARD**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—The Wollondilly nominee for the Local Woman of the Year Award is Nicole Smith of Mittagong. Nicole has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to the betterment of our community through her leadership and involvement in various organizations. Currently serving as the Chair of The Southern Highlands Community Foundation, Nicole has exhibited exceptional dedication to philanthropy and community development. As a Board member of the Southern Highlands Arts Fund and the Supporters of a Southern Highlands Regional Gallery, Nicole shows passion for promoting arts and culture in our community. Her commitment to the welfare of young people is evident through her role as a Board member of the BDCU Children's Foundation. As President of the Bowral Public School Council, Nicole has been active in fostering a positive educational environment for our local students. Nicole serves as the Vice President of Grow Southern Highlands, and has played a pivotal role in fostering sustainable practices and agricultural initiatives in our region. Nicole's contributions to our community make her an outstanding candidate for the Local Woman of the Year Award. Her leadership, dedication, and passion for making a positive impact contribute significantly to the betterment of our region.

#### **JULIE MCKINNERY - CRONULLA WOMAN OF THE YEAR**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I congratulate breast cancer fundraising and advocacy powerhouse Julie McKinnery of Caringbah, who is the 2024 Cronulla Woman of the Year. Having fought breast cancer twice herself, Julie is the passionate host of the annual "Julie's Biggest Pink Breakfast", which has so far raised more than \$75,000 for the National Breast Cancer Foundation. Julie has shown extraordinary leadership and advocacy through her commitment to the fight against breast cancer and her ability to rally the support of the community. I've been to her annual breakfast events where Julie creates a vibrant social gathering featuring activities such as donations, raffles, silent auctions, and lucky door prizes to help raise money to support the fight against breast cancer. In the 12 months between each breakfast, Julie works away gathering donations from local businesses. Julie's efforts extend beyond fundraising as she works to helping others facing similar challenges. She promotes the need for regular testing and is known for her colourful slogans like "Chicks Check Ya Tits" and "Lads Check Your Nads" that help nudge people into action. Julie's enthusiasm and passion for the cause is infectious and I congratulate her on this well-deserved award.

#### **KAYE HERALD- CRONULLA SENIOR OF THE YEAR**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I congratulate Kaye Herald on being named the 2024 Cronulla Senior of the Year. Kaye serves as a board member and chair of Gynea Community Aid and Information Service [GCAIS], which does wonderful work providing information and associated support services to the general community, seniors, and people from culturally diverse backgrounds. After joining the GCAIS committee in 2016, Kaye stepped up to lead its board in 2019. She has worked hard with her fellow board members and staff to grow and strengthen the organisation for the benefit of its clients and the GCAIS team. Kaye is appreciated for her hands on and inclusive leadership, as she mentors and provides direction to fellow board members, while at the same time supporting the business and taking an active interest in the services delivered. Kaye is a significant contributor to our community, giving her time to lead an organisation that is making a difference to the lives of people. I congratulate Kaye on her contribution to GCAIS and on being recognised for the volunteer work she does as a valued senior in our community.

#### **BERRIMA DISTRICT SPORTS AWARDS 2023 WINNERS**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—Presented at the Mittagong RSL on the 23rd February, the Berrima District Sporting awards recognise excellence in a wide field of sporting pursuits. Zoe Newman of the Hockeyroos was an inspirational guest speaker on this night celebrating the skill and passion of local sportspeople of all ages. The winner of the Junior Team was Southern Highlands Storm Junior Rugby League Under 16 Team. Robertson 1st Grade Lady's Hockey Team was the winner of the Senior Team category. The Representative Team was won by the Under 18 Southern Highlands Division 4 Girls Field State Champions. Recognising upcoming talents in the very popular sport of hockey in Wollondilly is the School Team winner, Bowral Public School's Girls Hockey Team. The prestigious Alex MacLean Memorial Club Person of the Year award winner for services in sport in our community was awarded to Renee Lewis, Southern Highlands Netball Association President. For 2023, the Keith Williams Senior Sportsperson of the Year Award was presented to Emma O'Sullivan a true talent in a range

of sports including mountain running, marathons, plus athletics including steeplechase. The 2023 Junior Sportsperson winner is Phonenix Sparke, for Cross country skiing. Congratulations to all.

#### **MURAL CELEBRATING HILL TOP RFS MEMBERS**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—Wollondilly residents are delighted to see the completion of a mural on the wall of Hilltop Rural Fire Service shed, celebrating the brigade's longest serving volunteers John Matters and Brian Coates. Their combined commitment spans over 70 years, including their assistance in building the brigade's first tin shed, along with the subsequent shed which is used today. Both John and Brian have proven their dedication over the years, notably during the 2000-2001 bushfires. They drove bulldozers in the night from Buxton to Hill Top to clear crucial paths for backburning operations, ensuring the safety of countless lives and properties. During the devastating 2019 - 2020 fires they worked again to clear vital control lines, with Brian stationed at Hill Top and John at Colo Vale. The mural, painted by artist Samuel Hall, is a tribute to and celebration of the people who make the organisation what it is. Brian and John are both mentors and an inspiration to the RFS. Their selfless contributions embody the essence of community service, and this mural will serve as a reminder of the people whose dedication and service make our communities both safer and stronger.

#### **PYPER MARCHANT - NSW GOVERNMENT STATE REPRESENTATIVE AWARDS**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—I would like to recognise today an incredible athlete from the Castle Hill Electorate. Pyper Marchant attends Castle Hill High School and actively participates in many of her school's sports as well as representing NSW and Australia in many Rugby Union competitions. Pyper has recently received five awards NSW Government State Representative Awards. The five awards were: (1) 2022 Australian Schools Rugby Youth 7's U17 Girls Championship; (2) 2023 Australian Schools Rugby Emerging 7's U15 Girls Championships; (3) 2023 Australian Schools Rugby U18 Girls Championships; (4) 2022 School Sport Australia 15 years Touch Football Championships, and (5) 2022 Australian Schools Rugby U16 Girls Championships. Pyper has put in a lot of time and effort into training and preparing herself for the competitions. Last year she was picked to be in the Australian School's Rugby Union first ever Australian Schoolgirls Sevens Team. The team competed in the Global Youth Sevens tournament and won. I recognise Pyper Marchant for her sporting achievements. I extend my own congratulations to Pyper for the significant work to achieve such outstanding sporting achievements. Well done.

#### **CAMERON BATEY - NSW GOVERNMENT STATE REPRESENTATIVE AWARDS**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—I would like to recognise and congratulate a recipient of the NSW Government State Representative Award. Cameron Batey is from the Castle Hill Electorate and attended Baulkham Hills North Public School until 2023 and has now moved on to Model Farms High School. Last year Cameron competed in the School Sport Australia Cross Country Championships 2023. Cameron was part of the NSW Primary School Sports Association Cross Country Team and competed in the 11 years Boys Cross Country event. He finished 9th in the individual event and won gold for NSW in both the teams' event and the relay. Congratulations to Cameron Batey for his hard work and dedication to cross country and for being part of the team representing New South Wales at the School Sport Australia Cross Country Championships. Congratulations, as well, on receiving the NSW State Representative Award, it was well deserved, and I look forward to seeing what you do next.

#### **JOAN STAMMERS - THE CHAMPION CAMPING CATASTROPHE**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—I recognise Joan Stammers who is resident of the Castle Hill Electorate. Joan recently launched her first Children's book titled "The Champion Camping Catastrophe". The book details the camping adventures of the Champion family. The family who migrated from the United Kingdom decided on a camping adventure. The adventure saw the family encounter snakes, leeches, deluge of rain, lightning, fires as well as a flat car battery. Having been born in the United Kingdom herself, her perspective on the oddness of the Australian wilderness offers Australians a curious insight into our sun-burnt country. The moral to the story is through adversity the family became closer and a better family because of their joint experience. Joan wrote the book 30 years ago but was unsuccessful in getting the book published. After her retirement from teaching, she joined Friends of Hills Libraries and was inspired to revisit the script. I am sure many children who will love reading the adventures of the Champion family. Joan has generously donated copies of her book to the Hills Shire Council libraries. Thank you, Joan, for your wonderful storytelling. It is wonderful to see your dream come true.

#### **LOCAL MAYORS, GENERAL MANAGERS, COUNCILLORS MEET MINISTER HOENIG**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I had the pleasure last month of hosting NSW Minister for Local Government and Leader of the House in the Legislative Assembly Ron Hoenig for his first official visit to the Northern Rivers region. Local mayors, general managers and councillors from eight general purpose councils and

the bulk water authority Rous County Council met at Ballina Council Chambers to discuss disaster preparedness and recovery, and issues related to the local government portfolio. Leaders represented were Cr Steve Krieg and GM Jon Gibbons (Lismore City Council), Cr Kylie Webster (Kyogle Council); Cr Bronwyn Petrie and Interim Chief Executive Glenn Wilcox (Tenterfield Shire Council); Cr Chris Cherry and GM Troy Green (Tweed Shire Council); Cr Michael Lyon and GM Mark Arnold (Byron Shire Council); Cr Sharon Cadwallader and GM Paul Hickey (Ballina Shire Council); Cr Robert Mustow and GM Vaughan Macdonald (Richmond Valley Council); Cr Jeff Smith (Deputy Mayor Clarence Valley Council) and Phillip Rudd (General Manager Rous County Council and Executive Officer Northern Rivers Joint Organisation). I take this opportunity to congratulate Byron mayor Cr Michael Lyon on his election as chair of the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation and of Rous County Council.

#### **PREMIER'S AWARD GOES TO CASINO HIGH STUDENT IZZY MILLER**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—It was great to visit Casino High School in my colleague Richie Williamson's neighbouring Electorate of Clarence to see NSW Premier Chris Minns personally award his first Premier's Award to Year 9 student Isabelle 'Izzy' Miller. The prestigious award honours Izzy's bravery in preventing a major bus crash in Casino on 22 November 2023. CCTV footage captured Ms Miller jumping into the empty driver's seat, steering the bus away from petrol bowsers, pedestrians and other vehicles just moments before impact. Miraculously, her actions brought the bus to a safe stop with all passengers unharmed. The runaway bus, which was full of about 20 local students, had begun moving after the bus driver had stepped out from the vehicle. Premier Minns praised 14-year-old Izzy for showing courage and judgment well beyond her years, setting an example for others and inspiring people around New South Wales. I too salute Izzy Miller for her quick thinking and selflessness in saving multiple lives on that day. The NSW Premier's Award is issued at the Premier's discretion. While there are no published criteria for this award, it recognises significant contributions or achievements by individuals or groups.

#### **CLOSURE OF CHARITABLE ORGANISATION GILCHRIST FOUNDATION**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—Stan Gilchrist recently informed me that he was closing the family's charitable organisation Gilchrist Foundation due to health, location and workload pressures. I would like to pay tribute to Stan and his wife June for their wonderful work with underprivileged young Aussies. The Gilchrists are the proud parents of former international wicketkeeper-batsman Adam Gilchrist AM, now a cricket commentator and in-demand public speaker. The couple met through their university studies, enabled because they had both been awarded Teachers' College Scholarships. They understood hardship and family sacrifice, but especially the importance of educational scholarships as a pathway. Gilchrist Foundation's motto was "We Find, we Fund and we Foster" and they have done all of these things. Over the past three years, Gilchrist Foundation was engaged throughout Australia via its Tertiary Studies Program and its other welfare, educational and sporting activities. Its mission was to assist disadvantaged youth to further their education and life skills, including through financial assistance, active engagement and mentoring. The Foundation has given life-changing opportunities to no less than 11 recipients, a great achievement. Stan Gilchrist has been working with Lord's Taverners Northern NSW to maintain all of Gilchrist Foundation's continuing scholarships.

#### **CENTRAL COAST U16 FEMALE REPRESENTATIVE CRICKET TEAM**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)**—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge the Central Coast U16's Female Representative Cricket Team for their outstanding performance in the McDonalds Country Cricket NSW U16 Female Country Championships. The Country Championships is an annual event where eight female representative cricket teams from across New South Wales participate in a 40-overs-a-side tournament. This year the U16 teams travelled to Queanbeyan to compete across three challenging days. The Central Coast team won all preliminary rounds in the competition where they demonstrated their incredible skill and teamwork on the field. The squad further took out an historic victory in the final against the Newcastle side. Central Coast displayed unmatched talent with the bat and ball, bowling Newcastle out for 73 runs in 17 overs. Congratulations girls on your fantastic effort and dedication, you are a credit to your community.

#### **EMERSON LEADBETTER**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)**—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Emerson Leadbetter for her performance at the 2024 Australian Interstate Surf Life Saving Championships at Maroubra Surf Life Saving Club. The Australian Interstate Championship is an annual event that sees Australia's best lifesavers compete in ocean and beach lifesaving events to battle it out for the National Champions title. Emerson from Swansea-Belmont Surf Life Saving Club represented the New South Wales Team in the competition and was instrumental in assisting the state being crowned Australian Interstate Champions. Emerson triumphed at the competition, taking out 2nd in U17s Flags, 1st in the Mixed Beach Relay and 4th in Mixed Taplin. Emerson has been a member of Swansea-Belmont Surf

Life Saving Club since U6s and has continuously proven her skill, passion and dedication to the club through attending weekend nippers and competing in numerous surf lifesaving events and contests. Congratulations Emerson on your outstanding performance, you are a credit to your club and community.

#### **KAITLIN REES**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)**—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Kaitlin Rees for her performance at the 2024 Australian Interstate Surf Life Saving Championships at Maroubra Surf Life Saving Club. The Australian Interstate Championship is an annual event that sees Australia's best lifesavers compete in ocean and beach lifesaving events to battle it out for the National Champions title. Kaitlin from Swansea-Belmont Surf Life Saving Club represented the New South Wales Team in the competition and was instrumental in assisting the state being crowned Australian Interstate Champions. Kaitlin triumphed at the competition, taking out 1st in the U17s Board race, 2nd in the Ski Race, 1st in the Mixed Board Relay and 1st in the Mixed Ski Relay. Kaitlin has been a member of Swansea-Belmont Surf Life Saving Club since U6s and has continuously proven her skill, passion and dedication to the club through attending weekend nippers and competing in numerous surf lifesaving events and contests. Congratulations Kaitlin on your outstanding performance, you are a credit to your club and community.

#### **JACKSON WALSH**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to congratulate Jackson Walsh, an active member of the Warilla Barrack Point Surf Life Saving Club, for being awarded the Young Citizen of the Year 2024 at the Shellharbour Community Awards which were held on 17 January 2024 at the Civic Centre, Shellharbour City Centre. Jackson has completed over 150 hours of voluntary surf patrol and dedicates his time, passion and expertise to provide water safety for the nippers and coaches the juniors. He coached the Warilla Barrack Point SLSC Pool Rescue Teams to compete at the NSW State and Australian Pool Rescue Championships, where the team successfully won medals at all levels. He has been a successful competitor at NSW Country, State and Australian Championships. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Jackson on his award and wish him well in his future endeavours.

#### **MARTY NICHOLS**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to congratulate Marty Nichols, from Shell Cove, for receiving the NSW Ambulance Service Medal in the January 2024 honours. From his days as a regional NSW paramedic, the Shell Cove resident has worked as an intensive care paramedic, then in rescue and special operations and as a critical care helicopter paramedic. Five years were spent as a critical care paramedic educator before he was appointed to a clinical leadership role during the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr Nichols believes it is for his work during the pandemic that he was awarded the Ambulance Service Medal in this year's January 26 honours. Over his 23-year career, Mr Nichols hasn't stopped learning, completing three bachelor degrees (including nursing and law), three graduate certificates and two masters. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Marty on his very well deserved NSW Ambulance Service Medal and wish him well in his future endeavours.

#### **LARRY HOW**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to congratulate Larry How, from Shell Cove, for being awarded the Citizen of the Year 2024 at the Shellharbour Community Awards which were held on 17 January 2024 at the Civic Centre, Shellharbour City Centre. Larry actively supports fellow veterans in the community as the President of the Albion Park RSL Sub-Branch. He is also the Secretary of The Links Shell Cove golf club and has significantly contributed to the success of the facility through his support and mentorship over the past 14 years. He is the Director of New Generations for the Rotary Club of Shellharbour, responsible for youth programs including youth exchange. He has also served as the President of the Rotary Club of Shellharbour and District President and has received three prestigious Paul Harris Awards, recognising his service to the community in fundraising. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Larry on his award and wish him well in his future endeavours.

#### **JAMES CORCORAN RETIRING PRINCIPAL**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)**—I rise to recognise the service of James Corcoran, outgoing Principal of Good Samaritan Catholic College in Hinchinbrook in my electorate. Mr Corcoran is moving on having been in the role since 2019. His time at Good Sam has success across all fields of school life including academic, sporting and spiritual endeavours. His tenure also oversaw the difficult period of the pandemic. However, his leadership ensured that parish and school life continued through the introduction of online masses, graduation and information nights. I had the opportunity to thank Mr Corcoran in person at the Good Samaritan Awards Evening in December. A night that not only recognised the outstanding achievements of the students of Good Sam but was

a testament to the legacy of Mr James Corcoran. As the school Term 4 newsletter succinctly put it: "his legacy of leadership, guidance, and dedication will forever remain etched in the fabric of our school." I thank him for his service and wish him all the best in his future endeavours.

#### **JOHN EDMONDSON HIGH SCHOOL GLENFIELD PRINCIPAL NETWORK AWARDS**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)**—I might be biased but schools in Leppington are home to the best teachers in our state. This was put on full display as John Edmondson High School in Horningsea Park hosted the Glenfield Principal Network Awards. While I congratulate all the winners and nominees, I would like to pay special thanks to the winners from my neck of the woods. Four of John Edmondson's teachers were honoured for their dedication to delivering a world-class education to our kids. Chris Griffiths won an award for Classroom Teacher; Alex Teuma was successful in the Early Career Teacher category; the Executive Teacher Award was given to Kimmy Tran and Reagan Farrell won an award for her administration. Our State's amazing teachers and education staff deserve our thanks and appreciation for the important work they do with the next generation. As a parent with two children in the public system, it's reassuring to see schools and staff like John Edmondson justly rewarded.

#### **BAPS KEMPS CREEK**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)**—On Friday 20 October, I, along with the Member for Liverpool, paid a visit to the construction site of the new BAPS Hindu Mandir and Cultural Precinct in Kemps Creek. This new precinct, set on a 25-acre site, will be the largest in Australia and New Zealand upon completion. The precinct will include a temple, assembly and dining halls, and a children's playground. The impressive size and scale of the temple is only fitting for our Western Sydney region, whose rich multicultural character includes many of the Hindu faith. This grand place of worship, in close proximity to the Western Sydney Airport, will be a significant feature for both locals and those travelling to Sydney. It was also a fitting venue to host many of the festivals BAPS hold throughout the year that attract thousands. Thank you to the construction team at the site and BAPS members for showing us around, I look forward to returning to see this important cultural precinct upon completion.

#### **LAKE MACQUARIE HIGH SCHOOL LEADERS**

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)**—I would like to extend my congratulations to the six Lake Macquarie High School students who have been elected chosen as its 2024 school leaders. For the first time since 2014, Lake Macquarie High School has extended its leadership team to include two prefects, reflecting the school's growing strength and presence in the community. The 2024 school captains are Kiara Scrimshaw and Keagan Vowels, two students who have been regarded as leaders amongst their peer group for many years, demonstrating academic excellence and strong engagement with the community and representing the school at events including ANZAC and Remembrance Day services. Samara Petersen and Ashley Hartin have been elected as vice captains and bring their positive outlook and responsible application to all aspects of their schooling, driving their fellow students in demonstrating citizenship. Sean Kokany and Luca Davids are the school's prefects and have been elected as two young leaders who promote positive community values, championing empathy and a respectful approach to all. I have no doubt that these young leaders will do their very best for the school community and provide a brilliant example for their fellow students.

#### **CHARLTON CHRISTIAN COLLEGE LEADERS 2024**

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)**—I would like to extend my congratulations to the newly elected student leaders at Charlton Christian College. The 2024 Senior School Student Leadership team includes Jacob Ashley Brown, Vienna Chalmers, Abbey Craig, Liam Hyslop, Mia Hyslop and Mia Lozanovski. Middle School Student Leaders include Jakob Callaghan, Jameson Duvollet, Niamh Faithful, Caitlyn Hergenhan, Kayley Ponga and Xavier Sweeney. Junior School Student Leaders are Abbi Grainger, Jack Kennedy, Zoe Mathieson, Ruby Sendjirdjian, Ethan Snell and Logan Wallace. Charlton Christian College's Primary Sports Captains are Willow Panek and Cody Orchard for Liddell, Marli Grainger and Dexter Cole for Booth, and Elijah Liebrechts and Liam Charters for Court. The Secondary Sports Captains are Walter Chapman and Annalise Wilton for Liddell, Avalon Woodward and Jonvi Dendaluce for Booth and Marcus Manev and Olivia Hawgood for Court. Congratulations to all these wonderful students who have received a clear vote of confidence by their teachers and peers in their ability to lead the school throughout 2024.

#### **TORONTO HIGH SCHOOL LEADERS**

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)**—Year 11 students at Toronto High School had their first taste of politics late last year when they engaged in a vigorous election process for the highly coveted positions on the school 2024 leadership team. I would like to congratulate the successful candidates, who are said to embodying the school's motto, Remis Insurgite; Rise to Your Oars. Each of these students have shown great dedication and

commitment to their new roles and strive to set the highest example in leading the student body. Ben McLean and Shakira Yates are the School Captains, William Roberts and Cooper Walsh are Vice Captains, Amy Duncum and Lejla Taborin are Senior Prefects, while Kalani Faapoi, Yolanda Laguna, Haze Mathews, Christopher Olde and Bella Smith have been endorsed as Prefects. Sports Captains and Vice Captains were elected at the start of this year. Leading Endeavour are Maggie Halbesma, Dakota Gibbons, Ella Hawke and Cameron Gawn. Leading Victory are Bella Smith, Thomas Smith, Bailey Urquhart and Hayden Waters. Leading Sirius are Charli Rooker, Benjamin Mclean, Yolanda Laguna, and Mason Rew. Leading Argo are Blake Clifton, Tjanari Briggs, Jesse-James Castray, and Mitchell Bubendey.

#### **TAFE KINGSWOOD'S NEW CONSTRUCTION INSTITUTE**

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney)**—In February, the new Institute of Applied Technology for Construction was opened by the Hon. Steve Whan MP, Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education, at Kingswood TAFE. The new institute encourages individuals to undertake a career in trade and enables current workers to up-skill and expand their qualifications. The facility contains a civil construction sandpit and large workshop spaces for students to practice the trades of carpentry, plumbing, engage in electrotechnology training and many other practical activities. The industry of trade is a vital asset that contributes to the betterment of society. The new institute will give more people to chance fruitfully contribute to our growing society right in the heart of Western Sydney. This is a great investment in tertiary education and will only benefit my local community.

#### **TUMBATREK AND TUMBAFEST 2024**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to acknowledge the event organisers of Tumbatrek, an annual gathering that pays tribute to the visionary leadership of The Late Hon. Tim Fischer to promote this region. Tumbatrek brings together a network of politicians, business operators and locals in the heart of the country, providing a unique opportunity to immerse in discussions, walking together on Ngarigo land, showcased by the beauty of the region. Tumbatrek is a tribute to tourism, to the life of the softwood industry, beef production and local prosperity over the decades. Additionally, I would like to express my gratitude to the organisers of the Bendigo Bank Tumbafest, including coordinator Karly Fynn, President Tamika Hoffman, and to all the volunteers involved. Despite the challenges posed by the cost of living, this year's event welcomed 3000 visitors who enjoyed the picturesque Creekscape in Tumbarumba, along with tastings of local wine and a variety of food stalls. Together, these events showcased the vibrant spirit and resilience of our Tumbarumba community, bringing people together. Thank you for your invaluable contributions to our regional community.

#### **AWECC MULTICULTURAL EVENT**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to acknowledge the Albury Wodonga Ethnic Communities Council (AWECC) for organising the Border Multicultural Family Friendly event, held on Saturday, February 10, at the Albury Botanical Gardens. The event was a celebration of vibrant multiculturalism on the border, showcasing the best of our diverse community. The audience was captivated by performances of singing, dancing and drumming performed by Bhutanese, Filipino, Vietnamese, Indian and First Nations representatives. This event provided a platform for our community to come together in laughter, music and dancing. Our inclusive city of Albury-Wodonga plays a crucial role in strengthening, promoting and understanding and appreciating the diverse heritage of our nation. I was grateful to be part of this joyous occasion and to be part of the opening of this event. I commend AWECC for promoting unity in our community.

#### **BRAD FERRIS TO HAVE PLENTY OF DAYS OFF AS HE DEPARTS COUNCIL**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to acknowledge Brad Ferris, Deputy Chief Executive of Albury City Council, who will be retiring after 35 years of dedicated service to his city. Mr Ferris has had a pivotal role in the development and growth of Albury since 1988. He has overseen significant projects such as the Nexus Industrial hub, revitalisation of the Albury Entertainment Centre and Convention Centre and the expansion of Albury airport. Brad's leadership skills have been instrumental in forging Albury into a vibrant and thriving regional city, making it a beautiful place to live and work. I thank Brad for his commitment and for his caring manner over this long term of service to the community. Brad, best wishes to you for an enjoyable retirement.

#### **PELLEGRINO HAIRDRESSING**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I wish to acknowledge and recognise the incredible work of one of Kogarah's most famous small businesses, Pellegrino Hairdressing. Run by Sam and Mary Pellegrino for almost 40 years, Pellegrino Hairdressing has been a symbol of stability and homeliness for our local community. Opening in 1984, Sam and Mary have devoted their life to the salon, which has been Hurstville and the surrounding areas longest running hairdresser. Throughout the years, the business has seen and endured several changes to the local area. Famously, Sam's brave defiance to continue operating past 1 pm changed the history of

trading hours forever. It resulted in a case that set the precedent to enable hairdressers and bakers to continue operating past this time. While this was a landmark case, the real legacy of Pellegrino Hairdressing will be the generations of families that have walked through the doors of 334 Forest Road, the stories that have been shared and the memories that have been made. I want to thank the Pellegrino family for their lifetime of service to our local community and I wish them good health, happiness and peace of mind for the future.

#### **EUNICE AMOS (100TH BIRTHDAY)**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I would like to congratulate and extend my best wishes to Eunice Amos for a very happy 100th Birthday. Eunice was born in Carlton NSW on March 27th 1924. She lived there with her family until she married her husband, Stanley Amos. Together, the couple built a house in Camperdown where they had their first son, Thomas. A few years later, Mrs Amos and her husband moved and built a house in Beverley Hills where they had two more children. To this day, Eunice still lives in the same house in Beverley Hills where she enjoys excellent health with only a little support. In addition to her three children, Eunice's family has now grown to include six grandchildren as well as two great grandchildren. Sadly, Stanley died in 2015 at the age of 96. I wish Eunice the happiest of days on her 100th birthday as well as good health, happiness and peace of mind for the future for her and her family.

#### **ANNIE ZHANG (GEORGES RIVER ART PRIZE)**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I would like to recognise and congratulate young local artist Annie Zhang for winning the 2024 Georges River Favourite Young Artist Choice Prize. The Georges River Art Prize is a biennial national art competition that provides a platform for visual artists in the local community to showcase their finest work. The Favourite Young Artist Prize features local young artists aged 7-17, who can submit drawings or paintings for exhibition with visitors casting their votes over the course of the exhibition. Annie won the Favourite Young Artist Prize taking home the sought after \$100 prize for her artwork 'Quiet snowy night.' Quiet snowy night is an acrylic painting of a snowy village at night, composed of shades of cool blue that contrast the warm yellow light of each house's window. The composition of this painting portrays a peaceful atmosphere of the snowy night with yellow lights and is very picturesque. This achievement is a testament to Annie's budding artistic talent and dedication to her craft so I would like to commend her on this amazing achievement.

#### **NORWEST CHRISTIAN COLLEGE 2024 SCHOOL LEADERS**

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone)**—Mr Speaker, today I rise to acknowledge and extend my heartfelt congratulations to Jemma Hubbard and Josiah Viray on their successful election as school captains and to Olivia Keegan and Oliver Harriot on their appointments as vice-captains at Norwest Christian College in Riverstone. Their election reflects the trust and confidence their peers and teachers have put in their leadership abilities. As they enter the new roles, I encourage them to remember the importance of leading with integrity, empathy, and inclusivity. Their dedication to serving the school community will undoubtedly leave a lasting impact and inspire those around them. Together, as a team, they can make positive changes, foster unity, and create memorable experiences for everyone at Norwest Christian College. To the new leaders, embrace this opportunity with enthusiasm and determination and know that you have the support of your fellow students, teachers, and staff behind you. Congratulations once again on this well-deserved achievement. Wishing you all the best as you embark on this exciting journey of leadership and service.

#### **ST JOHN 23RD COLLEGE 2024 SCHOOL LEADERS**

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone)**—Mr Speaker, today I rise to acknowledge and extend my heartfelt congratulations to Jyotsna Kannapat Joseph and Lucas Smith on their successful election as school captains and to Sena Odago and Harper Szot on their appointments as vice-captains at St John 23rd College in Stanhope Gardens. Their election reflects the trust and confidence their peers and teachers have put in their leadership abilities. As they enter the new roles, I encourage them to remember the importance of leading with integrity, empathy, and inclusivity. Their dedication to serving the school community will undoubtedly leave a lasting impact and inspire those around them. Together, as a team, they can make positive changes, foster unity, and create memorable experiences for everyone at St John 23rd College. To the new leaders, embrace this opportunity with enthusiasm and determination and know that you have the support of your fellow students, teachers, and staff behind you. Congratulations once again on this well-deserved achievement. Wishing you all the best as you embark on this exciting journey of leadership and service.

#### **WYNDHAM COLLEGE 2024 SCHOOL LEADERS**

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone)**—Mr Speaker, today I rise to acknowledge and extend my heartfelt congratulations to Kiara Fleming and Walid Geda on their successful election as school captains and to Christine Douglas and Atharv Javajal on their appointments as Vice Captains at Wyndham College in Quakers Hill. Their

election reflects the trust and confidence their peers and teachers have put in their leadership abilities. As they enter the new roles, I encourage them to remember the importance of leading with integrity, empathy, and inclusivity. Their dedication to serving the school community will undoubtedly leave a lasting impact and inspire those around them. Together, as a team, they can make positive changes, foster unity, and create memorable experiences for everyone at Wyndham College. To the new leaders, embrace this opportunity with enthusiasm and determination and know that you have the support of your fellow students, teachers, and staff behind you. Congratulations once again on this well-deserved achievement. Wishing you all the best as you embark on this exciting journey of leadership and service.

### **HSC DISTINGUISHED ACHIEVERS 2023**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I was proud to recently celebrate Badgerys Creek's 2023 Higher School Certificate [HSC] Distinguished Achievers by holding a morning tea in their honour. These accomplished students attained an HSC result of 90 or above in a particular course of study, with many of them having excelled in multiple courses. I congratulate each of the 148 students in my electorate who achieved Distinguished Achiever status for their remarkable efforts and results. At the morning tea, I was pleased to hear the students as they spoke about their future ambitions. I have no doubt in their ability to achieve their goals; their HSC results are a testament to their intellect, drive and discipline. I acknowledge and commend their teachers, parents and carers' dedication and commitment to their education. I wish these HSC Distinguished Achievers future success and encourage them to continue striving towards their maximum potential in their journey ahead.

### **AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS LIFE BLOOD**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I rise to thank and commend Australian Red Cross Lifeblood for the important work they do in providing life-giving blood, plasma, transplantation and biological products for world-leading health outcomes. I extend my strong appreciation to donors for their selfless contributions and saving of lives. In December 2023, I had the pleasure of knowing that my 41st blood donation would help at least 3 people. The recipients of blood donations include people who have a chronic disease, suffered burns, are fighting cancer, experienced trauma or had surgery. Mr Speaker, I take this opportunity to encourage those who can donate but are not yet donors to consider joining the donor community. It is quick and relatively easy. I encourage those who are donors to check whether they are due to donate again. Whilst life may be busy, there is no greater investment of time than that which saves lives, particularly noting that being a donor does not take much time at all.

### **USMAN KHAWAJA**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I rise to congratulate cricket superstar and former Erskine Park local and St Clair Hawks junior Usman Khawaja for being named the 2023 ICC Men's Test Cricketer of the Year after scoring 1210 runs, including three centuries, at an average of 52.60. Mr Khawaja was the only batter to score 1000 Test runs in the 2023 calendar year. These are just a few of many extraordinary achievements throughout Usman's career. He was a member of the Australian team that won the 2021-2023 ICC World Test Championship and was the second-highest scoring batsman in that Championship with 1,621 runs, the highest by an Australian batsman. It was in August 2021 that I stood right here to congratulate Usman on being named the tenth ever captain of Sydney Thunder ahead of that Big Bash League season. I am so proud to again be standing here congratulating Usman as his cricketing career continues to soar to new heights. I thank Usman for being an inspiration to all and for doing our region and country proud.

### **BANKSTOWN SPORTS WOMEN'S CRICKET CLUB**

**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 Bankstown Sports Women's Cricket Club on their first win of the season. I want to extend my congratulations to these inspiring young ladies for showing the community that you should always do something you love and put in the time and dedication required to develop. They aim to have more females join a male-dominated sport and show their talents to the community. Bankstown Sports Women's Cricket Club was founded in 1972, and it provides young girls and women the chance to learn and play the emerging sport of women's cricket. They offer so many opportunities for these young females including free coaching by qualified coaches and excellent training facilities. They are also very inclusive and want more females to join and give cricket a go. Bankstown Sports is one of the strongest women's cricket clubs in Sydney. I extend my thanks to the Bankstown Sports Women's Cricket Club coaches for their amazing work and dedication to getting their team to where they are now. It is great to see this incredible work and talent shown within the Bankstown electorate. Well done ladies on your hard work!

### SUMMER DRIZZLE - BOOK LAUNCH

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—Antoine Kazzi is a highly regarded award-winning journalist and author of eighteen books who advocates for peace and harmony. During his long journey in the media, he focused on reinforcing cooperation between Australia and the Arab world. He has written over 5000 articles in which he pinpoints the necessity of social harmony in Australia, encouraging the Arabic communities to actively involve themselves in mainstream society and promote social harmony while respecting the law in Australia. He received praise for publishing the first encyclopedia of distinguished Lebanese Australians titled 'Brilliant Faces' – for which he received twelve awards, including an award from the Premier of New South Wales and the Lebanese President Michel Suleiman. Throughout the years Antoine has achieved many successful awards and achievements. It all started in 2011 when Antoine was appointed as coordinator of the Lebanese Youth Parliament by the Lebanese Consultative Committee (LCC). This year Antoine will be celebrating 30 years as Editor-in-Chief of El-Telegraph News Paper. Once again congratulations to Antoine Kazzi on the many amazing achievements that he has accomplished throughout the years and for his unwavering work in the Bankstown community.

### SCHOOL WINS AWARD FOR LIBRARY GIFT DOCUMENTARY

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—Congratulations to St Euphemia College Bankstown on their award-winning school library award documentary. St Euphemia College students filmed a documentary about transforming two shipping containers into libraries for struggling communities. This documentary has won 'Best Outreach Film' at the Helsinki Education Film Festival International. Created by filmmaker Chris Spyrou, 'Changemakers' came about last year when the students heard about how the floods in Lismore were impacting education and that an under-resourced school in India, with one teacher for over 200 students, had no access to literature. It was through a partnership between St Euphemia College and online learning platform UpSchool.co in February 2022, that facilitated the transformation and delivery of the libraries complete with desks, stationery, whiteboards, laptops, and books at the end of 2022. The documentary created by Changemakers won because the message of the project reached out to humanity, effortlessly inspired change, and showed incredible heart. I would like to thank Mr Spyrou for the hard work and dedication that he put into creating this film. Once again, congratulations to St Euphemia for their amazing work and the strong message that they portrayed within the documentary.

### EMILY HINES

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker, I would like to congratulate Emily Hines of Dubbo who has recently been named in the NSW team to contest the National Track titles. Emily was recently part of the Dubbo Cycle Club contingent who participated in the Under 15 and 17 NSW Track Championships held in Sydney. Emily produced sensational results in Sydney, showcasing her remarkable endurance and determination in both individual and team events, bringing home an impressive collection of gold, silver, and bronze medals. It was after Emily and her teammates secured silver in the Under 17's Girls Team Sprint event that Emily's selection in the NSW Team was announced. The National Track Titles will be held in March at the Anna Meares velodrome in Brisbane. I would like to wish Emily all the best with her preparations as she fine tunes her skills for the upcoming National titles, building on the success of the NSW State Titles campaign. With her dedication, talent, and determination, I have no doubt that Emily will continue to make her mark on the national stage.

### JASON DEARMER

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker, I would like to congratulate Dubbo's Jason Dearmer on his outstanding commitment to fundraising for the NSW Cancer Council. Jason has been working behind the scenes of the Dubbo Stars of Dubbo since its inception, and in April will take the stage himself for the first time and is currently in training under the expert guidance of Kalitha Huggett from Urban Edge. He is a long-time volunteer with the Cancer Council and knows only too well how the money from the event will go to helping those in need. Jason's wife, father and grandfather have all been impacted by cancer, as well as having friends diagnosed with the disease. Jason has taken part in Relay for Life, Biggest Morning Tea and Daffodil Day and now, coming out from behind the scenes and into the spotlight is another fundraiser bucket list item ticked off. He has an interesting combination of responsibilities, working in health and safety at Taronga Western Plains Zoo and serving as a Board Member of the Dubbo Chamber of Commerce, so we look forward to seeing what Jason brings to the stage and wish him well with his fundraising for the event!

### CHARMAINE ROBERTS

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker, I would like to congratulate Charmaine Roberts who was recently awarded life membership to the Dubbo Greyhound Club. Charmaine is one of the backbones of the Dubbo Greyhound Club and was recognised with the prestigious award for her contribution to the sport, spanning more than 35 years. With a history of Greyhounds in her family, Charmaine's love for the breed blossomed from a young age, inherited from her father and grandfather. Known as one of the most successful trainers in NSW, Charmaine has made an indelible mark on the sport, with many Greyhounds trained by her etched in history. This includes winning the Black Top Final at Newcastle Gardens in 2018 and the Bathurst and Dubbo Gold Cups the following year. Her ability to nurture and train these animals to their full potential is a testament to her skill and deep connections with them. Charmaine's passion extends beyond the track, as she is dedicated to ensuring their well-being and happiness in their post racing lives. Through her efforts, she sets a positive example for others in the racing industry. Congratulations Charmaine, your dedication and passion will continue to inspire future generations of Greyhound racing enthusiasts.

### HER CAVE

**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)**—Congratulations to local resident Regina Doyle from Her Cave for receiving Volunteer of the Year at the Central Coast Council's 2024 Australia Day Awards. When Regina left her job due to illness, she created a craft and textile group in her own home for woman who were experiencing loss, depression, loneliness, empty home syndrome and boredom. It was not long until Regina created the Her Cave Incorporated located at Kanwal. Her Cave brought local women together by being creative with the same like-minded people in a safe environment. Regina gives up her time 7 days a week to keep Her Cave active by running craft classes, set up of donations/collections, applying for grants but most of all enjoying the company of others.

### JAMIE LOADER

**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)**—Captain Jamie Loader from Wyong Fire Station was honoured the Australia Fire Service Medal at the 2024 Australia Day Honours List. The Australia Fire Service Medal Award recognises firefighters who have performed above and beyond expectations during their careers. Jamie began his Fire and Rescue NSW career more than 21 years ago and today Jamie is recognised for his consistently displayed strong leadership skills in areas such as community prevention, risk reduction, planning and engagement. During the state-wide emergency bushfires 2019-2020, Jamie demonstrated exceptional leadership skills, mentoring, and guiding new firefighters under extreme pressure and made important decisions during this critical time which led to saving lives and properties. Over the years Jamie has participated in the Firefighter Championships and continue onto State and National Firefighting Championships successes for the Wyong Fire and Rescue crew. Being a firefighter is challenging but also a rewarding career and I congratulate Jamie Loader for being an outstanding member in keeping our community safe.

### WE CARE CONNECT

**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)**—We Care Connect a not-for-profit organisation, start packing for the new school year receiving over 750 requests for back-to-school packs to support students who need them the most. School donations were continuously delivered to We Care Connect drop off locations at Avoca Beach Bowling Club, Wyong Rugby League Club, Bateau Bay Bowling Club, Budgewoi Soccer Club, Canton Beach Sports Club, Wyong Bowling Club and Wallarah Bay Recreation Club. On top of the school items donations the community also donated up to \$17,000 for back-to-school backpacks. 75 per cent of requests have come from sole-parent families, 45 per cent have experienced family violence, 53 per cent have long-term illness or disability, and 15 per cent are facing homelessness. Students will arrive at their new year at school with the back-to-school packs which include a new backpack, lunchbox, drink bottle and school supplies including pencil case, Glue Stick, correction tape, exercise books, painting smock, plastic document wallets, sharpener, eraser, and coloured pencils. It is important for students to have these supplies when attending throughout their school years and We Care Connect volunteers are doing a great job in supporting those families in need across the Central Coast.

### CELEBRATING GRADUATE STUDENTS

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—The Country Universities Centre [CUC] Macleay Valley celebrated graduating students last week. Amongst the graduates were Georgia Hollis, who completed Bachelor of

Physiotherapy; Jane Bagley, who completed Bachelor of Human Services and Tegan Saul, who completed Graduate Diploma in Midwifery at the Charles Sturt University through the Country Universities Centre [CUC] in Kempsey. I wish all three local women all the best in their chosen careers, their achievements of CUC graduates serve as an inspiration to all aspiring scholars and a testament to the power of Education. All Graduates have chosen the humanities as their career path and are participating in careers in their local Communities. Its great to see these young women use this valuable resource to assist their Community into the future. Congratulations to these three graduates for not only graduating but also serving in your local Communities.

#### **MAUREEN AND PETER DEANS RETIREMENT SWR NEWSAGENCY**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—After 30 years running the South West Rocks Newsagency, Maureen and Peter Deans have sold the Newsagency. Like many before them their family holidayed at South West Rocks deciding because of family health reasons to move to the idyllic Mid North Coast. Since 1994, their 4 children have assisted them to run the Newsagency. "It was a great experience for them to get their first job experiences in the Newsagency". Three of their children went on to different careers, with their daughter Felicia still working at the Newsagency. Maureen and Peter have supported numerous local organisations, sporting clubs and community events over the years, in retirement the couple intend to continue to give back to the community by volunteering their time with their 4 children and 9 grandchildren. The Deans stated that with South West Rocks Growing, they find it is time to hand the Reins over to "New Blood" and new ideas. I wish Maureen and Peter all the best in retirement, thank them for their contributions to the South West Rocks Community. I hope to see them on the golf course one day.

#### **A FOND FAREWELL**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—After almost three decades of being a part of the business, Mr Roy Wilkinson is retiring as Akubra's Chief Financial officer. For 27 years, Roy has lived and breathed his job at Akubra, having his entire working career in the one place. Its not every day that you see someone sticking with a job for that long or even having such a short list of employers. Most proud moment at Akubra was winning back the Slouch Hat contract from Defence. Mr Wilkinson has a world of knowledge about the Akubra business and its history and is proud to have grown with the Australian hat Manufacturer over the decades. Quality is the reason Mr Wilkinson believes Akubra has survived 148 years to date and is recognised around the world. The decision to leave the business comes down to simply needing a break and what a break Mr Wilkinson's deserves. I hope Roy's retirement is filled with relaxation, new adventures and even a few Akubra hats to keep the memories alive. Hats off to you Mr Wilkinson and your incredible career at Kempsey Akubra!

#### **YASMINA BONNET**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)**—I pay tribute to the wonderful Yasmina Bonnet of Millers Point who is a strong and dedicated advocate for her local neighbourhood and always working to make it a better place. She is a member of the Millers Point Community Resident Action Group and worked on the campaign to oppose overdevelopment at Central Barangaroo, convening meetings, talking to experts and disseminating information. Yasmina is well known for spearheading the campaign that secured Sydney Harbour's first swimming spot in over 50 years at Marrinawi Cove at Barangaroo. Marrinawi Cove is now more popular than ever and enjoyed by visitors from across the city and globe. She's continued to look for ways to improve access and amenity at this spot and identify other places where harbour pools might work to make sure that everyone can enjoy swimming in the sea. Yasmina is also a strong advocate for people with disability and has used her position as a community leader to build support for improved accessibility and support. On behalf of the Sydney electorate, I thank Yasmina for her energy and ongoing contributions.

#### **ANNIE CRABB**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)**—I pay tribute to the outstanding community contribution of Annie Crabb from Millers Point. Annie is the President and a longstanding member of the Millers Point Community Action Group [MPCRAG]. Annie is a strong and passionate advocate for Millers Point and protecting heritage and the harbour for future generations. Together with other MPCRAG members and her neighbours, she ran a strong campaign 'Don't Block the Rocks' against overdevelopment at Central Barangaroo under Modification 9 that helped get the proposed waterfront tower withdrawn. She engaged with a range of organisations and the wider community to ensure they understood complex planning documents and encouraged them to stand up and defend the public good. Annie has been an active and engaged member of her community since moving to Millers Point, bringing state and local government together with residents to find solutions to local issues and getting to know neighbours to help build a strong sense of community. Every community needs an Annie and on behalf of the Sydney electorate, I thank her for her service.

### TAMMY CHILDS

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I would like to congratulate Mrs Tammy Childs on receiving a NSW Public Service Medal, recognised for her outstanding public service. Tammy is team leader, Northern NSW District, Homes NSW and oversees the management of public housing tenancies in the Northern Rivers area, recognising and promoting the fact that stable housing is a basic need and human right. In February 2022, Northern NSW experienced its worst flooding event on record. Hundreds of people were displaced from their homes. In the wake of the disaster, Tammy was deployed as the disaster welfare coordinator for Coraki. Much of Coraki was inundated by flood waters and completely cut-off from resupply by land. Tammy established an evacuation centre at the Uniting Church working tirelessly for prolonged periods to provide critical advice, guidance, and support to the people of Coraki and staff from other agencies. The welfare and needs of hundreds of vulnerable community members were addressed. In her ongoing role at Homes NSW, Tammy continues to provide critical support to her community in the recovery effort, striving to achieve optimal outcomes particularly for those in disadvantaged communities. I would like to personally thank and congratulate Tammy on her outstanding contributions.

### SUPERINTENDENT JOANNE SCHULTZ

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I would like to congratulate Superintendent Joanne Schultz, one of the most recent senior police appointed to the Coffs Clarence Local Police District, who was awarded the Australian Police Medal as part of the Australia Day honours announced by Governor General, David Hurley. Superintendent Schultz joined the NSW Police in 1988 at Kempsey as a general duties officer, before transferring to the NSW Police Force Education and Training Unit. Superintendent Schultz has received numerous awards and praise during her career, notably for her response to the 1989 Kempsey bush crash and the Hunter/Central Coast storm emergency. In 1999, Superintendent Schultz was promoted to sergeant, field education and School of Operational Policing, before she transferred to field operations Newcastle Local Area Command and Central Hunter Local Area Command. In 2013, Superintendent Schultz was promoted to inspector at Botany Bay Local Area Command as a duty officer, later transferring to the Hunter Valley Police District as a duty officer, specialising in human resources before becoming officer in charge of Singleton. In 2023, she was promoted to Superintendent at Coffs/Clarence Police District. I congratulate Superintendent Schultz on this well-deserved recognition and thank her for her tireless service to our community.

### SHIRLEY STOKES, AM

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I would like to offer my congratulations to Ms Shirley Stokes who has been awarded a Member of Australia award, AM. Ms Stokes is a deserving recipient. Her dedication and pioneering work which allowed athletes with a disability to compete in para rowing at state and national championship levels was instrumental in creating further opportunities for para rowing to become an international sport. In the early days Ms Stokes won two NSW lightweight championships and enjoyed further success in the sport before accepting various administrative roles with Rowing Australia and the Board of Rowing NSW. Between 2000 and 2002 Ms Stokes was a Director with Rowing Australia, and proudly volunteered during the Sydney Olympics in 2000. In 2004, Ms Stokes assisted in FISA's (International Governing Body for the sport of Rowing) application for para rowing to be admitted to the Paralympics. In 2021, she was made a Life Member of Rowing Australia. Ms Stokes is a current member of the Lower Clarence Rowing Club and enjoys offering her assistance in a voluntary capacity. I congratulate Ms Stokes on this well-deserved recognition and thank her for her selfless service to our community.

### MOSMAN ART WALK RETURNS FOR FOURTH YEAR

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—Speaker, for the fourth year in a row the popular Mosman Art Walk took place in February and March as part of Mosman High School's fundraising efforts for their art program. More than 40 acclaimed and professional artists exhibited their work in shops and businesses in and around Mosman shopping village. The initiative which is supported by Mosman Council encourages visitors to stroll the shopping precinct to see original artworks displayed in bookshops, clothing stores and florists. The walk features a variety of artwork including paintings, prints, sculptures and ceramics and all are available to purchase. Thirty percent of the proceeds go to Mosman High School's art program and seventy percent goes directly to the artist. One of the organisers Ann King helped initiate this event in 2021 as a way to not only support Mosman High but also local businesses and artists who were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Congratulations to Mosman High, and the artists and businesses who took part in another successful Mosman Art walk.

### NORTH SYDNEY BOYS TOP HSC

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—Speaker, after a twenty-seven year reign from James Ruse Agricultural High, North Sydney Boys High School has claimed the number one spot in the Higher School

Certificate rankings for the first time. North Sydney Boys outranked James Ruse following a notable rise in the school's advanced and extension English results and improving maths scores over seven years. Excitingly the school's success rate is up from 62.84 percent in 2022 to 69 percent in 2023. I want to extend my sincere congratulations to the year twelve cohort of 2023 on this outstanding achievement. I know there was a lot of celebration at the school as the results came in with lots of yelling and cheering at the exciting news that they had ranked first. Congratulations North Sydney Boys High and to all the year twelve students.

#### **STANTON LIBRARY TURNS 60**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—Speaker, this year Stanton Library in North Sydney celebrated an important milestone reaching 60 years of service to the local community. The Stanton Library was named after the North Sydney Mayor James Street Stanton who was a champion for the establishment of free municipal libraries throughout the late 1930s. As Mayor from 1937 to 1939, Stanton advocated levying a special tax to subsidise the creation of local authority libraries in all suburbs. Sadly Stanton died in 1943 and never saw the vision of a North Sydney Library come to be. Three months after his death North Sydney Council voted to create a library and it was decided the Stanton Memorial Library would open as part of a new civic centre development. Stanton Library was officially opened in 1964 by the Governor of NSW Lieutenant-General Eric Woodward with an initial collection of 10,000 books and within two months 4,600 people had registered as borrowers and more than 17,000 loans were issued. Today however, nearly 550,000 physical and digital items are borrowed annually by 65,000 members, cementing its place in our local community as a true neighbourhood hub.

#### **RHYS PARSONS- RANKINS SPRINGS**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Today I would like to recognise Mr Rhys Parsons, a local filmmaker from Rankins Springs. Rhys studied screenwriting and filmmaking in Melbourne before returning to his local town to raise awareness for mental health in small, rural communities. Rhys is eager to use his skills to give back to country areas, who have a very high rate of mental health concerns. Rhys created a GoFundMe page raising funds to make a short film exploring these issues. His goals are to support the non-for-profit organisation, Boys to the Bush, support a Headspace counsellor to visit the community regularly and even establish a cinema that will continue to raise funds to advocate for mental health. Rhys's short film will feature local actors and crew members who tell the story of a school student having trouble dealing with his mental health after the passing of his mother. Rhys believes his filmmaking skills will allow him to communicate important messages regarding mental health in rural areas. I commend Rhys for his dedication and passion towards raising awareness for rural mental health.

#### **JAMES AND GAVIN - GRIFFITH**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Today I would like to acknowledge Mr James Brown and Mr Gavin Wickenden, newly appointed Deputy Captains of Griffith Fire and Rescue NSW. James and Gavin are long-serving members of Griffith Fire and Rescue, with forty years of experience between them. Gavin joined the station in 1998 at the age of eighteen and James came on board in 2008. Both men have had their share of dealing with devastating fires, locally and throughout the state. James and Gavin worked tirelessly during the harrowing fires in the summer of 2019/20. During this time, Gavin was sent up to Glen Innes, whilst James was sent to Eden. James and Gavin are looking forward to their new roles and consider leadership, communication and teamwork to be key moving forward. With having to attend over five hundred emergency calls a year they are both extremely committed to their roles. I thank James and Gavin for their many years of service to our community.

#### **BEVERLEY HAYES - HILLSTON**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Today I would like to recognise Mrs Beverley Hayes of Hillston for her dedication to teaching for over 40 years. Beverley has been the Principal at St Joseph's Primary School in Hillston for 7 years. In that time, she has been an inspiring leader and has instigated many major projects to better the school. In her career, she has taught all over Australia as well as internationally in Qatar. Beverley is involved in the local Parish and CWA. She introduced recycling bins for cans and bottles in the school which she takes to local events as there are no other recycling bins in Hillston. She uses this as an opportunity to fundraise for the school with the return and earn scheme. Mrs Hayes has decided to move back to Kiama to be closer to family. The Hillston community will miss her contributions moving forward. Mrs Hayes is to be acknowledged for her outstanding commitment to her career and local community.

#### **BONNYRIGG PUBLIC SCHOOL - 2023 END OF YEAR AWARD PRESENTATION DAY**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—Bonnyrigg Public School, guided by their Principal Ms Voula Hatzidimitriou, is acknowledged for its commitment to academic excellence and the fostering of leadership qualities. The Tri Vo Leadership Awards, presented by me, recognize students who have demonstrated exceptional leadership qualities. In the recent awards ceremony on 13 December 2023 at Bonnyrigg Public

School, the following students from various year levels were celebrated for their outstanding leadership: Kindergarten: Kayden Trindall and Adi Kabuyawa; Year 1: Jayden Xayasane and Aleksandra Dimitrijevic; Year 2: Richard Le and Lyandra Esho; Year 3: Devante Chea and Janel Nguyen; Year 4: Chris Luu and Mariam Esho; Year 5: Michael Huynh and Lina Huynh Nguyen; Year 6: Martin Luduena and LeAnh Nguyen. These students symbolize the school's dedication to nurturing well-rounded individuals who not only excel academically but also showcase remarkable leadership skills. I thank the Principal for her kind invitation and support of the awards. Furthermore, I congratulate all the award recipients, teachers, staff, parents and the school for the successful year.

#### **GOVERNOR PHILIP KING PUBLIC SCHOOL - 2023 END OF YEAR AWARD PRESENTATION DAY**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—On the 12th of December 2023, I had the great pleasure of attending Governor Philip King Public School's End of Year Award Presentation. I was most impressed with the quality of the presentation, and especially with the school's creativity in naming their student leadership team after the Australian Parliament structure. The student leadership team is called the Cabinet and the School Captain is called the Prime Minister. I commend the school leadership team for their exceptional efforts. It was a great delight to personally present my Tri Vo MP Leadership Award to 14 students to recognise their outstanding leadership abilities. The Awards went to David Klemmer, Gabrielle Modelo, , Aston Rogers, Valentina Yousef, Jaxon Klemmer, Rosetta Modelo, Charbel Mansoor, Chloe Sayers, Mark Mico, Julya Bashee, Somer Rasheed, Amanda Huynh, Nikola Veselinovic and Alexia Morales. I congratulate all the award recipients, students, teachers and staff, parents, and the local communities on the well-deserved accomplishments. I thank the Principal Mr Jason Corcoran and the Deputy Principal Mrs Heidi Hosking for their kind invitation. I look forward to visiting the school again in the near future.

#### **BOSSLEY PARK PUBLIC SCHOOL - 2023 END OF YEAR AWARD PRESENTATION DAY**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—Bossley Park Public School, guided by their Principal Mrs Tracey Betts, places a paramount focus on academic excellence and cultivating leadership qualities among its students. Bossley Park Public School opened in 1890 with an enrolment of 22 students. The school was only opened for a period of four years before it was closed due to falling enrolments. After several unsuccessful attempts by various principals and community members, the school was finally re-opened early in July 1900. I attended the recently held End of Year Award Presentation Day on 14 December 2023. In this ceremony at Bossley Park Public School, the Tri Vo Leadership Awards were proudly presented by me to the following exemplary students: Clorinda Loek (Kindergarten); Diego Hanoka (Kindergarten); Reine Zora (Year 1); Leon Odeesh (Year 2); Colise Sinclair (Year 3); Halen Garside (Year 4) . These students stand as shining examples of the school's commitment to shaping well-rounded individuals who not only excel academically but also exhibit remarkable leadership skills. I thank the Principal for the kind invitation. I congratulate all the students, staff, parents and local community for the successful year.

#### **TORRIE LEWIS**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—Former Novocastrian Torrie Lewis is now Australia's fastest-ever woman, beating the national 100m record with 11.10 seconds at the ACT Championships in Canberra on Saturday 27 January, and surpassing her previous PB of 11.23 set last year in Sydney. Torrie shaved one-hundredth of a second off Melissa Breen's 11.11 set 10 years ago at the same Institute of Sport track. Torrie also bettered Raelene Boyle's Australian Under-20 record of 11.20 which had stood since 1968. Torrie, 19 years old, was born in England, her father of Jamaican background and her mother Scottish. She moved with her mum to Australia when she was 6, and attended St Mary's Catholic College in Gateshead. Torrie started her athletics career with Macquarie Hunter Little Athletics Club at Glendale before moving to Brisbane in 2020. She claimed double gold in the 100m and 200m at 2023 National titles in Brisbane and represented Australia in the 100m and 4X100m relay at the world championships in Budapest. Torrie's number one target for 2024 is attaining the 11.07 qualification time for the Paris Olympics, where she wants to make the semi-finals. Bring on Paris!

#### **DR JOHN WARD - 2024 NSW SENIOR AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—Local geriatrician Dr John Ward has devoted much of his life to providing medical care for disadvantaged people, and has worked in ageing since the 1980s. John co-founded the Hunter Ageing Alliance about four years ago after seeing an unmet need. The Alliance aims to have the requirements of ageing Australians better recognised by governments and large corporations, with a focus on environment, housing, end-of-life planning, health and aged care services. John is particularly concerned about isolated people who fly under the services radar and remain vulnerable. The organisation has eight programs in planning or implementation stage to create age-friendly communities, tackle elder abuse and end social isolation of older people. His philosophy is deceptively simple: he sees a need and gets it done. The Alliance will do whatever works, a skill John first learned as Director of the Prison Medical Service more than forty years ago.

John's over-riding goal is to ensure that Newcastle and nearby LGAs are turned into age-friendly communities. Congratulations on being named 2024 NSW Senior Australian of the Year – for your inspiration and devotion to helping others.

#### **ISAAC STRUTT-STEVENSON**

**Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend)**—14-year-old Cardiff High School student Isaac Strutt-Stevens has garnered praise for his acting debut in the role of a cancer patient in the Netflix global hit series *Boy Swallows Universe* which stormed into the Netflix global Top Five streaming chart, and into the top ten in 47 countries including, America, the UK, Canada, France, Germany and Australia. The drama is adapted from Trent Dalton's bestselling novel, unfolding in 1980s Brisbane suburbia. Isaac plays Christopher in the hospital where the main character Eli is a temporary patient. The two hatch an escape plan, including throwing a television through a window, which he thought was great fun! Isaac doesn't like school much, but enjoys making and appearing in his own short films about his billycart and working on pushbikes. Balancing school and stardom has been a challenge – he even faced bullying for his involvement with the show, but quickly learned about resilience and how to overcome challenges. His director Jocelyn Moorhouse and star Bryan Brown were extremely supportive, though. Despite having to have all of his hair cut off, he found the experience a rewarding one. Well done, young man!

#### **INSTALLATION OF RABBI ZWARENSTEIN**

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse)**—I would like to congratulate Rabbi Sam Zwarenstein on his installation at Emanuel Synagogue. Rabbi Zwarenstein has been involved in Jewish community and communal organisations for over 30 years. He completed three years of rabbinical studies in South Africa through SAJTS. In late 2015, he completed his studies in Clinical Pastoral Education and assumed his role in the clergy team at Emanuel Synagogue. Soon after, he completed his rabbinical studies through the Pluralistic Rabbinical Seminary and was ordained in December 2022. Rabbi Zwarenstein has a keen interest in technology and new gadgets and is invested in enhancing Jewish life, learning and engagement. On Sunday 3 March, he was official installed as one of five full-time rabbis at Emanuel Synagogue. It was a great honour to be present for his installation. I particularly loved hearing the stories from Sam's family. Congratulations Rabbi Zwarenstein.

#### **INSTALLATION OF RABBI MORDECAI**

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse)**—I would like to congratulate Rabbi George Mordecai on his installation at Emanuel Synagogue. After serving as the cantor at congregations throughout the USA, Rabbi Mordecai returned to Emanuel Synagogue in Sydney's eastern suburbs, where he grew up. George weaves his Judaeo-Arabic heritage into his work as both a cantor, performer, and has over 20 years' experience in building community. In addition to his musical and liturgical expertise he is an engaging educator. George infuses his teaching with a deep sense of spirituality and historical perspective, always mindful of the needs and aspirations of his students. On January 2021, he was ordained as a rabbi, and on Sunday 3 March, he was official installed as one of five full-time rabbis at Emanuel Synagogue. It was my pleasure to share Shabbat dinner and with Rabbi Mordecai and his family at an evening at Emanuel recently. I can see that his success is lifted by his beautiful and talented family. Congratulations Rabbi Mordecai.

#### **IRAQI AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY GRADUATES FORUM**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)**—Celebrating the achievements of community members is a special part of my job. One of the highlights of the year is to see the pride and joy in the faces of parents and community members alike to celebrate all the high achievers who were honoured by the Iraqi Australian University Graduates Forum at the annual Australia Day function. These young people not only completed their schooling in some of the most challenging few years our community has experienced,, they excelled! Some of these young people come from migrant and refugee backgrounds, have seen their parents struggle and overcome many barriers in establishing a new life for themselves and their families. They will now play a part in being the role models and supporters for many other young people. To these young people- I hope your skills and resilience take you far, so you all can make your special mark on our broader community! I congratulate the Iraqi Australian University Graduates Forum for putting together such an inspiring and exciting event. I acknowledge Dr Bushra Al Obaidi, Ahmed Alrubaie and many others for celebrating and encouraging young people.

#### **RILEY SCHUTZ SELECTED TO TOUR GERMANY**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise the achievements of Inverell's Riley Schutz, who was selected for a football tour of Germany at the Inverell Joeys Mini World Cup Tournament. The German tour is designed to test playing and coaching talent, while connecting those selected with new knowledge and expertise in training techniques and modern practices. I congratulate Riley on being awarded this opportunity to develop his soccer career and would also like to thank the team behind the Joeys Mini Wold Cup, including

Jackson Haussler, Heinrich Haussler, Laini Kirkman and Katrina Heathwood. I commend Riley on his hard work, practice and preparation leading up to the tour, for his commitment to the sport and for being an ambassodore for Australian football.

### RECOGNITION OF ALEXANDRA TRINDER

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise Alexandra Trinder on being awarded the winner of the prestigious Young Achiever Award for the cotton industry in the Gwydir Valley, for demonstrating a passion and a voice for woman in agriculture since moving to Moree in 2017, whilst striving to mentor the next generation. I congratulate Alexandra for her award, for her career in the Cotton industry and her current role as a Consultant with HMAg in Moree. One of her many achievements is being the recipient of the BASF Women in Agriculture Award at the 2023 summer grains conference. Alexandra has a range of clients in the district and is well respected by her peers and clients, with her passion for cotton clear to all. I commend Alexandra for supporting and mentoring staff, fellow Agronomists and growers across the region. Also, for lending her expertise and time to many industry and community organisations, which included being a committee member of Young Aggies and Gwydir Valley Cotton Growers Association and has recently joined the Crop Consultants Australia Board. I thank Alexandra for her contribution and positive impact to the Australian Cotton Industry, agriculture and to her community.

### INVERELL NETBALLERS TAKE ON DUBAI

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise the achievements of Kaitlin Driscoll, Shannon Driscoll, Emma Mozzell and Charlotte Mozzell of Inverell, who were selected to play Netball in Dubai, for the Emirates Dubai Netball Championships during December 2023. I congratulate each of you for taking this opportunity and for sharing your skills and experience internationally. I command all those involved in making this trip a reality, including the fundraisers and supporters of this awesome foursome. Each are fine ambassadors for their sport and community of Inverell.

### ST GEORGE MEAL ON WHEELS

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, there are so many important organisations in my community, who work incredibly hard for the vulnerable and less fortunate. One such organisation is St George Meals on Wheels, who continue to do a fantastic job, over — 56 years after they were first founded within our community. Whilst I have already spoken about their achievements in this Parliament before, the volunteers and team of executives do such a fantastic job, that I just had to recognise their hard work again. St George Meals on Wheels empowers the elderly within our community to live safely and comfortably within their homes, ensuring that they have access to nutritious and tasty food. I'd like to thank the CEO of St George Meals on Wheels, Nahed Soliman, for her continued dedication. I'd also like to thank President Lesley Sandiland, Vice President, John Burke, Secretary, Karen Bindon and Treasurer, Barbara Sainsbury. I'd also like to thank all of the volunteers — without you, this important initiative simply would not be possible. St George Meals on Wheels and I have a wonderful partnership that I am excited to continue well into the future.

### VALE FATHER NICHOLAS BOZIKIS

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I rise to recognise and pay my condolences to Father Nicholas Bozikis, who sadly passed away at the age of 79. Father Nicholas was a champion for the Greek Orthodox community in New South Wales, serving within the Archdiocese of Australia in Sydney for more than 50 years. After emigrating to Australia from Greece in 1964, he began his service with the Archdiocese in 1970, at the invitation of late Archbishop Ezekiel of Australia. Father Nicholas served all throughout New South Wales, including in Wollongong, Kingsford, Hurlstone Park and many more parishes based in the Sydney area. During my time as the Minister for Multiculturalism, and now as Shadow Minister, I have the pleasure of working closely alongside the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese. The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese are proof that no matter who you are or where you come from, we are all stronger together. Father Nicholas ensured that this belief echoed through the entire community. I offer my condolences to Father Nicholas' family and friends during this difficult time - his Presbytera, children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Vale Father Nicholas Bozikis.

### RITA ZIOLKOWSKI - VERGE GARDEN COMPETITION WINNER

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I would like to congratulate an incredibly talented member of our community, Rita Ziolkowski. Rita recently was named the winner of Georges River Council's Verge Garden Competition. This is a wonderful initiative that promotes sustainability, whilst aiming to beautify our local area. Rita has planted a colourful little garden on her verge strip, which I must say, looks absolutely stunning. For her efforts, she was awarded a \$250 voucher to use at a local plant nursery. What a wonderful initiative by Georges River Council to keep our streets green. The St George area is already one of the most gorgeous parts of Sydney and this is thanks, in part, to residents like Rita. I am committed to creating a sustainable future for the next

generation of locals, and I will continue to work hard to ensure that our local environment is protected and as beautiful as it can be. I would like to once again commend Rita, as well as encourage other residents to get involved in creating their very own sustainable green spaces where they can.

#### **HANNAH'S BLUE BUTTERFLIES ROAD SAFETY AWARENESS**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to recognise Diane and Graeme McMurtrie for their commitment to road safety awareness. 'Hannah's Blue Butterflies Road Safety Awareness' was established by Diane and Graeme after their 19-year-old daughter Hannah was taken too young, on a road outside of Taree on the Mid North Coast. From that moment, Diane & Graeme have vowed to honour Hannah's life and carry her loving legacy. Their mission statement is simple, 'to save lives' and they do this by educating, informing, and transforming. HBB are NSW Towards Zero Ambassadors, partner with the PCYC as presenters in their Traffic Offender Intervention Program, talk to HSC students, assist in the Rotary RYDA programs, First Responders education and partner with the Mid Coast Council supporting road safety initiatives. Recently, HBB introduced a 24/7 dedicated support line to assist others navigating grief. I thank Diane, Graeme and their road safety ambassadors for their outstanding contributions to promoting road safety and making our communities safer for all.

#### **ROTARY CLUB OF TAREE ON MANNING**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to acknowledge the Rotary Club of Taree on Manning for their commendable efforts in improving the classic Aussie barbecue experience through the introduction of their mobile barbecue van. The trailer was donated by radio station 2RE. Despite its initial state of disrepair, the Old Bar Men's Shed have breathed new life into this barbecue van, restoring and outfitting it to its present condition. The barbecue van made its debut at Taree's Elizabeth Park during the 2023 New Year's Eve celebrations and was a resounding success. This mobile facility has not only added a new dimension to the classic Aussie barbecue but has also proven to be a valuable asset for the Rotary Club's catering operations at outdoor events. The ability to serve directly from the trailer has streamlined their operations, reducing setup and packing time and allowing the Rotarians to focus on their mission of community service. Thank you, Rotary Club of Taree on Manning, for all you do for our community. I look forward to having a sausage sanga from your new barbecue van!

#### **LORRAINE RYAN**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to congratulate Lorraine Ryan, for being awarded the Lions Club of Hallidays Point – Citizen of the Year Award on Australia Day. This title is awarded in appreciation of exceptional contribution and dedicated service to the Hallidays Point community. Lorraine has managed to change lives, inspire her community and promote the importance of wellbeing and good mental health. She also established the now 130-member friendship group, Birds of a Feather, has opened her home hosting cancer fundraiser, the Biggest Morning Tea, and supported the Great Lakes Women's Shelter. Congratulations on your well-deserved recognition Lorraine, thank you for all you do in our wonderful Hallidays Point community and beyond.

#### **BRONTE CARRIGAN**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—The Lake Macquarie One Act Play Festival is a theatre competition showcasing short, sharp and original one-act plays, aiming to encourage and foster local and regional playwrights and performers alongside established artists from around NSW and Australia. The plays are performed in front of a live audience and a panel of judges will assess the performances based on a series of criteria. When the Festival returns to the Warners Bay Theatre on Saturday 6 April it will include a piece from the pen of Charlestown electorate local Bronte Carrigan. Titled "Waiting for Beckett...", the piece has four of the greatest playwrights of all time called together to write the greatest play the world has ever seen—but one of them doesn't show up, leaving Bertolt Brecht, William Shakespeare and Henrik Ibsen waiting for Samuel Beckett. Bronte has not only written the piece, but will be playing Shakespeare alongside actors Katelyn Dowling as Brecht and Henry Barnett as Ibsen. It is wonderful to see this sort of local creativity showcased, and I wish Bronte, her castmates, and all the other playwrights and actors involved all the best.

#### **LAKE MAC AWARDS FINALIST – STEPHANIE DE SOUSA**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—It is my pleasure to congratulate Charlestown Electorate resident Stephanie de Sousa on being named a finalist in not one but two categories at this year's Lake Mac Awards. Stephanie is a finalist for the coveted Lake Mac Ambassador title, which is awarded for outstanding contribution to the Lake Mac community category and, and in the category of Creating and Performing Arts

Leader, which is awarded for outstanding demonstration of leadership and contribution to the arts. Stephanie is known to many as the Lake Macquarie local who popped onto screens around Australia as a competitor on the 2019 season of the cooking show MasterChef, and since then the reality show alumna has worked in professional kitchens and has stayed engaged with the Lake Mac community and communities around the Hunter. It is great to see Steph inspiring people to get back into the kitchen and cook up a storm with simple ingredients and fresh produce through the sharing of her budget-friendly cooking tips and recipes for families through her website and social media, spreading the joy of home cooking to everyone. I congratulate her and all her fellow nominees.

#### UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—Since 2019, the University of Newcastle has awarded Academic Excellence Scholarships Recognising Outstanding Performance in Undergraduate Studies. These scholarships are awarded to domestic and international students on the basis of academic excellence and are worth \$10,000 each. The scholarships support the recipients to identify with their degree programs as successful degree ambassadors, and as future graduates and alumni. This year, thirty-two recipients have been named, and I would like to take this opportunity to recognise those scholars who live in the Charlestown electorate: Jacob Armit of Warners Bay, Bachelor of Chemical Engineering (Honours); Lilliana Francisci of Adamstown, Bachelor of Pharmacy (Honours); Peter Hyslop of Warners Bay, Bachelor of Media & Communication; Rebekah Kitchen of Mount Hutton, Bachelor of Nursing; Lucy Reid of Warners Bay, Bachelor of Education (Secondary); Jarrah Webster of Eleebana, Bachelor of Midwifery. Congratulations to all recipients on their outstanding academic achievements, I am sure they will continue to work hard and I cannot wait to see what these inspirational locals will achieve next!

#### CHATSWOOD HIGH SCHOOL UPGRADE

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—I am delighted to see the long-awaited upgrades to Chatswood High School come to completion. These complement the recent upgrades undertaken of Chatswood Public School. The upgrades at Chatswood High School feature specialist teaching facilities such as maths, science, and art rooms; dedicated performing arts spaces and music rooms; new sports facilities and recreational areas; a new library and administration facilities; together with new halls. I commend all involved in this project, including the school executive, the parents and citizens association, the builders and contractors, staff, students and wider community for the vision and determination to see this upgrade realised. I have no doubt that these upgrades to Chatswood High School will set up its current and future students for even greater success, both inside and outside the classroom. This investment in Chatswood High School is a huge boost to public education in our local community and I pay tribute to the community of Chatswood High for making this dream a reality.

#### STARABILITY DANCE PERFORMANCE GROUP

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—Celebrating Australia Day on 26 January, I and many other Willoughby locals were treated to a terrific performance by the StarAbility Dance Performance Group at the Chatswood Concourse. Since its formation in April 2006, StarAbility has provided a wonderful opportunity for people living with a disability to exhibit their artistic talents. From humble beginnings with only five dancers, StarAbility now has over 150 dancers who have performed with stars including John Foreman, Doug Parkinson, Rhonda Birchmore and Maria Venuti. Attracting nationwide recognition, StarAbility have performed for the Governor-General, the Governor of NSW, several NSW Premiers and multiple charities including 4 ASD Kids and the Humpty Dumpty Foundation. Eager to dispel the stigmas surrounding disability, StarAbility have been key advocates for the annual Don't DIS my ABILITY campaign. The vision for the StarAbility Dancers is to produce passionate performers who reach a level of excellence in their dance. Through their success, these young dancers have grown in their self-esteem and identity, gaining confidence from their achievements and inspiring others with their success.

#### WILLOUGHBY AUSTRALIA DAY COMMUNITY AWARDS

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—As well as celebrating our nation, Australia Day is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate our local community and I am particularly proud of the Willoughby locals who were recognised for community awards by Willoughby City Council. I would first like to acknowledge Glenda Hewitt who received the 2024 Willoughby Cultural and Community Building Award for her contributions to community housing, the Artarmon Parklands Community Garden, and the Artarmon Progress Association. I would also like to acknowledge Dr Bibiana Chan who received the Willoughby Environmental Citizen of the Year Award for her founding of the Community Flower Studio [CFS]. Acknowledging our senior citizens, Pam Clifford was awarded the Willoughby Senior Citizen of the Year for instigating the North Bridge Public School Archives and for contributions to the Northbridge Progress Association, Rotary and Probus. Finally, two Citizens of the Year Awards were presented to Granth Berthold for his community contributions to Parkrun and the SES, and John

Jung Eun Noh for his contribution to the MOSAIC Men's Group. I warmly congratulate each of these worthy recipients for their outstanding contributions to our Willoughby community.

### **GANMAIN TRIATHLON**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—Excitement and anticipation were an understatement for this year's runners, event organisers, and spectators of the Ganmain Triathlon. This year's event was held on Sunday, 11 February, and was described as a massive success by all in attendance. It was even more exciting to learn that a local 15-year-old Ganmain Teenager, Ben Davies, outshone his older, more experienced opponents to win the Open Event - Male Section of the Ganmain Triathlon. Ben is a Triathlon NSW's development pathway program member and completed this one-kilometre run, 20km ride, 150m swim, and 5km run event in 42 minutes and 35 seconds. My deepest congratulations are also extended to this year's Ganmain Triathlon organisers. Your combined determination, commitment, and dedication in bringing this much-loved event to your local communities is appreciated, and you all deserve a huge thanks for your achievements. Congratulations again to Ben and the organising committee on this year's Triathlon. I look forward to receiving information and hopefully participating in next year's event.

### **ATHLETIC CHAMPS**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—There must be something in the water in Cowra, with 21 athletes representing Cowra Little Athletics' Club at the Region 3 Championships at Barden Park in Dubbo. Braving the horrendous heat conditions over the weekend of February 3 and 4 were Brody Flene, Ada Duff, Samuel Tydd, Claire Phelan, Chloe Tysoe, Sophie Phelan, Kaidon Sproh, Toby Morrison, Pia Grey, Joshua Morrison, Thomas Phelan, Noah Grey, Patrick Rowston, Finn Grey, William O'Reilly, Oliver Tydd, Aliya Murray, Kiana Murray, Alex Rice, Charlie Chittick and Jack Chittick. The 21 athletes who competed in 71 total individual events secured twenty-seven medals for the club. Highlights from the day were Charlie Chittick, who broke the regional record for the under-10 boys Discus and claimed the Gold Medal. Brody Fiene from the Under 17s secured a first in Javelin and Hurdles. William O'Reilly from the Under 11s came first in the 100m, 200m, and Long Jump and 2nd in the High Jump. I congratulate all the athletes on their results and wish all those traveling to State Championships the best of luck.

### **MO - FOREVER REMEMBERED**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—Some people come into your life who make a long-lasting impression; one such gentleman and dear friend was the late Maurice 'Mo' Simpson of Grenfell. Mo was an imperative part of the Grenfell community, where he not only served as the former Mayor of Weddin Shire Council, with 17 years total service, he was also actively involved in many community organisations, including the Lachlan Regional Transport Committee, Grenfell and District Senior Citizens Welfare Committee, Grenfell Health Council, Grenfell Multipurpose Service Health Committee, the Grenfell Show Society, Grenfell RSL, Grenfell Rotary Club, SES, and RFS. With the interest of rural and regional NSW firmly at heart, Mo was a member of the NSW Nationals since July 1970 and Vice Chair of the Grenfell Nationals Branch. It was beautiful to see Weddin Shire Council dedicate a memorial board to honour such a wonderful man who gave so much to his community. I was privileged to be part of a very moving tribute in honour of Mo, joined by members of Mo's family and the Weddin Shire Council. Maurice Anderson Simpson, better known as 'Mo,' passed peacefully at the Grenfell MPS on Thursday, 1st December 2022. Aged 89 years.

### **ROBERT COOKE**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—After serving the people of NSW for the past five decades, Robert Cooke has retired from the NSW Police Force. Colleagues and friends gathered at the Bathurst Police Station to farewell the popular officer who started his career in 1974 in a job that he held for 32 years before relinquishing his position as a senior constable in 2006. It was then that he took up the post of a General Administrative Support Officer, until his final day on the job earlier this year. Mr Cooke, better known as "Cookie" to his mates, focus will now turn to travelling around Australia and the world, but there's no doubts he will miss the job. And his colleagues will miss him too, particularly Chifley Police District Superintendent Bob Noble who described "Cookie" as an esteemed colleague and a source of inspiration, not only in his longevity in the career but also the fact he still has such vitality and a great energy about him. On behalf of the wider Bathurst community, I would like to thank Mr Cooke for his unwavering dedication to the NSW Police Force over such an extended period of time. Well done Robert Cook.

### **HURLSTONE PARK WANDERERS CENTENARY SEASON**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)**—I wish to congratulate the Hurlstone Park Wanderers on celebrating their 100th birthday with the kick-off of their centenary season. Hurlstone Park Wanderers is one of the oldest continuously operating community football clubs in the country and I am delighted

to recognise their long standing and significant contribution to the Inner West community. This centenary season the club is enjoying ever higher numbers of players of all ages from MiniCubs through to Over 50s. I particularly note the strong participation by girls and women, and the commitment of the club to welcoming players of all ability and from diverse backgrounds. It is wonderful to see the club operating in their newly completed amenities building, a building fit for a club with such a long history. Congratulations President Rosalie Viney, Chair Louise Roberts, all the Committee, members and players on such an historic achievement and happy birthday!

#### **FATHER NICHOLAS BOZIKIS**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)**—I wish to recognise the passing of Father Nicholas Bozikis, a significant, influential and much-loved figure in the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia and my local community. Father Nicholas was born in 1944 on the Greek island of Zakynthos and emigrated to Australia in 1964 where he initially settled in Melbourne before moving to Sydney in 1970. He was ordained to the priesthood here in Sydney and served within the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia in Sydney for more than 50 years, including as Parish Priest at both St Stephanos Hurlstone Park and St Nicholas Marrickville. Everyone who knew Father Nicholas knew what a warm people person he was, dedicated to helping not just his parishioners but the wider community. Father Nicholas is survived by his wife, children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren and he remains connected to our local community through his son Peter, co-owner of Honey and Walnut Patisserie in Dulwich Hill. I extend my deepest condolences to Father Nicholas' family, parishioners and many friends. Vale Father Nicholas and thank you for your many years of dedicated selfless service.

#### **COOKS RIVER CROQUET CLUB – SHARPE FLETCHER INVITATIONAL FOR U-35S**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport)**—invite everyone to come down to the Cooks River Croquet Club at Mackey Park over the ANZAC Day long weekend to enjoy the inaugural Sharpe Fletcher Invitational for U/35s. Led by the world's number one golf and association croquet player Robert Fletcher, and former Australian women's champion Alison Sharpe, this event will be one of the most enriching of its kind in the world. Bringing together the current Women's World Golf Croquet Champion and 2023 Australian GC Champion Jamie Gambrell along with her brother Ethan current U/21 Australian Golf Croquet Champion, as well as representatives from around the world, this event will showcase the challenging and unique sport of croquet. Congratulations to all the team at Cooks River Croquet Club, in particular President Stephen Burns, Vice President Georgina Carnegie, Alison Sharpe, Robert Fletcher and all the team behind this wonderful event.

#### **KAYE PRICE**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—Kaye has lived in Bathurst for more than 50 years and has been recognised as a Living Legend. While raising her family and working full-time at West Bathurst Pre-School, Kaye was a member of Bathurst Inner Wheel, Bathurst Business & Professional Women, Bathurst Regional Eats & Drinks, Bathurst Trefoil Guild, and held many roles on the Bathurst Uniting Church Council. After retiring in 2005, Kaye started a walking group to keep people fit, while engaging with others. Every week for 18 years, Kaye has led the group on a 4-5km walk around the city, followed by coffee and socialising. She now runs a second walking group of U3A. Over the last 12 years, Kaye has been on the Bathurst Regional Council Organising Committee for the Seniors Festival. Kaye has also been an active member of the Bathurst Ladies Probus Club for the last 18 years, having served two years as President and producing the club's newsletter for several years. For many years Kaye has volunteered at Meals on Wheels, the Cool Climate Wine Show, and the Bathurst Eisteddfod. Congratulations and thank you for your service.

#### **JANET PAGE OAM**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—Jan is a Bathurst-born, retired educator with a love of her hometown and a passion for its heritage. She has just been named one of Bathurst's newest Living Legends. She shares stories about Bathurst's heritage through talks, tours and writing. She has researched and conducted tours during the Annual Autumn Colours Heritage Festival around the Bathurst Community including many stories behind the headstones in Bathurst Cemetery during Cemetery Wanders with Bathurst Family History Group where she is President. She was heavily involved in the completion of Bathurst War Memorial Carillon. She is a founding member and the President of the Friends of Bathurst War Memorial Carillon. She has developed and coordinated several exhibitions highlighting the history of the Carillon and in 2008 she coordinated the 75th Anniversary celebrations. Jan is also involved in her local community, Napoleon Reef, where she has shared aspects of the area's history through three displays in 2017 - 2019. She is a founding member and President of the Napoleon Reef, Walang & Glanmire Residents Association. Congratulations and thank you for your service.

#### **LUCIA WILCOX OAM**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)**—Congratulations to Newcastle netball hero, Lucia Wilcox, on being awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia in the 2024 Australia Day Honours. Ms Wilcox's unwavering

dedication and service to netball have not only left an indelible mark on the sport but have also positively impacted countless individuals within my electorate. Through her exemplary leadership, coaching prowess, and commitment to fostering inclusivity and skill development, Ms Wilcox has become a beacon of inspiration for aspiring local athletes and enthusiasts alike. Her passion for promoting the values of teamwork, sportsmanship, and personal growth exemplifies the essence of the Novocastrian sporting spirit. Well done Ms Wilcox, this recognition is very much deserved.

#### **MARCIA CHAPMAN**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)**—It is with immense gratitude and respect that I acknowledge Ms Marcia Chapman's remarkable 34-year tenure with Jenny's Place Women's Domestic Violence & Homelessness Support. As Executive Manager at Jenny's Place, Ms Chapman has been instrumental in providing vital support to countless women and children facing the harrowing challenges of domestic violence and homelessness. Her journey at the organisation began decades ago as a caseworker and her commitment to the Jenny's Place and its mission is unparalleled. Her enduring compassion has left an indelible mark on the organization and the lives it touches. As Ms Chapman embarks on a well-deserved retirement, her legacy of compassion and advocacy will continue to resonate throughout Newcastle and I wish her every joy and fulfillment in the next chapter of her journey.

#### **LOCAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR JENNY WOOLFE**

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields—Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Innovation, Science and Technology, Minister for Building, and Minister for Corrections)**—Congratulations to 2024 Local Woman of the Year, Jenny Woolfe, on being recognised for her tireless volunteer work in the community. A long-time Macquarie Fields resident, Jenny has been a Friend of Ingleburn Rotary Club since 1996 and actively involved in many of the organisation's programs. In 2022, Jenny was awarded the Paul Harris Fellow in recognition of support for Rotary programs and ideals for more than 25 years. In addition to her Rotary contributions, Jenny has volunteered with the Growing Friends Program at The Australian Botanic Garden in Mount Annan since 2022. The program involves propagating native plants for sale to the public through the Garden's shop to provide funds directly for Garden projects. Jenny's long education career has included secondary school teacher, head teacher and Deputy Principal at four high schools in the Macarthur area. Jenny continues to be a casual teacher at a local high school. Jenny was also a volunteer Independent Education Advisor with the Gallipoli Scholarship program. Jenny is a very deserving Local Woman of the Year. I commend her valuable contributions to our community.

#### **TRACEY BILLS**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise today to recognise Tracey Bills. Tracey was recently nominated for the Goulburn Electorate Local Woman of the Year Award for her significant contribution to the creation and longevity of Pink Days held at Yass High School. Tracey is a teacher at Yass High School and is known as the creator and brains behind Pink Day. Pink Day is held annually, where students are encouraged to dress up in pink outfits, bringing along any spare change to donate to the National Breast Cancer Foundation and the local Yass CanAssist. Monies raised support research and development of new cancer treatments and provide financial aid to those in the community undergoing cancer treatment. Overtime, Pink Day has raised approximately \$100,000, with the event now extending to include primary schools across the local area. Tracey is a dedicated and committed teacher who has taught many generations of children, sharing her wealth of knowledge with her peers. I sincerely commend your capacity to generate such community spirit within the school and the community more broadly to support those in need.

#### **YOLANDA HAVERFIELD AND SANDIE MOORE**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise today to recognise both Yolanda Haverfield and Sandie Moore, two women recently jointly nominated for the Goulburn Electorate Local Woman of the Year Award for their outstanding work in the establishment of the monthly Sutton Community Markets. Approximately three years ago, Yolanda and Sandie recognised that many neighbouring villages held community markets and noted the lack of this activity in Sutton. With diligent research, planning and negotiation, a steadfast and concentrated effort was set upon to identify a suitable venue. This venue required adequate parking facilities, strong public safety, arrangement of insurance, rubbish removal, entertainers, and the viability of potential stall holders. The first Sutton Market Day was held in September 2022, quickly becoming a celebrated community event. The markets see a wide array of stalls selling home-made and home-grown produce, food stalls, entertainers, Fire Brigade displays, horse and sulky rides, they featured Santa visits in December and the opportunity for visitors to donate items to the annual Anglicare Christmas Giving Tree. I commend you both on your highly motivated spirit and leadership in developing this cherished community event. Your dedication sparked social and financial prosperity within the village of Sutton.

### TEGAN RUPS

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise today to recognise Tegan Rups. Tegan was recently nominated for the Goulburn Electorate Local Woman of the Year Award for her outstanding contribution to the township of Marulan. Tegan is a mother of three, working full-time, yet committed to supporting a range of fundraising and community events, which provides the opportunity for the community to come together. These events have many benefits such as supporting connection, sharing interests, and general community well-being. Tegan generously volunteers her time and holds the role of President of the Marulan Australia Day Committee, Grants Officer and Community Field Liaison Officer with the NSW Rural Fire Service and Community Liaison. Tegan also participates in many local Council projects, as the Community Council Representative to ensure that the village of Marulan and its residents' views are represented. I thank you Tegan and commend you on your diligent contributions to the community.

### CAMERON MCDONALD – NARRABEEN SPORTS HIGH SCHOOL

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—I acknowledge and thank Mr Cameron McDonald, Head Teacher of the Science Faculty at Narrabeen Sports High School, for his momentous efforts in the delivery of the new science labs at NSHS. For years the wonderful science teachers at NSHS went above and beyond to foster a productive learning environment, despite the dilapidated and outdated state of the school's science labs. When I first visited the school in 2023, I was completely blown away at the passion and drive Cameron and the whole science faculty had to see the science labs updated so they could encourage more students to pursue studying science. Thanks to Cameron and the school community's advocacy, four brand new science labs were opened in February 2024, as part of a \$20 million upgrade of various buildings and facilities across the school. It was an honour to attend the labs official opening where Cameron pointed out many of the innovative design features he and the contractors came up with to maximise the benefit to students. Thank you, Cameron. Students at NSHS will benefit from your efforts for years to come.

### NORTH AVALON SURFRIDERS ASSOCIATION

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—I acknowledge one of Australia's oldest boardrider clubs, the North Avalon Surfriders Association, commonly known as 'NASA'. Formed in 1970, the club is dedicated to nurturing local surfing talent, providing surfers with the opportunity to compete in monthly local comps, as well as entering teams in state and national competitions. The Pittwater community loves the ocean and surfing, and clubs like NASA are central to bringing our community together! It was an honour to attend the 2024 NASA Surf Classic and official opening of the Club's new storage shed on 24 February 2024. I thank the members of the NASA committee, particularly current club President, Andy Owens and Club Secretary, Ed Ockwell, for all their efforts in ensuring the club continues to thrive. Congrats on the new shed and good luck for the 2024 surf season!

### SERBIAN FESTIVAL SYDNEY 2024

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—I recently had the opportunity to attend the 2024 Serbian Festival Sydney in Darling Harbour. The festival was a beautiful celebration of Serbian culture and the contributions of Serbian Australians to our community. The two-day program was packed with Serbian culture including traditional dancers and a range of musical performances. The biggest event of its kind outside of Serbia itself, the festival displayed some of the very best of the Serbian cuisine. The event was enjoyed by all who attended including Pittwater locals and members of the St Sava Ingleside community. I thank the organisers for their efforts putting together such an immersive and vibrant event. Thank you to Fairfield City Councillor Mihailo Mijatovic, Director of the Serbian Festival Sydney and Mateja Vasic, Communications Director, for your efforts coordinating the Official Ceremony. I am pleased that recognition of the Serbian Festival Sydney is now preserved in the records of the oldest parliament in our nation.

### ADELONG AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—It was a pleasure to join Councillor James Hayes to honour Adelong community champions in the town's Australia Day awards in January. Citizen of the Year Michael Neyland has been honoured for devoting countless volunteer hours and resources to maintain and revitalise the Adelong creek walk. Michael sought the original funding for the walk, and it has been his passion ever since. Young Citizen of the Year Spedding Pearce is honoured as the ABC's 2024 Heywire Riverina award winner for his moving written account of fear and hope in the devastating Dunns Road bushfire. My congratulations also to Community Service Award winners Bill O'Connell, Kathy Taylor, the Adelong Show Society, Greg Gorman, Rick Singh, Grant Bambling, AKD Softwoods Tumut, Grant Elliott, the Adelong S&C Club volunteers, Ellen Joy Taber, Lisa and Nick Bamblett, Colin Tiyce, Culley Reynolds and Josey Howell for invaluable generosity and service to their community. All have done amazing things in service to their community and deserve heartfelt gratitude for their

passion, hard work and dedication. Their Australia Day awards sum up everything that is special about Adelong and its people.

#### **DAMIEN NYE**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—It takes courage and dedication to serve with Defence, and compassion and selflessness to work for peace when the uniform is no longer worn. Uranquinty's Damien Nye has shown those qualities and more. After retiring from the army in 2015, Mr Nye devoted countless hours and his own money to help victims of Russia's invasion of Ukraine as well as worthy causes closer to home. In recognition, the fourth-generation Light Horseman was awarded the Wagga City Council Peace Award at the 2024 Combined Rotary Clubs of Wagga Peace Day in February. The father-of-three began his post-military life by raising money for local charities before using his superannuation to travel to Ukraine to deliver aid to people in crisis. Realising more was needed, he returned to Ukraine last year, with the support of Rotary, and delivered more supplies through the volunteer group Ukrainian Patriot. Mr Nye never set out to achieve personal accolades but thanks his family and fellow volunteers for their help. His award was presented on the 31st anniversary of Wagga becoming the world's first Rotary Peace City. On behalf of a grateful community, congratulations and thank you to Mr Nye for his inspiring work.

#### **BERT ADAMS**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—Congratulations to World War II veteran, Bert Adams, who celebrated his 100th birthday in February. Born at Gulgong, Mr Adams joined the RAAF when he turned 18 and completed thirty missions as a navigator in Lancaster bombers, having the remarkable experience of celebrating VE Day in London. He was awarded a British DFC and a French Legion of Honour. Back home in Mudgee, he met his future wife Valerie, a life-long union that lasted until Mrs Adams passed away two years ago. After he became a teacher, the couple moved to Wagga Wagga where Mr Adams re-joined the air force. He later joined the Wagga Bridge Club and remains a stalwart of the game. A keen sportsman, he played hockey until he was in his fifties and still plays golf twice a week. He is the proud father of Kim McBeath, Nancy Adams and Bill Adams, and has six grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. Mr Adams has also been a constructive correspondent with my office. The only WWII veteran to march on Anzac Day last year in Wagga, he plans to march again this April. Congratulations to Bert Adams on a life well-lived.

#### **JUSTICE OF THE PEACE CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION - LOUIS STANTON**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—Congratulations to Louis Stanton on receiving a Justice of the Peace Certificate of Appreciation by the Cumberland Branch of the NSW Justices Association on Monday 20th November 2023. The NSW Justices Association was established in 1911 to offer support, information and advocacy to Justices of the Peace across NSW. The Cumberland Branch of the NSW Justices Association performs an integral role in our community, providing accurate and trusted verification services. Entrusted independent and impartial witnesses, Justices of the Peace certify legal documents, like powers of attorney, statutory declarations and affidavits. Justices of the Peace are key to the functions of our legal system, assisting courts and governing bodies to provide timely outcomes. The Certificate of Appreciation is awarded to outstanding members of the Association, who have demonstrated great loyalty and longevity. Louis has generously volunteered his time as a volunteer JP in the NSW JA – Cumberland Branch for 20 years. Congratulations Louis on this significant award. Thank you for your dedicated service to our community. I also thank NSW Justices Association State President, Dr John Brodie, and the Cumberland Branch for your considered advocacy and ongoing support for our community.

#### **JUSTICE OF THE PEACE CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION – RODNEY CARROLL**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—Congratulations to Rodney Carroll on receiving a Justice of the Peace Certificate of Appreciation by the Cumberland Branch of the NSW Justices Association on Monday 20th November 2023. The NSW Justices Association was established in 1911 to offer support, information and advocacy to Justices of the Peace across NSW. The Cumberland Branch of the NSW Justices Association performs an integral role in our community, providing accurate and trusted verification services. Entrusted independent and impartial witnesses, Justices of the Peace certify legal documents, like powers of attorney, statutory declarations and affidavits. Justices of the Peace are key to the functions of our legal system, assisting courts and governing bodies to provide timely outcomes. The Certificate of Appreciation is awarded to outstanding members of the Association, who have demonstrated great loyalty and longevity. Rodney has generously volunteered his time as a volunteer JP in the NSW JA – Cumberland Branch for 15 years. Congratulations Rodney on this significant award. Thank you for your dedicated service to our community. I also thank NSW Justices Association State President, Dr John Brodie, and the Cumberland Branch for your considered advocacy for JPs in our community.

### **JUSTICE OF THE PEACE CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION – WILLIAM KENDALL**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—Congratulations to William Kendall on receiving a Justice of the Peace Certificate of Appreciation by the Cumberland Branch of the NSW Justices Association on Monday 20th November 2023. The NSW Justices Association was established in 1911 to offer support, information and advocacy to Justices of the Peace across NSW. The Cumberland Branch of the NSW Justices Association perform an integral role in our community, providing accurate and trusted verification services. Entrusted independent and impartial witnesses, Justices of the Peace certify legal documents, like powers of attorney, statutory declarations and affidavits. Justices of the Peace are key to the functions of our legal system, assisting courts and governing bodies to provide timely outcomes. The Certificate of Appreciation is awarded to outstanding members of the Association, who have demonstrated great loyalty and longevity. William has generously volunteered his time as a volunteer JP in the NSW JA – Cumberland Branch for 40 years. Congratulations William on this significant award. Thank you for your years of dedicated service to our community. I also thank NSW Justices Association State President, Dr John Brodie, and the Cumberland Branch for your considered advocacy for JPs in our community.

### **ALIZÉE VANDERVEKEN – LOCAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR 2024**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—The Local Woman of the Year for the Davidson Electorate for 2024 is Alizée Vanderveken. Alizée, also known as Ali, continues to bring our local community together to support sustainability as the co-founder and president of St Ives Towards Sustainability. Ali's passion and leadership has meant regular Clean Up Australia events, a focus on exploring ways to increase composting and recycling and plans to establish a community garden. She has raised funds to support these efforts via the NSW Government's Return and Earn. Ali is originally from Belgium and now calls St Ives home. Her background in research and consulting in the fields of geography and planning has given her expertise in which she is using for the benefit of our community. I am proud to recognise Alizée Vanderveken as Davidson Electorate Woman of the Year for 2024, and officially present her with this award at the ICC Sydney on 7 March 2024 at the NSW Government's Women of the Year breakfast. Thank you for your work, Ali. The world needs more people like you.

### **GALSTAUN COLLEGE – YEAR 12 LEADERS 2024**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—On Wednesday 21 February 2024 I attended the Hamazkaine Arshak and Sophie Galstaun College for their official opening ceremony assembly and school leaders' induction service for 2024. It was a very special occasion. I was honoured to join His Eminence Archbishop Haigazoun Najarian, Primate of the Armenian Apostolic Church in Australia and New Zealand; Rory Amon MP, Member for Pittwater; Principal Edward Demirdjian; and Michael Kolokossian from the Armenian National Committee of Australia. I proudly and officially recognise Galstaun College 2024 Year 12 school leaders Shahen Vaejabedian, Anthia Ani Poliopoulos, Lara Ferhad and Lucas Pailagian. Remember that leadership is always about solving problems. Galstaun College was founded in 1986 and moved to its permanent home in Ingleside in 1991. As the only bi-lingual Armenian Christian co-educational college in Australia, it now teaches over 320 students from across Sydney from Kindergarten to Year 12. It gives me great pride to represent the Australian Armenian community from the Davidson electorate in the Parliament of NSW.

### **SYDNEY CHINESE LIONS CHARITY BALL 2024**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—On Saturday 9 March 2024, I attended the Lions Club of Sydney Chinese Charity Ball 2024 at the International Convention Centre in Sydney. It was a wonderful night enjoyed by all. It is an annual event, and this year the Club raised thousands of dollars in donations for CareFlight, a critical care aeromedical retrieval service and charity based in Australia. They provide the highest standard of rapid response critical care to the ill and injured, with the vision to be the most advanced integrated aeromedical service trusted by all Australians. I recognise the Sydney Chinese Lions Club, who celebrated their 29th anniversary this year. In particular, I recognise President Dr Anthony Cheung OAM, Honorary President Mei Ha Cheng, Immediate Past President Wendy Lin, and directors Leo Li, Walton Chu, Emily Hung, Sophie He, Jasmine Wong, Robert Chu, Yammie Gao, Duncan Lin, Yoko Chung, Cindy Chan, Kago Fong, Kyeart Ngoi, Cindy Tsang, Shirley Tse, Vivien Feng, Tim Yuen, Kevin Yau and Wendy Lin. Thank you for your service and living the Lions motto, "We serve".

### **JOSSIE VAN GORKOM**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)**—On behalf of the Sydney electorate, I acknowledge the contribution of constituent Jossie van Gorkom of Darlinghurst. Jossie is part of a caring and supportive social housing tenant group in the Sydney electorate, giving time and support to other tenants and others in the community. She is one of a number of tenants who contact my office about constituents who need help or are looking for organisations or activities they can join. In addition, Jossie supports inner city Neighbourhood Advisory Boards as secretariat,

distributing information across several precincts and helping build community. I thank Jossie for her efforts to support people in need and to make the inner city a great place to live.

#### **KITE FLYING FESTIVAL SYDNEY 2024**

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Kellyville)**—It was recently my pleasure to attend the Kite Flying Festival Sydney, held annually at the Castle Hill Showground. It is part of an important Indian festival, Makar Sankranti, which celebrates the arrival of Spring, and the practice of flying kites dates back to ancient times in India. The ecstasy of colour when the kites are in motion is truly a sight to behold, and the Showground becomes a frenzy of light and motion. Most spectacular are the 'Patang', or fighter kites, which are particularly impressive. Despite the event being pushed back 2 weeks due to inclement weather, the crowds still showed up en masse, and many thanks must be given to the chief organiser, Kaushal Parikh, for his hard work not just in organising the festival, but in successfully communicating the change of date to the community. The day is a very important event for my local Indian community, and I was delighted to be there – I look forward already to next year's event!

#### **RAY WILLIAMS ENCOURAGEMENT AWARD 2024**

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Kellyville)**—As I do every year, I recently had the opportunity to present the Ray Williams Encouragement Award to students from each of the schools within my Electorate. This award is an opportunity to highlight particular students who try their very best, both at school and within the broader community. It is to reward hard work, persistence, respect for others and a positive attitude. I look forward to getting to more schools next year, particularly in the parts of my new Electorate which I have not represented before. This year, the award was presented to: Lily Roberts, Piper Reichard, Liyara Fernando, Grace Green, Micah Thomas, Jaden Angelo Reyes, Jake Turner, Eleazar Perocho, Ryan Codd, Charlotte Agius, Sage Trujillo, Noah Kennedy, Charlotte Scott, Kyla Hogan, Alex Vozzo, Matilda Brown and Cooper Howson. I wish them all the best for their future studies.

#### **RHONDA GAFFEY**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)**—I wish to recognise the contributions of Rhonda Gaffey who was awarded the City of Parramatta Senior Citizen 2024. Her contribution extends beyond Parramatta - the people of NSW owe her their gratitude. Rhonda is a retired executive teacher and education consultant. A guide at Hambleton Cottage Museum and the Parramatta Female Factory, Rhonda's skill for bringing history to life is amazing. She has always had an interest in family history which led her to discover five convict Parramatta Female Factory women on her family tree. Rhonda has an incredible knowledge of the Parramatta Female Factory and has given talks and readings to a diverse range of audiences around Sydney, including the National Trust Heritage Festival, Women's Pioneer Society and Probus groups. Rhonda has also passionately and effectively advocated for the protection of our heritage. She is a Parramatta Female Factory Friends Committee member and on the Bicentenary Committee for the Parramatta & Historical Society. Rhonda has many awards to her name. In November 2023 she received a Certificate of Achievement from the Royal Australian Historical Society for her dedication to social and community history. She also has a NSW Minister of Education Quality Teaching and Learning Award.

#### **NASS AOUN**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)**—Nass Aoun was recently awarded the City of Parramatta Young Citizen of the Year and I wish to thank him for his contributions as he has endeavoured to use his influence and skills to make our community a better place, particularly in assisting some of our most vulnerable citizens. Most recently Nass has focused on people in our community who are experiencing homelessness. He has worked very hard to find volunteers and through involving local businesses has secured donations to set up a shelter program and provide a safe and welcoming space for those in need. He has thought carefully about this homelessness initiative and the project involves wholistic support and outreach services such as counselling and job assistance for those in need, setting up mentoring programs as well as establishing a community garden. I am very pleased that the program has seen an increase in individuals transitioning from homelessness to finding stable and permanent housing. I thank Nass for his tireless efforts and continue to look forward to witnessing the positive impacts his work will continue to have on our community.

#### **SONAM LOCHLAR CELEBRATION 2024**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)**—Lhasso fyafulla - "Its been great to see you in Tamang." On the 11th of February, I had the privilege of attending the Sonam Lochar, the Nepalese New Year celebration organised by the Tamang Society of Sydney. The Tamang Society represents the Tamang people; an ethnic minority from Nepal. It was wonderful to join our vibrant Nepalese community in celebrating the new year. Traditionally, Sonam Lochar is marked by offering prayers at monasteries. People also visit their relatives to seek blessings from their elders and wear traditional outfits to mark the importance of the day. The 2024, Sonam Locha welcomes the Year

of the Wood Dragon. Wood represents vitality and creativity and is believed to make people born In the Year of the Wood dragon full of energy and drive. About 8,000 people of Tamang ancestry are estimated to live in Sydney, and to see the youthful dance and cultural activities of the Nepalese community was truly enriching. Over 500 people participated in the celebration. I thank the organisers for hosting such a wonderful event. I wish everybody a prosperous and happy Sonam Lochar.

#### **LEADERSHIP BY THE COWPASTURE**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)**—Last month I attended the Leadership by the Cowpasture conference, which brings together student leaders from local high schools and support leaders from 14 primary schools. The conference seeks to develop student leaders through collaborative activities and exercises, with a focus on fostering skills in leadership, public speaking, and community mindedness. It was great to meet south-west Sydney's student leaders, and answer questions about values, role models and leadership. I was also joined by Marianne Siokos, Director Educational Leadership, who made remarks about the value of the conference. I'd like to give a special shoutout the student leaders from St John's Park High School for organising and hosting the event, as well as Principal Ms Moisisdis, Ms Wasch and Ms Le for their support. I hope to see out student leaders achieve remarkable things with these skills in their own schools, and I look forward to seeing what comes out of next year's conference.

#### **ST RITA'S PARISH CAROL'S DAY**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)**—Christmas is a time for communities and families to come together and connect - and St Rita's Melkite Catholic Parish in Ashcroft is no different! . Their yearly Christmas Carol's Day celebration amplifies the talents and hard work of the parish children's group, who prepare performances for their families and attendees. It was a delight to meet members of the St Rita's parish community and witness some of Liverpool's vibrant community spirit on full display. The festivities consisted of music and dance, performances from the choir and children's group, as well as a nativity scene re-enactment. There was also a brief appearance from Santa, who distributed gifts to the children. Several stalls were also set up by local businesses, who provided an array of activity and food options for attendees. I commend the Children's group and Parish council for their success in organising the event, with kudos to Parish Priest Cherif Helou, Assistant Priest Chaouki Ibrahim and Subdeacon Robbert Abdelsayed.

#### **AIRSHOWS DOWNUNDER SHELLHARBOUR**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises Airshows Downunder Shellharbour which was held Friday 1st March to Sunday 3rd March 2024 with a two-day carnival of aviation plus a careers and skills day showcasing the best of modern defence force aircraft, civil aerobatics performers, restored historic aircraft and fun for the family. It was a terrific event which included defence exhibits, air force cadets, air force shop, HARS Museum displays, WWII German Exhibit, static aircraft displays, Lockheed Martin F-35A Lightning II, Qantas Airways Ltd, Civil Aviation Safety Authority, aerobatic displays by the reigning Red Bull Air Race world champion and former Royal Australian Air Force top gun fighter pilot Matt Hall and much more. I acknowledge Shellharbour City Council, Mayor Chris Homer, Shellharbour Councillor Kellie Marsh, Mr Justin Giddings, Chief Executive Officer AMDA Foundation Limited, the many volunteers from HARS Museum led by Bob Delahunty and volunteers from the Illawarra Light Railway Museum Society including Treasurer Brad Johns, Destination NSW, Viva Energy Australia, Hill to Air, Skydive Australia, Touchdown Helicopters, Royal Aeronautical Society Australian Division, Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Defence Network which hosted a terrific event on Friday 1st March 2024 and Hotel Tutto in Wollongong.

#### **KIAMA WOMEN OF THE YEAR 2024**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises Barbara Adams from Jamberoo. A mother, a grandmother, community volunteer and a wonderful person, on Thursday 22nd February 2024, I was delighted to officially announce Barbara Adams of Jamberoo as the 2024 Kiama Electorate Woman of the Year recipient. Barbara Adams has been President of the Jamberoo Red Cross Branch for fifteen years and is an instrumental and well-respected person in the Jamberoo community; I am delighted that she is being recognised with this prestigious award today. From monthly markets to craft days, barbecues, cake bakes, raffles and bingo, the Jamberoo Red Cross group is one of our region's most active branches which has been recognised through a series of awards for their charitable and fundraising efforts. Barbara is not a newcomer to volunteering in the Jamberoo community. For many years, Barbara was very active in the Jamberoo RLFC as a volunteer and proud parent; and she certainly knows how to get things done! Barbara is never afraid to put her best foot forward. We are lucky to have people like Barbara; she is a fine example of someone who works in the service of others.

### CLEANUP AUSTRALIA

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises the twenty participants who took part in the Clean Up Australia Day event at Mahogany Creek Reserve in North Nowra on Sunday 3rd March 2024. I was extremely pleased to attend and lend a hand on the day. I acknowledge and thank Mr Raul Arregui who organised this excellent event which was a huge success for our local North Nowra community. A special mention must go to Krystal Thompson from Shoalhaven Council for her assistance with tools and resources for the clean-up, and for joining from the start to welcome the group and get us all going. I also acknowledge Michael Irving and Wayne the North Nowra Postie who was handing out lots of cold bottled water to local residents' who were participating in the clean-up efforts. As a passionate conservationist, it was truly inspiring to see so many local residents' getting involved and taking action to preserve our natural environment. From collecting cigarette butts to confectionary waste, plastic and discarded glass bottles, it was terrific to get involved and to be a part of this very important National Day of Action to keep our community clean, green and pristine.

### APPETITE CAFE

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I wish to acknowledge Mr Phillip Salhab and Mr Adrian Pizzolato, owners of Appetite Café in Five Dock for their incredible work in turning their café into a Taylor Swift extravaganza to celebrate the megastar's recent Australian tour. The café was transformed with a wall display, decorations, community activities, menu items, and Taylor's hits playing each day. This not only brought Taylor Mania to Five Dock – bringing our community together through a love for Taylor Swift and her music. It also made headlines, with media coverage featured across several outlets including in The Sunday Telegraph. Appetite's 'Taylor Takeover' has shined a light and put Five Dock on the map. I sincerely thank and congratulate Phillip and Adrian for bringing a fun and welcoming vibe to the shopping district along Great North Road. I know many families and Swifties were overjoyed with the 'Taylor' offerings and celebrations put on in honour of the pop star. They have a genuine heart for our community and should be commended. Wishing Phillip and Adrian, and their hardworking staff at Appetite Cafe all the very best.

### EVA KLEMPFNER

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I rise to warmly congratulate my local constituent Ms Eva Klempfner of Drummoyne, who will be turning 100 on 14 March 2024. I sincerely wish Eva all the very best on this very special occasion. I hope that she has a lovely time celebrating this special milestone with family and loved ones. On behalf of our local community, I extend my best wishes to Eva and her family. I sincerely wish her all the very best.

### HILDE SCHINDHELM

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I rise to warmly congratulate my local constituent Ms Hilde Schindhelm of Drummoyne, who will be turning 100 on 13 March 2024. I sincerely wish Hilde all the very best on this very special occasion. I hope that she has a lovely time celebrating this special milestone with family and loved ones. On behalf of our local community, I extend my best wishes to Hilde and her family. I sincerely wish her all the very best.

### MARDI GRAS

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)**—I draw to the attention of the House the fabulous 2024 Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras festival, which culminated in the Oxford Street parade on the second of March. I want to acknowledge the disappointment of Fair Day being cancelled, due to the last minute discovery of contaminated mulch in Victoria Park. I want to give a special thanks to the Pride in Protest collective, who campaign for social justice in the queer community, for their spirited activism. At its heart and its origins, Mardi Gras is a defiant, music and dance-filled protest. It is always so exciting to be a part of what it is today, but we must always honour those who took part in the first Mardi Gras on Oxford Street in 1978 to demand equal rights. I was so pleased to see the 78ers celebrated by everyone in our community as they marched again this year.

### BELINDA DALEY

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)**—Today I recognise a wonderful member of the Balmain community and the Balmain Woman of the Year, Ms Belinda Daley. As the Vice President of the Balmain-Rozelle Chamber of Commerce, and a Board Member of Together2 in Rozelle for 14 years, Belinda's work in the local community has been both meaningful and impactful. She has rallied small business owners to reinvigorate our local main streets, and has helped to create important connections in our community. She has played an integral role in ensuring our local businesses are supporting vulnerable and marginalised members of our community as we continue to recover from the impacts and disruptions of COVID-19. Belinda embodies our kind, caring

community and I was so pleased to name Belinda as the 2024 Balmain Woman of the Year. Thank you for your incredible work, Belinda. You make our community a better place for all.

#### **LUNAR NEW YEAR**

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden)**—After the conclusion of the Lunar New Year Festival, I extend warm wishes to members of my community who have celebrated this Lunar New Year. We all hope for a year filled with happiness and prosperity throughout the Year of the Dragon. The Year of the Dragon promises to bring joy, fun and humour following on from others born in past Years of the Dragon. This festive occasion holds significance for many within our community, symbolizing the gathering of family, friends, and loved ones to exchange blessings and spread joy. I'd like to recognize the dedicated members of the Camden community who organised specific events to celebrate Lunar New Year, including The Royal Hotel Camden, who served a wonderful selection of meals. To all members of my community and those who observed and celebrated across New South Wales, I hope you all had a wonderful Lunar New Year.

#### **THE GREAT ELVIS SPECTACULAR**

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden)**—Four of the finest Elvis tribute artists in the world came together, touring Australia, to showcase the music of Elvis Presley in this three-hour show, journeying through The King's early days in Memphis, to his most popular period: The Vegas Years. This year's act included Johnny Lee Memphis, Brendon Chase, She Is the King and Stuey V as they rock and roll and was sure to have the audience dancing in the aisles to all Elvis' most famous hits we all know and love. Congratulations to all of the organisers of this fantastic event.

#### **YOUTH SOLUTIONS CHARITEA HIGH TEA**

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden)**—I was privileged to be able to attend this year's Youth Solutions ChariTEA High Tea at Lakeside Golf Club Camden. The annual high tea raises money for youth solutions, a youth drug and alcohol prevention and health promotion charity delivering health and wellbeing education programs as well as support services to young people and the community. Their ultimate goal is to build the skills, knowledge, supports and connections needed for young people to be prevented from experiencing drug and alcohol harm. It was great to learn more about the great work Youth Solutions does in the community. This Year's High Tea was able to raise an incredible \$15,188. These vital funds will go to support the delivery of youth drug and alcohol prevention and health promotion for young people in the community. Congratulations to the organisers of this year's event for making it such a great success.

#### **CADEN CONNOR RISING FOOTBALL STAR**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I acknowledge 12-year-old Caden Connor from Port Macquarie and congratulate him on being selected to attend a Football Development Tour in the United Kingdom. Caden plays for the Port United Club and was one of only fifty players chosen nationally to participate in the 11-day tour in September 2024. Caden initially attended a regional soccer camp in Port Macquarie from which he was selected for a national camp on the Gold Coast and was then chosen to join the international development tour to London. For a young person to train so hard and commit to constantly improving his skills and knowledge shows a mature and focused dedication. In between training and attending school Caden and his family are currently fund raising for this trip of a lifetime. I wish Caden a brilliant tour where he will train with the best of the best, see some international soccer players at work and learn more about what it takes to succeed at this level. Caden is a long time Liverpool FC fan, and he aspires one day to play for this team.

#### **OCHRE RIBBON WEEK**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I take this opportunity to commend Mid North Coast Local Health District Aboriginal Health Workers Jade Chelman and Natasha Donovan for their efforts in raising awareness of Ochre Ribbon Week in the Port Macquarie area. Ochre Ribbon Week (12-19 February) is a national campaign that began in 2015 to highlight the devastating impacts of family violence in Aboriginal communities and a call for action to end the violence. 'Don't Silence the Violence' was the key message that Jade, Natasha and their colleagues were promoting throughout various events during the week-long campaign. The wearing of an ochre-coloured ribbon during these events, is a symbol that has helped to prompt discussions and talk more openly about violent behaviours and how to access support. Ochre Ribbon Week is a vital program which has been successful because of the dedication of advocates such as Jade and Natasha. The program provides opportunities to raise awareness in the wider population about violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait women and children and strategies for escaping violent situations. Thank you for your impressive efforts, continuing to come together to connect and support one another and not be silent about violence.

**ABBIE JANE – NOMINEE NSW WOMEN OF THE YEAR**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Congratulations to 14-year-old Abbie Jane from Port Macquarie on receiving a nomination in the 2024 NSW Women of the Year Awards. Abbie is the mastermind behind the emerging, global phenomena 'The Rainbow Shoelace Project' focussed on promoting acceptance and connections in the LGBTQIA+ community. The stigma surrounding the pride flag at Abbie's former high school inspired her and a friend, Max Dawnn to create Rainbow Shoelace beads to support queer kids who were feeling afraid and alone. From this small symbol of unity and friendship, the initiative soon grew, with more than 100 packs of beads dispersed each week. By March 2022, the packs given away were over 230,000 shipped throughout the world. Today, Abbie lives in Port Macquarie and attends St Columba Anglican School and says she now feels at home and more accepted living on the Mid North Coast. Applauded as an anti-bullying campaigner, Abbie was nominated for the NSW Women of the Year Awards in the 'Ones to Watch' category and I was delighted to see her on stage to accept her award. Clearly, a role model and an inspiration to many, I congratulate Abbie on her nomination.

**JENNIFER CROWLEY IWD**

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith)**—In Penrith we celebrated International Women's Day on 8th March. We then followed up with a morning tea recognise all those fabulous women who were nominated. Ms Jennifer Crowley was nominated for service to the Leonay community and the broader Penrith area. Jennifer has devoted an incredible 30 years to the Wiggles and Giggles Childcare Centre as an educator and childcare worker. Jennifer's remarkable commitment to the well-being and development of the community's children is truly inspiring and deserves recognition. Jennifer's enduring presence has become synonymous with the Wiggles and Giggles Childcare Centre. Her longevity is a testament to her unwavering dedication and the high regard in which she is held by the community. Jennifer's experience in the community is now coming full circle, as children she once cared for have now grown into adults, some choosing to work alongside her, while others now entrust their own children to her care. The centre's reputation, and praise for its long-term staff, is a reflection of Jennifer's positive influence. Jennifer has left a definite mark on the people of Leonay and my electorate of Penrith, and I sincerely thank her for her dedicated service.

**KRIS GAUCI IWD**

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith)**—In Penrith we celebrated International Women's Day on 8th March. We then followed up with a morning tea recognising all those fabulous women who were nominated. I acknowledge the remarkable contributions of Ms Kris Gauci. Kris's unwavering commitment to providing support to those in need exemplifies the spirit of community service. Having worked for a large community organisation, Kris's dedication to keeping funds within Penrith led her to co-found the non-profit organisation, 'Our Community Cares' in 2013. Kris raises funds to benefit the Penrith community, providing essential equipment for Nepean Health and offering support to vulnerable individuals, including those undergoing chemotherapy, suffering dementia, and for residents in aged care. During the Covid pandemic, Kris swiftly responded to the needs of isolated children at Nepean Hospital by organising and providing them with comfort packs. In 2023 she introduced a program for free lawn maintenance for ill and frail clients. Also re-establishing a scholarship program for year 10 students to connect with and form friendships with Aged Care residents in the Penrith LGA. Kris also serves as the Chair of the Penrith Community Kitchen. I am honoured to recognise her for her service to the people of Penrith.

**MARLENE HARRIS IWD**

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith)**—In Penrith we celebrated International Women's Day on 8th March. We then followed up with a morning tea recognising all those fabulous women who were nominated. I want to take this time to acknowledge the outstanding and generous work of Ms Marlene Harris. Marlene has volunteered her time and skills to help support the Penrith community for many years, and her commitment to improving the well-being of other is truly awe-inspiring. Marlene supports the Penrith community through an incredible variety of methods, such as assembling backpacks for the homeless, crafting home-knitted dementia dolls for persons in aged care facilities, as well as providing essential items like clothing, school supplies, and items for childhood care. She does all this from her garage at home with no external funding. Her unwavering dedication to serving others has left an incredible legacy for the Penrith Community. Marlene's generosity also extends, to participating in toy drives for Outback Aboriginal children. Marlene, along with her supportive husband Martin, exemplify the true spirit of community service. It is with immense admiration that I again thank and congratulate Marlene on being an outstanding member of my community.

### ILLAWONG BASEBALL CLUB

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)**—I would like to recognise the Illawong Marlins Baseball club based in Barden Ridge, one of two baseball clubs located within Holsworthy. It was a privilege to meet the team at their annual Ladies' day celebration, and I would like to offer my sincerest congratulations to the new executive team for 2024-2025. President Matt Saunders, Vice President Christopher Patten, Secretary Stuart Hitchcock, Treasurer Melanie Lockeridge, and Registrar Stephen Phillips, your willingness to serve and lead is essential to the continued success and growth of the Illawong Marlins. I have every confidence that under your guidance, the club will thrive and continue to be a source of pride for our community.

### SUTHERLAND SHIRE ENVIRONMENTAL CENTRE

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)**—I would like to recognise the work of the Sutherland Shire Environmental Centre for their sustained campaign to protect Koalas along Heathcote Road in my electorate of Holsworthy. Catherine Reynolds and John Souvleris have spearheaded a campaign to raise awareness and educate the public on koala safety within the Sutherland Shire, and I have had the great pleasure of working with them to advocate for stronger safety measures. Their work is commendable, and their dedication to the preservation of koalas exemplifies the importance of community-driven initiatives in safeguarding our precious wildlife. They have worked tirelessly, and serve as an inspiration for their unequivocal commitment to the cause.

### OYSTER BAY PUBLIC SCHOOL'S STUDENT LEADERSHIP TEAM

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)**—I congratulate the exceptional student leadership team of Oyster Bay Public School on their appointment. Being democratically elected by your peers is an incredible achievement of which these students should be proud. I encourage them to make the most of this fantastic opportunity to contribute to their school community and to develop the skills that shape the community and professional leaders of the future. I use this occasion in NSW Parliament to acknowledge Oyster Bay Public School's student leadership team for 2024, namely Orlando Tauta, Charlotte Twidale, Asher Foxe, Joseph Ghosn, Gwendoline Hanna, Luca Savaroc, Bae Doble and Ashlyn Gorman. With the guidance of their incredible Principal Wanita Bowles, I have every confidence that these dedicated students will capably lead their peers through what will be their most important year of schooling thus far and be role models to their entire school community. I extend my best wishes to these student leaders as they continue to exemplify Oyster Bay Public School's motto of 'each for all'.

### SUTHERLAND SHIRE TOY RESTORATION CENTRE

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)**—I congratulate the incredible community volunteers at the Sutherland Shire Toy Restoration Centre in Jannali on winning the Community Group of the Year category at the 2024 Sutherland Shire Council Australia Day Awards. The Sutherland Shire Toy Restoration Centre has been assisting our community for nearly fifty years, specialising in the production, repair, and restoration of used toys. Staffed by a dedicated group of retirees, the Sutherland Shire Toy Restoration Centre's mission is to support vulnerable people, with proceeds of their sales being generously donated to local community groups for distribution to underprivileged families in the Sutherland Shire. Of course, none of this would be possible without the dedication of the Sutherland Shire Toy Restoration Centre's. I recognise Wendy Amesbury, John McCracken, Kate Doherty, Dorothy Paramenter, Mike Ryland and Bruce Harris for applying their skills and volunteering their time for this important cause. I commend the team at the Sutherland Shire Toy Restoration Centre on recognised as Community Group of the Year at the 2024 Sutherland Shire Australia Day Awards and extend my best wishes for the future.

### MIRANDA WOMAN OF THE YEAR 2024

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)**—I congratulate the 2024 Miranda Woman of the Year, Diane McInerney of Sylvania – a pillar of our local community. Diane is truly deserving of this recognition. As the inaugural President of the Catholic Women's League of Gynea, Diane works tirelessly to bring women together in faith to make a meaningful difference by supporting different groups and charities. Amongst the organisations that the Catholic Women's League of Gynea has supported is The Farm at Galong which provides a place of restoration for women and children affected by substance abuse. Furthermore, Diane worked as a school teacher for nearly 30 years and even in her retirement, continues to teach scripture at Our Lady Star of the Sea in Miranda. She is also a member of Zonta International Botany Bay where she is particularly proud of her involvement in the group's work providing birthing kits for women in less developed countries and raising funds for cancer research. Diane is a quiet achiever making a significant impact and enriching our community. I am pleased to acknowledge her selfless work and passion for helping others by naming her the 2024 Miranda Woman of the Year.

### MAITLAND SHOW ART PRIZE WINNERS 2024

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Congratulations to Molly Mahoney who has been named the grand champion in the 2024 Maitland Show Art Prize. The emerging

artist won the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander section of the competition and was then chosen as the overall winner. Molly competed against 84 other artists and 168 works for the title. Molly is a descendant of the Boon Wurrung and Barkindji peoples of south-eastern Australia. Coming from an artistic family, Molly works with traditional methods and materials such as sewing and working with possum, kangaroo hide, and emu feathers, exploring the blending of the ancestral with the contemporary. Chief steward Amorelle Dempster said the quality of the work was incredible and she had no idea there were so many talented artists who called the city home. Julie Hvirf won the open traditional section, Rene Brager took out the works on paper section, Janelle Goldman came out on top in the miniatures section, Steve Harrison won the sculpture section and Emily James won the emerging young artist category. Congratulations to all the winners.

#### **HUNTER VALLEY TRAINING COMPANY FINALISTS**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—At 42 years of age the Hunter Valley Training Company is Australia's oldest group training company. Begun by the Hon. Milton Morris AO and Kay Sharp AM, it has provided employment and skills training to over 40,000 people, operates from 10 regional offices and has its flagship technical skill centre at Rutherford. The Hunter Valley Training Company proudly celebrated having six finalists at the last years Apprentice Employment Network NSW & ACT Group Training Awards. I wish to acknowledge the three Hunter based finalist. Joel Hartley who was previously a finalist for trainee of the year in Business Administration, was last year acknowledged as a finalist for Marketing trainee and currently mentors new trainees for the training company, congratulations Joel. Justin Curley was also a finalist and completed his Electrical apprenticeship with HVTC and host employer, Origin Energy in 2022, following completing a Mechanical apprenticeship in 2017, congratulations Justin. Jacob Anderson who has successfully completed his water operations traineeship and was also a finalist, congratulations Jacob. Thank you to the Hunter Valley Training Company, who employ 280 Hunter based apprentices and trainees and continue to deliver a high-quality workforce for the Maitland region.

#### **CELIA KELLY AND PIP THOROUGHGOOD**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Congratulations to the Maitland Repertory Theatre team who took home two awards at the 45th annual City of Newcastle Drama Association [CONDA] awards late last year. Maitland Repertory Theatre received 12 nominations for five of their productions: Dorothy in Wonderland, All My Sons, Rumours, On Golden Pond and Lord of the Flies. Celia Kelly won the award for Excellence by a Performer in a Supporting Role - Play for her role as Chris Bevans in Maitland Repertory Theatre's Rumours. Celia triumphed over 7 other nominees in the category. Pip Thoroughgood, a tutor at Maitland Repertory Theatre, won the award for Excellence by a Director - Play for directing Maitland Repertory Theatre's All My Sons. Head CONDA judge Karen Birrell said the calibre of theatre produced in the Hunter was exceptional and it was great to see so many different companies winning awards this year. Congratulations Celia and Pip.

#### **COMMUNITY SMART ENERGY TALKS**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—There's nothing that warms my heart more than seeing my community look out for each other and this is demonstrated today by the wonderful members of the Umina Community Group. Last month, Sean Richardson of the Umina Community Group collaborated with Louisa Klopstien of Vanholland Energy Assessors, Jo Muller of the Peninsula Environment Group and Stephen King from the Patonga Progress Association to give the first of their Community Smart Energy Talks at the Umina Beach Surf Club. This free talk provided advice to locals on ways to reduce their energy bills, reduce their emissions and ways to improve their energy efficiency. This wonderful event has come at a time when we are all trying to find ways to tighten our belts and spend money more wisely. Well done to Sean, Louisa, Jo and Stephen for sharing your wisdom and thank you also to all of the other members of the Umina Community Group who have assisted in ensuring this event runs smoothly. Good luck at your further upcoming Community Smart Energy Talks and thank you for all that you're doing.

#### **ANDREW SLADE FROM MOUNTAIN PRIDE FARMS**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—The Peats Ridge farming community plays an essential role in stocking Central Coasties' dining tables with the freshest fruit and vegetables. And it is my pleasure to acknowledge the wonderful work of local farmer Andrew Slade from Mountain Pride Farms. Andrew is the person behind Mountain Pride Farms in the lush plains of Peats Ridge. To open the doors at Ettalong Growers Market on Saturday, Andrew rises at 3am on a Friday, before the sun. He's out collecting freshly laid eggs from his Peats Ridge farm, and boxing up his own avocados, pumpkins, watermelons and garlic. As roosters crow and birds start to tweet, Andrew is stacking boxes of eggplants and capsicums, beetroots and cabbages from local growers, including third generation Italian farmers. Then there's a tonne and half of unpacking and packing back up on Saturday. Andrew,

I would like to extend a hand of thanks for doing whatever it takes to get the bounty of Peats Ridge onto the plates of appreciative Central Coasties.

### **GOSFORD PRESCHOOL**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—Diversity is what makes Australia beautiful, and I am thrilled to acknowledge the Gosford Preschool team for their commitment to create a diverse and inclusive learning environment for all children. Gosford preschool is home to a multicultural hub with pre-schoolers from various cultural backgrounds. This preschool has a strong focus on building multicultural awareness, which involves exposing other cultural celebrations to the school community. The educators are proud advocates for breaking down cultural barriers so that they can provide an equal start for every single child at this preschool. Having a strong knowledge of Aboriginal culture, this preschool has laid out multiple educational activities to introduce the beauty of Aboriginal foundation to the children. In addition to that, their teaching showcases the mateship of Australian culture. They have organised numerous donation callouts and fundraising events to support communities in isolated parts of Australia. Preschoolers are the future of our country and having a passionate early learning centre like Gosford preschool assures me that our future is very well taken care of. I applaud the Gosford Preschool team for your exemplary actions, and I truly appreciate your hard work nurturing our little learners.

### **NORTHERN BEACHES WOMEN'S SHELTER ASES ACCREDITATION**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)**—Today, I acknowledge the incredible work of the Northern Beaches Women's Shelter. Since opening its doors in November 2010, over 500 homeless women have benefited from NBWS Services with 90 per cent transitioning back into the community successfully and sustainably. Originally known as the Manly Women's Shelter, it expanded to become the Northern Beaches Women's Shelter, and then the founding shelter in the Women's Community Shelters Network. As the proud Patron of the Northern Beaches Women's Shelter, I am thrilled to report the NBWS has attained Australian Services, Excellence Standards Accreditation. This valued recognition highlights the excellent work of the Board, Ambassadors, skilled staff, volunteers and others committed to assist women suffering domestic violence, mental health, financial hardship, drug and/or alcohol abuse or similar issues. I congratulate the Northern Beaches Women's Shelter on attaining ASES Accreditation and encourage the community to continue supporting the Shelter, including financially, in delivering its range of valuable women's services.

### **GEORGIE FURZE- MANLY WOMAN OF THE YEAR**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)**—I wish to pay tribute to this year's Manly Woman of the Year, Georgie Furze for her amazing work with girls and young women. Georgie established 'Beyond the Gloves', a boxing program that empowers young girls between the ages of 12 and 18 through physical exercise and mentoring. Georgie is focused on using boxing to build resilience, self-esteem and confidence and promote body positivity and mental fitness among young girls. The results of her program include increased school attendance, motivation, meaningful connections and peer support, and improved relationships. On receiving the Manly Woman of the Year Award, Georgie said, "I am passionate about helping young women. I really care about them and feel greatly honoured to have received the Manly Woman of the Year Award. I'll remember this day for the rest of my life." Georgie joins an outstanding list of inspirational local women who make a positive contribution to our community, and we thank each one of them for their commitment and inspiring leadership.

### **NEW CEO FOR BE CENTRE**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)**—Speaker, I wish to recognise the appointment of Tania Taylor as the new Chief Executive Officer of the Be Centre, an organisation which aims to assist children manage their emotions and experiences through play, in a safe space that's centred on them. Tania brings a wealth of experience from the charity sector including through another Northern Beaches-based charity where she helped raise millions of dollars to address mental health. Tania has a passion for changing outcomes for children who have challenges, and for working within purpose-driven organisations. Her dedication to fostering positive change aligns greatly with the mission and values of the Be Centre Foundation, which summarises its work with the motto, 'What they struggle to say, we help through play'. I wish Tania the very best in her new role, as she sets about building on the historic growth of the Be Centre and charts a new course for an even brighter and impactful future, helping as many children as possible.

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