

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Tuesday 19 March 2024**

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

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

## *Announcements*

### **VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I extend a very warm welcome to guests of the member for Drummoyne, members from Concord Rotary Club. I also welcome to the public gallery guests of the member for Hawkesbury, students from Colo High School, who are participating in the Legal Studies and the Legislature program conducted by the Parliamentary Education and Engagement team. I also welcome guests of the member for Blacktown, Mr Shuichi Tokuda, Consul-General of Japan, along with Mr Sosui Yoshiji Soeno, Samurai Commander, and his wife, Iuliana. I also welcome Shingo Yokohama, former World Kickboxing Champion, and Mr Peter Mylonas, Kempo Genbu Ryu International Karate Organisation. We are in safe hands, I believe—until things go wrong. It was wonderful to meet all our guests earlier. I also acknowledge guests of the member for Davidson, Harold and Sue from St Ives Rotary Club. I welcome guests of the member for Lake Macquarie, student leaders and teacher Kylie Hattenfels from Toronto High School.

### **LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY PHOTOGRAPHS**

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

## *Bills*

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

#### **Returned**

**The SPEAKER:** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the bill with amendments. I order that consideration of the Legislative Council's amendments be set down as an order of the day for a later hour of the sitting.

## *Question Time*

### **RENTAL MARKET**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (12:06):** My question is directed to the Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading. The Minister has said he is committed to taking steps to "ease pressure on the rental market". Last financial year New South Wales had a net population gain from immigration of 174,000 people, placing additional pressure on rental demand. What conversations has the Minister had with Federal Ministers about reducing short-term demand in the rental market stemming from record high migration numbers?

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields—Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Innovation, Science and Technology, Minister for Building, and Minister for Corrections) (12:07):** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his interest in the rental market and rental reform. For 12 years there was not much when it came to rental help and reform. There is a rental crisis at the moment, due mainly to undersupply in the market that has been building up for 12 years. You cannot have rental affordability and accessibility if you do not have rental availability. It is important to do all we can to increase supply. This is the headline of members opposite. This is their record when it comes to rental reform. Denying people the opportunity—

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

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

**Mr Alister Henskens:** We know it is government by headlines, but members cannot use props in the Chamber.

**The SPEAKER:** I uphold the point of order. The Minister will resume his answer without the assistance of props.

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG:** Rental is a hot issue at the moment. One in three people in New South Wales rent. In certain places, it is probably closer to one in two. It is important that we continue the supply agenda to reduce pressure on housing. That is why the planning Minister is doing all that he can. Of course, he is being blocked by members of the Opposition, whose only answer to help renters is no, no and no.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, direct relevance. It was a narrow question about what conversations the Minister has had with Federal colleagues.

**The SPEAKER:** I uphold the point of order. The Minister will be directly relevant to the question, which was about what conversations he has had. The member for North Shore will come to order.

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG:** Of course, last year, as members would be well aware, the Government appointed the Rental Commissioner, a strong advocate for those in the rental market, whose job is to come up with ideas and policy in a form that implements the Government's reform agenda when it comes to renting. We on this side take the rental space seriously. We are working on the supply side. We are working on the rental reforms.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, direct relevance. Mr Speaker, the Minister is flouting your ruling.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister is sailing close to flouting my ruling. He will continue his answer.

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG:** We have the conversations all the time. It is important that we continue to look at all angles when it comes to reducing the pressure on rental. In relation to supply and rental reform, we on this side have an agenda; those opposite did not for 12 years.

#### GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (12:10):** My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on the impact that changes to GST distribution will have on New South Wales?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:10):** It is a good question from the member for Cabramatta. I have to say it will take more than a private member's statement from the member for Wahroonga for people to realise that we are being screwed over by the GST distribution. That is the truth of the matter. By any stretch of the imagination, the distribution by the Commonwealth Grants Commission is disproportionately hitting the taxpayers of this State. As a result of the Grants Commission determination last week, this State will lose \$1.6 billion in just one year.

As a result of that change, much of it is being sent to Victoria and Western Australia. As a result of that, New South Wales taxpayers are sending an inordinate amount of money to the Commonwealth Government and it is not being returned for essential services and infrastructure that the people of this State need. I have to echo the sentiments of the previous Premier and previous Treasurer of New South Wales, Mr Perrottet, when he said that it is "black magic" that is determining the split of GST revenue to the States. When we look at some of the particulars of that GST distribution, they are particularly worrying. For example, Kiama has been reclassified as a major city in New South Wales and Cessnock has been reclassified as a major city—

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** —despite the fact that Kiama has grown by just a thousand people over the last five years and Cessnock has grown by 1,500 people. Meanwhile, Hobart and Darwin are not considered major cities under the GST formulation because their populations are below 250,000. These seem like distinctions without a difference. However, they have major implications for how the GST is distributed. This opaque way of distributing public funds is disproportionately hitting New South Wales, so we have a simple fix for it: It should be split as percentage of population. Split it by head.

As a result of that, if it was distributed by per capita, New South Wales would have an additional \$3.6 billion in this year alone. That is the equivalent of recruiting an additional 10,000 nurses and an additional 10,000 police officers for this State—a huge amount of money that is going out of this State and into other jurisdictions. I have to say, when it comes to the smaller States, there is an obligation on larger States to ensure that there are some relativities for their budget bottom lines. I am talking about South Australia, the Northern Territory and Tasmania. But Western Australia is on the verge of being one of the wealthiest governments in the whole world, on par with the petrostates in the Middle East—and for largely the same reason. *[Extension of time]*

I am amazed to hear from the member for Wahroonga today. He is very chirpy. He is jumping around, having a say—

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** —talking to his sources, apparently, conducting an investigation.

**Ms Robyn Preston:** Point of order—

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

**Ms Robyn Preston:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The comments are irrelevant to the question that was asked.

**The SPEAKER:** I have ruled on that point of order previously. The Premier has been directly relevant. He is now straying somewhat, but that is perfectly permissible.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** The member for Wahroonga is conducting an investigation. He would have us all believe that he is Perry Mason, but we all know he is more like Willie Mason. At the end of the day, the Government is dealing with the situation in New South Wales that needs to be rectified. I have to say I am very grateful for the Leader of the Opposition joining the Government in putting New South Wales first, and for standing up on behalf of the taxpayers of this State. That is important. We want this to be a bipartisan effort. Unfortunately, that does not extend to the previous Treasurer of New South Wales, the member for Hornsby. He said:

Chris Minns and Daniel Mookhey are now blaming the regular GST distribution as a fresh excuse ...

He uses the words "the regular GST distribution", as if the member for Hornsby is happy with the status quo. He went on to say in this tweet:

I should be grateful they've moved on from blaming me for their sorry economic ... performance.

No, we have not. We want you to hang around, Matty—\$27 billion in nine months!

**Mr Matt Kean:** Point of order—

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

**Mr Matt Kean:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, relevance. The Premier is mathematically challenged. I will not use the language of the Treasurer of Victoria and call him a tool.

**The SPEAKER:** I thank the member for Hornsby. There is no point of order.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** With Perry Mason and Spending Matt, it is up to the Labor Party to fight for the interests of the people of New South Wales. We on this side will do that every single day of the week. The bottom line here is the taxpayers of this State send billions of dollars to the Federal Government and we deserve our fair share.

## SOCIAL MEDIA SECURITY

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (12:16):** My question is directed to the Minister for Local Government. What advice has he taken from security agencies about the security of parliamentary emails on his mobile device on which he used TikTok?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! All members, including Government members, will come to order and allow the Minister to answer. I call the member for Canterbury to order for the first time.

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (12:17):** The fascination that the Opposition has for my social media platform—

**The SPEAKER:** Government members will come to order and allow the Minister to answer.

**Mr RON HOENIG:** The fascination that the Opposition has for my social media platform is now becoming an obsession.

**The SPEAKER:** I draw attention to the fact that Government members are interrupting the Minister. The member for Canterbury will come to order.

**Mr RON HOENIG:** The question asked by the member for Goulburn virtually echoes a question asked by the Coalition in upper House estimates, when I was asked the most searching questions about "Rontent" and what I was doing on world Hobbit Day.

**Mrs Wendy Tuckerman:** Point of order: I understand that Government members think security is a laughing matter, but I ask that the Minister answer the question as put.

**The SPEAKER:** Members will come to order. I call the member for Swansea to order for the first time. I call the member for Canterbury to order for the second time. Somebody should get the member for Canterbury a glass of water. The Minister will be directly relevant to the question.

**Mr RON HOENIG:** I got about three words out. I was asked also about Halloween and who came to my electorate office for trick or treat. Even the Opposition leader asked me about "Rontent".

**Mrs Wendy Tuckerman:** Point of order: The Minister is flouting your ruling.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Goulburn will resume her seat. The Minister will be directly relevant. He has not achieved that yet.

**Mr RON HOENIG:** I manage my social media accounts in accordance with the social media guidelines for Ministers and will continue to do so.

**The SPEAKER:** I note that the Minister keeps popping up in my Facebook feed.

### TEACHER WORKFORCE

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (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 actions taken by the New South Wales Government to support teachers in delivering free, quality education for our families?

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (12:20):** I thank the member for Camden, a former teacher, for that great question. That is how to ask a question in this House. It is somewhat intimidating to answer a question after the answer given by the influencer of the New South Wales Parliament, but I will attempt to do so. First, I say hello to visitors in the public gallery, from Colo High School, and thank them for coming in. Today is probably the first time we have had a debate about TikTok. That is not very common at all.

When it comes to improving outcomes for students right across New South Wales, one of the most important things, if not the single biggest priority for our Government, in lifting these outcomes is, of course, the teachers in front of those wonderful students. To deliver that high-quality, free public education, as we ask our wonderful expert teachers to do, we as a government—and we made it very clear that this will be our priority—really need to tackle the issue of the workload burden on our teachers in all of our schools in all sectors across New South Wales so that we can get our teachers focused on their expert practice, their core responsibility, which is teaching and learning in the classroom. They have been overwhelmed with administrative work.

We are working our way through that, line by line, and conducting a policy audit. We have found more than 300 policies, and any teacher listening to this will think, "I can't believe it's only 300." So many policies have been added to our teachers' workload, and so they are leaving in droves. We have also slowed down the rollout of the new curriculum so that, in a time of teacher shortage, we can get our teachers to focus on delivering the new curriculum in a way that does not jeopardise student outcomes or quality. The previous Government made it so rushed. We are now going through a review of tasks—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Port Macquarie will come to order.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** —that every teacher at every school must do, and there are hundreds and hundreds of them as well. We have put more than 400 admin support staff members in our schools to assist our teachers with the day-to-day admin tasks that really do not have to be done by our expert teachers day by day. [*Extension of time*]

We scrapped the previous Government's disastrous student behaviour policy, which saw teachers and principals unable to deal with persistent misbehaviour. Whilst we do not want to talk down our system, we must be clear that that is a problem in our classrooms, and one of the most important things that teachers, principals and deputy principals need to be armed with is the toolkit to deal with misbehaviour so that it is cut off at the pass and children can learn in safe and productive classrooms and our teachers can work in safe and productive environments as well. We are doing everything possible through the NSW Education Standards Authority, the regulatory authority in charge of the curriculum and accreditation, to make it easier for teachers to do professional development, be accredited and continue their accreditation to make sure that that admin burden is not seeing our teachers leave in droves.

When we came to government, we saw a teacher exodus like we have never seen in the public school system, thanks to the behaviour of those opposite. Admin burden, underpayment and the undervaluing of teachers

resulted in people resigning before they were due to retire and vacancies in excess of 3,000. We are rolling out all those changes in our public schools because we as a government are committed to listening to the educators, to listening to the profession that starts all others, in our classrooms. It would really do the Opposition well to listen to teachers in our classrooms, because teachers are saying that they are happy to have a government that is finally valuing them, and we are building the schools and putting teachers inside them.

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

### REGIONAL NEW SOUTH WALES

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (12:26):** My question is directed to the Premier. Over the past five years, many of the problems that my team and I have had to try to clean up have been due to poor consultation practices and standards of State Government actors. Will the Premier's Government support legislated minimum standards and oversight for when it consults with regional communities to ensure that their voices are properly considered in government decisions?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:26):** I take the member for Barwon at his word. As he said, consultation has not been good enough and has not been targeted well enough to deliver for his community. In relation to the specific question of signing up to legislation I have not seen yet, I cannot do that. But, obviously, we will wait to see whether there is a private member's bill or other regulatory, protocol or policy changes that could be implemented. One of the most important things a government that listens must do is travel, particularly to the regions, to understand the impact of government policies, not just where there are gaps or where things are slipping through and not being implemented but where there are opportunities as well. So I wait to see the member's legislation and, of course, we will continue that dialogue.

### WESTERN SYDNEY HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (12:27):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Health. Will the Minister please update the House on how the Government is delivering health infrastructure to meet the needs of Western Sydney's growing community?

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (12:27):** What a fantastic question. Recently the Premier and the Deputy Premier took the entire Cabinet out to East Hills and got a firsthand understanding of the challenges in that community. They are very lucky to have such a great advocate in the member for East Hills—well done. Health infrastructure is important. To me it is not as important as staffing, but it is critically important to communities. Given the age of some of our hospitals and the significant explosion of population in Western Sydney, we have decided to make a record \$3 billion commitment, which will see an additional 600 beds for Western Sydney. Today I will outline to the House a number of specific areas we are focusing on going forward.

Today we have announced that the planning work for \$1.7 billion worth of investment across Western Sydney has commenced. That includes \$1.3 billion for a brand-new Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital. The member for East Hills and other members have been very strong advocates for that for a long period. Bankstown hospital has not had an upgrade or an investment like that since 1997. It is a significant investment in a growing community where there is big demand on health services. At nearby Canterbury Hospital, the Government will invest a record \$350 million, which will be the first investment like that since 1998. The people of Canterbury have waited for an investment in their local hospital since 1998. It is an investment that the member for Canterbury and others have been terrific advocates for and are very proud of, as are the health staff who work in and operate that hospital. The Government is making a record investment of \$550 million in Fairfield Hospital, which has not had that sort of investment since 1989. In Blacktown and Mount Druitt hospitals the Government is investing \$120 million that will add an additional 60 beds. [*Extension of time*]

The investment is critically important to those hospitals. We dove down into the Bureau of Health Information last week and, like the policy nerd I am, pored over its huge datasets—particularly around Western Sydney, because that is where the pressure is. It is acute in all areas, but particularly so in our emergency departments. About 4,000 people use the emergency departments in Western Sydney hospitals every week, which is an enormous load. The \$3 billion investment and an additional 600 beds will make a real difference to the way in which we deliver health services for Western Sydney.

I acknowledge the Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education for his advocacy. We are working closely with him and his team to make sure that TAFE remains a strong presence in Bankstown. When I first became the Minister, I could not believe those opposite had waited so long to decide where the hospital would go. I said, "Tell me where the experts say it should go. Show me the evidence to support what Health Infrastructure is saying. Let's announce the site and get on with it, because that is what the community expects." I acknowledge all the members who have been tireless advocates for their communities. I also acknowledge the Health staff, who

have been waiting patiently for the upgrades. Let me assure those communities that the Minns Labor Government will deliver the hospital upgrades for Western Sydney because they need and deserve those health services.

### REGIONAL YOUTH CRIME

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst) (12:32):** My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. There is an escalating regional youth crime crisis. People want to tell us their stories so that we can come up with a whole-of-government response. Will the Minister commit to a regional crime inquiry as requested by the Country Mayors Association, NSW Farmers, Country Women's Association and Police Association, or does the Minister still believe it would just be "a talkfest"?

**The SPEAKER:** The question was worded in such a way that it could be ruled out of order. However, if the Minister is prepared to answer it, she may do so.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (12:33):** Yes, I am prepared to answer it. I have said repeatedly that we do not need the politicians in this building telling us that there is a problem in regional New South Wales when it comes to youth crime. I am saying, and I will continue to say, that what has been proposed by the groups that the member for Bathurst listed is an inquiry into the police and the work they do in regional New South Wales. I have made it very clear—and others have supported this; in fact, some of the groups that the member for Bathurst mentioned recently supported it too when I sat down and spoke to them directly—that the problems we are experiencing are a whole-of-government problem. So we need to take a whole-of-government approach.

**Mr Paul Toole:** Point of order—

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** Seriously?

**Mr Paul Toole:** My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The question was in relation to a whole-of-government response and asked whether the Minister will commit to a regional inquiry to respond to the pleas of country mayors across the State on behalf of the residents who are living in fear in regional New South Wales.

**The SPEAKER:** I thank the member for Bathurst. I have heard enough to adjudicate on the point of order. There is no point of order. The Minister has been directly relevant and is continuing to answer the question. The Minister has the call.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** It is curious that the member for Bathurst asks me a question, which I am answering seriously with all the factual information, but then takes a point of order. You know that you are being a hypocrite, mate. You know that you have not done anything in this place. You know that very well.

**Mrs Wendy Tuckerman:** Point of order: The Minister should be directing her comments through the Chair, not pointing at the Opposition benches.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will direct her comments through the Chair. However, she is being directly relevant. The Minister has the call.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** The member for Bathurst is a hypocrite—there you go. The inquiry proposed by those groups that the member listed was specifically around policing in regional areas in relation to youth crime. That is a direct attack on the police who are out there day in, day out doing unimaginably difficult work. The work that those police do—

**Mr Paul Toole:** Point of order—

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

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** Is he serious? Sit him down.

**The SPEAKER:** I cannot sit the member down. I need to hear his point of order.

**Mr Paul Toole:** The point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The question was: Will the Minister commit to a regional crime inquiry on behalf of the victims of crime in regional New South Wales?

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Bathurst will resume his seat. I have ruled on the point of order already. The Minister has been directly relevant. Opposition members may not like the answer because the Minister is not using the words they want to hear. However, she is being directly relevant. The Minister has the call.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** What has happened to the clock? I will have another three minutes. Please leave it because I have a lot to say. I have not even started on what we announced last week. This Government has taken direct action, and I thank the Premier for his support of the direct action.

**Mr Paul Scully:** The question is: Will The Nationals support it?

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** That is a very good point. We have taken direct action, and I am very proud to be the Government that has.

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

**Mr Jihad Dib:** I was reflecting on the olden days.

**The SPEAKER:** The member should not reflect—at least not out loud.

### HOUSING SUPPLY

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (12:37):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. Will the Minister please update the House on the New South Wales Government's plan to deliver more housing?

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (12:38):** I thank the member for Penrith for her question. She is keenly interested in delivering more housing and more well-located, well-designed and well-built homes for young people throughout New South Wales. The Government's proposal for more diverse and well-located homes through our reforms to planning controls will allow the delivery of more low- and mid-rise housing types. We are talking about duplexes, townhouses, terraces, manor homes like you see out in Penrith, and low- and medium-storey apartment blocks. It is no longer appropriate to not even consider those sorts of applications for low- and mid-rise housing. The good news is that many councils are rising to that challenge, including Penrith council. They are working with the Government to deliver plans through negotiation. That is the sort of sensible action in good faith that we need more of. Sadly, though, there are those who only want to play political games, keen to create confusion and latch onto anything they think might undermine the Government's plans.

Recently, the member for Wairoa made some claims under parliamentary privilege that described a circumstantial case of misuse of information by a planning official seeking to profit from the Government's Transport Oriented Development program. He said that the information he had, which he was able to verify, supported a "strong circumstantial case" of corrupt conduct. He said there was "credible evidence" and that he had "documented evidence". The first thing anyone would do in that circumstance is refer it to the ICAC. In fact, that is what my department and I did.

**Mr Matt Kean:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The question was about the Government's plans to deliver more housing. It has nothing to do with the member for Wairoa or anyone else on this side of the House.

**The SPEAKER:** A direct answer has eluded the Minister up to this point, but he still has some time left.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** A strong defence from the member for Hornsby in the Chamber, but not so much in the corridors. Let us just reflect on what has happened here, because this is about whether this Government is able to confront the housing crisis that we are facing in New South Wales.

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

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** This is about planning reforms connected to infrastructure—the sort of infrastructure that the member for Hornsby was standing in front of the other day, claiming there was no infrastructure to support more housing.

**Mr Matt Kean:** Point of order—

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

**Mr Matt Kean:** The Minister is misleading the House. The planning Minister is secretly trying to shove 8,000 homes into Cherrybrook and will not be up-front with the community about it.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Hornsby will resume his seat. The member can address the issue using the proper processes of the House if he believes that is necessary.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order: Standing Order 131 (9) does not allow points of order to be "repetitive, interfering or used to make a statement". The member for Hornsby does it all the time and he needs to be found guilty of an act of disorder.

**The SPEAKER:** I thank the Leader of the House. That is certainly a possibility. Members will come to order. The Minister has the call.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** When the member for Hornsby shopped that story around, he could not convince even the member for Wahroonga of that circumstantial evidence, let alone anyone else. The Government has been accused of a cover-up when it comes to its housing plans, but there has been nothing of the sort. [*Extension of time*]

In every parliamentary term there are a few defining moments that go to the heart of attitude and integrity. For the Opposition, yesterday was one of them. Only yesterday the ICAC delivered its finding that said it was "satisfied there is no evidence that Ms Joyner or any other person engaged in corrupt conduct".

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. This is completely off the rails and has nothing to do with anything the Minister is supposed to be talking about. He is now talking about ICAC, which was not in the question at all.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will return to the leave of the question.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** I am getting to the heart of the integrity of the planning process for planning reforms.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Hornsby and the Premier will cease assisting the Minister. The Minister is quite capable of answering the question.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** When it comes to making sure that we have a good and proper housing debate about the future of young people and making sure there is housing for all ages and all income types across the State, the Government is getting on with the job, making those reforms and introducing those plans. On the other side of the Chamber, we have seen the worst political and professional judgement since Godwin Grech. In fact, some people are referring to him as Gordon Grech.

**Mr Tim James:** Point of order—

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** Oh, here he is!

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

**Mr Tim James:** Standing Order 73 is being flagrantly flouted. The Minister is making imputations about a member. He should do so by substantive motion and he knows it.

**The SPEAKER:** I do not uphold the point of order. The Minister has the call.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** It is amazing how many people are lining up for the leadership challenge in the offing, while the Government is fine. The only motion some members opposite want debated is who will be the next Leader of the Opposition. Unlike the members opposite, who are diminished by their behaviour lately, we are getting on with the job of making sure there is more housing for more people in New South Wales.

**Ms Robyn Preston:** Point of order—

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

#### **ROSEHILL RACECOURSE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne) (12:44):** Hello to the good members of Concord Rotary Club in the gallery. My question is directed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. Is the relocation of Rosehill Racecourse to Sydney Olympic Park under consideration by the Government?

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (12:45):** I thank the member for Drummoyne for her question. As she would be aware, if she had followed any of the coverage of the discussion and debate around the future of Rosehill Racecourse, any proposal put forward is subject to the discussion of the members of the Australian Turf Club [ATC]. The Government has entered into a memorandum of understanding with the ATC that requires it to put forward more options for housing. That may include other things, but at the moment we do not have a proposal on anything from the ATC. We do not have a proposal to discuss more housing, but the ATC recognises that it might have a role in helping facilitate more housing in New South Wales—something members opposite do not recognise that they have.

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

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** While the Government is getting on with the task of working with councils, communities, the union movement and other groups and organisations—all of whom recognise that we are in the midst of a housing crisis—members opposite are scurrying around with claims of corrupt conduct that do not stack up. Trying to blur all the lines and all this sort of stuff that the member for Drummoyne has just tried to do

does not help her cause. I remind the member for Drummoyne: She is only new in this place and just because they give her the question does not mean she has to ask it.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129, direct relevance. It was a narrow question about whether a proposal is under consideration. It was not an invitation for the planning Minister to have a general rant.

**The SPEAKER:** I do not uphold the point of order. I ascertained very early in his answer that the Minister was being directly relevant.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** I thank you for that ruling, Mr Speaker. I mention to the Minister for Health—we have flu shots coming to Parliament House, but can we get some hearing checks? I think members opposite are struggling to listen. They are certainly struggling to listen to their communities and their councils. They are certainly struggling when it comes to listening to what the alternative first law officer of the State should be doing, and that is referring allegations to the ICAC. Yesterday was a defining moment for Opposition members, and they failed every test of reasonableness when it comes to reasonable debate in this State.

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129, relevance. Will you bring the Minister back to the leave of the question? We are discussing Rosehill, and Government members are crab-walking away from the issue.

**The SPEAKER:** I do not uphold the point of order. The Minister has been directly relevant.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** Even the Nats want to run for the Liberal leadership now. Even the Nats are auditioning for the Liberal leadership. The Government is working on housing and we will deliver it.

#### PARRAMATTA LIGHT RAIL

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (12:48):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport. Will the Minister update the House on the progress of Parramatta Light Rail stage one and stage two?

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (12:48):** I thank the member for Parramatta. It was absolutely delightful to be with her, the Lord Mayor, the Premier and representatives of business on Friday in the heart of Parramatta because this is such an exciting time. For the first time in 80 years, trams have returned to the centre of Parramatta. It is a huge milestone to deliver light rail right in the heart of Western Sydney.

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

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** I confirm for the House that not only is testing underway, but it is underway on the entire Parramatta Light Rail line. We will complete the 2,000 hours of testing to deliver that essential service. Last Thursday night a light rail tram travelled the first 6.6 kilometres from the stabling yard in Camellia through Parramatta Square, along Church Street and through the hospital precinct to its final stop in Westmead. The good news is that testing will continue during the day in April. We want people to be aware. We want them to be alert and looking out for trams, because this is the first time in many years that this has happened in the heart of Western Sydney.

When the trams are ready, passengers will be able to jump on board this brand-new service connecting some of the fastest growing communities in our city. It is anticipated that more than 16,000 people per day will jump on and off these trams at Church Street alone, supporting the 60 businesses, eateries, restaurants and shops that need that support. It is great news for those business owners and for their families. By 2026 we anticipate that 28,000 people per day will be using the new light rail service. It means that the people of Westmead can get a connection to Carlingford via Parramatta through to Camellia, and it means that public transport connections will be available to the future Metro West stations, due to open in 2032 in Parramatta, and also to Parramatta Light Rail stage two.

I am very pleased to inform the House that the Government is moving ahead with the completion of the entire line. You do not build half a bridge; you build the entire thing to connect communities—you have to connect communities. That is what we on this side are committed to, to deliver this game-changing project for Western Sydney. It is because of an additional \$200 million investment that our Government has been able to get planning approval for the second stage of the Parramatta Light Rail. We want to ensure that we can begin construction on that critical link in this term of government. I would suggest that it is important to look at what has happened in the past. [*Extension of time*]

It is important to remember that those opposite said many things about the second stage of the Parramatta Light Rail. They said many things—in fact, they promised it 17 times. They promised it, and promised it, and then promised it again. Families moved to Wentworth Point and Melrose Park—thousands of them. They bought

homes, made investments and opened businesses on the basis of those promises. What happened? They were completely and utterly let down by the Liberal-Nationals Government. It comprehensively failed to deliver on its promise, again and again. We on this side of the House are absolutely getting on with the job of completing the whole project, because the communities of Western Sydney deserve transport services that are reliable and affordable and give families the real option of leaving the car at home. That will help families with the cost of living, and it will help to boost businesses in Western Sydney.

Our Government is absolutely committed to delivering the future public transport that Western Sydney needs. That is why we are delivering the Southwest metro—a project that those opposite were going to cancel. That is why we are delivering critical bus links to the new Western Sydney airport for communities in the south-west when that airport opens and the first planes land—something that those opposite completely failed to do. We are delivering a medium-term bus plan—something that has not happened in decades. There are communities in Western Sydney where a bus turns up once an hour or not at all. That is not acceptable. We are also committed to delivering essential future metro connections like Metro West, and we are delivering that in conjunction with the housing that our city needs. That is why the Government will continue to invest to deliver these game-changing projects for communities right across Western Sydney.

### DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE SERVICES

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (12:53):** My question is directed to the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. The Lokahi Foundation has been supporting 35 women and children. Federal funding has not been renewed, and no State funding has been provided. Allegra Spender emailed the Lokahi Foundation and said Minister Rishworth's office advised, "It is actually the State Government that is recommending the funding not continue."

**Mr Paul Scully:** The Feds will dodge any funding at the moment.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Wollongong will come to order and allow the member for Port Macquarie to ask the question.

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS:** The Minister has denied that. Who is telling the truth?

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (12:54):** I thank the member for Port Macquarie for her question. We have had direct discussions about the Lokahi Foundation, and I thank the member for her interest. It is correct that the Lokahi Foundation has previously been funded by the Federal Government. It was funded by the Commonwealth Government's Department of Social Services. I have communicated with Allegra Spender following that correspondence to clarify the role of the State Government in those discussions and the role of the national partnership agreement. At no time have I or the Department of Communities and Justice made any recommendation to the Federal Government in relation to the Lokahi Foundation.

It is my understanding that the Department of Communities and Justice has provided the Lokahi Foundation with a list of services that they can refer their current clients on to. I also understand that the Commonwealth has asked the Lokahi Foundation for a proposal to allow consideration of transitional support for the remainder of the financial year to assist the service's clients to transition to other services. The other services in the area currently serviced by the Lokahi Foundation include Bondi Beach Cottage and The Deli Women and Children's Centre. Both offer the Integrated Domestic and Family Violence Services Program, which is the closest service to that which the Lokahi Foundation covered.

The Department of Communities and Justice has spoken to those services and confirmed that they have capacity to take on the Lokahi Foundation's clients. That has been confirmed. They are State Government-funded services in the local area. Bondi Beach Cottage and The Deli Women and Children's Centre, the Junction Neighbourhood Centre, the Women's and Girls' Emergency Centre, and Weave Youth and Community Services all offer the Staying Home Leaving Violence program. Domestic Violence Service Management and Moving Forward are specialist homelessness services providers based in the catchment area that support women and their children escaping domestic and family violence with rapid rehousing, crisis accommodation and case management support. I and my office have also spoken with the Lokahi Foundation to clarify the role of the New South Wales Government in relation to this. There is currently no funding available for the Lokahi Foundation, but we know that its current clients can be serviced and supported by existing State Government-funded services.

## COASTAL SAFETY

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (12:57):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Emergency Services. Will the Minister please update the House on the action the New South Wales Government is taking to promote coastal safety in New South Wales?

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (12:57):** I thank the member for Gosford for her question. The member is a well-known water lover who sends me photos from the beach all the time, saying, "Wish you were here." I usually respond with photos of being stuck in an office, or something like that. Summer may be officially over, but with today's temperature of 30 degrees and water temperature of about 25 degrees, people are still going to the beaches. New South Wales beaches are some of the most beautiful in the world, but they do have the potential to be dangerous. As we said a while ago, the last thing that we want is a great day at the beach becoming the worst day for someone's family and loved ones. That happens far too often.

Over the weekend I joined Surf Life Saving NSW CEO, Steve Pearce, and President, Peter Agnew, to announce 10 new emergency response beacons [ERBs] up and down the coast. They are part of a commitment of 32 emergency response beacons to be placed on beaches where the data tells us that lots of people attend but where there is not always a patrol. They operate in a simple but practical way. While 32 beacons will be rolled out, the first 10 will be rolled out in places that include the Central Coast, the South Coast, the Mid North Coast and the Hunter—and we are using data. They are an improvement on the original beacons and have got enhanced noise cancelling technology. If somebody sees someone else in distress, they press a button and it connects straight through to Surf Life Saving headquarters. Those at Surf Life Saving headquarters then instantly turn the cameras on and watch the beach. They have already been used to save lives this year. The noise cancelling means that people can have a conversation.

Importantly, the moment that happens, Surf Life Saving NSW activates a rescue. For example, we were at Shelly Beach in Manly the other day. Shelly Beach is unpatrolled, but there are a lot of people there, including a lot of divers that can black out. Manly Beach is around the corner, where there are people who can perform the rescue. Within a minute or two, they are able to dispatch someone on a jet ski or another form of transport, whether it is a rubber duckie or a bike. Those technology enhancements make an enormous difference. One unintended benefit is that those systems have also been used for people who have experienced cardiac arrest or have gone for a walk and found themselves in trouble. They are a great practical solution. The Government would love to have surf lifesavers patrolling every single bit of waterway in New South Wales, but that is difficult because our coastline is so big. [*Extension of time*]

It is all part of a \$23 million commitment announced by the Minns Labor Government in the last budget. The money will be used for things like jet skis, portable equipment and additional life-saving equipment—and that has already started. It forms part of a bigger package around water safety, which also includes a \$73 million investment in Marine Rescue NSW, \$5.8 million for the famous and wonderful Westpac helicopter, which is celebrating 50 years, and \$1 million for Surfing NSW so that surfers can be trained to perform rescues. Rescues are not always performed by surf lifesavers. Surf Life Saving NSW is currently exploring options to attach rescue equipment to the ERBs, which people could use to keep themselves safe if they attempt a rescue. While it is not necessarily the best word to use, there have been bystander deaths. That means people have gone into the water to rescue somebody else, often a child, and they have not quite got the swimming ability. The other person survives, but the person who has tried to rescue them does not make it. That is why flotation devices are important.

The Government also held a water safety round table two weeks ago. While it is not good news that New South Wales lost 14 people to drowning this summer, it is an improvement on the past summer. It is 14 people too many, but last summer it was 26. So I wanted to bring all of the stakeholders together to look at what we did and what we could do better in preparation for next summer. I talked about the 14 deaths, and they are a tragedy, but I also acknowledge that over 3,000 people were rescued over the summer, including over 300 on 26 January alone. Know your ability, swim between the flags and take care of yourself.

## HOMELESSNESS

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (13:03):** My question is directed to the Minister for Health, representing the Minister for Homelessness. Given the growing number of rough sleepers who are nonresidents, and the limited ability for specialist homelessness providers to support them, what action will the New South Wales Government take to help that vulnerable population?

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (13:03):** It is a very important issue, and I acknowledge the work of the member for Sydney. I have watched him represent his electorate and community since he was elected to this place in 2012.

He has been a tireless advocate for those sleeping rough. I had the pleasure of being the shadow Minister for Housing and Homelessness, and I know firsthand the effort that the member for Sydney puts into this issue each and every day on behalf of his community. From memory, there are more people sleeping rough in the member for Sydney's electorate than in any other electorate across New South Wales. It is important to acknowledge that context. It is an important issue.

This evening the Minister for Homelessness, who is a tireless advocate for those sleeping rough and doing it tough, will be hosting a forum for nonresidents who are experiencing homelessness and are sleeping rough, as well as stakeholders and the member for Sydney. The member for Sydney will continue to be engaged, as he should, given the high number of people within his community who are experiencing homelessness. That includes those nonresidents. There is a \$189 million package called Together Home, which has a range of different tranches designed to be able to help people transition from rough sleeping into accommodation. The Government has supported and expanded that, and the Minister has advocated for it going forward.

The Government is working on a strategy around homelessness, and the member for Sydney will continue to be engaged on that. I remind members that the Government is in partnership with the Federal Government on the issue. The National Housing and Homelessness Agreement is coming up, and the Federal Government also has a responsibility to contribute in this space. I hope that all members of this place are concerned with the Commonwealth Grants Commission and its decision to reduce funding to New South Wales to the tune of \$1.6 billion. That will have a direct impact on the homelessness services that are provided by the New South Wales Government. The Government cannot fix the issue on its own. Like with health, education and infrastructure, housing and homelessness services is a partnership model. We can argue the benefits or woes as much as we want, but the reality is that we have to deal with the cards we have got, which is that it is a dual—*[Extension of time]*

There are two levels of government working together to deliver for homeless people and those sleeping rough in our communities. Both the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces and the Minister for Housing are advocating strongly and vigorously to the Commonwealth around its responsibilities in this agreement. I have been assured that the Minister will directly raise the member for Sydney's concerns about nonresidents and the rights they have, or do not have, in relation to the provision of homelessness services across New South Wales. While not breaching cabinet confidentiality, we are lucky in New South Wales to have those two Ministers who are strong advocates for people who cannot always advocate for themselves. They are strident advocates for those people, and that is important to the Premier, the Deputy Premier and this entire Government.

The Government will be strongly advocating to the Commonwealth Government to help on this. The member for Sydney can be assured that the Government will work with him and his community to enhance and improve specialist homelessness services, like the package that Together Home supports, which is in the vicinity of 1,000 people across the community. Given the high number of people in the member for Sydney's electorate who sleep rough and do not have stable and permanent accommodation, I can assure him that the Minister has made it clear that she will continue to work closely with the member, his community and the providers that work across his community, and all of our communities, to deliver improvements in services for those most vulnerable in our communities.

#### DILLWYNIA CORRECTIONAL CENTRE

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (13:08):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Corrections. Will the Minister update the House on the New South Wales Government's response to the release of the final report of the Special Commission of Inquiry into offending by former Corrections Officer Wayne Astill at Dillwynia Correctional Centre?

**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) (13:08):** I thank the member for Heathcote for her question and her interest in this important subject. The final report of the Hon. Peter McClellan, AM, KC, on the Special Commission of Inquiry into offending by former Corrections Officer Wayne Astill at Dillwynia Correctional Centre makes for sober reading, but it also provides a blueprint for reform. When I first heard about Mr Astill's deplorable behaviour, I acted quickly to establish the inquiry.

Mr Astill's offending behaviour against female inmates, which occurred over a period of almost five years from 2014 to 2019 before his arrest in February 2019 and subsequent conviction in 2022, raised serious concerns about the management and governance at Dillwynia, and Corrective Services more broadly. As the report makes plain, the concerns were well founded. The special commission of inquiry has validated the stories of survivors. For too long, crimes against those in custody were ignored and there was silence. I also take this opportunity to

acknowledge the Corrective Services staff who raised concerns about the issue. The offences and the systemic issues detailed in the report are deplorable and unacceptable. As Mr McClellan stated:

It is apparent that problems in the management structure of CSNSW and the incapacity of some managers have undermined public confidence in CSNSW facilities ... it will be important that a process of review of the entire institution is undertaken, and appropriate changes implemented.

The Government will take time to carefully consider that important 804-page report and its recommendations and will provide a response in the coming months. The Government is committed to undertaking the necessary reform to ensure that inmates are properly protected, corrections officers are supported by sound management and strong integrity processes, and public confidence in the Corrective Services system is restored. That significant report demands a detailed and considered response, but it is clear that significant reform of Corrective Services is required to restore the public trust and confidence in what is an important element of our justice system.

Consistent with the recommendations and suggestions of the commissioner, change will not be limited to the one facility and the 31 recommendations of the report but will also go to broader corrections and other facilities. It is abundantly clear that significant reform will be required within the whole Corrective Services system. I have asked the Secretary of the Department of Communities and Justice to lead the development of the Government response and the taskforce which will be responsible for the implementation of the recommendations of that important inquiry's findings. [*Extension of time*]

I also take this opportunity to advise the House about the leadership of corrections. Mr Kevin Corcoran's appointment as the Commissioner of Corrective Services ended on 13 March 2024. He has been on leave since giving his evidence to the inquiry in November 2023. The Secretary of the Department of Communities and Justice holds the employer function for the Commissioner of Corrective Services. The secretary made the decision to end Mr Corcoran's appointment and informed me of that decision. That is appropriate. Mr Leon Taylor will remain the acting commissioner.

I also advise the House of several steps that have already been taken to improve the safety of inmates and the management of Dillwynia. They include establishing a standalone governor for Dillwynia, installing additional CCTV cameras in priority areas, providing specialist trauma counsellors to support victims, establishing a sexual misconduct reporting line to provide confidential reporting mechanisms, providing anti-sexual harassment training for all corrections staff, and the introduction of body-worn cameras for all uniformed staff at Dillwynia. As I have said, Mr McClellan's report makes for disturbing reading, but it also lays out a blueprint for reform not just of Dillwynia but, as recommended by Mr McClellan, of the Corrective Services system as a whole. Colleagues, we all need to work together to restore the public trust and confidence in Corrective Services. I call on all members of the Parliament for bipartisan support for those important reforms. I look forward to updating the House as we work through Mr McClellan's important recommendations.

#### *Committees*

### **JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE NSW RECONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY**

#### **Inquiry**

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** As Chair: In accordance with Standing Order 299 (1), I inform the House that the Joint Select Committee on the NSW Reconstruction Authority has resolved to conduct a review into the NSW Reconstruction Authority Act 2022, in accordance with section 93 of that Act, 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 following report of the Legislation Review Committee entitled *Legislation Review Digest No. 11/58*, dated 19 March 2024. I move:

That the report be printed.

**Motion agreed to.**

### **JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE NSW RECONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY**

#### **Deputy Chair**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with Standing Order 282 (2), I inform the House that on 14 March 2024 Liza Anne Butler was elected deputy chair of the Joint Select Committee on the NSW Reconstruction Authority.

*Petitions***PETITIONS RECEIVED**

**The SPEAKER:** I announce that the following paper petition signed by 10,000 or more persons has been lodged for presentation:

**Camden Haven Transitional Accommodation**

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly to call on the Government to urgently give financial support to the Camden Haven Community at 3 Inc. for the purchase of a decommissioned motel as permanent transitional accommodation for the homeless, received from **Mrs Leslie Williams**.

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

*Business of the House***SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: ORDER OF BUSINESS**

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (13:16):** I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended on Wednesday 20 March to permit:

- (1) At 2.30 p.m. the moving of a condolence motion for Mr Brian Langton, former member for Kogarah.
- (2) At 5.00 p.m. the public interest debate to proceed, after which contributions to the condolence motion to continue, if required.
- (3) Government business.
- (4) Community recognition statements.
- (5) Private members' statements, after which the House shall adjourn without motion until Thursday 21 March at 10.00 a.m.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (13:17):** The Opposition supports the suspension of standing and sessional orders moved by the Leader of the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

*Notices***PRESENTATION**

[*During the giving of notices of motions*]

**Ms ANNA WATSON:** I seek leave to table a document for members' perusal.

**Leave not granted.**

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

*Bills***CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS (CARE AND PROTECTION) AMENDMENT BILL 2024****Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 13 March 2024.**

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (14:32):** I lead for the Opposition and speak on behalf of my colleague in the other place the Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones, MLC, the shadow Minister for Families and Communities, and shadow Minister for Disability Inclusion, in debate on the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Amendment Bill 2024. The Opposition supports the bill. The proposed legislation amends the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998—the care Act—to clarify that the care Act can apply to children and young people outside New South Wales where there is a sufficient connection to New South Wales. The amendments apply retrospectively to functions validly exercised and orders validly made prior to the amendments coming into force.

The bill addresses concerns regarding the current limitations of the care Act. Without the proposed amendments, there is a risk that the objectives of the Act may not be fully achieved. The recent decision by the New South Wales Court of Appeal in *DN v Secretary, Department of Communities and Justice* [2023] NSWCA 321 identified the current limitations in the Act. That decision identified uncertainty regarding the jurisdiction of

the New South Wales Children's Court in cases involving children who are not physically present or ordinarily residing in New South Wales.

Historically, the care Act's jurisdiction was interpreted broadly, inclusive of children and young people placed outside New South Wales during initial proceedings or relocating after final orders were issued. However, the Court of Appeal's narrower interpretation of the Act's jurisdiction in the case of DN has introduced uncertainties that could impede the Act's effective implementation, including its adherence to principles such as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle. Such uncertainties could lead to delays in ongoing matters before the Children's Court, directly impacting the wellbeing of children and young people involved, including the potential disruption of interstate family placements. Additionally, the existing ambiguity surrounding jurisdictional boundaries poses a significant threat to efforts aimed at providing children with safe and stable environments, whether within family settings, with kin or with foster carers. Families residing in border towns may become entangled in jurisdictional disputes, further complicating an already challenging situation.

The proposed amendments seek to offer clarity and assurance, ensuring that decisions made align with the objectives and principles of the care Act. The recent Court of Appeal decision has led to concerns regarding the ability of the Children's Court to promptly conclude ongoing cases, potentially resulting in significant delays. Such delays could directly impact the wellbeing of children and young people in need of protection. The implications of the Court of Appeal's decision extend beyond jurisdictional matters, affecting the timely resolution of ongoing cases and creating uncertainty in the legal process. The absence of clarity regarding jurisdiction could impact the making of decisions in the best interests of the child or young person involved.

Additionally, concerns arise regarding applications to amend or rescind care orders under section 90 of the care Act. That section enables interested parties to seek alterations to final care orders in cases of significant changes in circumstances. However, if the Children's Court loses jurisdiction due to the child no longer being in New South Wales, the court's capacity to consider those requests is limited, thereby affecting the parties' ability to advocate effectively for the child's welfare. Similarly, questions arise regarding the jurisdiction of the Children's Court to hear applications for transferring proceedings or orders under chapter 14A of the Act. That chapter governs the transfer of proceedings to other jurisdictions, which is crucial in cases involving children placed or residing outside New South Wales. However, should the Children's Court lose jurisdiction because the child is no longer in New South Wales, the court's capacity to manage those proceedings may be impeded, potentially impacting the child's welfare.

By providing clarity on jurisdictional matters and extending extraterritorial jurisdiction, the bill seeks to ensure that the best interests of children and young people remain paramount. It aims to provide a framework that not only addresses legal complexities but also focuses on safeguarding the wellbeing of our most vulnerable members of society. For those reasons, the Opposition supports the bill.

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (14:37):** I speak in support of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Amendment Bill 2024. I commend the Minister for Families and Communities for her work in this space. The aim of the bill is to amend the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 to clarify the operation of that Act in relation to children and young persons who do not ordinarily live in, or are not present in, New South Wales, if there is a sufficient connection to New South Wales.

The uncertainty arose from a recent New South Wales Court of Appeal case, which held that the New South Wales Children's Court has no jurisdiction to make or vary orders for children and young people who are not ordinarily living or present in New South Wales at the time orders are made. That decision has significant systemic implications. The uncertainty in jurisdiction has created delays in care proceedings and risks decisions being made that are not in the best interests of children and young people. This impedes the primary objective of the Act: that children and young persons receive care and protection as necessary, with their safety, welfare and wellbeing remaining paramount. The administration of the Act is underpinned by several principles, including regard to the child's or young person's culture, disability, language, religion and sexuality and, if relevant, those with parental responsibility for the child or young person.

Section 9 (2) (d) of the Act provides that if a child or young person is temporarily or permanently deprived of his or her family environment, or cannot be allowed to remain in that environment in his or her own best interests, the child or young person is entitled to special protection and assistance from the State, and his or her name, identity, language, cultural and religious ties should, as far as possible, be preserved. If a child or young person is placed in out-of-home care, the child or young person is entitled to a safe, nurturing, stable and secure environment, and if aligned with their best interests, this will include the retention by the child or young person of relationships with people significant to them, including birth or adoptive parents, siblings, extended family, peers, family friends and community.

The bill seeks to ensure that future legal proceedings and orders support these principles by clarifying that the Act can apply to children and young people outside New South Wales where there is a sufficient connection to New South Wales. Schedule 1 [1] to the bill amends section 4—children and young persons to whom this Act applies—to include those who are present in New South Wales or have a sufficient connection to New South Wales. Schedule 1 [2] inserts new subsection 4 (2) expressing a clear intention for the Act to have extraterritorial application insofar as the legislative powers of the State permit, including in relation to children and young persons "who do not ordinarily live in, or who are not present in, New South Wales". New subsection 4 (3) outlines several non-exhaustive factors that may be considered in determining a sufficient connection to New South Wales.

Finally, the bill inserts a provision in schedule 3 to the Act. It provides that functions exercised before the commencement date, that would have been validly exercised if the amending Act had commenced before the relevant function was exercised, are taken to have been validly exercised. Furthermore, an order made by the court under this Act before the commencement date, that would have been validly made if the amending Act had commenced before the order was made, is taken to have been validly made. The bill aims to clarify the operation of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act and to ensure that the policy objectives of the Act can be achieved and that the provisions of the Act are complied with. It removes current uncertainty that may impact the primary objectives of the Act, putting children and young people at the centre of decision-making. In keeping with that, I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (14:41):** I support the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Amendment Bill 2024. I will speak, firstly, to the purpose of the bill. The bill will amend the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 to clarify the operation of the care Act for children and young people if they are living outside of New South Wales. Importantly, the bill makes key changes. It clarifies that the care Act applies to children and young people when they are living outside New South Wales where there is a sufficient connection to New South Wales—and that is the important provision—in so far as the legislative powers of the State permit. It clarifies those amendments, though, to apply retrospectively to functions validly exercised and orders validly made prior to the amendments coming into force. That is important. There are a whole lot of procedures and even more around when things should apply retrospectively, and this amending bill certainly meets that test.

The bill recognises and acknowledges that while New South Wales can legislate extraterritorially, it can only do so to the extent that is constitutionally permissible. Therefore, this bill does not displace or override the operation of the laws of other jurisdictions and nor does it displace the State's international obligations, including those under the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Speaking as a local member, I have faced this situation quite a few times where children are from New South Wales, have a strong connection to New South Wales, yet are living outside New South Wales. There are certain things that just cannot be done, and that has been a problem. I also have an extensive geographic border, and that has come into play at different times in relation to young children. This legislation is all about young children. It is about giving them the absolute care and protection that they require.

I will now speak about the reasons that this legislation is absolutely necessary because of a particular case in the New South Wales Court of Appeal. The court held that the New South Wales Children's Court has no jurisdiction to make or vary orders for children and young people who are not ordinarily living in, or present in, New South Wales at the time orders are made. That decision has system-wide implications. It has created delays in proceedings, and it risks decisions being made that are not in the best interests of children and young people. I keep making the point that that is what this bill is all about. The court's decision also calls into question the validity of previous orders made by the Children's Court where the child or young person was not present or ordinarily living in New South Wales at the time the order was made.

The decision also frustrates compliance with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle under the care Act, and risks interstate family or kinship placements not being fully considered or utilised—quite often there are cases when they need to be and should be—even if those placements would be in the child's best interests. The current uncertainty in the jurisdiction impacts the primary objectives of the Act, which are to ensure that children are safe and protected, and their safety, health, and wellbeing are promoted above all else. In part, this is achieved by requiring that active efforts are made to find the child's family, kin and community and, wherever possible, place children in suitable family and kinship placements.

The reality is that families, communities, traditional lands and cultures do not stop at the New South Wales borders. In quite a few areas—I know particularly in my area and others—the implications of the decision are particularly significant for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. It also has significant impacts on all the families in the border towns. I could give a whole dissertation on colonialism and borders, but in the interests of time I will leave that aside for today. It has all come into my mind. Without this bill, the policy objectives of the

Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act cannot be achieved, and the provisions of the Act cannot be complied with.

I will now address some other issues as well, particularly situations overseas. The bill does not promote the placement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children overseas—far from it. It recalibrates the jurisdiction of the Act to give full effect to the intent of the Act. Overseas placements of children in care are extremely rare. The bill will align with international private law and not displace New South Wales's international obligations, including under the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. The convention means that the Children's Court cannot exercise jurisdiction for a child or young person who habitually resides in a convention country, unless that country grants consent. If the Children's Court has lost jurisdiction because the child or young person is no longer present or ordinarily living in New South Wales, the Children's Court would be unable to hear those applications. That is a most unsatisfactory situation. This bill ensures this pathway to challenge orders remains open.

Further, international obligations and their implications must be considered. They must be considered when assessing whether a child has a sufficient connection to New South Wales and whether the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act continues to apply. This is put into effect by the bill amending the Act and allowing consideration of whether the matter could be dealt with by another court in another jurisdiction when considering whether there is a sufficient connection to New South Wales. In conclusion, I commend this bill, as it clarifies the operation of the care Act for children and young people living outside New South Wales.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion) (14:49):** In reply: I thank the member for Hawkesbury, the member for Fairfield and the member for Lismore for their contributions to the debate on the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Amendment Bill 2024. The bill amends the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 to provide that the Act is intended to have extraterritorial application, including in relation to children and young persons who do not ordinarily live in or who are not present in New South Wales, if there is a sufficient connection to this State.

I note the Legislation Review Committee's comments in today's digest and its concerns that the bill's factors to determine whether a sufficient connection to New South Wales exists are too broad. The committee is concerned that the amendment may apply to children who have never lived in New South Wales. However, it is very unlikely that the secretary would ever exercise functions in respect of any child or young person who had never lived in New South Wales or for whom the Department of Communities and Justice had no previous involvement.

Whether or not a child or young person has a sufficient connection with New South Wales will depend on the individual facts and circumstances of the child or young person. The bill balances New South Wales's ongoing responsibility to these children, while appreciating that their connection to New South Wales may diminish over time and that it may be more appropriate for the jurisdiction they are currently living in to consider the matter. The bill does not displace or override the operation of the laws of other jurisdictions or displace the State's international obligations including under the Child Protection Convention.

I note also the Legislation Review Committee's concerns about the retrospective application of the bill. The retrospective provision of the bill supports placements and orders that were made in the best interests of children and young people. It is more important that orders of the Children's Court of New South Wales are enforceable and prevent potentially detrimental disruptions of stable and secure placements. This bill actually provides a safeguard by allowing parties to bring a matter back to the Children's Court if significant changes in the children's circumstances warrant a variation of the order. This bill will clarify the operation of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act in relation to children and young people who are outside of New South Wales. The bill is in response to a very uncommon and extraordinary case that has significant implications for many far more common cases about children in placements within Australia.

Without this bill, there is a considerable risk that children and young people will not be placed with family, kin and community if they are interstate; that existing, secure and long-term placements may be disrupted; and that there will be further delays and uncertainty in current court proceedings. These risks jeopardise the overarching goal, which is to provide safe, secure and loving homes for children and young people to grow up in. This bill is essential for ensuring that decisions that are in the best interests of children and young people and are aligned with the principles and objects of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act can be made. Fundamentally, this bill is all about ensuring that children and young people in New South Wales achieve the best possible outcomes in life. I commend the bill to the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

### **Third Reading**

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

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

### **Consideration in Detail**

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

*Schedule of amendments referred to in message of 14 March 2024*

No. 1 **Parliamentary joint committee**

Page 3, Schedule 1[1]. Insert after line 7—

*joint committee* means the Committee on Ageing and Disability constituted under section 28A.

No. 2 **Parliamentary joint committee**

Page 5, Schedule 1. Insert after line 28—

#### **[13A] Part 5A**

Insert after Part 5—

#### **Part 5A Committee on Ageing and Disability**

##### **28A Constitution of joint committee**

- (1) A joint committee of members of Parliament, to be known as the Committee on Ageing and Disability, must be appointed.
- (2) The joint committee must be appointed as soon as practicable after—
  - (a) the commencement of this part, and
  - (b) the first session of each Parliament.
- (3) The joint committee has the functions conferred or imposed on the joint committee by or under this Act or another Act.
- (4) Schedule 2 contains provisions relating to the joint committee.

##### **28B Functions**

- (1) The joint committee has the following functions under this Act—
  - (a) to monitor and review the exercise of the Commissioner's functions,
  - (b) to report to both Houses of Parliament, with the comments the joint committee thinks appropriate, on any matter—
    - (i) relevant to the Commissioner or connected with the exercise of the Commissioner's functions, and
    - (ii) to which, in the joint committee's opinion, the attention of Parliament should be directed,
  - (c) to examine each annual report and other report—
    - (i) made by the Commissioner, and
    - (ii) presented to each House of Parliament under this Act, Part 5 or another Act,
  - (d) to report to both Houses of Parliament on matters appearing in, or arising out of, the annual reports or other reports,
  - (e) in relation to trends and changes in services and issues affecting adults with disability and older adults—
    - (i) to examine the trends and changes, and
    - (ii) to report to both Houses of Parliament about changes the joint committee thinks desirable to the functions and procedures of the Commissioner,
  - (f) to inquire into any question in connection with the Commissioner's functions that is referred to the joint committee by both Houses of Parliament and to report to both Houses on the question.
- (2) Nothing in this part or Schedule 2 authorises the joint committee to—

- (a) reinvestigate a particular report, or
  - (b) reconsider a decision to investigate, not to investigate or to discontinue the investigation of a particular report, or
  - (c) reconsider the findings, recommendations, determinations or other decisions of the Commissioner, or another person, in relation to a particular investigation or report.
- (3) The Commissioner may, as soon as practicable after a report of the joint committee has been tabled in a House of Parliament, prepare and give to the Presiding Officer of the House a report in response to the report of the joint committee.

#### **28C Membership**

- (1) The joint committee consists of 7 members as follows—
  - (a) 3 members who are members of, and appointed by, the Legislative Council,
  - (b) 4 members who are members of, and appointed by, the Legislative Assembly.
- (2) The appointment of members of the joint committee must, as far as practicable, be in accordance with the practice of Parliament in relation to the appointment of members to serve on joint committees of both Houses of Parliament.
- (3) A person is not eligible for appointment as a member of the joint committee if the person is a Minister of the Crown or a Parliamentary Secretary.

#### No. 3 **Parliamentary joint committee**

Page 6, Schedule 1. Insert after line 3—

#### **[18] Schedule 2**

Insert after Schedule 1—

#### **Schedule 2 Committee on Ageing and Disability**

section 28A(4)

#### **1 Vacancies**

- (1) A member of the joint committee ceases to hold office—
  - (a) when the Legislative Assembly is dissolved or expires, or
  - (b) if the member becomes a Minister of the Crown or a Parliamentary Secretary, or
  - (c) if the member ceases to be a member of the Legislative Council or Legislative Assembly, or
  - (d) for a member who is a member of the Legislative Council—if the member resigns the office by written instrument addressed to the President of the Legislative Council, or
  - (e) for a member who is a member of the Legislative Assembly—if the member resigns the office by written instrument addressed to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, or
  - (f) if the member is discharged from office by the House of Parliament to which the member belongs.
- (2) Either House of Parliament may appoint 1 of its members to fill a vacancy among the members of the joint committee appointed by the House.

#### **2 Chairperson and deputy chairperson**

- (1) There must be a chairperson and a deputy chairperson of the joint committee, who must be elected by and from the members of the joint committee.
- (2) A member of the joint committee ceases to hold office as chairperson or deputy chairperson of the joint committee if the member—
  - (a) ceases to be a member of the joint committee, or
  - (b) resigns the office by written instrument presented to a meeting of the joint committee, or
  - (c) is discharged from office by the joint committee.
- (3) If there is a vacancy in the office of the chairperson or the chairperson is absent from New South Wales or is for any other reason unable to perform the duties of the chairperson, the deputy chairperson may exercise the functions of the chairperson under this Act or the *Parliamentary Evidence Act 1901*.

#### **3 Procedure**

- (1) The procedure for calling meetings of the joint committee and conducting business at the meetings must, subject to this Act, be determined by the joint committee.

- (2) The Clerk of the Legislative Assembly must call the first meeting of the joint committee in each House of Parliament in the way the Clerk thinks appropriate.
- (3) At a meeting of the joint committee, 4 members constitute a quorum, but the joint committee must meet as a joint committee at all times.
- (4) The following person must preside at a meeting of the joint committee—
  - (a) the chairperson,
  - (b) if the chairperson is absent—the deputy chairperson,
  - (c) if the chairperson and deputy chairperson are absent—a member of the joint committee elected to chair the meeting by the members present.
- (5) The deputy chairperson or other member presiding at a meeting of the joint committee has, in relation to the meeting, all the functions of the chairperson.
- (6) The chairperson, deputy chairperson or other member presiding at a meeting of the joint committee has—
  - (a) a deliberative vote, and
  - (b) if there is an equality of votes—a casting vote.
- (7) A question arising at a meeting of the joint committee must be decided by a majority of the votes of the members present and voting.
- (8) The joint committee may sit and transact business despite—
  - (a) a prorogation of the Houses of Parliament, or
  - (b) an adjournment of either House of Parliament.
- (9) The joint committee may sit and transact business on a sitting day of a House of Parliament during the time of sitting.

#### **4 Reporting when Parliament not in session**

- (1) If a House of Parliament is not sitting when the joint committee seeks to give a report to the House, the joint committee may present copies of the report to the Clerk of the House.
- (2) The report—
  - (a) on presentation and for all purposes is taken to have been laid before the House, and
  - (b) may be printed by authority of the Clerk, and
  - (c) if printed by authority of the Clerk—is for all purposes taken to be a document published by or under the authority of the House, and
  - (d) must be recorded in the Minutes, or Votes and Proceedings, of the House on the first sitting day of the House after receipt of the report by the Clerk.

#### **5 Evidence**

- (1) The joint committee has power to send for persons, papers and records.
- (2) The joint committee must take all evidence in public subject to clause 6.
- (3) If the joint committee as constituted at any time has taken evidence in relation to a matter but the joint committee as constituted in that way has ceased to exist before reporting on the matter, the joint committee as constituted at any later time, whether during the same or another Parliament, may consider the evidence as if it had taken the evidence.
- (4) The production of documents to the joint committee must be in accordance with the practice of the Legislative Assembly in relation to the production of documents to select committees of the Legislative Assembly.

#### **6 Confidentiality**

- (1) The joint committee must take evidence in private if—
  - (a) the evidence relates to a secret or confidential matter, and
  - (b) the witness giving the evidence requests that it be taken in private.
- (2) The joint committee must direct that a document be treated as confidential if—
  - (a) the document relates to a secret or confidential matter, and
  - (b) the person producing the document requests that it be treated as confidential.
- (3) For this clause, when the joint committee directs that a document be treated as confidential—
  - (a) the contents of the document are taken to be evidence—
    - (i) given by the person producing the document, and

- (ii) taken by the joint committee in private, and
- (b) the person producing the document is taken to be a witness.
- (4) If, at the request of a witness, evidence is taken by the joint committee in private—
  - (a) the joint committee must not, without the written consent of the witness, disclose the evidence, and
  - (b) a member of the joint committee or another person must not, without the written consent of the witness and the authority of the joint committee under subclause (6), disclose the evidence.

Maximum penalty—20 penalty units or imprisonment for 3 months, or both.

- (5) If evidence is taken by the joint committee in private other than at the request of a witness, a member of the joint committee or another person must not, without the authority of the joint committee under subclause (6), disclose the evidence.

Maximum penalty—20 penalty units or imprisonment for 3 months, or both.

- (6) Subject to subclause (4), the joint committee may disclose or, with the written permission of the chairperson, authorise the disclosure of evidence taken in private by the joint committee.
- (7) Nothing in this clause prohibits—
  - (a) the disclosure of evidence that has already been lawfully published, or
  - (b) the disclosure by a person of a matter of which the person has become aware other than because of the giving of evidence before the joint committee.
- (8) This clause has effect despite the *Parliamentary Papers (Supplementary Provisions) Act 1975*, section 4.
- (9) If evidence taken by the joint committee in private is disclosed in accordance with this clause, the *Parliamentary Papers (Supplementary Provisions) Act 1975*, sections 5 and 6 apply in relation to the disclosure as if it were a publication of the evidence under the authority of that Act, section 4.
- (10) A document produced to the joint committee in proceedings conducted in private is a public document for the purposes of the *Defamation Act 2005*, section 28 if the document is disclosed in accordance with this clause.
- (11) Proceedings of the joint committee conducted in private are proceedings of public concern for the purposes of the *Defamation Act 2005*, section 29 if the proceedings relate to the taking of evidence that is disclosed in accordance with this clause.
- (12) In this clause—
  - disclose* includes publish.
  - document* includes part of a document.

## 7 Application of certain Acts

For the *Parliamentary Evidence Act 1901* and the *Parliamentary Papers (Supplementary Provisions) Act 1975* and for any other purposes—

- (a) the joint committee must be regarded as a joint committee of the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly, and
- (b) the proposal for the appointment of the joint committee must be regarded as having originated in the Legislative Assembly.

## 8 Validity of certain acts or proceedings

- (1) This clause applies if, at the time an act or proceeding of the joint committee is done, taken or commenced, there is—
  - (a) a vacancy in the office of a member of the joint committee, or
  - (b) a defect in the appointment, or a disqualification, of a member of the joint committee.
- (2) The act or proceeding of the joint committee is as valid as if the vacancy, defect or disqualification did not exist and the joint committee were fully and properly constituted.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion) (14:54):** I move:

That the Legislative Council amendments be agreed to.

The Ageing and Disability Commissioner Amendment Bill 2023 has passed the Legislative Council with amendments to implement recommendation 11 of the independent statutory review of the Act. These amendments provide additional oversight of the Ageing and Disability Commissioner by a joint parliamentary committee. Firstly, I acknowledge the Opposition's and The Greens' contributions regarding the creation of the new joint

parliamentary committee via the amendment. The Government believes in and strongly supports transparency and accountability at all times. The Ageing and Disability Commissioner has several avenues to raise issues publicly, which we have all seen frequently. Nevertheless, the Government understands the concerns raised in the other place with respect to the proposal for additional parliamentary oversight. Whilst the Government's view is that a parliamentary committee is unnecessary, it acknowledges the possible benefits of additional parliamentary oversight. The Government thinks this is an amendment that we can all agree on.

Finally, I thank Mr Alan Cameron, AO, for his work on the independent statutory review of the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Act and all of the advocacy groups and organisations for disability and ageing that have contributed to this work. I thank again our outgoing Ageing and Disability Commissioner, Robert Fitzgerald, for his safe stewardship of the commission since its inception. I give special thanks to all of the hardworking Ageing and Disability Commission staff members and our official community visitors, who are in our communities and keeping vulnerable people across New South Wales safe every day. I thank them for their care of and attention to those who need it most.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (14:57):** I recognise the efforts of my colleague in the other place, the Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones, MLC, the shadow Minister for Families and Communities, and her successful amendment to establish a parliamentary joint committee to monitor and review the functions of the Ageing and Disability Commissioner. I note the Minister's comments and that she has acknowledged that these amendments will be accepted. We believe that oversight is important, which is why this amendment was passed through the Legislative Council earlier. I note that amendment No. 1 amends page 3, schedule 1, to insert after line 7:

*joint committee* means the Committee on Ageing and Disability constituted under section 28A.

That is very important. The purpose of Parliament is to have oversight of bureaucracy. It is important that we keep those channels open and maintain transparency at all times. Notably, the committee will oversee the execution of the commissioner's responsibilities. That also means scrutinising each annual report, along with any pertinent associated reports, and providing Parliament with insights into any emerging issues and trends highlighted in these reports.

The committee will also analyse trends and developments in services and matters affecting individuals with disabilities and elderly individuals. It is important that the committee presents its findings to the Parliament because the findings need to be transparent and open to all. That is why committee structures, especially the ones in the New South Wales Parliament, are incredibly robust. That robustness—disseminating information and making sure that it is public—is why committees are established in the first place. The Opposition looks forward to the establishment of the oversight committee. I acknowledge the great work of the Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones and those in the other place. I also commend the Government for accepting the amendments to institute the committee with regard to the Ageing and Disability Commissioner Amendment Bill 2023.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

## HEALTH PRACTITIONER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2024

### First Reading

**Bill introduced on motion by Dr Michael Holland, on behalf of Mr Ryan Park, read a first time and printed.**

### Second Reading Speech

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (15:01):** On behalf of Mr Ryan Park: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to bring before the House the Health Practitioner Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. In New South Wales the management of complaints against registered and non-registered health practitioners is governed by two pieces of legislation: the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (NSW) and the Health Care Complaints Act 1993. The Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (NSW) regulates registered health practitioners, such as medical practitioners and nurses, and is an applied law scheme. That means New South Wales applies, via the Health Practitioner Regulation (Adoption of National Law) Act 2009, the schedule to the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (Queensland)—Queensland national law. However, New South Wales did not adopt the complaints processes under the Queensland National Law and instead retains its own complaints mechanism. The combined Queensland provisions and the specific New South Wales provisions are known together as the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (NSW)—national law.

The Health Care Complaints Act 1993 establishes the Health Care Complaints Commission. The commission is an independent, New South Wales-specific body responsible for receiving, assessing, investigating, resolving and prosecuting complaints relating to health services and health service providers, including non-registered health practitioners. Together, the national law and the Health Care Complaints Act operate to protect the health and safety of the public, including by ensuring that legitimate complaints relating to health practitioners in New South Wales are properly assessed, investigated, resolved and, where appropriate, prosecuted. The complaints process under part 8 of the national law is currently being reviewed to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and meets the needs of the New South Wales community. However, before that review is finalised, the Government seeks to make minor changes via the proposed bill to help streamline the complaints process and address some urgent issues.

I now turn to the features of the proposed bill. Schedule 1 makes amendments to the Health Care Complaints Act. Currently section 14 of the Health Care Complaints Act prevents a health professional council from taking action in relation to a complaint that is being investigated or dealt with by the Health Care Complaints Commission. However, a council may still exercise its powers under the national law to do anything to protect the life or the physical or mental health of any person. The words "to do anything to protect the life or physical or mental health of any person" mirror the wording used under section 66 of the repealed Medical Practice Act 1992. That provision allowed a council to take immediate action to suspend or impose conditions on a practitioner's registration if necessary to protect the life or physical or mental health of any person. The immediate action power now sits under section 150 of the national law. However, the national law allows a council to take immediate action if appropriate to do so "for the protection of the health or safety of any person or persons (whether or not a particular person or persons) or if satisfied the action is otherwise in the public interest."

As the threshold under section 150 of the national law differs from the threshold at which a health professional council can take action under section 14 of the Health Care Complaints Act, there may be times when a council cannot take immediate action to suspend or impose conditions on a registered health practitioner while a complaint about the practitioner is being investigated or dealt with by the commission. However, councils should be permitted to take immediate action under section 150 to protect the public, irrespective of whether the commission is investigating or otherwise dealing with a complaint. The bill remedies that concern by allowing health professional councils to take action under part 8, division 3, subdivision 7 of the national law while the Health Care Complaints Commission is investigating or dealing with a complaint. The amendment clarifies that councils can take immediate action in relation to a practitioner under section 150 of the national law.

The bill makes a minor amendment to allow the commission to accept an oral withdrawal of a complaint. Currently the Health Care Complaints Act only allows a complaint relating to a health practitioner to be withdrawn if the complainant provides written notice to the commission. Under the bill, if the commission accepts the withdrawal of a complaint by oral notice, it must be noted in writing to ensure a paper trail is created. Further, the commission may only accept the withdrawal of a complaint by oral notice if the commission considers it appropriate to do so. The bill also removes section 30 of the Health Care Complaints Act and replaces it with new section 91A. The new provision is substantially similar to current section 30, although some amendments have been made. Section 30 of the Health Care Complaints Act provides that the commission may obtain an expert report as part of an investigation of a complaint. However, it may be appropriate for the commission to obtain expert reports at other stages, including during the prosecution of a complaint.

The bill resolves that issue by removing wording that would prevent the commission from obtaining an expert report at other stages of dealing with a complaint and relocates the section to part 7 of the Act as section 91A, which enables the provision to have a more general application. Further, section 30 of the Health Care Complaints Act provides that expert reports obtained by the commission when investigating a complaint may only be used in disciplinary or related proceedings under the national law and are inadmissible in other proceedings except with the consent of the complainant, the practitioner and the expert. Section 30 does not allow expert reports to be used in proceedings under the Health Care Complaints Act. However, the commission can deal with complaints relating to non-registered health practitioners. Whereas proceedings relating to registered practitioners are dealt with under the national law, proceedings relating to non-registered health practitioners are governed by the Health Care Complaints Act.

If the commission decides to deal with a complaint about a non-registered health practitioner under the Health Care Complaints Act, it should be permitted to rely on an expert report where needed. To address that concern, the bill will allow expert reports obtained by the commission when dealing with a complaint to be used in proceedings under the Health Care Complaints Act as well as the national law. This amendment will ensure consistency in how complaints about registered and non-registered health practitioners are treated. The remaining provisions currently under section 30 of the Health Care Complaints Act will remain substantially the same under new section 91A.

The bill will also grant the Health Care Complaints Commission the power to share information it holds with overseas regulators of health service providers. This will allow the commission to disclose appropriate information, such as information relating to complaints about a registered health practitioner, to an overseas regulator. That might be appropriate if, for example, a practitioner moves overseas with the intent of practising in that overseas jurisdiction. Importantly, this amendment will not confer a broad power on the commission to disclose information to a regulator of health service providers in an overseas jurisdiction at any time it likes. This is because the Health Care Complaints Act only allows the commission to disclose the information if the public interest in disclosing it would outweigh the public interest in protecting the confidentiality of the information and the privacy of any person to whom the information relates.

The commission must also have regard to the principle under section 3 (2) of the Act, which requires the commission to consider the protection of the health and safety of the public in the exercise of its functions. Schedule 1 to the bill also introduces some clarifying amendments. They include an amendment to clarify that the Director of Proceedings of the Health Care Complaints Commission has the power to vary, withdraw or discontinue the prosecution of a complaint after determining that a complaint should be prosecuted, and other minor amendments to improve consistency within the Health Care Complaints Act.

I now move on to schedule 2 to the bill, which amends schedule 1 to the Health Practitioner Regulation (Adoption of National Law) Act 2009. The NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal may exercise disciplinary powers under the national law in relation to registered health practitioners against whom a complaint has been made. This includes the power to cancel or suspend a registered practitioner's registration if satisfied of certain matters. From time to time, a registered health practitioner may allow their registration to lapse before a tribunal makes a decision relating to a complaint. If that person is no longer registered, the tribunal cannot make an order cancelling or suspending the practitioner's registration.

However, the tribunal may decide that if the person were still registered, the tribunal would have suspended or cancelled the person's registration. If the tribunal decides it would have cancelled the person's registration, had the person been registered, the national law allows the tribunal to make a disqualification order. A person subject to a disqualification order cannot apply for registration in the health profession for a specified period or until specified conditions have been complied with. However, if the tribunal decides it would have suspended a person's registration had the person been registered, there is no similar power to prevent a person from being registered during the period they would have been suspended for.

When a practitioner is suspended, the national law states that the practitioner is taken to not be registered for the period of suspension. There should be consistency between registered practitioners and people who were previously registered practitioners. A person should not be permitted to be registered as a health practitioner during the period that a tribunal has decided they would have been suspended, simply because they allowed their registration to lapse before the tribunal made its decision. To achieve this outcome, the bill clarifies that, if the tribunal decides that it would have suspended a person had they been registered, that person may not apply for registration in the health profession during the period they would have been suspended for.

The bill also requires written reasons to be provided when a health professional council suspends or imposes conditions on a health practitioner's registration under section 150 or reviews a section 150 decision under section 150A. Requiring written reasons for these decisions will ensure greater transparency in how councils make decisions relating to immediate action under sections 150 and 150A. These reasons will also be inadmissible in civil or criminal proceedings, other than proceedings under the national law, or in coronial inquests or inquiries, which will encourage practitioner participation in section 150 and section 150A proceedings. Similar privileges will also be extended to transcripts of audio recordings of section 150 and section 150A proceedings.

The bill also addresses concerns about the operation of impaired registrants panels. Under the national law, where a registered health practitioner or student has an impairment, the health professional council can refer the practitioner to an impaired registrants panel. The impaired registrants panel must assess the practitioner or student and may take certain action, including recommending that the practitioner consent to a suspension or conditions on their registration, or recommending that a complaint be made about the practitioner. It must detail these actions in a written report to the council. Currently, after an impaired registrants panel provides a written report to the council, it cannot undertake any further work in relation to the matter. However, there may be times when the council, after receiving a written report, considers that further variations to the recommendations are required. This usually occurs when the impaired registrants panel recommends that conditions be placed on the registration of a practitioner or student that are impractical or unmanageable.

Currently, if the council wants these recommendations to be reconsidered then it must refer the matter to a new impaired registrants panel, which can be an administratively burdensome and lengthy process. To address this concern, the bill introduces new section 152IA to the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (NSW). New section 152IA allows a health professional council to request that the same impaired registrants panel further

consider its recommendations and, if appropriate, vary its recommendations. To ensure procedural fairness, the practitioner or student the subject of the inquiry will be able to make oral or written submissions to the impaired registrants panel if the panel is considering varying its recommendations.

Further, the bill confers a power on assessors conducting performance assessments of practitioners to obtain answers to questions and records relating to the professional practice of a practitioner by written notice to a person who might hold this information. Currently, the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (NSW) only allows an assessor to obtain this information and those records by physically attending the premises where the practitioner practises or where records are held. This can hinder the completion of performance assessments that are conducted remotely or on the papers, where there is typically no need for the assessor to attend the premises to assess the performance of the practitioner.

The bill also allows the Minister for Health to remove a member of a health professional council from office if their principal place of practice ceases to be within the State. Some health professional council members are only eligible to be appointed as a member of the council if their principal place of practice is within New South Wales. In cases where a member moves interstate, resulting in a change to their principal place of practice, it may be appropriate for them to be removed from office. However, there may be cases where a member should not be removed from office despite their principal place of practice ceasing to be in New South Wales. For example, members who live in areas bordering two States may have a principal place of practice outside of New South Wales but nonetheless maintain a strong connection to New South Wales. The Minister will therefore have discretion to remove a member from office to account for circumstances where a member's principal place of practice ceases to be in New South Wales for a legitimate reason.

Finally, the bill addresses some current gaps in the operation of proceedings before the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal and professional standards committees. The bill makes amendments to schedule 5D to allow those disciplinary bodies to accept the judgements and findings of New South Wales performance review panels and council inquiries into evidence, and to allow disciplinary bodies to use evidence of certain judgements, verdicts, findings, certificates, decisions and determinations about a practitioner to help substantiate a finding relating to the practitioner. Whereas the changes introduced by the bill are relatively minor, they will help ensure that the complaints process under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (NSW) and the Health Care Complaints Act continues to properly safeguard the New South Wales public, while ensuring procedural fairness and practitioner engagement. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

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

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 12 March 2024.**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (15:20):** I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Bail and Crimes Amendment Bill 2024. The legislation was first announced during a press conference a week ago, accompanied by a press release that identified it as being part of the Minns Government's response to young people in the regions. Along with the legislation, other programs were announced in the press release, about which the Opposition will require further information. Dr Ruth Higgins, the president of the New South Wales Bar Association, has described the legislation as rushed. The Opposition agrees with that description. In just the past hour or so, I have been presented with amendments that the Government will seek to move to its own bill. That is an ample demonstration of the rushed nature of the bill, but in the course of this contribution I will draw attention to some other matters that I foreshadow the Coalition will move amendments to address.

Schedule 1 to the bill seeks to make changes to the Bail Act, but only in respect of offenders who are between 14 years and 18 years of age. Having looked at both the legislation and the Premier's press release, it is not entirely clear what, if anything, will be done under the Government's policy with regard to young people aged between 10 years and 14 years of age. Schedule 1 is designed to be in effect for only 12 months. It is said to be intended as a circuit breaker. The changes to the Bail Act involve a new test encapsulated by clause 22C (1), that the bail authority must have:

a high degree of confidence the young person will not commit a serious indictable offence while on bail subject to any proposed bail conditions.

That test will be introduced with respect to bail for offenders between 14 years and 18 years of age. It is, as far as I can deduce from my researches and discussions with experienced criminal law practitioners, a new test for bail that has not previously been in place in New South Wales. It is fair to say that it is a highly subjective test with regard to the bail authority's assessment of the circumstances, and it will be very important to observe how it will operate in practice.

For that reason, one of the reasonable amendments the Coalition will move is to ensure that the reports of the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, or BOCSAR, are tabled in Parliament after the program has been in operation for six months, nine months and 12 months, so that the Parliament may observe how the intervention—as the Attorney General described it—has been operating. The new bail provisions are deliberately limited to only two categories of crime: motor theft offences and serious break and enter offences that are punishable by imprisonment for a term of 14 years or more. Effectively, if an offender has committed an offence under either of those two categories and then comes before the court again, the new provisions will be triggered. That is sufficient from me, but I am sure that other Opposition members will make their own contributions regarding the new bail provisions.

The bill would also introduce the new criminal offence of performance crime, already colloquially referred to as the "post and boast" offence. Although there is a more limited offence on the Queensland statute books, this is the first time that a crime of this nature has been introduced in New South Wales. The new offence adds—I will use the colloquial expression—a two-year imprisonment penalty on top of the principal offence that is the subject of the post and boast. Again, the scope is limited. The offences covered under schedule 2 to the bill are limited to motor theft offences and break and enter offences, although the break and enter offences may be of a less serious kind than those covered under the schedule 1 changes to the Bail Act. The new offence provides that if someone commits one of the two offences—either break and enter or a motor theft offence—and posts it on social media or otherwise disseminates it in the manner described in the bill, they would be liable for the new offence, which adds two years' imprisonment to the maximum penalty.

I note that, under schedule 2, the new "post and boast" offence or performance crime offence is not limited to juvenile offenders but covers all offenders. Whatever the particular issues are in Moree or elsewhere related to motor theft offences and breaking and entering offences, there does not appear to be any logical reason why the new "post and boast" offence is not extended more broadly. I say that as the theory behind punishing people who boast about their crimes is because boasting has the capacity to make others think it is desirable to commit crimes for the purposes of putting it on social media or otherwise bragging about the crime. If that is an issue with motor theft offences and breaking and entering offences, the logic behind it would apply to all offences.

In aid of that proposition, I reference BOCSAR's December quarterly figures regarding crime statistics in New South Wales. The figures show that New England and North West has seen a 92 per cent increase in motor vehicle theft, a problem that must be dealt with. Schedule 2 to the bill appears to overlook the concurrent increase in sexual assaults, domestic violence and other assaults in the same region over the same period. Regional New South Wales has seen a 47 per cent increase in sexual assaults. That is more than double the increase in motor vehicle thefts. There were 3,000 more sexual assaults in regional New South Wales in 2023, compared with 2019, and 5,000 more domestic violence assaults. I rhetorically ask why those crimes are not getting the same attention under the new provision.

I foreshadow that the Coalition will move amendments that it believes will improve the performance crime offences. Firstly, the Coalition seeks to extend the performance crime offences to all serious indictable offences, in addition to the motor theft offences and the breaking and entering offences that are currently covered by schedule 2. The Opposition will also move amendments that will plug a hole in the current legislation. On the Opposition's reading of it, new section 154K seems to require the offender who is committing the motor theft offence or the break and enter offence to disseminate or advertise the capturing of the crime. The Opposition's view is that it is very difficult for a person to film themselves stealing a car or breaking and entering into a property and, therefore, the advertising and dissemination of the crime usually requires the cooperation of others. If that other person has not committed the crime then no offence will be committed. The Opposition apprehends that, in the real world, that is the much more likely event.

If the object of the bill is to stop the glorification of crime on social media and elsewhere—which the Opposition supports—it should not only cover more crimes than the limited two categories of crime but also clearly capture all the people in the criminal enterprise, as set out in the offences in section 346 and section 546 of the Crimes Act. The Opposition will move amendments to make the legislation more workable and more logical to achieve the Government's intended objectives. It is undoubtedly important and difficult to deal with the matters that have been brought to the attention of the public not only in regional New South Wales but also across the State. Although I accept that the crimes have a particular impact on small, regional communities, young offenders are also stealing cars in metropolitan Sydney and all over the State.

Posting crimes on the internet is a genuine problem. There was a case in the Supreme Court a few weeks ago where a murder committed by minors was posted on social media. People go on social media to glorify their crimes. The Opposition agrees with the Government that that is undesirable, but logic dictates that all serious indictable offences should be subject to the new offence to send a strong message that there is no place for the glorification and repetition of crime in our State. By doing so, we ensure the safety and wellbeing of people and

allow them to reasonably go about their daily affairs protected. Finally, it is important not to rush important pieces of legislation and to get them right. The Opposition is more than willing to fulfil its parliamentary duties to scrutinise legislation and point out the gaps where they occur.

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (15:37):** I speak in support of the Bail and Crimes Amendment Bill 2024. Firstly, I thank the Attorney General for preparing the bill and cooperating with stakeholders throughout the State, including Youth Justice NSW, the NSW Police Force, the Department of Communities and Justice, the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research [BOCSAR], the magistrates service, criminology experts and, most importantly, community leaders in rural New South Wales, including First Nations Elders, legal services and youth advocates. The Bail and Crimes Amendment Bill 2024 is an important law reform that strives to protect young people across New South Wales while, at the same time, protecting our community and supporting victims of crime. The bill responds to concerning crime rates in regional New South Wales and aims to address the high risk of serious repeat offences by young people.

I also put on record that, throughout rural New South Wales, the NSW Police Force does an incredible job. It has faced an increasing amount of crime in Moree and in other places. Each time, it has done its duty and stepped up and done its work—as has the magistrates service. But they need more help and more support. Certainly, the reforms that the bill begins to implement will do just that. The bill amends the Bail Act 2013 to introduce a temporary additional bail test for young people. It also amends the Crimes Act 1900 to create new offences addressing the rise in performance crimes by young people. Working in tandem with support-based responses driven by the Minns Labor Government, that legislative reform approach will help provide long-term solutions to reduce rising regional crime rates.

I now address the real issue here. The BOCSAR data shows that in 2022-23, New South Wales regional areas experienced higher rates of crime than metropolitan areas, highlighting an increase of offending by young people under the age of 18, especially in motor vehicle or break and enter related offences—home invasions. Moree recorded the highest rate of motor vehicle theft in New South Wales and the second highest rate of break and enter crimes. Concerns have been raised in the community that young offenders are released on bail despite committing serious offences that would trigger a strict bail test if committed by an adult.

Currently under the Bail Act, bail is granted by bail authorities following a two-step process. Firstly, the show cause test is applied to adults charged with certain serious offences. The test requires bail be refused unless the accused person can show cause why their detention is not justified. Secondly, the unacceptable risk test is applied as the second test in a show cause offence and the first test for all other offences. The unacceptable risk test requires bail be refused if satisfied that, upon release from custody, the accused person will fail to appear at proceedings, commit a serious offence, endanger community safety, or interfere with a witness or evidence.

The show cause test does not apply to children under 18 at the time of committing an offence, given their vulnerable status. Instead, the unacceptable risk test is currently applied. To prevent reoffending, the bill introduces a bespoke test to set a higher bar for the release of young people charged with serious offences. The amendments in the bill provide an immediate and time-limited legislative response to the recognised increase in those offences, while working to deter performance crime before that dangerous trend becomes a bigger issue throughout New South Wales.

I now turn to the amendments in the Bail Act. Amending the Bail Act, schedule 1 to the bill introduces a temporary bail test for people aged 14 to 18 years charged with committing serious break and enter or motor theft offences while on bail for another offence of that type. That ensures young people alleged to have repeatedly engaged in break and enter or 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. That test applies only to people aged 14 to 18 years at the time of the relevant offence, as that age group recorded the highest rates of offending among young people. The test may only be applied to "relevant offences" as defined in new section 22C (5) to include "a serious breaking and entering offence" or "a motor theft offence". Creating a new two-step bail assessment for child offenders under section 22C (2) requires a bail authority to apply the unacceptable risk test first. The bail authority may only consider the new test after determining if there is an unacceptable risk and whether any bail conditions could reasonably address the risk of a further offence being committed.

I now look at the safeguards that the Government will put in place under the bail test. Tightening bail laws for young people raises concerns about conversely increasing the number of young people in detention. To prevent that, section 22C is a time-limited and targeted amendment. Purposefully designed, it will provide a circuit breaker and deterrent from damaging cycles of recidivism. After careful development and consultation, the amendment is refined to only address a particular cohort of young people: those alleged to have committed at least one relevant offence while on bail for another offence. The provision will sunset after 12 months, followed by an outcomes evaluation.

Schedule 2 [1] to the bill will introduce a new section 154K into the Crimes Act to create a new offence of performance crime. That offence targets the emerging phenomenon of offenders posting images or recordings of their offending on social media, creating heightened risk in the community. Those depictions may encourage other impressionable young people to engage in criminal activity by demonstrating the means to do so. It also poses a significant risk to victims, as circulation of a crime being committed online may be re-traumatising for survivors, particularly where media is used to embarrass, degrade or target a victim.

New section 154K provides that 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. Relevant "material" to constitute that offence has been defined under new section 154K to include anything containing data to generate text, images or sound. "Advertise" has also been defined by that section as attracting notice and attention of the public. "Disseminate" includes sending, supplying, exhibiting, transmitting or communicating material.

Important safeguards have been applied to the new offence to prevent an overreach of the law. To satisfy the offence, the offender's act or omission must constitute a motor theft or breaking and entering offence and the offender must have disseminated material to advertise their offending content. Those parameters ensure the offence cannot inadvertently capture other scenarios such as accidental filming by a member of the public or filming and publication of criminal acts by journalists for media reports. We have seen the impacts of performance crimes in our own Western Sydney community. Recently, videos circulated of dangerous driving around the main roundabout in Harris Park. People sharing that content online encouraged more dangerous actions. The bill highlights the serious risks of performance crime and amplifies the community's denunciation of that behaviour. *[Extension of time]*

Performance crime is not funny. It is not funny to break into a house. Stealing a car should not go viral. Over 1,000 likes on a post does not validate a criminal activity. Social media is an incredibly valuable platform for a variety of functions. For our youth in the electorate of Prospect, social media is where they live, learn, connect and find inspiration. We will continue to support the use of social media by our young people, but we must promptly and firmly draw a line in the sand that the promotion of criminal activity is unacceptable. It is dangerous and must be stopped before it influences more members of our community.

This legislation shows a whole-of-government approach. The Government recognises that this bill alone cannot resolve youth crime in regional New South Wales. The bill is the first part of a multifaceted response to address the issue. Law does not operate in a vacuum, and it is crucial we implement a whole-of-government approach to supporting at-risk youth. The best outcome for everyone is to avoid engagement with the criminal justice system. The Minns Labor Government is committed to working with communities to implement long-term solutions which drive that outcome.

This bill will work in tandem with a suite of community-based initiatives to address offending behaviour and provide holistic support to young people. Trialled in a pilot program in Moree, this multi-pronged approach will work with local organisations to meet intersectional community needs. Youth Action Meetings will be expanded to nine police districts to enable a coordinated approach between government and non-government agencies to identify children and young people at risk of harm or committing a crime. It is apparent that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth are overrepresented in regional crime rates. To ensure we do not see a continued increase in youth incarceration, these amendments will work with community action to ensure focus remains on prevention and not just punishment.

The Safe Aboriginal Youth Patrol Program will be expanded to five priority locations, in consultation with the local communities. This important program offers outreach services to young Aboriginal people on the streets late at night, to transport them to a safe home or activity. To further support that community, additional judicial resources and funding for the Aboriginal Legal Service will be made available in Moree, where a new \$8.75 million bail accommodation service will also be established. This will provide 24/7, informed, child-safe care, rather than remanding young offenders in custody. It will connect young people to Indigenous organisations, Elders and familial supports from their own communities, to provide guidance and care. Out-of-hours activities, including subsidised entry to Moree pools and the Moree PCYC, will also be delivered in partnership with the Moree Plains Shire Council and Aboriginal communities.

Equipped with skills and resources, this new generation of young people can advance and become thoughtful and empowered members of our community. They have faced and will face challenges that were once unimaginable, from a pandemic to climate change. They will turn problems into opportunities and let solutions be the driving force of our society, so it is important that we continue steering youth across New South Wales towards support and correction when required. The bill will improve community safety and reduce rates of reoffending in regional areas, particularly, as a first step, around Moree. Through both legislative and holistic community

support, it will tackle the cycle of recidivism for the most vulnerable members of our community before it truly begins. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (15:51):** I contribute to the debate on the Government's proposed amendments to the Bail Act 2013, contained in the Bail and Crimes Amendment Bill 2024. As mentioned by the two previous speakers, crime is escalating across regional New South Wales and our communities are calling for help now. We have heard countless stories of violent assaults, break-ins and robberies—so many, in fact, that they are becoming the norm. That is not a good norm to have. As this crisis deepens, residents and families feel like there is simply nowhere safe to go. A couple of members have spoken about the need for a whole-of-government response, yet we are not seeing that. We need a whole-of-government response that is informed by a proper parliamentary inquiry. That is something that the Opposition, along with many organisations, have called for, and will continue to call for, because that is the way to get to a proper whole-of-government response.

In regional New South Wales, gone are the days when you could leave a window open for some fresh air at night. Now the house needs to be tightly sealed and secured, while you wait to see who will be targeted next on your street or in your neighbourhood. There are reports of people in many towns setting up safe rooms within their homes to make sure that they have a safe place to go behind padlocked doors. If you live in a regional area, chances are that you have been impacted by crime or that you know someone who has. That is terrifying. As a regional MP, I am very close to this issue, and I take it very seriously. It is happening in my backyard and the backyards of several of my colleagues, and there is no doubt in any of our minds that things are getting worse.

In Dubbo, one of my constituents, Mike Blake, fell victim to this problem just after Christmas. Mike is 84 years old. He was stabbed by a young man in broad daylight. Like many others, Mike was just going about his normal day. He had gone out to the front of his house to move his car to the side garage. He pulled into the garage and, when he went to hop out of his car, he was confronted by a young assailant who was armed with a 30-centimetre knife that had one serrated edge and two prongs at the end of it. The young man demanded money from Mike. Mike had hardly any time to react. The young fellow lunged at Mike and stabbed him twice on his left side. Mike also suffered three lacerations to his left arm. This all happened in a matter of milliseconds.

Mike was brutally attacked, right next to his home, at five o'clock on a Wednesday afternoon. That is not the Dubbo that Mike knows and loves. It is not the Dubbo that I know and love, and it is one of the reasons why proper, whole-of-government action, including an inquiry, needs to be taken now. I note the scoffing from the police Minister, who is sitting opposite me. As she know, the way to get things done is not to bury one's head; it is to actually listen to what people are saying. I implore her, and the Premier, to do the right thing here.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Have you ever been to Moree?

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS:** I note the interjections from those opposite—

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Which were "Have you been to Moree?"

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS:** I suggest that they concentrate on doing their own job rather than trying to question what we are sticking up for in regional New South Wales. It is abundantly clear that the bill put forward by the Labor Government falls well short of the necessary action. The scope of these changes is far too narrow, relating to only two crimes: serious break and enter offences and motor vehicle theft offences. That means that the horrific attack on Mike that I just told the House about would not be included under the new bail laws. With respect, that shows the stark difference between members in this place who live in regional areas and who understand the reality of what is going on in our neighbourhoods and Government members who are making decisions but who still do not seem to grasp the issues. If they do not want to take it from me, they can look to the data. The latest NSW Bureau of Crime Statistic and Research statistics reveal a number of confronting truths, including that crime rates in regional towns have increased well beyond those in Sydney—which, of course, we already knew—but also that outside of break and enter crimes and motor vehicle theft, which are all that this Government seems to be capable of focusing on, there are serious problems that need to be dealt with.

In 2023, rates of violent offences such as assault were 57 per cent higher in the bush than in the city and violent incidents at schools in regional New South Wales increased to their highest level in five years. Non-domestic assaults in regional towns across the State grew by 14 per cent from 2019-23. Sexual assault across the regions is up 47 per cent from 2019, and domestic violence incidents increased by 24 per cent. An obvious question is why are these crimes not included in the bill? In the past two years, domestic violence assaults went up 7.6 per cent and sexual assaults went up 11.3 per cent in the bush, yet there are no protections for women in the proposed changes.

I acknowledge that the Premier made a short visit to Moree last month, but the grip of this crisis reaches much further than just one regional town. For example, my colleague in the other place the Hon. Sarah Mitchell has shared chilling details from her family and close friends in Gunnedah who have also been impacted by the

regional crime crisis. One example was a married mum in her forties who woke up in the middle of the night to three masked offenders standing in her home. There were three youths, armed with large knives, and the woman's daughters woke up to their mother screaming. When they ran out of their bedrooms to see what was happening, they saw their mum being threatened. Those images should not be the norm. They will be burnt into those kids' minds forever. The 12-year-old daughter was able to lock herself in her room and call her dad. Over the phone she said to him, "I know Mum is still alive because I can still hear her screaming."

Valuables were stolen, along with the family's car, which they had only just replaced after another robbery last April. Thankfully, no-one was physically hurt on that occasion, but it was extremely traumatic for all of them, and that kind of trauma does not just go away. Sarah's parents have also had their home broken into. They woke to find a young man in a hoodie standing in their bedroom at 3.00 a.m. They jumped out of bed, and they realised he was not acting alone. In fact, there was a group of youths trying to steal two cars. My colleague, the member for Upper Hunter, is in the Chamber today. He will share the story of his brush with regional crime at his home. He woke up in the middle of the night to lights shining through the window. He realised there was a young person in his car. Fortunately, the member for Upper Hunter managed to chase him off, but it could have been a far worse situation. We will hear more from the member for Upper Hunter on that shortly.

It is good to see some effort is being put towards a solution for Moree, but that will only highlight what might work for Moree. With such a heavy emphasis on one town, other regional communities are being left behind. Whether they are in the Upper Hunter, in my electorate of Dubbo or in Bourke, Casino, Bathurst, Orange, Kempsey or Gunnedah, we are no closer to a solution for those particular areas or towns. Those communities cannot afford to wait for a lengthy pilot program to finish before getting the help they need. We need a bespoke approach. The Government needs to recognise that a blanket approach simply will not fix things. As I have said repeatedly, we need a whole-of-government approach in which each town is considered differently, because they are all different. They have different issues, resources, capacities on the ground and organisations that can be part of the solution.

The bail amendments are narrow not only in the scope of crimes they cover but also in the age group they cover. Legal actions for underage offenders have increased by 188 per cent in the regions. Assaults at bush schools reported to police have risen by 31 per cent. In Dubbo, a young boy faced court 70 times before his twelfth birthday. That boy had been to court for over 100 offences at the age of just 11. That particular youth is not covered by the new bail laws because the temporary additional bail test for young people only covers those aged 14 to 18 years. That does not help to solve several of the problems. Some of the offences are regularly committed by people younger than 14, and the Crown has to prove *doli incapax* for youths aged between 10 and 14. Again, this is a narrow approach. A whole-of-government approach and a proper parliamentary inquiry could help to inform a more modern approach to *doli incapax* for the future. The rise in social media and TikTok trends have a part to play as well. But the scope of crimes included in the new posting and boasting laws is extremely narrow, as mentioned by my colleague. [*Extension of time*]

The new offence does not relate to co-conspirators. That could encourage young people to get their friends to film them committing crimes with even more frequency. The amendments are rushed. In the Attorney General's own words, as he yelled at me across the Chamber in question time the other day, this legislation is not perfect. It is a long way from perfect. The need for a proper parliamentary inquiry is now starkly evident. We cannot sit back and accept the run-of-the-mill response to a growing problem. That is why The Nationals have launched a new website, regionalcrime.com.au, to help people share stories and help the Government recognise that those things are happening, maybe not in their full sight but in our full sight. Sharing their stories on that regional crime website will help people to feel like they are being recognised. We can have a whole-of-government-response, which we need now. I call on the Premier and the entire Government to support that response.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (16:03):** I contribute to debate on the Bail and Crimes Amendment Bill 2024. Community safety is a top priority for this Government. Just last week the Government introduced its \$26.2 million regional crime package, of which this bill forms just one part. Last week and, in fact, almost every week in this Parliament—and as recently as today—I was honest with the people of New South Wales. We are not blind to the concerns of regional communities. We know there are problems that have existed for decades. We know that those problems—largely socio-economic problems—have resulted in a rise in serious violent crimes in some areas of our State. We know that those problems are not unique to New South Wales. States and Territories across the country are grappling with the same problems.

In the last year I have travelled across this State, talking to police. I visited 33 regional communities in less than a year, some more than once, from Murwillumbah to Nowra, and Wagga Wagga to Walgett, to name a few. In those communities I have made every effort to listen firsthand to local members of Parliament, Aboriginal communities, mayors and broader community organisations and services. They told me about the very real

problems that their communities face. Those problems are very deeply linked by a myriad of social and economic factors—poverty, intergenerational trauma, poor education outcomes, undiagnosed health issues and sadly more. The problems are not simple; in fact, they are very complex. Addressing the root cause of crime will take many years to unravel, but I am determined, and we as a government are determined, to tackle the problem.

Most importantly, I listened to the local police in those communities. They are doing everything that police can do. In almost every instance of these dreadful offences, police have arrested the offenders in days or even less. The local police are an integral part of the social fabric of their communities. I have heard from police officers on the ground about the lengths they have gone to to help kids and families in need, whether that is connecting vulnerable people to services, boxing with kids at the local PCYC on a chilly early morning or working with local community organisations to get kids on the right track. They do a fantastic job. Quite frankly, I am tired of those opposite blaming police for the entrenched social problems that have permeated our communities for decades.

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

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** Unfortunately, they are the same social problems that those opposite did absolutely nothing to fix while they were in government for 12 long years. My colleague the Attorney General spoke in detail about the mechanics of the changes in the bill. He also spoke about the increases in offending by young people under the age of 18 for stealing motor vehicles and break and enter offences, particularly in select communities in regional New South Wales. Police have also reported that they are seeing young people repeat offending while on bail, putting themselves, their friends and the community at risk. Police, through Operation Regional Mongoose and other initiatives, have identified many examples of young people committing sometimes serious offences while on bail for other serious offences.

The changes are a circuit breaker. They introduce a time-limited Bail Act amendment, which will ensure that young people aged between 14 and 18 years who repeatedly engage in break and enter and motor vehicle theft offences can be released on bail if the magistrate has a high degree of confidence that they will not commit a serious indictable offence while on bail, subject to any proposed bail conditions. Secondly, the bill introduces into the Crimes Act an offence of filming and disseminating footage of certain serious offences to publicise or advertise the commission of that offence. This aims to crack down on what is known as posting and boasting, where offenders film their crimes, post them publicly on social media and then boast about the crime. That kind of behaviour only seeks to encourage violent crime and has no place in our society.

I emphasise again that this is a circuit breaker. The time-limited bail offence will give the Government and community time to implement the important measures we announced last week, including a new Bail Accommodation and Support Service for young people in Moree and the establishment of nine new Youth Action Meetings across the State. The Bail Accommodation and Support Service will provide a safe place for young people to stay, with skilled, qualified, trained and consistent staff onsite 24/7, providing child-safe care. These young people will be linked to Aboriginal organisations, Elders and cultural support to ensure they have all the support they need to stay on the right track. This is what these kids need—a supportive environment focused on health, culture and education to break the cycle and keep them out of the justice system.

Additionally, the New South Wales police Youth Action Meetings, known as YAMs, are already in 11 locations across the State supporting up to 1,320 people per year, including 545 Aboriginal young people who mostly reside in regional and rural New South Wales. That will be expanded to Wollongong/Lake Illawarra; Tuggerah Lakes/Brisbane Waters; the Hunter Valley, Cessnock; Orana-Mid Western, which is in Dubbo; Mid North Coast, Kempsey; Central West, Orange; Newcastle; Port Stephens; Hunter Valley and Lake Macquarie. I note that the member for Oxley is in the Chamber. I thank him for bringing this matter to my attention very early in the new parliamentary year. These meetings are practical. They bring together key local government and non-government agencies to identify risks, develop action plans and put tangible outcome strategies in place to help young people get the support and services they need to stay out of the justice system.

The pilot YAMs in Coffs Harbour, Bourke, Walgett and Brewarrina were well received by government agencies and community organisations, with young people re-engaged in health, education and community services as a result of their referral to the YAM. We know that the difficulties these kids face are immense. For example, in Bourke and Brewarrina 88 per cent of young people referred through the YAM had witnessed, or were a victim of, domestic and family violence. This package in its totality is about getting kids the help they need to steer them away from crime and the justice system. The problems are complex and the problems are entrenched, but police are doing everything that we ask of them. I also take this time to commend the NSW Police Force for its youth crime prevention work. As outlined in the *Youth Strategy 2023-2025*, the NSW Police Force works with partners to reduce the number of young people engaging in antisocial behaviour and criminal offending, with the aim of lessening their contact with the criminal justice system.

This strategy sits alongside the NSW Police Force's strategic initiatives and internal policies, including the Aboriginal Strategic Direction. Driving this strategy is the NSW Police Force's Youth Command, which develops and delivers programs that aim to educate, support and empower young people, and reduce the number of young people coming into contact with the criminal justice system. This includes working with regional-based portfolio advocates within the NSW Police Force, PCYCs and corporate and not-for-profit partners, such as sporting codes. We need to do more. There is no doubt about that. As a Government, we are listening and we are acting. Most importantly, we cannot place the blame on the police for these deep-seated social issues. The Department of Communities and Justice, along with the NSW Police Force, service providers, local government and other government agencies, are already working collaboratively on ways to address these underlying environmental factors, including through groups being coordinated by the Premier's Department and the Department of Communities and Justice, and locally through YAMs and other programs, such as Just Reinvest NSW.

Finally, I acknowledge the work of my colleague the Attorney General. We have worked closely with one another on this issue from the very start of our term in government. We both, along with the broader ministerial team, want to see a better future for vulnerable kids in regional and metropolitan communities. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst) (16:13):** I am thankful for the opportunity to speak in debate on the Bail and Crimes Amendment Bill 2024. I begin by thanking police officers for the work they do right across New South Wales. The workload of police officers in rural and regional New South Wales is quite extreme. They have to deal with a lot of situations, and in some cases with very little support. But they are doing the very best they can and I thank them for their work. Ensuring community safety is the responsibility of anyone who is in government, and it is the Government's role to make sure that communities feel safe. We should not have a situation in regional New South Wales where people are too scared to leave their homes—people cannot even go out in their neighbourhood and do the things they enjoy doing each and every day—because of the escalating level of crime in our communities, which has reached a new level.

Some of the reports from communities in regional New South Wales and statistics from the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research [BOCSAR] indicate that our regions have been experiencing higher rates of crime than occur in communities in metropolitan areas. There have been increases in offending by young people under the age of 18 for motor vehicle theft and break and enter offences. This has caused great concern in our communities. I also note that young people are driving these trends, with reports of repeat offending while on bail and a developing trend of young people filming themselves committing car theft or serious break and enter offences. Sometimes the social media posts include weapons. The bill is before the House today because the Government was dragged to the table. The Government has not been proactive on this issue. It has been hearing these stories for the past six months but has sat back and pretended it was not happening. These offences were happening in regional communities that whole time.

The only reason the Government has introduced this bill to deal with bail is that the media brought it to the attention of the Minister and the Government. Government members cannot claim in this House that they have stood up for regional communities. They have failed regional communities because, for the past six months, they have done nothing about it. The only reason the Government has introduced this bill today is that the media highlighted the problem. The Government did not care about our communities. These matters have been raised time after time.

**Mr Adam Marshall:** It is all Ben Fordham's work.

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** The member for Northern Tablelands, who is in the Chamber, has been talking about crime in his community. I have been to Moree with the member for Northern Tablelands and spoken to shop owners in that community. We travelled around that area. The member for Northern Tablelands also welcomes the funding to support his community. But there are so many other communities that this Government has forgotten because they have not received the same media attention as Moree. Moree deserves it because youth crime rates there are a lot higher than in other communities across the State. Yes, the Government should be doing something there and, yes, it is the right thing to do. But the Government is failing other communities across New South Wales right now.

**Ms Anna Watson:** But it's a trial to see how it goes. That is what a pilot program is all about.

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

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** The member for Shellharbour will have her turn later. If the member for Shellharbour wants to have a turn, she should seek the call. These are modest changes to the Bail Act to prevent young offenders from committing serious crimes while already on bail, and the bill is in danger of falling short of reaching the appropriate crackdown on youth crime that is necessary in this State. We are on a slippery slope headed towards

situations that are being experienced in Queensland and in the Northern Territory, where youth crime is untameable and drastic law reforms and interventions are having to be actioned in an effort to take back control of the streets. Make no mistake about this: Labor has gone soft on law and order in New South Wales.

**Ms Anna Watson:** What is this if we have gone soft?

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** The statistics speak for themselves. Look at the information since NSW Labor came to government.

**Ms Anna Watson:** You had 12 years in government and what did you actually do? Yet here you are, after 12 years, whingeing.

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** I make it clear that this bill is not enough. It does not address young offenders.

**Ms Anna Watson:** That is what it is about—young offenders.

**Mr Nathan Hagarty:** He clearly hasn't read it.

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

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** It does not address those who are under 14 years of age. They are exempt from the "post and boast" laws. Kids as young as 10 are committing violent crimes across regional New South Wales because the courts rule that they do not know right from wrong. They cannot tell me that an 11-year-old who appears before a court on 70 occasions to face over 100 charges does not know by now what is right and what is wrong. They clearly do, and they are choosing to commit these woeful crimes because they know—and they brag about it—that "The police will never catch me." These children think the laws do not apply to them. Magistrates apply *doli incapax* and believe the child standing in front of them in the courtroom for the 100th time is not capable of evil. I think that child's 100 victims would think otherwise. Evidence shows that these kids are so confident in their ability to commit crimes and get away with it that it is a game amongst their peers, posting and boasting of who can commit the most outrageous crime.

I thank the shadow Attorney General for bringing two amendments to this bill to this House. The amendment requiring that reports be presented to Parliament after six, nine and 12 months is all about accountability. It is about making sure that the intervention is working. We cannot drop the ball on youth crime. These kids need help. We as members of the New South Wales Parliament need to provide appropriate resources and support. Post and boast laws need to be extended to include other indictable offences so that young repeat offenders do not jump from one crime to another because they know the weak points in the judicial system and where they can still get off scot-free.

Under these proposed laws, an offender would need to steal a car or break and enter and also film and upload the material to social media to be liable. It should apply to not only those who are committing the crime but also those who are involved in the crime. Anyone involved in the crime is part of it and they should be liable under the new law. I make the point that we should never give up on our kids. The judicial system is failing them. We are failing them. More appropriate laws need to be put in place that send the right message to youths who are going down the wrong path.

When I talk to police officers in regional New South Wales, they say that they are always looking at new ways to engage trouble kids who commit violent crimes. Our cops are saying that intervention needs to continue so that we can actually help these kids, connect with these kids, help them be a part of the community and make them comfortable with police. That is part of the continuing battle in this space as well. I acknowledge our police who run wonderful programs through PCYCs and breakfast and youth programs. At the end of the day they create the opportunity to ensure that these kids get back on track and have a real chance of making a contribution to their communities. I thank the shadow Attorney General for the amendments brought to the House. They will certainly strengthen this bill. I think it is a step in the right direction, but we should never go soft on law and order.

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (16:22):** I am a little disappointed by the member for Bathurst. I think every MP in this Chamber would say that community safety is a priority for every one of us. To stand in this place and play politics with community safety tells us everything we need to know about members opposite. The Bail and Crimes Amendment Bill 2024 makes sensible amendments to the Bail Act, which we all need to support. To say that those of us on this side of the Chamber do not care about community safety is just ridiculous, and the member for Bathurst knows that. I thought he was better than that. This affects each and every one of our electorates, particularly in Shellharbour and Moree. And, yes, I have been to Moree, and I have seen exactly what happens up there. The member should keep in mind that this is a trial to gauge whether this will work. It is a sensible approach to what needs to happen.

Of course I speak in favour of the Bail and Crimes Amendment Bill 2024 and I thank the Attorney General for bringing forward this important legislative change. The bill has been brought to the Parliament in response to calls from law enforcement agencies to assist them with dealing with serious issues that impact multiple regional communities, including my own community, Shellharbour. Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research data indicates that regional New South Wales experienced higher rates of crime than metropolitan areas in 2022-23. During this period there were specific increases in offending by people aged under 18 for break and enter and motor vehicle offences. They were the two most common offences.

In January this year, my community watched in horror as six children, the eldest being 14 years old, put their precious lives at risk by riding in a car stolen from Dapto. Clearly we need to do more to discourage such crimes and protect our children but also protect innocent bystanders. There are two key elements to the bill: firstly, strengthened bail laws and, secondly, additional penalties for boasting about dangerous crimes on social media platforms such as TikTok. Importantly, these amendments will work in tandem with other support-based responses to address offending behaviour. The New South Wales Government will introduce a \$26.2 million package of reforms and initiatives to support community safety and wellbeing, particularly in areas such as mine, with programs for young people, focused on strengthening early intervention and prevention. That is the right thing to do.

Regarding the increased bail powers, I welcome the temporary—and I emphasise again that the provisions are on trial for the first 12 months—additional bail test for people who are aged between 14 and 18 and charged with committing serious break and enter or motor theft offences while on bail for other offences of that type. These changes are required because offenders under 18 years of age have been released on bail despite repeated car theft or break and enter offences, which is the what the member for Bathurst was just speaking about. He seemed to contradict himself a number of times.

When committed by adults, this type of repeated offending whilst on bail would attract the show cause test, requiring a bail authority to refuse bail unless an accused person can show cause why they should be released. This bill introduces, for people aged 14 to 18 years old, a bespoke test that sets a higher bar for release for this type of repeated offending. My community rightly expects that law enforcement agencies have the tools to keep us safe and that repeat offenders are kept away from the community in circumstances where there is a real risk of repeating the same offence over and over again.

The other main change that will be brought about by this bill is a deterrent to performance crime, where an offender films or live streams themselves in the act of a certain crime to gain social media following and to outrage and scare victims and law-abiding citizens who end up seeing these videos online. These social media posts can also encourage other people to engage in similar dangerous behaviour. The State of Queensland has recently introduced an offence that targets advertising of motor vehicle offending on social media, which aggravates the crime and attracts an additional two years in prison.

I fear for the safety of young people who see these crimes on social media and hope to become famous for undertaking similar dangerous activities. It is simply not worth the risk of being seriously injured or dying in a motor vehicle accident for clicks on social media. Hopefully this bill can highlight the dangers and make at least some children think twice. I look forward to hearing back from the police, Youth Justice experts and the wider community after the 12-month trial. I commend the bill to the House. I will say one last thing before I go. I think every parent in New South Wales would support this type of change to our laws. If it saves one life or 100 lives, it is worth it. As a mother of five, I absolutely support this bill. When I think of the children I know between the ages of 14 and 18, and that we could save their lives, isn't that our job? Isn't that what we are here to do?

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (16:28):** I have deep concerns that the changes to bail laws proposed by the Minns Government in the Bail and Crimes Amendment Bill 2024 will backfire. For that reason I oppose the bail laws. Let me explain why. First let me say that I accept that the Premier is acting with good intentions. We all want and deserve crime-free communities, but these changes will lead to an increase in crime, not a decrease. That is because study after study has shown that the longer a child or young offender spends in remand, the more likely they are to reoffend. The amendments in the bill would lock more children up for longer and a lot of them are just that—children. Make no mistake: There are good people who work in our remand system but unfortunately that does not prevent it from being a criminal training ground. Needlessly sending young people into remand is akin to sending them to crime school, and crime school is a long distance from anywhere in my electorate. In fact, we have not got a crime school in my electorate. They have to go to a remand facility in Wagga. Children as young as 14 could be hours and hours away from their home and family. Why would we do that?

The proposed changes require magistrates to have a high degree of confidence that a young person will not commit a further serious indictable offence before granting bail. That is an impossible test. If magistrates fear that they might get that test wrong, they will start refusing bail to protect themselves. Surely the Government knows that. The proposed changes remind me of how convicts were treated back in the day. It is about punishment, but

the real solution is prevention. Right now, we are not doing the basic things we need to do to prevent crime. In my electorate a school called the Tirkandi Inaburra school near Coleambally was established for young Aboriginal males between the ages of 12 and 15 years. It has just closed even though it was set up to provide Indigenous students with a framework to stop them engaging and re-engaging in the criminal justice system. I repeat: The Government has just closed it. The Department of Communities and Justice and the Department of Education ran the school. It worked incredibly well but now it has gone.

Members can understand my scepticism about the promised wraparound services and support, which are often hollow words—talk is cheap—when my region is continually trying to hang on to the services that we already have. I have been advocating for years for a PCYC in Dareton, which is in the west of my electorate over the river from Mildura, because the low-level crime there is increasing daily. We still do not have it. In my region we should be forgetting about changes to bail laws and start with proper drug treatment units and proper mental health units in Murray first. We in Murray have been forgotten, neglected and ignored, and we have been for years.

We should catch those kids before they fall into a life of crime. We need consistent policing from the time a kid commits their first crime. I am tired of hearing local business owners tell me that police do not want to get involved with shoplifting and argue that the businessperson should just claim their losses on insurance. Surely crime prevention relies on knowing that shoplifting is a gateway crime. It starts with a packet of chewing gum, moves on to a car and, before we know it, home invasion. We need consistent and proactive policing before young people get involved in more serious crimes. I am asking for reliable policing and an increase in police numbers. I am asking that police not turn a blind eye, even to the most insignificant crime. I acknowledge we have a new government, but we need consistent and fair policing. We have not had that in the past.

The cost of remand will be huge. I know there is a sunset clause in the bill, but often such initiatives become mainstream because they work, at least for a while. We need to think differently. It will take generations of good, sound and well-thought-out government policy and whole-of-government action. The Advocate for Children and Young People would, I am sure, shed some light on possible solutions, but she was not even consulted during the drafting of the bill. I know that because I asked her office yesterday. Putting more young people on remand will lead to more crime, therefore I do not support the bill.

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (16:33):** I speak in support of the Bail and Crimes Amendment Bill 2024 and thank the Attorney General for introducing it to the House. The bill introduces an additional test for young people aged between 14 and 18 years of age who engage in repeated break and enter offences and repeated motor vehicle theft offences. It is a time-limited reform that has been introduced in direct response to regional youth crime issues. The bill also seeks to introduce a new offence of performance crime where a person commits a motor vehicle theft offence or a break and enter offence and posts material to advertise their involvement in that criminal behaviour.

Crime rates across New South Wales have fallen in recent years, but crime rates in regional New South Wales remain higher than in metropolitan areas. Some categories of youth crime in regional New South Wales have increased and there are some concerns about community safety. Sadly we continue to hear about homes being broken into or cars being stolen and taken for a joy ride while young people film themselves and post that content online. It is clear that the last thing we want is for a young person to injure or kill themselves, or an innocent bystander, as a result of such actions.

The bill seeks to address community safety issues as part of a broader package of providing additional support to help young people and disadvantaged communities break the cycle of reoffending. I speak often about Youth Justice, which works to support young people who are at risk of coming into contact or who do come into contact with the criminal justice system, often through dealings with the police or with the judicial system. Youth Justice works with the most vulnerable, marginalised and disadvantaged young people in our State, many of whom are in a situation or environment that is beyond their control. Those young people were born into an environment not of their own choosing. They may have experienced a traumatic life event or face the effects of intergenerational disadvantage.

I often say that we need to acknowledge that young people do not get to pick and choose their circumstances. I will never believe that a young person would say, "I dream that one day I will go to a youth detention facility." Rather, it is the circumstances that put them in that situation. Youth Justice NSW is behind programs, in the community and in custodial facilities, that aim to change the course of those children's lives—programs that offer the young person opportunities to reach their potential and that drive positive social outcomes for them and their family.

To break the cycle of disadvantage we must provide chances for young people to alter their course and uplift their communities by establishing strong local partnerships. They may include the Youth on Track program, a holistic early intervention program that recently onboarded six new Aboriginal community-controlled organisations to co-design programs that are culturally informed. In my travels all the people I have met in the many settings I have visited say that having programs that are culturally appropriate, locally designed, locally prepared and locally worked on in genuine partnership is critical in supporting, in particular, Aboriginal young people who are involved with the criminal justice system.

That work includes the Safe Aboriginal Youth Patrol Program, or the SAY program, a diversionary support service that provides a place to go for recreation and a transport service to help young people get off the streets and back home safely at night. It provides an alternative for a young person—a place for them to be. Members from regional New South Wales will know that after 5.00 p.m. or 6.00 p.m. there is not much to do because places close. What other recreational opportunities are we providing young people? What opportunities are we giving them to be out and about with friends in a good, safe space when those safe spaces do not exist? It is not too difficult to imagine what will happen. My colleague the member for Ballina was a teacher back in the day, and she knows that young people will find things to do because they need something to do. SAY patrols operate in Kempsey, Taree, Bourke and Newcastle in partnership with Police Citizens Youth Club. As part of its response to regional youth crime issues, the Government will expand the program to another five Closing the Gap priority locations to be identified in consultation with the communities.

Equipping young people with employment skills is also important if they are to seek independence and forge a more positive future. A few weeks ago I was fortunate enough to visit the Riverina Youth Justice Centre alongside the Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education and the member for Wagga Wagga. We visited the new barbering program and—I love this—it is called Jack of all Fades. It is delivered in partnership with Skills NSW. Of course, teaching young people barbering skills will allow them to access future job opportunities. But what sort of a Minister would I be if I said, "Go and learn this course and you're going to get a job", but did not also volunteer my own head for a haircut? I am pleased to say that the member for Wagga Wagga and I got a pretty good cut. The poor young man gave me a little clip on the ear. I said, "That's okay; you probably owed me that one." But it was really fantastic—I looked sharp and got the beard trimmed. Anyway, a week later I need to go back there again.

The other program that was running there that I was incredibly impressed with was a crane operators program. I saw the young people learning how to operate a crane, lifting up slabs of concrete as they do on a building site. That is one really good bit, but the most inspiring part was that the person who was teaching them had been an inmate at the same Youth Justice centre 10 years beforehand. He was given so much inspiration, life and skills that he went on to improve his life, and 10 years later he came back. The power of that not-so-young man delivering the course to the young boys who were there, and being able to tell them how he changed his life and how he can promise them some work if they can get it right, is transformative and inspiring.

That is what we can do when we look at what skills we can give young people. They can gain hands-on practical skills in carpentry, mechanics, painting, electrical and plumbing. We work with local community groups who will give them a job so that the Youth Justice system is giving them all the support and confidence that they need. We are giving them the skills. If they have done their consequence but then walk out the door and keep coming up against closed doors then we are not doing the right thing by them as a society. The Government is developing partnerships with groups that will give them some employment because, again, employment is an opportunity. There is a pride, a consistency and a real sense of being able to achieve things in employment.

I also mention another fun program. There is a fantastic group called Oyster-Life in Batemans Bay. The member for Shellharbour knows it well. I visited Uncle Hillary, who runs a diversion program with Youth Justice in the Batemans Bay area that is teaching young Indigenous boys cultural ways of farming oysters. It was absolutely magnificent. He had them out on the water and he is just a laconic guy. Having a conversation with Uncle Hillary, he was just taking his time and enjoying life. What a great influence he is on the young people; the Youth Justice office there said he has made an enormous difference.

Members are probably wondering why I am saying all of this. It is because it goes to another point that I want to make, which is about the work that the Youth Justice officers do. They are inspired in terms of things that they want to do, and they are looking for diversion programs. As the Minister, I am looking really keenly at diversion programs that make a long-lasting, genuine difference and change people's lives. I keep saying "change people's lives" because that is what we always need to remember.

The bill also seeks to address community expectations when it comes to youth crime, providing consequences to young offenders. We also need to address the underlying causes to help those young people take positive steps to reset their future, which is what I have been talking about. To support the Government's legislative changes, Youth Justice will continue to administer the Bail and Accommodation Support Service, or the BASS.

It helps provide after-hours accommodation and assistance to police around granting conditional bail to young people who may otherwise be refused bail—in other words, a safe place to go. [*Extension of time*]

The short-term remand program being piloted in southern Sydney and the Riverina also aims to reduce the number of children and young people experiencing short-term remand through improved systems, supports and diversionary responses. Even a brief period remanded in custody can change a person's trajectory. Institutionalisation at a young age can have a lifelong impact. By placing a young person with a local community organisation, we can provide a roof over their head and a bed to sleep in, as well as ensuring that they meet their bail conditions. The program assists police and courts to do their jobs while diverting young people from detention where appropriate.

As part of that commitment, under the Government's place-based response in Moree, we will invest \$8.75 million over four years in a new local Bail and Accommodation Support Service. I will come back to some of the criticisms that I have heard about that. Youth Justice will work with the local community to set it up as an alternative to remand for young people who would otherwise be refused bail on accommodation or support grounds. It will provide police, magistrates and courts with more options to put a young person on bail with greater confidence that they will not reoffend. It will assist young people to access the wraparound services to comply with their bail conditions.

By that I mean health, education and just getting the support that they need so that they will not reoffend while on bail. Sometimes it is as simple as someone having to get to an appointment that they cannot get to, so they find an illegal way to get there. We want to take out all of that and provide complete, wraparound support so that we can actually get on with the consequence. Young people will also be linked to Aboriginal organisations, Elders and local community supports.

My line in the sand when it comes to this is pretty clear. Members would know my belief in changing the lives of young people and never giving up on young people. Young people do need to have consequences, but the consequences are not about revenge but about changing behaviour. Let us look at how we can use consequences to change behaviour—how we provide support to a young person to change. Let us also not forget that there is a very real community safety element in this. I know that people in places like Moree are concerned, and one of the criticisms that we have heard is "Why just Moree?" But we will start with one place and work our way through it.

It is about continuous improvement but it is not just a one-hit wonder. There is no silver bullet; we are trying everything that we can. In my ideal world, not one young person would interact with the youth justice system and have to be kept incarcerated, but the reality is it is there for us, so what can we do while we have them? What diversion can we offer? In what way can we change their lives? In what way can we help them not only integrate into society but also thrive in society? When we believe in every opportunity for young people then we believe in a world of good. When we think that there are no options then we are doing the wrong thing as a society.

I have been happy with all of the inspiring trips I have been able to make to Youth Justice centres. Indeed, when I am having a really rough trot, I tell my team that I want to go to a Youth Justice Centre because there I see the hope, the opportunities and the things that we can do. In one centre that I visited—I will not mention which one—one of the youth officers looked very familiar. I thought, "I know you." He said, "You don't know me, do you?" I said that he looked familiar. It turns out he was one of my students back in the days at Punchbowl Boys' High School. He gave me a big hug and I said, "I remember you now. You made a woodwork table that was really impressive, and I loved it." He was brilliant at woodwork, and he will be teaching some of the young people there woodworking skills. He said, "Sir, we used to talk about not giving up on anyone", and he was doing that by not giving up on those young people.

This may not be the greatest legislation, and it does not solve every single problem, but it is looking at how we can potentially address part of the issue and how we can improve and change it. We cannot keep doing the same thing over and over again. I give members my word that diversion and giving young people opportunities will always be at the very heart of everything that the Government does and everything that I talk about. Having said that, I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (16:48):** I speak on the Bail and Crimes Amendment Bill 2024. Anyone who doubts the urgent need for action to combat crime in regional areas needs only look at the figures. Just last week the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research released its latest findings, which confirmed what those of us who live and work in the regions already knew. The statistics confirmed that crime in New South Wales is far worse in regional and rural areas than in Sydney. An analysis of the rate of property crime in regional New South Wales shows that it is 59 per cent higher than in Sydney. The rate of violent crime in regional New South Wales is 57 per cent higher than in Sydney. There have been increases in a number of other offences in regional parts of the State. Car theft is up 20 per cent, non-domestic assault is up 14 per cent, domestic assault is up 24 per cent and sexual assault is up 47 per cent.

In my electorate, there have been increases in the rates of various offences in certain local government areas. A breakdown of the figures shows a rise in retail theft, drug offences, domestic violence and sexual assault, just to name a few. Whilst I hasten to add that we in the south, at least in the Cootamundra electorate, have been spared the sort of offending seen in the northern parts of the State—Moree, as has already been mentioned numerous times in this debate, has been a particular focus—that only reinforces my determination to stop the contagion from spreading before my electorate faces a situation that could soon escape our control.

This debate is largely thanks to the relentless and concerted efforts of a number of people, including members in this place, who have doggedly demanded action from this Government to address regional crime. The Country Mayors Association called for a bipartisan parliamentary inquiry five months ago. I, along with the shadow police Minister, who I note is present in the Chamber—the member for Bathurst—and the member for Northern Tablelands, who has made representations about Moree and other communities, have been agitating for action for almost six months. I will have more to say on the inquiry in a moment.

Thanks to the ongoing advocacy from this side of the Chamber, the Government is finally waking up to the issue. I suppose it is a case of better late than never. While I commend the Government's attempt to make inroads into fixing the problems, the hastily cobbled together Bail and Crimes Amendment Bill 2024 falls well short of what is needed. I note that the bill's two targeted measures have raised serious concerns both inside and outside this place. The measures are the time-limited amendment to the Bail Act, which focuses on young people aged between 14 and 18 who are alleged to have repeatedly engaged in break and enter or motor vehicle theft, and the amendment to the Crimes Act, which introduces a new offence of performance crime. In the view of the Opposition, put simply, the amendments do not go far enough.

At the very least, the Government must accept the Opposition amendments foreshadowed by the shadow Attorney General. I thank him for his hard work on this legislation. The bill should include serious indictable offences in the changes to the Crimes Act, which at present appear to only target offenders who commit motor vehicle theft or break and enter offences and then post about it online. Beyond the debate on the ages and offences targeted, there is sadly little in the bill to help communities impacted by crime in places other than Moree. Yes, the changes are an important first step, but what about the elderly living in places like Dubbo—which was mentioned today—and Gunnedah? What about the scared families in Inverell and the small business owners in Glen Innes? I have no doubt that we will hear more about that in a contribution from the member for Northern Tablelands. They are all fearful that their livelihoods will be targeted next.

There is much more to be done. I note the Attorney General's words in this place. In his second reading speech, he said:

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.

I could not have said it better myself. Addressing crime rates in the regions is multi-faceted. Those of us who live and work in regional—and rural, in my case—New South Wales know that there is much more that needs to be done, and that it must be done in a way that provides lasting solutions to the ongoing problems. Most importantly, as the Attorney General himself said, the Government must work with the community. It is not good enough to sit in Sydney and dictate the answers from Macquarie Street.

As I mentioned previously, the statistics do not lie: Crime is far worse in regional New South Wales than in Sydney. As the member for Cootamundra—and I know that a number of members on this side of the House share my view—my bottom line is that nothing short of a bipartisan parliamentary inquiry will properly address the issue and get to the bottom of what is causing the antisocial behaviour, identify the support services that are available, the deterrence measures that are needed and the level and allocation of police resources. When it comes to the Cootamundra electorate, an inquiry would provide an opportunity to once again raise the issue of 24/7 policing in Cowra. That is a long-running issue that I continue to raise in this place.

An inquiry would also provide an opportunity to discuss the need for a new police station in Young. At this time just 12 months ago, I was pleased to announce—with the full support of the then police Minister and member for Bathurst, now shadow police Minister—a brand new \$19 million police station for the community of Young, which would also have a broader reach. Those plans were shelved by this Government. That is very disappointing, and I have made my position on that clear. I will continue to advocate very strongly on behalf of the police and the community, who have expectations of the type of work environment that police are expected to work in.

Disappointingly, the New South Wales Labor Government has resisted the idea of a parliamentary inquiry. The police Minister dismissed it as a "talk fest". I hope that position will be revisited. It is important to remember

that such an inquiry would not be targeted at police; our country police are doing the best job that they can. But a parliamentary inquiry would help to figure out the core issues behind the crimes, and would also be an opportunity to highlight the hard work that the police are already doing to combat this issue.

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (16:57):** I make a brief contribution in support of the Bail and Crimes Amendment Bill 2024. The bill will amend the Bail Act 2013 and the Crimes Act 1900. It proposes two targeted measures. Firstly, a time-limited amendment to the Bail Act that will ensure bail is not granted to young people aged between 14 and 18 who are alleged to have engaged in repeated break and enter and motor vehicle theft crimes, unless the relevant 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. Secondly, an amendment to the Crimes Act targeted to all offenders who broadcast their break and enter or motor vehicle theft crimes for the purposes of advertising their offending conduct, known as performance crimes.

The bill defines the term "relevant young person" as an individual between 14 and 18 years of age at the time that the relevant offence was committed. The new bail laws target two crimes that statistically have the highest rates of repeat offending amongst young people between 14 and 18 years of age. Breaking and entering and motor vehicle theft are the most common crimes committed in the regions. As defined in the Crimes Act 1900, "circumstances of aggravation" include crimes where the person is armed, is 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 have been committed.

A "motor theft offence" encompasses offences of taking a vehicle or transportation vessel without the 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. Crimes of that nature, known as "serious indictable offences", are offences punishable by imprisonment for life or for a term of five or more years. I note, however, that serious indictable offences are not limited to motor vehicle theft or serious breaking and entering. The bill introduces a new section in the Crimes Act for "performance crime" offences. A person will be guilty of such an offence if their act or omission constitutes a motor theft offence or breaking and entering offence and the person broadcasts material such as text, images or sound through social media or other electronic methods in an attempt to advertise their involvement in the offence. The bill will add an additional two years imprisonment to the maximum penalty available for the relevant motor theft offence or breaking and entering offence.

The bill recognises the seriousness of performance crime, which can encourage similar offences to be committed by others, and aims to reduce that risk by implementing a more substantial consequence for offences of that nature. It should be noted that the bill is just one measure in a suite of measures introduced by the Minns Government to address youth crime in the regions. The New South Wales Labor Government is committed to the reduction of youth crime. The Government will invest \$13.4 million for a targeted response in Moree to address crime, support young people and improve community safety. It will act as a pilot program and, if the approach proves successful, will inform actions to address similar concerns in other regional communities. There will be a new \$8.75 million bail accommodation and support service in Moree for young people, to be co-designed by government and community stakeholders. It will provide police and courts with more options to put a young person on bail with more confidence that they will not reoffend.

Young Aboriginal people will be linked to Indigenous organisations, Elders and cultural and family supports from their own communities, with skilled, qualified, trained and consistent staff on site 24/7 providing child-safe care. Out-of-hours activities are to be delivered in partnership with the Moree Plains Shire Council and Aboriginal community-controlled organisations, including potential subsidised entry and extended hours at facilities such as the Moree local government area pools, the Moree Sports Health Arts and Education Academy, and the PCYC. In addition, the youth command will continue Operation Youth Safe, which combines education and early intervention for at-risk children. The expansion of the Safe Aboriginal Youth Patrol Program to an additional five Closing the Gap priority locations, to be determined in consultation with communities, will reduce the risk of young Aboriginal people being victims of crime and the risk that they will become persons of interest in a crime.

The Government will continue the rollout of \$7.5 million in justice reinvestment grants, with grant funding available to recipients as early as June 2024. The reforms will help protect the community and significantly lift support for young people and disadvantaged communities. The Government's reforms look at the big picture, with the aim of providing an intervention pathway to help prevent crime and give young people a chance at life. The Government is also taking steps to increase the number of police officers in regional areas. As I said previously, the bill is just one measure in a suite of measures taken by the New South Wales Government to keep youth out of the criminal justice system. I commend the bill to the House.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** 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***GOODS AND SERVICES TAX**

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (17:05):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes the reduction in New South Wales's share of GST revenue from 92.4 per cent to 86.7 per cent of our population share, the largest single year reduction to our GST share since the system was introduced in 2000.
- (2) Calls on the Federal Government to reform the GST distribution model to a per capita basis in recognition of the fact that New South Wales gets 37 per cent of net overseas migration and makes up 31 per cent of the country's population.

Three months out from the State budget, New South Wales is looking at having \$1.7 billion taken out of its revenue stream. How did that happen? On 12 March the Commonwealth Grants Commission released its annual ruling on GST distribution. The commission cut New South Wales's share of GST by six points, from 92.4¢ per dollar per head of population in 2023-24 to 86.7¢ in the dollar in 2024-25. The cut will see this State's share of the GST pool, which is projected to be \$89 billion in the coming year, being reduced from 29 per cent last year to 27.1 per cent in the coming year. That is the biggest single year decline in GST share for New South Wales since the system was introduced in 2000. The State's GST share is now at its lowest level since 2018.

To put that in perspective, if New South Wales were to be allocated the same share of the GST pool as last year, the State would be \$1.7 billion better off in the coming budget year. Instead, it is down \$310 million. Every other State, except Queensland, will see their GST share in dollar terms increase. Victoria's share will increase by an eye-watering \$3 billion-plus. That is incredibly unfair. Removing \$1.7 billion from the State's revenue stream has obvious consequences for the 2024-25 budget. It piles more pressure on the State's triple-A credit rating, which was already under immense pressure from the moment that Labor took government from those opposite last year.

New South Wales lost its triple-A credit rating with Standard and Poor's in 2020, and its triple-A rating with Moody's has been at risk ever since. The former Government delivered the two biggest budget deficits in New South Wales and left behind the biggest debt ever handed from one government to another. On the figures that the Government received on taking office, that is projected to grow to \$187 billion a couple of years time. The Commonwealth Grants Commission wants the Minns Labor Government to increase royalties on mining to remedy the reduction in GST revenue, even though it has already done that. The Commonwealth Grants Commission wants New South Wales to increase taxes on property at a time when we have a housing crisis, and property taxes are a key part of what people pay for their property. Our focus will continue to be on stabilising the State's debt, and we are not going to make any sudden decisions in response to the ruling.

The Government and I say that New South Wales should get its fair share. New South Wales has 31.3 per cent of the national population, and it received 37 per cent of inbound immigration in the past decade. That is the average. Despite this, in 2024-25 it is set to receive only 27.1 per cent of the GST pool. If New South Wales got its per capita share, it would be much better off. The Government would have enough money to employ 10,000 extra nurses and 10,000 extra police. We would be able to double the TAFE budget. We would be able to build the Parramatta Light Rail stage one. Imagine the number of social housing properties we could build. Sadly, New South Wales is missing out on more than its fair share of GST. In 2024-25 we are receiving less than our per capita share across every category of Commonwealth payments to the State.

Our population is 31 per cent of the national population. We are receiving only 30 per cent of Commonwealth schools funding. We are receiving only 29 per cent of Commonwealth health funding. We are receiving only 24 per cent of funding for affordable housing. If we received the same amount of funding on our per capita share, we would be \$600 million better off for health funding, \$380 million better off for school funding, and \$160 million better off for housing. Across all payments, we would be \$5.8 billion better off in 2024-25 if we simply received our share of Commonwealth payments to the State on a per capita basis.

The outlook for other Commonwealth payments also is not good. The Commonwealth already cut \$3.2 billion from infrastructure funding last year. Even before that we were on track to receive just 23 per cent of Commonwealth infrastructure funding to the States over the next 10 years. That is \$3.2 billion that we expect to be put back into the New South Wales budget just to take us back to where we were before the cuts and another \$8 billion over 10 years just to bring us back to an equitable share of the national infrastructure funding. That is why the Premier, the Treasurer and this Government have put the other States on notice that New South Wales will advocate hard for substantial changes in the system of distributing GST funds collected by the Commonwealth. It is time New South Wales got its fair share, and it is time this Parliament got behind the call for New South Wales to get its fair share of GST revenue.

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (17:12):** I move:

That the motion be amended by inserting:

- (3) Condemns the Premier and the Treasurer for being asleep at the wheel ahead of the Commonwealth Grants Commission recommendation.
- (4) Calls on the Premier to stand up for New South Wales taxpayers and finally pick up the phone to the Labor Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese.

When the member for The Entrance is the last line of defence, things are pretty grim in the Government. The wheels are already falling off this sorry excuse for an administration. It has come up with a feeble excuse for its economic mismanagement and its budget bungling from its L-plate Treasurer, who is now blaming his incompetence on the GST calculation. What kind of Treasurer cannot calculate GST? As a former Treasurer, I know that Treasury briefs the Treasurer about how GST calculations work. They go up; they go down. That is not what a budget is based on. For the current L-plate Treasurer to come into the Chamber and blame the GST is an absolute joke. This is a Treasurer who promised he would maintain the Coalition's triple-A credit rating.

**Ms Anna Watson:** And we inherited a \$188.5 billion black hole.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** The member for Shellharbour is getting a bit sensitive because she is part of the racket that is about to trash the State's triple-A credit rating. While she is at it, she is supporting the L-plate Treasurer who is trashing the surplus that the Coalition worked so hard to deliver. What is Labor's feeble excuse? It is that it is someone else's fault.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** The member for Shellharbour will come to order. The member for Terrigal will come to order.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** Even Labor politicians are embarrassed by the excuses for economic incompetence and budget bungling. Don't take my word for it; take the word of the Victorian Labor Treasurer. He said the Treasurer was blaming the GST for blowing the budget and he described the Premier as "mathematically challenged". Those are not my words. They are the words of Victorian Labor Treasurer, Tim Pallas, one of the longest serving Treasurers in the country. He described the Premier's claims as mathematically challenged. But it gets better. He then said that the Premier "may not be the sharpest tool in the shed, but he is a tool". I think the best character assessments come from those who know one best, and I think the Premier's Labor colleague, the Victorian Treasurer—

**Mr Nathan Hagarty:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 74, which is about offensive words towards a member. There is only one "tool", and that is the member for Bathurst.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** We should uphold the point of order from the only member of the Ferguson faction in the Executive Government at the moment.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** Order! The member for Hornsby and the member for Leppington will resume their seats.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** He is the only one. How did you get to stay? The Premier dumped everyone else. Your time is coming.

**Mr Nathan Hagarty:** Unlike you, I can count.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** Order! The member for Hornsby will come to order. I thank the member for Leppington for his point of order. The member for Hornsby will come more directly to the substance of the public interest debate.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** I uphold the member's interjection, because they were offensive words coming from the Labor Treasurer of Victoria about the Premier of New South Wales, Chris Minns. He said that he has totally got the GST break-up wrong. We saw two days of tough-talking press conferences from the Premier, but did we see him actually do anything? Did he pick up the phone to his mate Anthony Albanese? Did he try to lobby his caucus friends? No. He did what he always does: nothing. That is the story of this Government. It has no ideas, no vision, no plans and no clue. Government members come into this place and blame the GST for their economic incompetence, but the reality is it is their bungling of the budget under an L-plate Treasurer.

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (17:16):** I make a contribution to the public interest debate. Let us remember the starting point of the economic pressure we are currently under and the reason we are now walking an economic tightrope: the economic mismanagement of the previous Government. What was at the heart of that? The member for Hornsby was right there.

**Mr Matt Kean:** You can't change excuses. Which excuse is it?

**Mr JASON LI:** The previous Treasurer and managing director of Perrottet, Kean and associates, the wolves of Macquarie Street, the masterminds of the private equity leveraged buyout fund model for running New South Wales—

**Mr Matt Kean:** Point of order: I know the member for Strathfield is frustrated at being the most talented member of the caucus and languishing on the back bench—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** What is the member's point of order?

**Mr Matt Kean:** It is 129—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** I do not need the number of the standing order. The member for Hornsby will address the substance of his point of order.

**Mr Matt Kean:** It is relevance. Which excuse is it? Is the Government's budget bungling our fault or is it the fault of the GST? I cannot keep up.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** I thank the member for Hornsby. He was on his way out of the Chamber, and it would be great if he continued in that direction.

**Mr JASON LI:** I thank the member for Hornsby. Flattery will get him everywhere. The hallmarks of the private equity leveraged buyout fund model for running the New South Wales economy were the selling off of public assets, the suppression of wages and the loading up of the State's balance sheet with debt approaching \$190 billion. That is why we are walking an economic tightrope at the moment, and that is why the billions of dollars that New South Wales will lose matter. We know that the current system for economic distribution is clearly broken. It is broken for three reasons. First of all, it is inequitable.

As the member for The Entrance said, New South Wales constitutes 31.3 per cent of the national population. We receive 37 per cent of inbound migration. Yet in 2024 and 2025 we are set to receive just 27.5 per cent of the GST. I tried to find the data for New South Wales's contribution to personal income tax and corporate income tax. How much do New South Wales residents pay in personal income tax and how much do New South Wales corporations that are domiciled in New South Wales contribute to corporate income tax? I could not find the data. I imagine it would be outsized compared with other States, but our share of the GST is not even equivalent to our population percentage. That is why it is inequitable.

The second problem with the way the GST is calculated is that it is incomprehensible and unpredictable. It goes into the horizontal equalisation black box and then the Turing machine will spit out a result. In this case, it has spat out a result three months before the State budget. This is unhelpful for State governments trying to plan and budget responsibly for the future. The third reason why the GST distribution is not good is because it results in perverse incentives. It is a disincentive to success. What the Commonwealth Grants Commission does is calculate a State's relative ability and capacity to raise revenue. In other words, the more able a State is to raise revenue the more it gets punished. The commission also looks at the cost of delivering services. So the more efficient a State is, the more it gets punished. They are the main reasons why the current system for distributing GST needs reform.

All of this is a structural problem. The whole issue is the result of a structural nuance in our Federation, where States have limited revenue-raising power but must deliver all of the essential services, and in New South Wales we have to deliver those essential services to the greatest number of residents. This is not just a problem for whoever is in government right now; it is an issue for whoever governs New South Wales. And so I appeal to those opposite to put down the politics and to join with us, as Team NSW, as we tackle this structural problem, just as the former Premier and former Treasurer Dominic Perrottet did in 2018. He was on a unity ticket with us. He showed bipartisan support, and we hope that the current New South Wales Opposition can have the same attitude.

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (17:22):** In the spirit of unity, let us talk about the things that we can all agree on. New South Wales gets 37 per cent of net overseas migration and makes up 31 per cent of the country's population. Despite that, our GST revenue has gone from 92.4 per cent down to 86.7 per cent of our population share, which is the largest single-year reduction to our GST share since the system was introduced in 2000. This will leave the budget up to \$10 billion worse off over the next four years and will leave New South Wales \$1.65 billion worse off in the next financial year alone. We are all in agreement about these things. That is enough to pay for 3,000 new health workers or pay for the Minns Government's 4.5 per cent pay rise to public sector workers—with no productivity reforms, mind you, costed at about \$618 million—2½ times over. These are facts. Despite that, our southern neighbours in Victoria are set to receive about \$3.7 billion in GST revenue in the 2025 financial year.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** All members will come to order.

**Ms ELENi PETINOS:** —Under the changes, Victoria will receive 24.8 per cent of the share of the \$89 billion GST pool, which is up from 21.9 per cent. That means that Victoria will now receive around 96 cents in the dollar, up from 85 cents in the dollar, despite the Victorian Labor Government plunging its State into record debt, embarrassing Australia on the international stage by cancelling the Commonwealth Games at the last minute and spending money recklessly on projects like the Suburban Rail Loop, which has been revealed to be subject to a \$16 billion budget blowout. Everyone in this Chamber wants more money for New South Wales. On this side of the House, we are saying that the reason there has been such a GST loss for us is because of those opposite. It is very simple. There are countless newspaper articles talking about this hole. Oddly enough, the Treasurer wrote an opinion piece, published at page 13 of today's *The Daily Telegraph*. He wrote:

Give us a draft ruling first. Currently there is no appeal process. Require all states to tell each other what it costs to deliver the same services.

This is an L-plate Treasurer, requiring a draft ruling up-front—something that has never been argued for by any previous Treasurer. They just got on with the job, but this Treasurer is a bit out of his depth and needs extra help because it is the largest reduction to New South Wales in the 24-year history of the tax. Members need not rely on the word of the Opposition; let us look at what economists are saying. In *The Daily Telegraph* today, Mr Saul Eslake said that while the Minns Government is pushing for a per-capita method of splitting the GST, with top-ups for smaller States, that approach would give even more GST dollars to Western Australia. He stated:

What surprises me is Mr Minns and Mr Mookhey are advocating a reversion to equal per capita distribution with top-up grants for smaller states ...

Every premier of New South Wales since Bill McKell has been arguing for more GST but they are arguing for a system that will give WA an increase, twice as big an increase as NSW. What a dumb thing to do.

That is from an economist. The real problem for New South Wales is that we have a Premier and a Treasurer who are completely asleep at the wheel. When the issue of this loss of GST revenue to New South Wales was first raised in question time last Wednesday, the Leader of the Opposition asked, "Why has the Premier not picked up the phone?" This is in the *Hansard* of 13 March—last week. The response from the Premier later in question time was, "At the end of the day, I am raising it in Parliament. This Government is taking on its own political party." He said that like it is an achievement, when his Government is meant to be standing up for the people of New South Wales.

But even worse is that the Premier told this place, "We will not rest until we receive it." Yet the Premier has not spoken to the Prime Minister. Those opposite are asleep at the wheel. Instead of looking at ways they can address the budget, they are obfuscating and looking for someone else to blame. What they are going to do is to increase taxes, and at the top of their hit list are our hardworking general practitioners, who cannot get any answer from those opposite about what they are going to do about payroll tax. They are asleep at the wheel. They have absolutely no clue what to do in relation to taxes and they should do better for New South Wales. [*Time expired.*]

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (17:27):** I support this motion. I note the contribution of my friends the member for The Entrance and the member for Strathfield. I was hoping I would be able to acknowledge the contributions from members opposite but, after that dribble, I just cannot. I acknowledge that six years ago in 2018 the member for Epping and then Treasurer Dominic Perrottet demanded a fairer GST share for New South Wales. He knew back then that it impacted our State unfairly, as it does today. In fact, at the time he described the GST-setting formula as "black magic", and I could not agree more. I acknowledge that Treasurer Mookhey was able to weave his magic in the first budget to pull a rabbit out of a hat by uncovering \$13 billion in savings, plugging \$7 billion of unfunded programs and reducing some of the State debt—

**Ms Eleni Petinos:** What do you know about the GST?

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** Order!

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN:** —that your lot left us. However, the Treasurer would have to be Houdini—

**Ms Eleni Petinos:** Talk about the GST.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** I call the member for Miranda to order for the first time.

**Ms Eleni Petinos:** You know what, Mr Temporary Speaker? I will just take a point of order instead.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Miranda is entitled to take a point of order. However, when I am in the chair, I would appreciate it if members do not yell from the bench and then storm to the lectern to take a point of order. What is the member's point of order?

**Ms Eleni Petinos:** I note Mr Temporary Speaker's comment. My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129, relevance. The member for Penrith has left the subject of the motion, which is about the GST, and is now speaking about any budgetary matters.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** I have been listening closely to the debate and members have talked about unusual things. Given the substance of the motion, I will allow the member for Penrith to continue—but I will be listening.

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN:** However, Treasurer Mookhey would have to be Houdini, David Copperfield, and Penn and Teller all rolled into one in order to deal with a \$1.65 billion GST shortfall just 12 weeks out from the State budget.

**Mr Gurmesh Singh:** Point of order—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** The Clerk will stop the clock.

**Mr Gurmesh Singh:** Mr Temporary Speaker, I withdraw my point of order. The member has returned to the leave of the motion.

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN:** Seriously, our State needs certainty when it comes to planning for the New South Wales budget. This Parliament is right to say, "We want our fair share." We need to be able to provide the services that the people of New South Wales not only elected us to provide but also deserve and, more importantly, have paid for. The current system under which the Commonwealth Grants Commission [CGC] simply hands down a ruling, with hardly any notice and no chance to appeal, is completely unacceptable. The system under which towns like Kiama and Stanwell Park are classified as major cities and funds to service them are cut is ridiculous. It is mind-blowing that the State's largest infrastructure project, the Western Sydney Aerotropolis and airport, which was previously designated as a major city, with the stroke of a pen became "inner regional". That lunacy is why the Premier and Treasurer have taken up the fight to fix the system and get a better outcome for our State. I am pleased to say the Treasurer has raised the issue with other State Treasurers. All States want to support their communities, and this Government knows there is a better way for all States and the Commonwealth to deliver that.

Let us look at what that system could be. We need a straightforward system where GST goes back to States based on population. That is the simplest, fairest way to do things. The Federal Government can top up smaller States to make sure that they are not worse off. That will cost the Federal Government less than the "no worse off guarantee" will cost them in the long term. Getting reform with other States will take some time. But even while we are stuck with the current system, the CGC could improve things by, firstly, telling each State how much GST we can expect for the next four years—not just one—so that everyone knows what the annual decision means for our budgets. Secondly, the CGC should give us a draft decision that can be reviewed and appealed if necessary. Thirdly, it should require all States to tell each other what it costs to deliver the same services so we can all keep each other honest.

Some States are worried that New South Wales is the big, bad State and that we will not share, but that is not true. For every dollar that Victoria will give to the smaller States next year, New South Wales will give \$7. We acknowledge that there needs to be a way to help smaller States in our Commonwealth, but we want to do it fairly, predictably and with certainty. A system that everyone can reliably predict and budget with is a fiscally responsible system that helps small and big States alike. We may be accused of negativity and whining but, in fact, our Government is positive and proactive in our proposals and advocacy, because the current system is broken and cannot last. Comments that these complaints arise every year demonstrate how broken it is. The Federal Government needs to be part of this solution, and we look forward to its cooperation and working with it. I commend the motion to the House.

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley) (17:33):** I contribute to debate on the good old GST carve-up—money that the States are allocated from Commonwealth taxes. Supposedly, that calculation is based on a State's population, the financial needs of its citizens and its ability to raise its own taxes. Raising taxes is something the Labor party is perfect at. During its last term, the New South Wales Labor Government introduced 11 new taxes and increased taxes 21 times. Just like the carbon tax under Gillard or the Medical Care and Injury Services levy under Iemma, pushing up the cost of a green slip, those taxes hurt middle Australia. According to Michael Usher, Premier Minns has thrown his hands in the air and acknowledged that he has given up on getting more money for New South Wales.

**Mr Jason Li:** Point of order—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** The Clerk will stop the clock.

**Mr Jason Li:** My point of order relates to relevance. The remarks of the member for Oxley have nothing to do with the GST.

**Mr Gurmesh Singh:** To the point of order: The member for Oxley is speaking about Labor raising taxes in a debate about tax. That is entirely relevant.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** There has been a lot of variety in today's contributions to debate. The member for Oxley may continue.

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP:** As I said, Premier Minns has thrown his hands in the air, according to Michael Usher, and acknowledged that he is giving up on more money for New South Wales. If our illustrious leader is doing that, what hope does this State have? According to the old playground rules, we are supposed to say nothing at all if we cannot say something nice. Victorian Treasurer Tim Pallas broke that old school rule. Yes, you are going to hear it again. He said that Chris Minns is "mathematically challenged" when it comes to the GST carve up. How can a State with such a high population and so much infrastructure be trampled by the Federal Government? He is not listened to, I would say. I would hazard a guess that the Victorian Treasurer may have been speaking to his mate, Albo. After all, wasn't it Mr Pallas who also said, "He might not be the sharpest tool in the shed but he is a tool"?

**Mr Greg Warren:** Point of order—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** The Clerk will stop the clock.

**Mr Greg Warren:** My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. Whilst varying views have been expressed during this debate, I do not see how it is relevant to make insinuations, use people's nicknames and generally carry on. The debate is ultimately about GST revenue for New South Wales. The member for The Entrance moved the motion to try to get our fair share. It is not an opportunity for members to use the Parliament to make assertions and unfair implications as well as unfair and unjustified—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** I have heard enough. The language used by the member for Oxley was specifically about the GST, as uncomfortable as that may be for some members in the Chamber. I remind members that they need only to draw my attention to the issue of relevance; they do not need to state a specific standing order. I also remind members that Standing Order 129 relates to relevance during question time; Standing Order 76 relates to relevance in other debate. The member for Oxley has the call.

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP:** I acknowledge this is an awkward situation, and I can empathise with Premier Minns. His calls for a fairer distribution are quite similar to those of us in the regions calling for fairer expenditure throughout country New South Wales. With a larger share of the spoils, surely the Labor Government would not be able to continue to rip the hearts of the very folk who put food on their table and provide the materials for their infrastructure and the electricity for their electric cars. Additionally, \$1.65 billion could provide a lot for the regional youths committing the current crime wave, to support a program that has extremely low return-to-jail statistics. The Second Chance for Change program has seen 180 previously incarcerated men into full-time jobs. That money needs to go to such programs, helping our communities deal with the fear of getting broken into and being attacked on the streets. What about our roads, water supplies or schools? Why is the Premier peacocking in the Chamber, yet not doing anything to help New South Wales, let alone our regions?

Our community asks the Premier for a transparent, fair government. They ask for a small say in the decisions of representatives in this place, decisions that affect our day-to-day lives. Imagine what \$1.65 billion could do to help our bottom line, at a time when the cost of living is becoming unaffordable for so many people in our community. Imagine an extra 10,000 nurses, 10,000 police or any number of other options to spend that money on—an opportunity gone begging. Premier Minns and Treasurer Mookhey promised a surplus. They promised transparency. Now, a year in, it is a trail of broken promises. "How's the serenity, Darryl?" There is no transparency, no surplus, and no support for regional New South Wales.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (17:39):** In reply: I thank all members who contributed to this debate: the member for Strathfield, the member for Penrith, the member for Hornsby, the member for Miranda, and the member for Oxley. I commend the member for Strathfield and the member for Penrith for their constructive contribution to this debate. I appreciate that the member for Miranda and the member for Oxley chose a less bipartisan approach, but I also appreciate their contribution to the debate because it reminds people of their position on this matter. The debate is a timely reminder for the people of New South Wales of what an alarming Treasurer the member for Hornsby was for this State. He knew all about spending money but knew very little about the revenue that was needed for New South Wales.

The House should reject the amendment. The motion is an opportunity for this Parliament in a bipartisan and—dare I say—multi-party way to present a united front and say to Canberra, "We want what is right for

New South Wales. We want our fair share." Whoever occupies the Government benches will then be assured that New South Wales is getting its fair share of revenue—a GST split that removes the GST distribution from the dark arts it now occupies to a place where people can understand how it is distributed, except it is being distributed in a fair way—on a per capita basis—across this nation. Surely we can unite on that point. The amendment should be rejected. The motion as moved should be supported by the whole House as a united call to Canberra to give New South Wales its fair share of GST. I commend the original motion to the House.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** The member for The Entrance has moved a motion, to which the member for Hornsby has moved an amendment. The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....35

Noes .....53

Majority.....18

**AYES**

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

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

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

**NOES**

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

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

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

**PAIRS**

Davies, T  
Thompson, T

Minns, C  
McDermott, H

**Amendment negatived.**

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

**Motion agreed to.**

*Bills***INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION AMENDMENT BILL 2024****Returned**

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

**COMBAT SPORTS AMENDMENT BILL 2024****Returned**

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

**BAIL AND CRIMES AMENDMENT BILL 2024****Second Reading Debate****Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (17:50):** On behalf of The Greens, I speak on the Bail and Crimes Amendment Bill 2024. Having listened to quite a lot of the contributions today, I say first of all that we oppose the bill. We oppose it for a couple of reasons, which I will go into. It is important to note that over and over we hear that the biggest change for a young person's life comes because of usually one person who takes enormous interest in the young person's life and gives them unconditional support. What I have heard today is many if not all members recognising that actual rehabilitation and change for these children and young people, who are acting in appalling ways, requires the whole government across every area to be looked at. The Greens oppose the bill because it seems incredibly poor law and because it will not achieve what it intends to. If you do not believe me, believe the much more learned lawyers in this place. Certainly, very learned lawyers in the Law Society of New South Wales and the Aboriginal Legal Service and countless other legal minds in the State have said that they have grave concerns about this law.

The bill would have been a good opportunity to have an inquiry. Ms Sue Higginson in the other place, who is our spokesperson on justice and the Attorney General, the member for Balmain, the member for Newtown, our entire party room and I were pushing for that inquiry. I believe that the Opposition was pushing for that inquiry. I have raised this particular law with the Premier, and I believe there is a desire to fix something but a refusal to do the work required to genuinely disrupt what we are seeing.

I say to my own community that I am not condoning acts of violence, breaking and entering, stealing cars, or any crime at all, but what we have seen in other jurisdictions and what we know to be true is that tightening bail laws just does not work. Locking children up as a goal is absolutely appalling, and this bill will significantly increase the number of young people on remand, locked up. I think that that cannot be disputed. I will not go into the law and where it sits. The Attorney General and the shadow Attorney General went through the bill pretty well.

The Greens will be moving amendments in this place. One amendment supports judicial officers to consider the law's impacts on the wellbeing of the young person and also available custodial and non-custodial options. Another amendment will be to review section 22C, which sets out the temporary limitation on bail for certain young persons in relation to certain serious offences. We want that review done within six months. This is a temporary law, and Labor members made that clear. So we are saying to review it in six months. We are opposing the bill. We do not like it. It is draconian and goes against the rights of children and young people. But it must be reviewed in six months, and a report on the outcome of that review must be tabled in the House within six months, so we will be moving that amendment.

The Aboriginal Legal Service, Amnesty International, Save the Children, Human Rights Watch, former magistrate David Heilpern, who was my own dean of law at Southern Cross University, and others have condemned these reforms as counterproductive. I also note the 600 legal experts who sent an open letter to the Premier this week, expressing their alarm at these reactionary reforms. This was a disturbing story in the community. In Alstonville on the weekend there was a community safety meeting, and what worries me about the conservative views expressed by a couple of people there is that they think this bill will actually stop the crime. There is absolutely no evidence to show that it will stop the crime. It is a reactionary appeal to the extreme right and is misleading to our people and our communities.

Many in the Government are extremely conflicted about these reforms. I have listened carefully to what they have said today. I think that the Premier too is genuinely conflicted about this. The bottom line is that we

need a whole-of-government approach and a huge circuit breaker in the form of investment. The Greens welcome investment in diversionary programs in Moree. I at one stage was a union organiser based out there. I have seen firsthand, in my time as a teacher in Broken Hill and in my time in criminal law in the Northern Territory and other places, that the level of commitment required from government to fund those truly diversionary programs is enormous. It is not about throwing money about. It is about looking for those programs that actually work and holding them to account.

It would be remiss of me to not say for every Aboriginal person in this State and especially in my own community that it is pretty cruel that, after a failed referendum because of a post-truth horror show about how the sky was going to fall if the Constitution was changed to acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in this country—a very colonial backlash—we are not putting Aboriginal people at the centre of this debate and at the centre of policy and decision-making in New South Wales. Closing the Gap—what a joke! One of the most significant things we can do is to make a difference in a child's life, because the gap starts at years 1 and 2. I have seen it. When that happens, the gap is almost never closed. This spike in regional crime, as I know my colleagues will also talk about, is a symptom. It is not the cause. The Greens believe that economic factors are the number one thing inciting criminal behaviour. It comes as no surprise that, as we have been in a cost-of-living crisis for the past two years, crime rates are up. If the Government was serious about preventing youth crime, it would address health, education and housing and tackle the underlying causes of crime. This is not a quick fix.

The Coalition is not getting off scot-free. It was at the helm for 12 years and did not invest in fundamental supports for our regional communities. I will give some examples. The satellite office of the Aboriginal Legal Service in Byron Bay was recently forced to close due to a lack of funding from the Federal Government. The Aboriginal Legal Service does incredible work and that office closure is outrageous. There have been massive cuts to mental health supports. Last year the Federal Labor Government cut the number of subsidised mental health visits from 20 to 10. I note the work of the chair of Portfolio Committee No. 2 – Health in the other place, Dr Amanda Cohn. The committee recently held a hearing in Lismore as part of its inquiry into the equity, accessibility and appropriate delivery of outpatient and community mental health care in New South Wales. Dr Cohn and the committee members heard from witnesses about the stripping of services. All witnesses told the committee that they need recurrent funding to support their programs.

The services were privatised by the Coalition and, lo and behold, there is now no recurrent funding. They do the heavy lifting—the frontline work—and, as a society, we now find ourselves in a precarious situation. It costs over \$700,000 to lock up just one child in detention for one year. A member of The Nationals talked about a child who had been bailed 70 times. I cannot even go there. [*Extension of time*]

Imagine what \$700,000 could do for organisations in every one of the 93 electorates represented in this place, and certainly in my electorate. Fletcher Street Cottage provides services to people who are experiencing homelessness. Despite what was said today, Byron shire has the highest number of rough sleepers in the State, and that \$700,000 would fund the organisation for a whole year. Can you imagine what could be achieved for each child? I genuinely believe every member in this place would like to see the situation change. They want the crimes to stop—I get that—but it will not be a quick fix. More and more children will be locked up. That is not the solution. In fact, I believe it is an absolute breach of the rights of children and young people.

This week the ABC released statistics tracking the over-policing of First Nations communities. It found that Indigenous people in Ballina shire are almost 10 times more likely to be searched by police than non-Indigenous people, with 80 per cent of searches finding nothing. It is clear that we have a long way to go. It was interesting to talk to some police officers in my electorate and to MPs who live in western New South Wales, whose views I hold in high regard, about the sorts of programs that actually work. There is a program in the Lismore electorate called Balund-a, which is a diversionary program for Bundjalung men. There is a threshold in terms of the crimes it deals with, but it is a diversionary system—a jail without walls, if you like. Many years ago I helped to set up education support for the program. Local Elders and a raft of support services are on hand, and the program is making a genuine difference in terms of recidivism and life chances of participants.

Recently a police officer in my electorate told me about visiting a young person in the Acmena Youth Justice Centre at Grafton. He asked that young person, "What is your greatest fear once you come out?" The young person replied that their greatest fear was they would not be able to get their medication—they had severe mental health issues—and that their home was not appropriate for them. We know that jail is not a deterrent for a lot of young people. That is a terrible indictment on our society. We all have a responsibility to those children because once they enter prison they will not ever really be free of it. I am not making that up; all the evidence tells us that is the case. The bill will just ramp that up, which is incredibly upsetting. I give a shout-out to a program in Armidale called BackTrack. Let's find the programs that are working. Let's not throw money at programs that are not working. Let's invest and support programs that we know do work—and there are countless examples.

The Greens' amendments require judges to consider the wellbeing of the young person if bail is refused, the availability of beds in detention facilities and alternative pathways to justice. Our judicial officers already look at the full picture and, if a judicial officer or a magistrate keeps granting bail, we must ask ourselves why. It is because of a reluctance to lock up children in jail.

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (18:05):** I have listened to various speakers debate the Bail and Crimes Amendment Bill 2024 from opposite perspectives, and I indicate that I support the bill.

**Mr Adam Marshall:** Good on you.

**Mr PHILIP DONATO:** I note the interjection from the member for Northern Tablelands. He clearly has a vested interest in the bill, with Moree front and centre. I have had discussions with him, and it is clear that there are a number of issues in Moree. Perhaps if the magistrate there had exercised proper judicial discretion and refused bail, some of those issues may not have come before the Parliament. I read the second reading speech delivered by the Attorney General from the perspective of a former police prosecutor and a police officer. Some members spoke against the bill citing incarceration numbers. They said that the bill will result in more children being locked up, perpetuate offending behaviour and lead to increased recidivism.

But the bill is quite specific. It deals only with serious break and enter offences and motor vehicle offences, which, according to the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research [BOCSAR] reports discussed by other members in the debate, are clearly two of the most prevalent offences in regional New South Wales. The reports show that those offences have increased significantly over the years. The first line of the BOCSAR report entitled *Crime in Regional and Rural NSW in 2023: Trends and Patterns*, which came out in March this year, states, "Rates of violent and property crime are considerably higher in regional New South Wales than in Sydney." Each of the offence categories outlined in the report shows, in a clear and concise matrix, that there are far more offences in the regions—in some cases, they have spiked—than in metropolitan Sydney.

There could be a number of reasons for those increases. One that comes to mind is the police re-engineering that occurred in 2018, when police resources were stretched further and thinner, especially in regional New South Wales. I raised that at the time with then police Minister Troy Grant, and expressed my concern that police re-engineering, especially in regional areas, would lead to expanding command areas and stretched resources. That would appear to be one of the reasons we have seen a spike in regional crime. There is a range of programs—which I am supportive of—that get young people involved and keep them out of the criminal justice system or even just get them engaged and going to school. Those programs are great. There are some in my electorate like Clontarf, Boys to the Bush and Ngurang-gu Yalbilinya, which operates a great program in Orange. I appreciate meetings that I have had with the Deputy Premier and education Minister, who has been very supportive of that particular organisation. I thank her for that. There are things happening in that space.

The programs are all well and good, and we can do everything we possibly can to try to discourage young people from taking the path of criminal enterprise or criminal activity. But there will come a time when they commit a serious offence such as a serious break and enter offence—and I will go into what a serious break and enter offence is shortly—or a motor vehicle theft offence. If they are on bail for a similar offence and they commit a further offence of that nature, then the court should seriously consider refusing bail for the protection of the community.

I heard members speak against the bill in relation to incarcerating more children. A reality of the bill might be that more young people will be incarcerated, but another reality is that we also need to protect the community. We need to protect victims in the community: the people who are too scared to go out at night, who have flashbacks of waking up and finding someone in their house while they were asleep, and who have had their car stolen from their driveway and burnt out up the street after it has been involved in a police pursuit. Those things are happening in my community. There is an element in our community who are sick and tired. They have had a gutful of being victims of crime. They have had a gutful of working hard to buy a car or a nice house and then having it destroyed, stolen or broken into. Clearly, in some cases, the courts are not protecting them, so they turn to their local members to raise their concerns. As local members and as a Parliament, we are obliged to do something about it.

As the Attorney General mentioned in his second reading speech, a serious break and enter offence refers to a break and enter that carries 14 years imprisonment on indictment. If they were adult offences, they would ordinarily be heard in the District Court. 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 and includes an offence of breaking and entering into a dwelling and committing a serious indictable offence in that dwelling, or an offence that is committed in "circumstances of aggravation" or "special aggravation" as defined in section 105A of the Crimes Act. That includes when a person comes into the house either armed or in the company of another person, inflicts violence on another person, or knows that people are home at the time that the offence is committed.

They are serious offences, and offenders have to be aged between 14 years and 18 years. We are not talking about kids aged 10, 11, 12 or 13 years old; we are talking about those aged between 14 and 18 who are presently on bail for a similar offence. If they are committing those offences whilst they are on bail, then, quite frankly, they deserve to be locked up. That is my view, and that is the view of many in the communities that we represent. People have had a gutful of being victims of serious types of crime, and there appear to be no consequences for the people who are doing the break and enters or the car thefts.

I also raise the high degree of confidence aspect, which is obviously a subjective test for the authorising officer—the magistrate, the judge or whatever the case may be—when determining bail. That could be potentially open for discretion. There is no definition for that term, which will be defined by the courts, and there may be some legal authority on that issue. In my view, given the crime categories and the increase in crime across regional New South Wales—the increase in the Central West is greater than 1.4 times the State average—we need to do more. It is great to have programs and that is a long-term goal. The programs will not be funded and get up and running overnight, but people need to be protected quickly, and this legislation does that. For members who oppose it, there is a sunset clause. It will be reviewed in 12 months, and there is an option to look at the BOCSAR statistics and how it has been working on the ground in our local communities.

I also support the "posting and boasting" provision. I raised that issue with the Attorney General in question time in this Chamber last year. I suggested amending the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act 1999 to include that as a factor that a judicial officer could take into account in sentencing. The Government has done one better than that and incorporated it into the Crimes Act as a new offence with a penalty of two years imprisonment. I think that strikes the right balance. In Queensland it is six years imprisonment, which to me seems probably a little bit excessive, but I think two years is proportionate and balanced as a custodial sentence for that type of offending conduct. [*Extension of time*]

We need to dissuade the copycat activity that people see of offences being committed on social media, whether it is a police pursuit or people being videorecorded while sleeping in their bed when they are victims of a break and enter. That was highlighted in my electorate and reported in a *Central Western Daily* article on 9 September 2023, "Chilling footage shows 'stupid' criminals filming unsuspecting victims as they sleep." They recorded their victims asleep while they were conducting a break and enter offence. There is no greater vulnerability than when people are asleep at night in their own home. It does not get any creepier than someone sneaking into a person's home and bedroom, in the shadow of darkness, and recording them while they are asleep. We need to come down hard on that sort of behaviour. If that is happening, it needs to be stamped out and deterred. Hopefully the "post and boast" legislation will deter that type of behaviour and discourage others from doing a similar sort of activity.

The BOCSAR report talks about many offences being committed simultaneously or during the same criminal enterprise, and I know that is happening in my electorate. I have spoken to the local police, and it may be a country thing that people sometimes leave their cars unlocked, parked in the driveway. They perhaps feel that they are a bit safer in the country. Criminals are coming along and opportunistically trying to open doors. They find an unlocked car and often the remote for the roller door is in the car. They open the roller door and can then gain internal access into the house. They can then steal wallets, phones, iPads and tablets. They then get the car keys and steal the car on the way out. We need to look at educating our communities—and the police have asked me to try to pass this on—that, unfortunately, we need to lock our cars at night. We cannot leave our cars unlocked in our driveway at night, parked outside our house. Unfortunately, it is not 40 or 50 years ago when we could probably get away with that.

**Mr Steve Whan:** You can't leave the back door open either.

**Mr PHILIP DONATO:** You can't leave a back door open. The immobilisation in a lot of vehicles makes them harder to steal, but people are getting the keys and then stealing the cars. In Orange and in the Central West, the cars often end up being burnt out or involved in a police pursuit—getting trashed and crashed and all sorts of things, while people film the pursuits on their phones.

**Mr Adam Marshall:** Disgraceful.

**Mr PHILIP DONATO:** It is disgraceful, as the member for Northern Tablelands said. It is disgraceful conduct, so we need to do something to stamp it out. I believe the bill goes some way towards that. I would like to see the programs extended not just to Moree but also across other parts of regional New South Wales. My friend the member for Barwon has a massive electorate, and Barwon is quite significantly overrepresented in a lot of those issues because of the lack of resources. It would be far worse in Barwon than it is in many other parts of the State, and I think the BOCSAR statistics confirm that.

The Parliament and the Government need to act to try to deter and denounce that type of conduct—to hold accountable the people who do it whilst on bail. If young people are going to commit those types of offences whilst on bail for the same type of offence, then I am sorry for those who think that locking up children is not acceptable, but there comes a point when we have to protect the community first and ultimately refuse bail. For those reasons, I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (18:19):** I speak in support of the Bail and Crimes Amendment Bill 2024. Community safety is a key priority for the Minns Labor Government, whether it is in regional or metropolitan areas. Reports from communities in regional New South Wales and statistics from the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, or BOCSAR, indicate that our regions have been experiencing higher rates of crime than metropolitan areas. In 2022-23 there were specific increases in offending by young people under 18 for motor vehicle offences and break and enter offences. Moree had the highest rate of motor vehicle theft in New South Wales and the second-highest rate of break and enter of dwelling offences. Although that is consistent with trends in other States and is a long-term trend in New South Wales, we must take immediate action to do something before it gets out of control.

What happens in one part of the State could occur in another part of the State. That is especially so when the disseminating of recordings of offending behaviour online may encourage others to engage in similar dangerous criminal behaviour. It might send the message to impressionable or easily influenced young people, or other people in our community, that criminal acts are socially acceptable—when we clearly know that they are not. It may also provide people with information or ideas about how to commit criminal offences. Reports have shown that offenders have been posting videos on social media of crimes that involve breaking and entering into the homes of other people, sometimes committed in people's homes while they are asleep. Such posts cause further harm or distress to, or re-traumatise, the victims of those offences. They cause immense fear and alarm, especially for regional and remote areas.

There have been 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. This bill is the first step in a suite of measures that this Government is progressing to meaningfully and comprehensively address these problems. Although these legislative measures are targeted to Moree, hopefully the strong stance the Government is taking against the crimes and the message that the Government takes law and order seriously will deter people around the State from being involved in crime or encouraging others to be involved. I also hope that the way the legislation is applied, and the lessons that are gathered, will help this House and the Government better legislate for many other areas and for the State as a whole. This is just the first part of the Government's significant and multifaceted response to regional crime.

The bill introduces two targeted measures. The first is a time-limited amendment to the Bail Act that 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. The second is an amendment to the Crimes Act, 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 change to the Bail Act in 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. 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. This proposed change has been approached cautiously in light of the potentially serious consequences for young people and, in particular, Aboriginal young people. 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.

The new offence in new section 154K of the Crimes Act that targets performance crime applies when an offender commits a motor theft offence or a break and enter offence and disseminates material to advertise their commission of or involvement in those offences. Addressing offending by young people and persistently high crime rates in regional New South Wales requires a multi-pronged and long-term approach. These legislative amendments to address the immediate problems will work in tandem with a suite of measures and support for the

longer term 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.

The New South Wales Government will invest \$13.4 million for a targeted response in Moree. The initiatives include additional judicial resources, \$8.7 million for a bail accommodation and support service, an action plan within six months, out-of-hours activities delivered in partnership with other organisations and continuing NSW Police Force operations. The New South Wales Government will also invest \$12.9 million to fund a new range of statewide regional crime prevention initiatives.

Schedule 1 to the bill introduces an additional, temporary test that applies to the granting of bail to a relevant young person for 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. 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.

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 offences. 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 break and enter offence. That is to 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 break and enter offence plus imprisonment for two years. In other words, the provision will add a further two years imprisonment to the maximum penalty available for the relevant motor theft offence or break and enter offence. New section 154K (3) provides that, if an offender is convicted of a performance crime offence, the offender cannot also be convicted of a motor theft offence or break and enter offence in relation to the act or omission constituting the performance crime offence. That is to avoid the offender being punished twice.

Schedule 2 [1] also introduces new section 154L into the Crimes Act, which provides that a review be undertaken two years after new 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 thank the Attorney General and his team for their work on this legislation. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (18:28):** I contribute to debate on the Bail and Crimes Amendment Bill 2024. There is most definitely an issue with youth crime in regional New South Wales. We are hearing from all members that they are hearing from both their constituents and the police that there is a problem and that we need to do something about it. The Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research stats show an increase in crime and, anecdotally, we know that social media plays a role in that increase. Social media fuels and motivates those crimes amongst the youth. They are serious crimes that instil fear in some of the most disadvantaged in our community, including the elderly, single mums and those living in areas where crime is more prevalent.

We cannot thank the police enough for the outstanding work that they do. Country cops need to be helped with law and order. We cannot have police catching young criminals and bringing them in, only for magistrates to let them back out on the streets, requiring police resources to catch them and bring them back in. That cycle cannot be maintained with the amount of police resources in regional areas. It is one of the key issues in regional areas. It is time to show that we are getting tough on youth crime in the regions, and the amendments are certainly welcomed. Some response is always better than nothing. The bill is a small step forward. It is a very modest change to bail laws. It focuses on youth, break and enter and car theft, but there is so much room for improvement in the bill.

I would love to see the list of offences expanded to include assault and sexual assault. The bill only adds a high degree of confidence that a young person will not commit a crime for magistrates to rule on. It does not seem to be as strong as the show cause test elsewhere in the judicial system. For the life of me, I cannot comprehend why it expires after 12 months. A change like this is only impactful if it is put in place long term and if it is

something that can be talked about and that kids can be educated on. The bill only applies to kids over the age of 14, but we know that some of those crimes are being committed by kids younger than 14.

The "post and boast" offences seem to only apply to the offender and not their friends who are recording the crime on their phone. There is an opportunity to improve the bill to make sure that it addresses these issues all over New South Wales. I am afraid to say that the Upper Hunter is not immune to some of the crimes that have been talked about during debate. Just a few weeks ago, I was woken up in the middle of the night with the lights of my car flashing, just 20 minutes out of the town of Muswellbrook, on a road that half a dozen cars drive on each day. It is hardly a busy area, but those young kids somehow got into my car. It was probably because I kept it unlocked because I am one of those stupid country people who keeps everything unlocked. I need educating on that. But they got into my car and woke me up in the middle of the night. I yelled a few choice words, which I will not repeat in the House. It sent the adrenaline up and is certainly something that shocks you. I am lucky that those offenders decided to run back to their car rather than confront me. There are issues when confrontation happens.

It scares fathers, like me. Just one week before, my daughter was at home by herself. The thought of something similar happening to her worries me. Unfortunately, my neighbour, who lives a number of kilometres away, was not as lucky. His niece contacted me to say that he had lost his Land Cruiser, and it really affected him. He has lived there all of his life, and this was the first time that had happened to him. I had something of a minor nature happen 20-odd years ago, but it was similar to this. It is not happening often, but there is a problem developing in regional New South Wales, which is why we talk in this place about a whole-of-government approach. A bill like this, in itself, cannot be the solution. We must work on other things, like diversion programs; holiday activities, which are quite often funded through councils; and funding for PCYCs. I benefited from PCYC guidance and mentoring through those years when one can get up to mischief, so I have a huge amount of respect for PCYCs. That program can be expanded.

There is a Dungog District Chamber of Commerce meeting next month to talk about what to do about youth in the area. Having a PCYC in the Dungog shire would have a huge impact on the youth there. Most importantly, we also have to look at how we use the resources that we have, like the police, and look at how they are best used. A number of police are used in regional areas to cart prisoners to remand, to court or to mental health facilities. We should be looking at using Corrective Services staff to transport prisoners, rather than our scarce police staff, so that we can make sure that police are there to do what they do best and work on law and order.

The calls by the Country Mayors Association, my beloved Country Women's Association and the Police Association for a regional crime inquiry are absolutely valid. We can look at that as part of a whole-of-government approach. We can look at what is causing those particular crimes and what we can do about it. Most importantly, it is our job to listen to the people of New South Wales. It would be valuable to hold public meetings and ask people to come and share their stories so that we can understand the breadth of what is happening in regional New South Wales. The work has already started with the website [www.regionalcrime.com.au](http://www.regionalcrime.com.au), but it is something that the Parliament needs to look at. While I support the bill, the Opposition will move amendments. The real solution is to listen to the people in regional New South Wales through a regional crime inquiry.

**Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (18:37):** I speak in support of the Bail and Crimes Amendment Bill 2024. I have listened to a number of contributions to debate. There have been many thoughtful contributions, and at least one that was blatantly political and misleading, which I will come back to. I support the legislation because it is more than just a kneejerk reaction to a law and order issue. It brings into focus a whole range of other interventions that the Government wants to undertake in communities that are affected, starting with Moree. The Government is hoping that with success there, there will be models that it can roll out further. I have been impressed with the Government in the discussion in the debate and by the Premier's commitment to take action. It is about focusing and putting more resources where they can make a difference. It is about diversion, rehabilitation and providing alternatives for young people who might get involved in the kinds of crimes that the bill addresses.

Those crimes are not as big of an issue in Monaro as they are in many other electorates. I spent some time talking to communities in the Barwon and Murray electorates in my role in irrigation. As part of that, one of the constant themes that I heard from people when talking about how communities were going was about crime. It was also about the way that a lot of money was going into the communities in various ways, but it was fragmented. It was often people coming in for half a day, spending half of their budget driving to get there, not being part of the community and building a place-based solution to the problem they were trying to address—not even perhaps merging two or three different funding sources to provide one full-time resource for a community. That was pretty much the constant theme that I was hearing from those communities.

The other theme, which the Premier has talked about quite a bit, is making sure that we do not have services that close down at five o'clock—that we have activities that are available out of hours, that we have some services

that can provide the wraparound services that people talk so much about, and that can engage people in the sorts of things that I am working on in my ministerial portfolio in the skills space and in future careers. It was interesting to note the member for Ballina speaking earlier about Juvenile Justice centres perhaps not being a deterrent because being there was often better than home life. I heard that consistently as well.

The Minister for Youth Justice spoke earlier about our visit to Wagga Wagga recently. One challenge is to make sure that the sort of wraparound services that young people get when they are in one of those centres continue when they go back into the community or are there before they get into trouble in the first place. I have been very impressed with the Premier's commitment to ensure we address those sorts of issues. There is no lack of money out there. There are a lot of resources going into different things. There is no desire to lock up a whole lot more young people in Juvenile Justice, because that is hundreds of thousands of dollars a year which could go towards diversionary assistance, if we could get that in place, and give people alternatives.

Unfortunately, at the moment there is a very clear impression in communities that a person is never going to be put into custody if they recommit those offences. That is obvious in what we see happening in many communities. There comes a point when action must be taken to make sure that that is not the message that is getting out there. The measures in the bill are a very well-considered way of addressing that issue, combined with more resources for justice, with the proposal to have the Bail and Accommodation Support Service in Moree, with the action plan over six months, which is about doing an audit of all of the services and trying to bring them together to make sure there is better coordination. Those are the sorts of things that are going to provide the long-term benefits.

There is absolutely no doubt, if you watch any media report in country New South Wales or when you travel in country New South Wales, you will hear people complaining that perpetrators are constantly bailed, over and over again. I do not want to be part of a huge law and order knee-jerk reaction which willy-nilly throws people into jails, particularly adult prisons, and puts them into a life of crime. But I do want to be part of something that puts an appropriate deterrent and appropriate punishment in place for repeat offenders and offers the wraparound services around it.

I return to the contribution of the member for Bathurst, who quite outrageously and ridiculously tried to pretend that this problem has emerged over the past six months. He talked about the Government being dragged to the table, but then he gave himself away by saying that he had been to Moree with the member for Northern Tablelands, and the member for Northern Tablelands had been talking about it—and he was about to say "for a long time" but he stopped. He knew that would reveal that this problem has been out there for a long time. Frankly, members of the former Government can rail about law and order and being tough on crime, but the reality is that the mess of different services that are not meeting the needs of young people in those communities is under their watch, in the same way—to an extent—that it has developed under every government's watch over the past 20 years. It is not a new problem.

The member for Bathurst went on to say that the statistics tell the story, and then he did not reveal any statistics. One statistic that the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research report showed was that a peak for young males being caught with vehicle theft was in 2022. If my memory is not too faulty, that is when the member for Bathurst was a Minister in government. This should not become a chest-beating issue for people like the member for Bathurst to use to get a headline in their local paper. Other members have taken a constructive approach of expressing their views one way or another on whether the bail laws are appropriate to be trialled for the proposed 12-month period and whether the new crime of posting and boasting is appropriate. I think that they are, but I accept that other people have different points of view. Members can discuss it in a constructive way which helps us to give the community some confidence.

We need to respect the fact that high levels of crime cause great community concern. While the member for Orange was speaking, I was remembering an encounter that my wife and I had with two torch-wielding folk in our house a couple of years ago. I had left the back door open; I acknowledge that. But it was a pretty scary experience. We do not want people to feel unsafe in their own houses. That is not fair. Perhaps more importantly, we also want to avoid the sort of thing we saw happen a week or so ago in Alice Springs, where a young man was killed when a car rolled over with eight young people in it. He was hanging out the window and he died. That is a tragedy that those families are never going to get over. We cannot allow things to continue and keep generating that sort of tragedy for families and communities. I strongly support the legislation. It is a huge step in the right direction not just because it amends bail laws but, more importantly, because it is wrapped up with a commitment to more resources and to better focus and target those resources to address the problems. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (18:46):** I contribute to debate on the Bail and Crimes Amendment Bill 2024. I come at this as someone who has worked in three adult prisons. I have worked for probation and parole. I have coordinated offender management programs across metropolitan Sydney and regional New South Wales.

I have also been the region manager of Western Region police for 10 years, not as a police officer but as part of the executive team involved in reporting on crime and that sort of thing. If you look at the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research per capita statistics for my communities of Barwon, our crime rates are through the roof. I appreciate that a stone in everyone's shoe causes pain, but when I talk about crime in my communities I am talking about some of the worst crime rates in the State.

The Young Offenders Act is 27 years old, and it was predicated or designed on the basis that it would have diversionary programs available. The idea was that, rather than put people into custody, which we know can be a university for offending—minor offenders can learn new tricks by going into custody—we would have opportunities to put them into programs that might help them to address their criminogenic need or offending behaviour and, dare I say, their own values or beliefs, because values and beliefs drive behaviour. In some parts of metropolitan Sydney, that has actually worked quite well, because there are diversionary programs. There are options that you can send young people to. While the 27-year-old Young Offenders Act might need an update, it does have some success in areas where there are diversionary programs.

However, in Barwon we do not have many diversionary programs. We had some shining lights of success like the Wiradjuri Condobolin Corporation or Down the Track at Lake Cargelligo. But, really, in terms of what is needed across such a vast area—44½ per cent of the landmass of New South Wales—we need a lot more. This is not a new problem, and I would challenge anyone that says it is. I refer to the 2017 inquiry into the efficacy of diversionary youth programs which was conducted by a committee from this place. That committee wound up in 2019 with a Government response that provides a lot of great insights about some things that we should have been doing about youth crime and diversionary programs for youth since 2019. I also say, very strongly, that if you commit a serious offence, especially a repeat serious offence, you should expect a custodial sentence. In no way am I saying go soft on all crime. I am saying that if it is a serious offence you have to expect a custodial sentence.

I do not like naming towns in this context because it sounds like I am talking down places in my electorate, but the reality is that places like Bourke and Walgett, and Condobolin to an extent, experience peaks and troughs in crime but serious offences are committed. I could tell the House about some of those offences, but it is a better use of my time to talk about what I think needs to happen. Fear of crime in our communities is increased massively by the number of home invasions, aggravated home invasions and car thefts. Fear of crime is at an all-time high. That is a huge issue because if someone is fearful of a crime, whether they are directly impacted or not, that will obviously impact their feelings of safety in the community.

Fear of crime also means that we cannot attract and retain professionals. In some communities in my electorate there have been instances of people going into nurses' quarters holding knives, and of sideswiping a doctor's car. Those nurses left the community. That doctor left the community. We cannot attract and retain professionals to towns when we have serious crime. Teachers and health staff communicate with others in their network, so they know where these problems are. I will not oppose the bill, but it will not address the issue of diversionary programs. I have taken some comfort from the Attorney General and noted a commitment in tranche two that will include diversionary programs. Those need to be place-based and bespoke. A cookie-cutter model cannot be implemented in every town. It has to be owned by the town. There needs to be investment by the community in the program so that they feel like it is theirs. Otherwise it is like water off a duck's back—it will not stick.

I refer to my old life working for the Department of Corrective Services. The LIS-R, or Level of Service Inventory—Revised, was a risk assessment tool for recidivism. It also clearly identified that when people who commit minor offences associate with people who have committed major offences there is a risk that they will up their game and commit more serious offences. From that perspective, I want to avoid custody for minor offences. But I also want to take the pressure off police. Members have mentioned that police sometimes have to rearrest the same people and put them back before the court. In many communities in my electorate, that is because there is no alternative. There is bail or there is custody. They are the two options that a magistrate has. There is huge community pressure for custody to be imposed, but magistrates know from an evidence perspective that custody will not necessarily change behaviour. That is a quandary for magistrates to deal with.

My colleague the member for Orange talked about the "post and boast" offence. I think that should be extended to other offences. In some communities in my electorate that I will not name, assaults on children are being filmed and posted to social media, which is encouraging more assaults by children on other children. Sadly, one of those involved a child with a disability. It has to be stamped out. We cannot have people glorifying offences like this. I have spoken to the Premier and the Attorney General about a couple of other complexities. I will not go into them, but I have asked that they address them with regard to the bill. I support the bill, but I urge the Government to move more quickly to implement diversionary programs.

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (18:52):** I make a contribution to debate on the Bail and Crimes Amendment Bill 2024. I acknowledge that I have come from Darkinjung land to the Parliament today, and that

we are on Gadigal land. Today we seem to be talking a lot about the people living on Gamilaroi land. I acknowledge the people on Gamilaroi land, their customs and the impact that these issues are having on their communities. I know that the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty has spoken to aunties in Moree who have said they sleep with their keys with them in bed because they do not want their cars to get pinched overnight. It is time we address this issue. An article from *The Sydney Morning Herald* from 2014 highlights a tsunami of crime happening in Moree back then. It seems a shame that we have had to wait until 2024 for action to be taken. The bill is not necessarily the be-all and end-all, but it is the start of changes we need to make to address crime in regional Australia.

I acknowledge that Moree residents are still incredibly unsafe in their homes. As the member for Barwon mentioned, they are unsafe in his community and other communities also. Similar incidents have occurred in my community on the Central Coast. The bill addresses serious repeat offending by young people and ensures the safety of our communities. When I was an Aboriginal studies teacher, not that long ago, a young Aboriginal man with dark skin named Cody came to me and said, "Miss, I can't believe what happens with the police out at Moree." I wonder if the Safe Aboriginal Youth Patrol Program was in place there, because they used to bundle Cody into a car to take him home when he was out on the streets late at night. But still the crime continues. For over 10 years our regions have been calling for help to address the increasing wave of youth crime. They are still calling for help. There is a massive youth crime problem in Queensland. It is really important that we act sooner rather than later, because the post and boast car theft crimes in Queensland are seriously impacting regional communities in particular.

In Moree residents have been beaten and left bruised and bleeding in their own homes. They cannot sleep. They live in fear, waiting until they are targeted next. The community has the highest rate of motor vehicle theft in the State and is second in New South Wales for break and enter dwelling offences. The rate at which these crimes are occurring is only increasing, with the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research indicating that in regional New South Wales from 2019-23 there was a 20 per cent increase in motor vehicle theft. During that same period, legal actions against youth increased by 188 per cent. Police data shows these thefts are also co-occurring with break-ins.

Operation Regional Mongoose, which focuses on serious property-related crime predominantly committed by young people, has resulted in 153 people, including 109 juveniles, charged with more than 1,400 offences, including breach of bail. Further, police have indicated that 63 per cent of local crime in Moree is committed by people released into the community on bail by the courts. Whilst these concerns are most prominent in the regions, last month on the Central Coast seven teenagers, aged 15 to 17, allegedly stole several vehicles from Pearl Beach, St Huberts Island, Wamberal and Berkely Vale, resulting in a police pursuit that ended in Toongabbie. This struck fear into our community. Youth crime is real, not just in remote communities but also in quasi-metro areas of New South Wales.

The New South Wales Government is listening to the community. I commend Chris Minns for going to Moree to talk to the community. It is proposed that the amendments to the Bail Act 2013 and Crimes Act 1900 are just the first part of the Government's significant and holistic response to youth crime. The amendments will work in tandem with other therapeutic and community-based responses to address the cycle of offending and to support our regional communities, such as Youth Action Meetings in nine police districts, which is a collaborative group of people working together to identify kids at risk and supporting them to keep them out of trouble. I thank everyone in my community and across New South Wales who is already doing this work. As well as that, the Safe Aboriginal Youth Patrol Program is getting kids home safely at night.

This bill will introduce a new test for young people aged between 14 to 18 charged with a serious break and enter offence or motor theft offence who are on bail for an offence of that type. The new provision provides that a bail authority must not grant bail to a young person captured by the provision unless they have a high degree of confidence that the young person will not commit a further indictable offence on bail. This will be the final step in the bail decision-making process. I commend magistrates for their work and acknowledge the fine line they have to tread in looking after our young people, especially those who are reoffending. It should be noted this test is time limited. It is a targeted response to address young offending that will sunset after 12 months from commencement.

The bill will amend the Crimes Act to include a new offence of "performance crime", the post and boast. In the age of social media, there is a strong desire for content. Unfortunately, this has extended to offenders posting images or recordings of their offending. Dissemination of this footage may encourage impressionable young people to engage in similar behaviour, posing further risk to the community and young people. The New South Wales Government is committed to protecting communities and addressing the cycle of offending. This is just the first step in addressing offending by young people and the persistent high crime rates in regional New South Wales.

I draw attention to the offerings of TAFE in Moree. Maybe this is something we can consider further down the track. Only 15 of the 215 courses offered online by Moree TAFE include a face-to-face component. They include responsible service of alcohol, responsible gambling, first aid and CPR. Realistically, in a town that does not have many jobs, the education opportunities for young people could be extended. This issue is a huge challenge, and we need to provide long-term solutions. This is about working with community. This is tranche one. I understand tranche two will have additional diversionary programs. I quote Tim Tierney of the Umina branch of the Labor Party, who last night said, "No children should be in jail." That is a fair comment in a perfect world. We have more work to do. I strongly support the legislation.

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill) (18:59):** I contribute to debate on the Bail and Crimes Amendment Bill 2024. As members know, I have a background as a member of the NSW Police Force, as a solicitor of many years and as the son of a former member of the NSW Police Force, who served his entire working life as a police officer. So I look at the bill through the eyes of a member of the Police Force and a solicitor, like the member for Orange. Additionally, I have a Master of Criminology, so I look at the issue of recidivism through those eyes. In this House, we all should do what we can to protect the community. We serve the community, and we need to do what we can to make them safe. Clearly, in regional towns such as Moree and others, the community do not feel safe. We have heard stories about members of the community who have safe rooms in their houses and are afraid to go outside for fear of criminal activity and assault. In this House, we must react, amend legislation and create policies and programs so that those members of society feel safe.

The bill seeks to amend two pieces of legislation: the Bail Act 2013 and the Crimes Act 1900. First, I will make some comments regarding the amendments to the Bail Act. Those amendments are in schedule 1. They provide that the bail authority must not grant bail to a relevant young offender for a relevant offence alleged to have been committed while the young person was on bail for another relevant offence unless the bail authority has a high degree of confidence that the person will not commit a serious indictable offence whilst on bail, subject to any proposed bail conditions. The bill defines a "relevant offence" to mean a motor vehicle theft or a serious breaking and entering offence. A "serious breaking and entering offence" is defined as an offence that is punishable by a term of 14 years imprisonment or more.

If a person commits a relevant offence such as serious breaking and entering, is granted bail and then reoffends, it would be unusual for the court to grant them bail in any event. The legislation imposes what has been described by Government members as a bespoke bail condition—that is, having a high degree of confidence. It is quite appropriate that the courts consider that somebody who continues to commit crimes should not be released on bail unless there is absolutely a high degree of confidence that they will not commit further offences. Also, the bill seems to limit the offences that the person has previously committed. It does not refer, for instance, to somebody who has committed a serious drug offence and then commits a serious break and enter offence.

People committing these offences are recidivists. We need to do what we can to keep our community safe. Young persons who may be refused bail will receive counselling, support and discussions whilst in custody. To be honest, I think the balance is right. I think those young persons who continue to commit serious crimes would know that they are likely to be refused bail. That itself may also act as a severe deterrent. If you lock up one person in the group, the word gets out and others may be more fearful and be dissuaded from committing further offences. The legislation makes considerable sense. The shadow Attorney General quite sensibly suggested that the Act be brought back or be reported on at intervals of six, nine and 12 months. The Opposition amendments that the shadow Attorney General foreshadowed make considerable sense, and I support them. As members of Parliament, we need to understand what is going on with these offences.

The bill also proposes to amend the Crimes Act 1900. New section 154K creates an offence described as a "performance crime offence". The new offence is limited to a situation where an offender commits an offence if the offender's act or omission constitutes a motor theft offence or a breaking and entering offence, and the offender disseminates material to advertise the offender's liability or the act or omission constituting the offence. First, I note that the bill limits the type of principal offence to a motor theft offence or a breaking and entering offence. As a member of the community, I am somewhat surprised that the Government has limited the nature of offences to only a motor vehicle theft or a breaking and entering offence. If the intent of this legislation is to dissuade people from committing serious crimes, then it should be expanded.

I note that the Opposition has foreshadowed amendments. Our communities—the electorates that Coalition members and Labor members represent—will no doubt ask why the new post and boast offence is limited to only vehicle theft offences or breaking and entering offences. On 8 January 2024 a publication regarding the Queensland offences commented on out-of-control criminal offending. It stated:

Out-of-control eshays have taken to social media to boast about the crimes they have committed with their mates.

Disturbing photos and videos have captured young people taking part in a range of acts including brawls, car thefts and anti-social behaviour.

The article continues, saying:

Stealing from stores, fleeing from police and smoking methamphetamine from glass pipes are also among the despicable acts teenagers are bragging about online.

It seems to me that the offence of posting and boasting, or performance offences, should be extended. We are told that further legislation will be brought in the Federal Parliament regarding the same sort of offence. An article published on the ABC on 14 March indicated the following regarding the Federal Coalition:

The Coalition will introduce a private members bill into parliament next week that would grant the eSafety commissioner powers to issue take-down orders and criminalise the act of promoting crime ...

It would seem that the Federal Opposition is also looking into it. Further in the same article, an associate professor indicated the following:

Dr Zahnow also said posting crimes was an issue beyond content that promotes those acts, and that governments should also be thinking about crimes posted out of community safety concerns, as well as crimes that identify victims.

Dr Zahnow further notes:

The government and police pick up on the posting and boasting because that's the most offensive to the public. But the other thing we need to start to think about is more broadly not just when people are putting up their own offences and boasting about it, but they can still get the same infamy from other people putting up posts on them committing offences.

The reality is the legislation before Parliament should be extended to include not just those who commit the offence and post and boast about themselves, but also those who film it on their behalf. I note the Opposition has foreshadowed amendments along those lines. I ask the members of Parliament in this House to support the Opposition's amendments. [*Extension of time*]

In conclusion, I state that the Opposition has very high respect for the service of every member of the NSW Police Force. I am a former police officer and, as I indicated, my father spent his entire working life serving the people as a member of the Police Force. Opposition members have a very high respect for what the police do. This Parliament must ensure that we give the police the tools to properly enforce the laws of this State. We must make sure that we give the police the right legislation. I might add that there is nothing more disheartening to a police officer or to a victim of crime than to see an offender, who has committed a serious breaking and entering offence, being released by a court on bail and who then commits further offences. In those circumstances, the amendments to the Bail Act are appropriate. I am sure the police officers do not want to see offenders committing further crimes, nor do the victims of crime. I ask the House to support the bill with the amendments proposed by the Opposition.

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (19:11):** My contribution to debate on the Bail and Crimes Amendment Bill 2024 will be brief. I support the bill because it is a start to tackling the growing of crime in our regions, but I emphasise that, on its own, I do not believe the bill is a solution. Much more needs to be done. I have spoken about this issue in the House previously. It is an issue that affects my community, and we have heard from many regional members tonight—and I am sure we will continue to hear from them—that it is an issue in their communities. But, as I said, this bill is only a start. On its own, it is not a solution, but I believe it begins to address some of the issues that have been raised with me by crime victims, police and community leaders in my electorate.

At the outset I acknowledge that the answer to this issue does not lie in locking up more young people for longer—in fact, it would only worsen the problem. But the proposed reforms to allow revocation of bail for young people who are alleged to have committed vehicle and serious property break and enter crimes while on bail for the same category of offences will help to slow down the incidence of crime in regional communities. The police tell me that such crimes are often repeatedly committed by a relatively small number of repeat offenders and that creating a mechanism of breaking that cycle will protect victims by reducing the rate of serious offences. We will need to measure the impact of that, but I think this bill is a measured response. In fact, I have been impressed by the cautious nature of the Government's response.

Usually when it comes to law and order debates, there is a flurry of higher penalties and chest-beating about how we will get tough on crime. The Government has emphasised a multi-agency response and has introduced this legislation and the "post and boast" offence, which I will speak about shortly. That is a relatively measured response. I agree that there will be concern in the community, which I will address later. But compared with debate on this type of legislation in recent years, the approach to this bill is a bit uncharacteristic. I welcome that nature of response from the Government.

The increased penalties for post and boast offences send a strong message that that is not okay. Will they be a deterrent? I think that is debatable, but I do not think that behaviour is acceptable, and we should have legislation that highlights that. I share the concerns of youth advocates and others about the risks associated with

increasing sentences and locking young people up, as they say, but this is specific targeted reform for bail offences. This reform comes from feedback from the community and the police. The changes are limited by a sunset requirement and, importantly, will need to be clearly evaluated. This has the potential to provide a circuit breaker.

We need long-term solutions. That is the key. That is why I and many members have called for a regional crime inquiry, which the Government has resisted until this point. In calling for that inquiry, I have spoken about three aspects. One aspect is bail law but more important are the issues of policing numbers and a better coordination of government services and interventions in our community. Policing numbers are a key issue. I thank the police for the work that they do in our communities, putting themselves on the line and tackling dangerous issues for our community to protect our safety. I acknowledge their work.

I believe that there is a case to increase the number of positions of police in regional areas, or the establishment figure. I know there is a severe shortage of police and I know the Government has acted to try to increase the recruitment of police across the State. But this is not just about finding police to fill the current positions; this is about recognising that reforms to policing structures over the past six or seven years have not worked. My community simply does not have the police numbers to undertake the work that will help the community. I am not talking about just increasing police numbers to lock people up. I am talking about proactive policing that can help to prevent crime, act before crime occurs and support people. When important community liaison positions have essentially gone unfilled for many years, which is the case in the Wagga electorate, and then crime breaks out and the police do not know how to tackle it without those liaison positions, anyone would begin to question exactly what the established structure is achieving. That is an important issue. What numbers do we need in regional areas? Do we need more 24-hour stations? What should the structure of that staffing be? Those are critical issues.

Fundamentally, the real solution lies in appropriate support for young people and multi-agency coordination of programs that are offered already. I acknowledge that a youth action meeting is held in my electorate and many programs are effective, including PCYC. But I also know that in many regional areas those programs simply do not exist and there are no safe havens for people to go to if they are remanded in custody. We must create diversion programs, empower families to take leadership roles, provide drug and alcohol services, and deliver the wraparound services that will keep young people out of trouble before it is too late for them.

Make no mistake, without a comprehensive approach across all arms of government and non-government agencies, the cycle of crime that is ruining the lives of young people and taking a toll on victims will not be broken. It is very easy to talk about whole-of-government approaches. As I said, I heard Bob Carr talk about whole-of-government approaches way back 20 years ago. But I am not sure I have ever seen it. Talking about it is easy but coordinating agencies within a bureaucracy is devilishly hard. But we need to do it. The Government is attempting a pilot program in Moree. It should be committing to making sure that every regional and rural member of the House is acquainted with how government agencies in their electorate are working together on the ground, not at the top level but at the middle level where the services are delivered.

I support the bill as a first step on a much longer journey to real reform. Importantly, we do not know what the solutions are. Let us face it: This is not a new problem. Many members have spoken tonight about how longstanding this problem is. We are all genuinely concerned about finding a solution, but do we know the answers for our communities? A regional crime inquiry would go a long way towards helping us flush out those issues and come up with new solutions that might tackle this issue. I will continue to advocate for a full inquiry into rural and regional crime so that the problems, issues and opportunities can be fully understood and the real solutions implemented. That needs a full suite of reforms, which will be essential to making a difference. I am pleased to be supporting this bill, but it is a small, moderate step. I am also pleased to support the Government's considered action, but I just insist that we just not leave it at this. Much more needs to be done for our communities, and we need to start with an inquiry to get to the solutions to help our young people.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (19:19):** I contribute to debate on the Bail and Crimes Amendment Bill 2024. All young people need to be nurtured, supported and educated if they are to grow up and lead healthy and happy lives and contribute to their communities to their full potential. Prison and Juvenile Justice are neither supportive nor nurturing. Young people miss school when they are detained. The loss of their freedom at such a young age and being forced to live in what can be harsh and intimidating environments can be psychologically traumatic. Many young people come out distrustful of authority, making them less likely to seek help in important life matters like physical health, mental health and safety, including domestic violence. Detention keeps young people away from their families and the people who love them and support their wellbeing. There is abundant evidence that imprisonment causes young people significant lifelong harm, including entrenched disadvantage that affects generations and long-term reoffending.

I agree that everyone deserves to feel safe, but safety will not be the outcome of the Bail and Crimes Amendment Bill. The bill will do nothing but lock more young people up, for longer, continuing the destructive

cycle of disadvantage, offending and reoffending that is harming young people and their families, and actually making our community less safe. The bill makes it harder for young repeat offenders of certain motor vehicle and break and enter crimes to get bail and creates a new aggravating offence for these crimes if the young offender publishes a video of their crime on social media, which could increase penalties by an additional two years in prison.

The reasons for youth offending and reoffending are complex and cannot be solved through incarceration. It is an indictment on our society that young First Nations people are disproportionately suffering from our failure to deliver real and lasting solutions to those complex problems. Sadly, it is our First Nations young people and their families who will suffer even further from the expanded incarceration under this bill. Solutions that Aboriginal-run organisations and legal centres have been calling for include intensive and targeted programs and responses for at-risk children, formal community partnerships between police and Aboriginal-controlled services, and resources for local after-school, evening and weekend activities that engage at-risk youth.

I welcome the Government's commitment to additional funding and support for diversion programs, justice reinvestment, Aboriginal legal services, council social facilities and bail accommodation supports, but these programs should be implemented instead of tougher bail and sentencing laws. Without the bail and sentencing changes, these programs have the potential to improve community safety by improving the lives of and opportunities for young First Nations people and their families. I also note that the focus of the Government's programs is largely in and around Moree, when the laws will apply across the State.

A Closing the Gap target is to reduce the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 10- to 17-year-olds in detention by at least 30 per cent by 2031. Closing the Gap is a national agreement developed in genuine partnership between Australian governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak organisations to improve life outcomes for Indigenous Australians. The bill will take us backwards in achieving this goal, with additional negative consequences for other Closing the Gap targets, including in health, education, employment, child protection and adult representation in the criminal justice system. Indigenous disadvantage has its roots in over two centuries of dispossession, racism and loss of self-determination. We know that moving forward to close the gap requires a collaborative approach with First Nations communities that has self-determination at the forefront.

I am disappointed that this Government, which has many strong advocates for working collaboratively with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations to eliminate disadvantage, has taken such a draconian response that we know will not work. The sense of safety that some in the community may get from the headline that more young offenders will be locked up and for longer is not worth the long-term damage we are imposing on young people and their families, or the resultant long-term erosion of the wider community safety. I hope that the one-year sunset clause for the Bail Act changes and the two-year statutory review of the new aggravating offence in the Crimes Act will be used as an opportunity to reset the approach to one that improves the lives of First Nations young people, which is central to improving wider community safety. I will not support the bill.

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (19:24):** I was initially reluctant to make a contribution to debate on the Bail and Crimes Amendment Bill 2024, not because I do not support it. Quite the contrary, I am very supportive of the bill, and I will say why in a moment. As a proud local member of the Moree community in the Northern Tablelands, I did not want to play into what I feared would be the politicking that inevitably occurs when we see how low we can go in being tough on crime. The focus of the Government's response to regional crime has been the Moree community. In the whole of the Parliament's history, I do not think Moree has ever been mentioned as much as it has been in this debate. Many people have never been to Moree and do not understand it, yet suddenly overnight they are becoming experts on Moree. Unfortunately, we have seen a bit of that in this debate.

I decided to speak because some things must be put on record not just by me as the local member, and on behalf of the mayor, Mark Johnson, and the council, who do a tremendous job, but also on behalf of the whole community: victims of crime; parents of perpetrators of crime, who I have sat down with; and perpetrators of crime themselves, who I have also spent considerable time with. At the outset, I acknowledge the many views on this issue. I respect those who believe that this package goes too far, that it is draconian and that it will end up with more children in custody, and I respect those on the other side who argue that it does not go far enough.

The Government deserves to be commended for coming up with a nuanced and detailed package that is not just the tough hammer of "Let's increase penalties." It is not a typical, traditional law and order response; it is a whole-of-government response that looks at early intervention, support programs and better coordination of services. It introduces something that we have never had access to in the bush—a bail facility that is a halfway house between simply releasing young offenders back onto the streets, where statistically they reoffend, and

sending them to jail. Rather, they can be placed in the community, where they can receive support and hopefully turn their lives around while it is still possible.

Admittedly, not all of those young people's lives will be turned around. Unfortunately, even at a young age, some have a rap sheet that is so long that they will inevitably do custodial time. That is the reality. There has to be punishment meted out to people who present to court for 30 or 40 offences of breaking into people's homes, bashing old people across the head with metal pipes, stealing their vehicles, burning them out and doing that not once or twice but multiple times. There must be a consequence for that. However, the bill will make an impact.

The Premier phoned me a few weeks ago and said that he would like to come to Moree. When he and I travelled together and spent a day on the ground, I made a commitment to him that if he was genuine about helping our community I would be standing with him every step of the way. Our community is proud but is not too proud to say, "We have a problem, a bloody big problem, and we need help." I am prepared, the mayor is prepared and the community is prepared to work with anyone, regardless of political stripe, who is determined to partner with us to fix the problem.

I am proud to say that the Premier was genuine in his approach and continues to be. I am incredibly grateful, on behalf of our community, for his approach and not just his genuineness but the speed at which we saw his sincere response backed up with genuine action. It was comprehensive and nuanced and something that we have never seen before. In my 11 years in this place and my nine years in local government before coming into this place, I have never seen a government move as quickly as it has on the issue. From the day the Premier visited, the package was developed in concert with the local community. It is not a top-down government approach. The Government has developed the legislation and the suite of other measures in consultation with me and the local mayor. That is incredibly rare. As someone who sat on the other side of the Chamber for many years, I did not see that. It is a real credit to the Premier to make that happen so quickly.

In saying that, I will inevitably cop some stick from members on this side of the House for extending platitudes. The way I do politics, partisanship does not come into it and on a serious issue such as this, partisanship should be left at the door. The bad behaviour involves the lives of not just young people but also victims of crime. Every member of the community is impacted by the sort of behaviour that the bill addresses. We should be looking for real solutions that work rather than worrying about scoring political points against each other. It is from that perspective that I come to the debate and strongly support the legislation, just as I strongly support the package that has been announced.

It could be said that the bill should go further in reforming bail provisions, but I think that the two offences that have been identified are certainly the issues in my electorate. From that perspective, it makes sense. The high degree of confidence test is a smart one, and the courts will still have discretion around it. The "post and boast" provisions are excellent and the shadow Attorney General will move some amendments that will seek to extend the offences that post and boast applies to. The amendments have a lot of merit, and I think that they will be welcomed by my community.

The package is not a panacea, but I do not believe that it has been said that it will be, nor is it designed to be. It is part of a broader suite. Some members have said that it is only for Moree. That may be true but the rubber has to hit the road somewhere before the package is rolled out more widely. As the local member, I can only support the bill and I can only be appreciative. It is our opportunity as a community to change something because unless we make an effort, nothing is going to change. For the people I represent, it is a huge opportunity that they cannot miss out on. It will be an absolute winner for our community and, ideally, the rest of regional New South Wales. As I have said many times, it is too important an issue to end in failure, so we will make it work.

While I do not believe it takes away the need for a regional crime inquiry, as the member for Wagga Wagga said, we are not here to talk about that. That is a discussion for another day. Today is about an important issue in my electorate. I received the letter from the Aboriginal Legal Service that I am sure every MP did. I saw the pen letter that was sent to the Premier. In response to the writers of those letters, I say that while I am incredibly respectful of their views and I do not question their sincerity, their heart and the position from which they come, I would ask them to walk a mile in the shoes of some of the people in Moree who have been feeling as if they are prisoners in their own homes for some time now and give the reforms a chance.

If they do not work, then what have we lost? If we do not give them a chance, we resign ourselves to rinse and repeat on the same cycle of crime and escalation in violence. There will be more victims, more young people going away and more carnage. We would be failing in our duty as legislators if we allow that to happen. Give the reforms a go and be patient. No doubt it will need to be tweaked, but I ask those people who hold those views to give it a chance. Because the lives of real people—victims, perpetrators and parents—are involved. I urge them to give the police and the community a chance.

I am not one for gloating, but 12 months ago I did warn the House that, if the Local Court magistrate in Moree did not start applying a bit more judicial prudence, there would have to be a big intervention and big changes made. I congratulate Magistrate Samuels. Here we are changing the Bail Act, because the community in Moree are sick of repeat offenders. A very sobering statistic was presented to the Premier when he came to Moree. Sixty-three per cent of all crime in that community is committed by young people who are out on bail reoffending. Maybe the bill can help remove that 63 per cent of crime.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (19:35):** I contribute to debate on the Bail and Crimes Amendment Bill 2024 and, in doing so, add my voice to the contribution of the member for Ballina on behalf of The Greens. The Greens do not support this piece of legislation. The bill seeks to introduce a temporary additional bail test for young people aged 14 to 18 who are charged with break and enter or motor theft offences while on bail for another offence of those types. It would also criminalise the promotion or dissemination of material that advertises a break and enter or a motor vehicle offence. NSW Labor has introduced the bill under the guise of ensuring community safety and targeting performance crime. But The Greens know that the bill, which flies in the face of years of expert evidence, will not make our communities or our young people any safer. We know that the bill will see more kids locked up behind bars. We know that it will primarily impact First Nations communities and children, who will bear the brunt of such horrific and racist laws.

I note the member for Northern Tablelands talked about the need for solutions that will work. His communities and our communities deserve solutions that will work, and we know that this bill is not the solution. The comments made in this debate have been sickening. Speaking about young people as "evil", as the former Nationals leader did, is despicable. I note that members speaking in debate supporting this offensive legislation keep using the term "young people". But let us be clear: The bail changes are about locking up kids. They are about imprisoning children. In his second reading speech, the Attorney General acknowledged that he is aware of concerns that tightening bail laws for young people risks increasing the number of young people in detention and affects the ability for New South Wales to meet its Closing the Gap targets.

Rather than addressing those concerns and just two days before National Close the Gap day, NSW Labor is attempting to ram through reforms that will cause unthinkable harm to First Nations communities. The proposed laws may be for a temporary 12 months, but the impact on the young people captured by the 12 months of legislation will be lasting, lifelong and permanent. It will be intergenerational, as we know the trauma of incarceration of First Nations people is. Rather than addressing those concerns and just a month after the New South Wales Labor Premier signed the State-based Closing the Gap partnership to supposedly improve Aboriginal health, education and social outcomes, the New South Wales Government has introduced this bill.

The Government has loudly acknowledged that the status quo has not been good enough and yet its actions speak far louder than its words. The status quo has not been good enough. The delivery of housing, public housing and community services has not been good enough. The delivery of and support for domestic violence services has not been good enough. The recognition of a need for treaties for First Nations people in this State has not been good enough. But we do not need more law and order to solve any of those problems. The bill purports to target performance crime on the basis that offending behaviour that is filmed and shared online sends a dangerous message to impressionable young people. But what of the dangerous message that this bill sends: that NSW Labor is willing to ignore the experts and crack down on young people and children and is blatantly perpetuating the systemic racism facing First Nations people within our so-called justice system. We cannot overstate the significant harm that this reform would cause if passed. We are talking about young kids who need our care and compassion. They need hugs; they need love; they need us to look after them and hold them. They do not need more punishment.

The Greens are far from the only ones with grave concerns about these draconian proposed reforms. Over 500 legal practitioners, community workers and academics have written to the Premier expressing their grave concerns about the detrimental impacts of the bill. Over 60 human rights and legal organisations—including the Aboriginal Legal Service, the Human Rights Law Centre and the NSW Council for Civil Liberties—have signed an open letter strictly opposing the changes, which will lead to worse outcomes for young people and kids in regional communities and their families. They have called the policy a devastating betrayal of our Closing the Gap targets, and it is nothing short of that. I await the hypocrisy when members who have supported the bill take a photo of themselves smiling and committing to the Closing the Gap targets on Thursday. It is despicable.

I acknowledge the contribution made by the member for Murray, who has outlined just some of the many things the New South Wales Government could be doing to support young people that do not involve a law and order approach—that do not involve locking up kids, in some cases hundreds of miles away from their families. In 2022-23 on an average day in New South Wales, 53.3 per cent of young people held in custody were First Nations children. I will say that again to make sure the gravity of the statistic really sinks in: More than half of all young people in custody in 2022-23 were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children.

Yesterday Redfern Legal Centre published a report on strip searches of children by the NSW Police Force. It found that between 2017 and 2023 First Nations children, who make up 6.2 per cent of the New South Wales population aged between 10 and 17, represented 44.57 per cent of all children strip-searched. In every jurisdiction where reforms like these have been introduced, punitive measures to tackle youth crime have failed. We need only look to Queensland, where the State's Human Rights Act was shamefully overridden, to see that such bail laws will do nothing to fix youth crime rates—and yet last year members of the New South Wales Labor Party joined with the Federal Labor Party in waving "Yes" signs all over the place. The hypocrisy of introducing laws that will limit our ability to meet our Closing the Gap targets is a disgrace.

The victims of those crimes absolutely deserve to have real action taken. They are horrific and terrifying. But it is false to pretend that the bill will have any real impact other than a headline-grabbing reaction. Rushing it through Parliament will do nothing but cause further harm. In comments to the *National Indigenous Times* last year, Queensland Human Rights Commissioner Scott McDougall stated that reports of children pleading guilty to charges to avoid facing longer periods of detention while awaiting trial were a "stark illustration of how broken the current approach to youth justice is". Now New South Wales risks replicating that broken approach. We cannot allow the fundamental human rights of children to be ignored and overstepped. The bill is in direct contravention of our obligations under the International Convention on the Rights of the Child. More policing and criminalisation will not make our communities, our young people or our First Nations people safer.

Who is asking the kids why they are doing this? We talk about speaking to the community, but we have heard that the Commissioner for Children and Young People was not consulted. I note the Attorney General is in the Chamber. How many young people from regional communities did he speak to before he brought this legislation to the House? Did anyone ask them what help they need? What is causing them to steal a car or break and enter? What kinds of support do they need to get them on the right path?

Even if members do not care about asking kids for their views or about international human rights protections, what about just thinking about the fact that they are children—kids who need love and care, not punitive policing? This is the State equivalent of a school caning a student or a parent using a belt on a child. We know that those measures are unfair, disgraceful and outdated, and yet we are using our Legislature and our justice system to impose punitive measures on kids in New South Wales. The reforms ignore decades of unequivocal expert evidence on how to reduce youth crime. When bail is denied to children, they are more likely to become enmeshed in the criminal justice system and legal systems, which will only result in worse outcomes in the long term. In the context of young people who are pushed into undertaking offending behaviour by systemic disadvantage and inequality, criminal justice-based solutions are wholly inappropriate. [*Extension of time*]

These things are costing our community in more ways than one. For every young person in detention in October last year we were paying \$985,500—close to \$1 million per young person—to keep them incarcerated. Imagine what could be done if that money was reinvested into community justice and diversionary programs. Imagine if it was invested into housing. Imagine if it was invested into free transport for young people. Imagine if it was invested into programs that would assist our community members, such as youth centres. Instead, we see tough and punitive responses introduced so that the New South Wales Labor Government can seek to look like it is acting.

The solutions are not easy, but they are there. The experts have told the Government time and again what is needed: diversionary programs, funding for community services and support, and Aboriginal controlled and owned organisations being empowered to deal with what their communities need. However, those things do not allow politicians to look tough on law and order. They do not allow politicians to look like they are doing something. The reality is, though, that those are the solutions that will work. Imagine what could be done if we reinvested that money back into the community.

The Greens are not and have never been content to simply imagine this better kind of world. We are committed to working alongside civil society groups and communities to make this a reality. We acknowledge the tireless efforts of the Aboriginal Legal Service, community legal centres, First Nations Elders and activists, legal experts and human rights advocates for their work towards First Nations justice, human rights and holding the morally bankrupt New South Wales Labor Government to account on this issue. We acknowledge that today members stand in this colonial institution debating a blatantly racist law that will cause unthinkable harm to First Nations people, just two days before we are supposed to look at the Closing the Gap targets. It is nothing short of shameful.

The Greens wholeheartedly condemn and oppose this bill. We will do all we can to stop it from becoming law. We call on the Government to heed the warning of First Nations Elders, community legal experts and human rights advocates on the damage this bill will cause. We need to do better by kids, by young people and by First Nations communities. But we also need to do better by those who are suffering and fearful of the crime rates in their communities. It is false to pretend that changing these bail laws will impact the safety of our communities.

We know what works. We know the solutions. Punitive measures like those in this bill will do nothing to address the challenge but will cause significant harm.

Let us take a minute to reflect on who is to blame. Who is to blame if a 14- or 15-year-old kid engages in a violent break and enter or steals a car? Who is to blame if that kid is then caught up in the justice system? I say we are all to blame. We have not delivered the safety nets, the support, the housing, the care, the financial support, the emotional support or the educational support that young person needs. Society has failed them and, as a result, they act in those ways. The idea that we would punish a kid for our failures is nothing short of an absolute disgrace. It is for that reason that The Greens will wholeheartedly do everything we can to oppose these bail laws passing the Parliament.

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (19:48):** I contribute to debate on the Bail and Crimes Amendment Bill 2024. I had the great privilege of being the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services for over two years in the last term of Parliament. During that time I was able to release a set of data in a report referred to as Forecasting Future Outcomes, put together by actuarial firm Taylor Fry. It brought together around three million datasets on two million young people over 27 years. It found that just 7 per cent of children and young people comprise 50 per cent of the welfare budget by the time they are 40. That figure took my breath away. When it is broken down, one of the most significant components to that cost is those children who, for whatever reason, find their way into the justice system. That is often a journey that starts very young.

Statistics from this State or any other will show that more than half of the children who end up in the juvenile justice system will be fronting a court magistrate as an adult. That is a terrible record of failure that no-one can be proud of. I recall that only a few weeks into my role as Minister I was confronted by a riot at the Frank Baxter Juvenile Centre. Many members would remember that I commissioned Lee Shearer to undertake a review of the youth justice centres, which are the hard end of youth justice. I got to meet some incredible people throughout the reform work that we sought to do.

It is in my heart—and I hope that it would be at the centre of every heart in this Chamber—that when a child comes into the youth justice system we should focus on ensuring that they never come back. Unfortunately, this bill ensures that more children will come back and more young people will be caught. I would have thought that no government would want to see more children move through that revolving door, which is what this bail law will do. As has been pointed out by many members, it will also affect the most vulnerable.

I hope that most members understand the two tests that are applied when it comes to bail. Every offence will have the unacceptable risk test applied, which is enumerated. I draw members' attention to the case of Tikomaimaleya, which outlines the differences between the two. Of course, when it comes to show cause, the case of Moukhallaletti makes clear that those matters are not enumerated and that a defendant must show cause. For children in some of the most challenging circumstances—children who are in foster care or who may not have a home at that time—that will be virtually impossible. The result of the change would be to say that we prefer those children to be in detention rather than getting the sorts of supports that are needed.

Many people have said that there are answers out there—and there are. None of them are easy and there is no easy solution to any of this. I acknowledge the comments of many regional members who have expressed concerns about crime in their areas. They are genuine about that. They want to try to do something about that. They are reflecting the anger of people in their electorates over the actions they see as requiring a punitive response. But I would simply say to those members, "You have been hoodwinked if you think this bill will fix it, because all you do is push people further along the pipeline of their justice journey, and you turn younger people into more hardened criminals who will spend more time in the justice system doing more damage and potentially hurting more people." That is the consequence of this bill.

I am sure that many would say that this bill is very well intentioned, but I do not want to see more young people in detention. I certainly do not want to see lives made worse as a result. That is why I say that this bill, which might appear to resolve a problem, does not do that at all. In fact, it will have the opposite effect. One of the components missing from this debate is not just a discussion around the first 2,000 days of a child's life; it is also the person who is responsible for that in this Chamber—the Minister for Families and Communities. The system has become worse under the watch of this Government.

**Ms Anna Watson:** Really?

**Mr GARETH WARD:** I acknowledge the interjection from the member for Shellharbour.

**Ms Anna Watson:** Good. I'm glad you do, because that is incorrect. Again, you are gilding the lily.

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

**Mr GARETH WARD:** What was that?

**Ms Anna Watson:** I said, "Again, you are gilding the lily."

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

**Mr GARETH WARD:** When Minister Goward had a caseworker vacancy rate of 10 per cent, the members in opposition called for her resignation. The caseworker vacancy rate today is at 12 per cent. When I was Minister, the worst it ever got to was 2 per cent.

**Ms Kate Washington:** I'm not even going there.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** I hear the interjection from the Minister. I know it is not easy. But the reality is that the Government claims it is trying fix the system, but it has continued to get worse. There are 270 people right now who could be seeing vulnerable children that inevitably fall through the cracks and into the criminal justice system. Those positions should be filled but they are not. That is part of this approach in this system that is resulting in more children entering the criminal justice system, and this bill will grasp onto and clutch onto them and bring them in. I do not want to see that happen. That is the consequence of this bill. That is the consequence of the approach of this Government.

During my time as Minister, I invested in programs like restorative justice and family group conferencing, which at a youth justice level involves young offenders confronting the people that they may have wronged. During my time as Minister, the Government met the Closing the Gap targets. This bill will exacerbate Aboriginal offending and more young people will end up in detention. I do not want to see that, and I do not think members of the Government want to see that but I think they are responding to the wrong sorts of policy approaches and they are responding to the wrong sorts of calls, thinking that the bill will deal with the problem and move it out of the way. On this Government's watch, this bill will make the problem worse and then it will have to invest even more.

One of the things that troubles me most about youth justice figures is the number of people with disabilities and cognitive impairments in the youth justice system. Even in school, of the number of kids suspended, somewhere around 80 per cent have a disability. The reality is that those numbers are also reflected in the youth justice system. Those kids really should have been given therapeutic supports. There are great examples like the secure residential care models in New Zealand and in Canada, where they have not only reduced the incidence of reoffending but also reduced the violent nature of crimes.

I heard the Attorney General in budget estimates. He was asked some questions about the age of criminal responsibility. I agree with the Attorney General when he said that we cannot just import all of the changes overnight. That will take time, and the Attorney General is right about that, but that journey needs to start somewhere. This bill takes us backwards from where we were on that journey. I believe that if this bill were to pass, when we look at the statistics in 12 months time, we will have locked up more kids, particularly Indigenous kids and kids with disabilities who should have been getting supports that could have turned their lives around and resolved in them not resulting in a life of crime. I know that is not the case with every child.

I challenge Government members and ask them: How many of them have gone to a youth justice facility? How many of them have gone to Mac River and seen those kids who have gone through a detox program, as I did? I actually followed up with one of them in Broken Hill and saw the transformation that those programs have had. How many of them have done that? How many of them have gone to Coffs Harbour and seen what Mission Australia has been able to do with children who were from the wrong side of the tracks but turned their lives around? I have seen it and I believe it. There are programs out there that do it. Yet the Minister tries to talk about privatisation of child protection services when some of those services have meant that children have had a stable carer for the first time in their lives. Some of those kids had 58 placements but the Minister is referring to it as privatisation.

This is not an easy answer. Blue team, red team—there are problems. I acknowledge that during my time in the ministry I tried to do as much as I could, but we cannot fix every problem. There is no doubt about that. This bill will simply make those problems worse. It might seem like the right response. It might seem like the Government is fixing a problem by giving local members who are concerned about crime in their communities a win. We should be concerned about everybody on the justice spectrum, everybody involved, but time and again there are examples all over the world where this simply does not work. I come back to where I started: Just 7 per cent of children comprise 50 per cent of the welfare budget. That is an example of every one of us failing. Unless both sides of politics can start sharing data, targeting early intervention and making sure that works, and listening to everything from the Tune report that I heard the Minister mention in Parliament last week right through to the experts of today, we are going to be back in this House dealing with this and nothing will get better.

**Ms KOBISHETTY (Balmain) (19:58):** I speak in debate on the Bail and Crimes Amendment Bill 2024. I thank my Greens colleagues, the member for Ballina and the member for Newtown, for their stirring

contributions to debate. As has been made clear, The Greens cannot support the bill. Passing new laws that will lead to children spending more time behind bars is a misguided approach to the issue. Evidence suggests that if bail is denied, children are more likely to be involved in the criminal justice system. Youth detention has been found to aggravate the trauma and behavioural issues that young people experience. The bill will introduce an additional bail test for young people aged 14 to 18 who are charged with break and enter or motor theft offences while on bail for another offence of those types. It will make it harder for kids who have committed those types of crimes to be diverted away from incarceration and into the kind of support that they need, and may make it easier for them to be locked up.

The bill will also introduce a new offence that will criminalise the promotion or dissemination of material that advertises a break and enter or motor vehicle theft offence. It will introduce new ways for young people to be criminalised and locked up, rather than putting them in touch with much-needed support. The bill is intended to sit alongside a suite of measures, including \$12.9 million in statewide crime prevention initiatives and a \$13.9 million place-based response specifically in Moree. The bill will make it easier to keep kids in prison, despite the resourcing of initiatives that are said to be directed towards keeping those same children out of prison. It is a disappointing approach from the Labor Government. As the member for Ballina said, genuine concerns are being raised in communities across New South Wales about young people who are engaging in criminal behaviour like break and enter and motor vehicle theft offences, but making it easier to incarcerate children will not make it better.

We know how distressing it is for families of kids who start to go off the rails, who take up all sorts of inappropriate activity and who fall into difficulties that would be better avoided. We desperately need to support them. As many members have spoken about, there are real-life examples of programs that can help support families and divert kids from crime, if only the Government starts investing money in those programs and invests early in the lives of at-risk children and families. For victims of a crime like breaking and entering or motor vehicle theft, to wake up and find that their home has been ransacked, their keys are gone and their car is nowhere to be seen is not only devastating but sickening. In talking about this, we are not trying to minimise the impact that those crimes have. A recent spate of those kinds of crimes across my own inner-suburban electorate raised concern and alarm across the community.

I spoke to many people who were horrified at the thought of having unknown people—on the evidence available, mostly young men—entering their homes and going through their things. Sometimes, it was happening while people were out and about doing other things. But members have talked about it happening when people are asleep in their own beds. It is not a comforting thought. I have personally been through the experience of having someone break into my home while my children were asleep. It is not something that should be dismissed or minimised. I acknowledge that folks living in regional areas are dealing with it on a larger scale than those of us in the city, but the solution is not to make it easier to put kids behind bars. It will not solve the problem.

As members have said, including both the member for Newtown and the member for Ballina, there is a racial element to this, with more First Nations kids in jail than ever before, despite representing a small proportion of the population. That is extremely concerning to me. The community that I represent, particularly the suburb of Glebe, is home to many First Nations families. In my time as the member for Balmain, I have spoken to a lot of those local families, and they just want their kids to thrive. Even though kids who have a challenging situation at home might sometimes be tempted to do the wrong thing and engage in dangerous or criminal behaviour, all their families want for them is the chance to be brought onto a better path, to have a future and to be helped along by their families, Elders and community if their behaviour starts to go astray.

I note, as the member for Newtown did, that there is growing community outcry in response to the bill. An open letter was signed by 60 human rights and legal organisations, including the Aboriginal Legal Service, the Human Rights Law Centre and the NSW Council for Civil Liberties. It says that throwing more children in jail will make crime worse in regional communities, not better. It says that throwing more children in jail will lead to horrific outcomes for communities, families and those children, compounding abuse and trauma. It says that throwing more children in jail will cause unspeakable damage to Closing the Gap efforts and to creating a better future for Aboriginal children in New South Wales. As my colleague said earlier, if we are working towards closing the gap, this is doing the opposite.

I particularly acknowledge the work of two organisations that operate in my electorate that have signed the open letter: Rainbow Lodge and Deadly Connections. These two organisations know only too well the difficulties that are created when punitive measures are focused on at the expense of prevention and diversion away from prison. We need to listen to these voices. I want to talk for a moment about the incredible work they do for men at Rainbow Lodge, a large proportion of whom are Indigenous. They help them transition back into the community following a period of incarceration. The men are supported in culturally appropriate ways with a focus on healing from past trauma, with intensive case management, including mental health support, creative therapies and

education. Many of these men are coming from a lifetime of incarceration, starting from when they were young men or children. How their outcomes might have been different had they been able to access these important programs and supports way back then. It is hard to see how increasing the incarceration of young people will help them avoid a similar path.

We know from programs like this that it is never too late to turn these kids' lives around. Many men are coming out of the program at Rainbow Lodge demonstrating that with the right services and with the right kind of intensive approach to this issue they can reintegrate into our society and have a future. It is very concerning for me to see this approach of incarcerating our children instead of focusing as much effort, attention and funds as possible on programs that can achieve outcomes earlier for children and divert them out of the criminal justice system. I acknowledge the work of the Redfern Legal Centre, an organisation that is not based in my electorate but whose services extend to my constituents and whose work I have the utmost respect for. Chief Executive Officer Camilla Pandolfini said:

These laws, which will incarcerate more children, will not only fail to make communities safer but will also perpetuate the cycle of injustice and over-incarceration impacting First Nations children.

She has urged the Labor Government to consider an urgent three-point crime prevention plan instead. The plan would focus on resource allocation to give at-risk young people appropriate activities to engage in—again, something that many members have talked about in the debate—and make sure that intensive, targeted and appropriate referral services are available and engaged when required. It is commonly acknowledged by members of all political stripes that there are not enough of these services, which give families and young people the help they need to get support rather than ending up in prison. The plan would also develop formal community partnerships between police and Aboriginal-controlled services. We should really be thinking about this.

It is not just the bleeding hearts at community legal centres, the Aboriginal Legal Service and The Greens who are raising these concerns. Today New South Wales Bar Association President Dr Ruth Higgins, SC, penned an op-ed in *The Sydney Morning Herald* pointing out that the proposal imports "a novel test"—a "high degree of confidence"—that is unknown to criminal law. Its construction will be a matter for the courts, but the application of the proposed test may make it more difficult for a child aged between 14 and 18 to be released from custody than it would be for an adult charged alongside a child with the same offence. She wrote, "That would be an oppressive and absurd result."

Dr Higgins and the New South Wales Bar Association have also noted the inconsistency in funding programs to prevent crime to support young people in Moree—which, of course, we all welcome—while implementing a statewide change to bail laws that will make it harder for young people to be diverted away from incarceration and into these much-needed programs. To that end they have labelled this a precipitous policy that risks undermining the valuable youth programs that it is funding. When the New South Wales Bar Association says that the policy is missing the mark, it is really important that the Government pays attention.

Finally, I understand that the Government will move a number of amendments to the bill, which suggests that it has been drafted in haste. Although I am pleased these errors have been picked up before the bill can pass, it raises the question: What is the rush? This is such an important issue. Why not consult with the barristers, the lawyers and the community before rushing a bill like this through Parliament? The diversionary programs and funding can be delivered quickly. There is no need to rush into enabling greater incarceration of our young people. We should be taking an entirely different direction. The Greens do not support the bill.

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (20:08):** I speak in debate on the Bail and Crimes Amendment Bill 2024, and state from the outset that this is a challenging topic and there is a diverse range of views in the Chamber. Over the past few months crime in regional areas has definitely increased. Unfortunately, I too was the victim of a relatively minor property theft crime—I had a bike stolen. Thankfully, the bike was recovered. But over the past few months stories have come to light of much more serious crimes committed by young people across regional New South Wales. In my electorate of Coffs Harbour one area of particular focus is gangs of young people who are terrorising shopkeepers and shopping centres. I hate to use language as strong as that, but when a group of children—and I use that word unashamedly—aged from 12 to 17 years are committing offences over and over again, it seems like our justice system is ill-equipped to deal with them. Children as young as 10 are breaking into people's homes while they sleep and terrorising law-abiding citizens and their children.

Obviously, everyone in the Chamber recognises that something needs to change. Some offenders are committing crimes for the first time, but many of them have committed offences multiple times and many are already in diversionary programs. I think that is the guts of what the bill seeks to address. However, in my view its scope is a little too narrow; serious crimes are excluded. For example, over the past 24 months in my electorate of Coffs Harbour, sexual assaults have increased by 40 per cent, and intimidation, stalking and harassment have

increased by 30 per cent. Both of those crime categories are excluded from the bill. When we see a changing situation in society, it is up to governments to alter our laws to keep up with the changes.

The bill also aims to address performance crime—post and boast—but, again, it is our view that the changes are too weak. Only the alleged criminal who does the filming and the posting is covered under the bill. I will give an example of how that will not work. Someone could be standing by the side of the road filming their friend breaking into a house and that person would not be guilty of any offence under the bill. I think it has been foreshadowed that that will be addressed by way of amendment. The Attorney General has already admitted that the bill is not perfect, and the Opposition has foreshadowed amendments that will move the bill in the right direction. Ultimately, this is about making the streets safer and keeping children out of a life of crime.

I will comment on some contributions from the crossbench, including The Greens, who wondered whether anyone had ever thought to ask the criminals why they are committing crimes. I think this is the first step in many diversionary programs. We know what works, but if it worked for everyone every time then we would not be here discussing this issue. It is also important to remember that the bill applies not to the first offence but to second offences and above. So whatever programs were undertaken after the first offence was committed obviously did not work or are not working. We need to ensure that our legal system has compassion, but we must also ensure that victims of crime have access to justice. This is a challenging topic, but we must act and we must acknowledge that the system is not working for some people.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (20:13):** The State Labor Government recently announced the details of the Bail and Crimes Amendment Bill 2024 as well as a support package to be delivered in Moree. It included \$13.4 million for a targeted response in Moree to address crime, support young people and improve community safety. The problems facing Moree are the same that are being felt in communities in the Tamworth electorate as well. Our people are fearful in their homes. There are horror stories from Gunnedah and Tamworth as young people with no fear of anyone or anything roam the streets looking for trouble. They are breaking into people's homes, terrorising the occupants, assaulting the elderly, damaging property and stealing cars. The assistance package for Moree and the measures announced in the Bail and Crimes Amendment Bill 2024 do not go far enough, and the Attorney General has stated that the proposed changes are not perfect.

In my area, significant funding needs to be invested in support of programs to back up our police. We cannot always arrest our way out of a problem; there needs to be support from the judicial system as well. I urge the Labor Government to work with community groups like the Tamworth Local Aboriginal Land Council [LALC], which has a program that would make a difference. It is appealing to the Federal Justice Reinvestment program for funding, but this could easily be picked by the State Labor Government. I encourage the Department of Communities and Justice to open a conversation with the council. I read from a section of the council's application:

Between 2020 and 2023 there has been a steep rise in the offending rate and the type of offending amongst young people in Tamworth NSW. From 25 young people, police have identified 8 clear ringleaders, with the others generally only offending when encouraged by this smaller cohort. Positive engagement has been proven to work effectively with the young people involved—young Aboriginal men aged 13-17. A 5-day a week rehabilitative diversionary program would operate on-Country for 6-10 young people. The program will provide a low staff to youth ratio with skilled Aboriginal mentors employed to lead a program that blends Aboriginal cultural knowledge sharing, recreational and skills-based activities with a long-term view to building career pathways for each participant, very similar to the BackTrack program that is now operating in approximately 9 centres in New South Wales. Participation in the program will be voluntary and will aim to provide positive, consistent and supportive relationships, to build young people's cultural identity and citizenship.

In terms of cost saving: The cost of the application is 40% of the cost of continued incarceration. The proposed number of clients is 6-8 young people in Year 1, with the potential to increase to a maximum 10 young people in the following years. The young people to be targeted are central to youth crime in Tamworth with crimes rates reducing significantly when they are locked up (62% reduction in vehicle theft, 25% reduction in aggravated break and enters). These 8 young people accounted for 25% of all legal actions in Tamworth over the last two-year period. A significant cost saving will be created by running this intensive intervention program, when compared to the cost of continuing to incarcerate these young people.

8 young people were incarcerated for a total of 2018 days during 2021 and 2022, based on a rate of \$2,748.96 per day (Cost of Youth Justice Services, Productivity Commission, 2022), this detention alone cost the NSW Government \$5.547m, without factoring in the cost of legal processes, community-based supervision, nor the social cost of the crimes to the community. A successful diversionary approach will represent a significant cost saving. Budget recurrent: \$1.2m per year required plus additional set up costs Year 1.

That is the program that the Tamworth Local Aboriginal Land Council would like to implement. That is the program that the State Government is similarly looking to roll out in Moree. There are programs ready to go and ready to be funded. I thank the Tamworth Local Aboriginal Land Council for its participation and for offering to be part of the solution.

Police analysis has shown a clear correlation between the ringleaders' custodial time frames or times when they are bail compliant and prevalence of crime in Tamworth. When ringleaders were incarcerated in November 2022, there was a 62 per cent reduction in stolen motor vehicles and a 25 per cent decrease in aggravated break

and enters across all Tamworth crime. Those eight young people accounted for 25 per cent of all legal actions in Tamworth over the past two-year period. The numbers speak for themselves. I again thank the Tamworth LALC. Community members are looking to lead and drive solutions that fill a current service gap with a program that provides full-time engagement with young people, as opposed to programs that run for one day or a few hours a week, and that provides bespoke, place-based solutions that are flexible in accommodating the unique needs of the young participants. I commend the LALC and urge the State Labor Government to work with it on this program.

In addition, our police need support. As part of that, I call on a division of the police air wing to be located in Tamworth to serve the New England North West. Tamworth has the resource capability to host PolAir. When the Oxley police district calls for air support, it is of great benefit. The tyranny of distance faced by our police is a challenge, and the air support makes a huge difference not only in and around Gunnedah and Tamworth but also in the whole New England North West, including when cars are stolen and driven to nearby towns. There is currently a fleet of five helicopters and three fixed-wing aircraft with PolAir command, and Tamworth is an ideal location for one of those aircraft to be based, right in the middle of the New England North West, in its largest city. That ensures that commands in the North West have access to a timely response when it is needed. More needs to be done, and everyone should be around the table doing whatever they can to keep our communities safe and stop these terrible crimes. We urge the State Labor Government to instigate a rural and regional police and crime inquiry. Let us stay at the table and work on a solution.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (20:22):** In reply: I thank the following members for their contributions to the debate on the Bail and Crimes Amendment Bill 2024: the shadow Attorney General, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Attorney General and members representing the electorates of Dubbo, Swansea, Bathurst, Shellharbour, Murray, Bankstown, Cootamundra, Mount Druitt, Ballina, Orange, Cabramatta, Upper Hunter, Monaro, Barwon, Gosford, Newtown, Tamworth, Wagga Wagga, Northern Tablelands, Kiama, Coffs Harbour and Balmain. I say again what I said in my second reading speech and have said many times in the past 12 months, since taking up the role of the Attorney General: Addressing community safety concerns is one of the fundamental priorities of this Government. The bill is one part only of a multifaceted approach to reducing youth crime, particularly in regional and remote areas.

Youth crime is an important and complex problem and requires a considered and holistic response. The bill is complemented by other announcements in relation to regional crime and a place-based response in Moree. This offers a measured and balanced approach to addressing growing concerns about youth crime. I turn now to address specific comments raised in debate. The member for Wairoa noted that the new bail test will only apply to young people between the ages of 14 and 18. The cohort to whom the provision applies has been identified to ensure that the provision addresses the criminal conduct causing concern and is as effective as possible at reducing recidivism and improving community safety.

The member also queried what has been done for young people under 14 years of age. These legislative measures are part of the Government's significant and multifaceted response to regional crime. The amendments will work in tandem with other measures and aim to provide therapeutic and community-based responses to address offending behaviour and support regional communities. That includes measures that will be available to support young people under the age of 14. The member for Wairoa also noted that the Opposition will move an amendment to require reporting by the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research [BOCSAR]. I will speak to the amendment in the consideration in detail stage. The member for Dubbo, the member for Bathurst, the member for Cootamundra, the member for Upper Hunter and the member for Barwon contend that the provision against performance crime does not go far enough. The member for Wairoa noted that the Opposition will move an amendment so that the performance crime offence applies to all serious indictable offences. I will speak to these amendments in the consideration in detail stage.

The member for Dubbo and the member for Bathurst raised concerns that the scope of the Bail Act amendment is too narrow. The bail test will apply to serious break and enter and motor theft offences committed by young people while they are on bail. These serious offences are increasing and causing significant community concern. When committed by adults, these types of offences are covered by the show cause test, but this test does not apply to children. It should be noted that in making a decision to grant bail to a young person, regardless of the offence type, the court can take into account the seriousness of the offence.

The crimes statistics do not support a need to extend the new test for young people to domestic violence or sexual offending. The member for Dubbo noted recent reporting from BOCSAR showing increases in other offences, including domestic violence and sexual assault. This report showed that the increase in these offences has been driven by adult offenders rather than young people, who are the focus of the amendments to the Bail Act. Adult offenders who commit these offences while on bail are already subject to show cause provisions in the Bail Act. Extending the measures would have a larger scale impact than the precise, targeted approach adopted

by the bill and could result in young people being inappropriately remanded into custody. Young people charged with other serious offences, including sexual offences and domestic violence offences, will continue to be subject to the unacceptable risk test through which courts can make decisions about bail.

The member for Dubbo and the member for Bathurst also expressed concern that the Bail Act amendment applied only to people over the age of 14. The cohort of young people to which this proposed provision applies has been identified to ensure that the provision addresses the criminal conduct causing concern and is as effective as possible at reducing recidivism and improving community safety. It should be noted that young people between the ages of 14 and 18 is the group with the highest rate of offending amongst young people for motor theft and serious break and enter offences.

Young people should be kept out of remand as a priority. We accept that. Evidence suggests that early contact with the criminal justice system, particularly under the age of 14, is correlated with more serious offending and ongoing justice system contact as an adult. No-one is denying that. But young people involved in the criminal justice system are generally from disadvantaged backgrounds and have complex needs, often as a result of trauma, abuse, homelessness, drug or alcohol misuse and a great many other factors. Therapeutic and needs-based supports are needed for these children in order to address underlying causes of behaviour. Further, the common law presumption of *doli incapax* recognises the unique status of those under 14 before the law. It would not be appropriate to extend a new, higher threshold bail test to children to whom the *doli incapax* assumption applies.

The member for Dubbo and the member for Upper Hunter opined that the performance crime offence would not capture circumstances of joint criminal enterprise and accessorial liability. The Opposition will move amendments that purport to address this concern. The Government opposes those amendments, and I will speak to that issue during the consideration in detail stage. The member for Bathurst raised concerns about the operation of the principle of *doli incapax*. *Doli incapax* is a long and well-established legal principle that has existed for hundreds of years. It is part of the law in all Australian jurisdictions, and the existence of the presumption in the common law has been affirmed by the High Court. *Doli incapax* recognises the unique and vulnerable status of young children and falls squarely within the purview of the court.

The member for Murray and the member for Sydney raised concerns that the changes to the bail laws would result in more young people on remand, with adverse consequences. As the Premier and I have said, this reform is not made lightly and has been approached cautiously, given the potentially serious consequences for young people, particularly Aboriginal young people. We know that; we concede that. That is why the provision has been carefully targeted and is time limited, to 12 months, with an evaluation to take place at the end of that period. It is also part of a broader package that includes non-legislative initiatives aimed at reducing young offending and supporting young people and their communities. These legislative measures are just part of the Government's significant and multifaceted response to regional crime. The amendments will work in tandem with the rollout of other measures and supports that aim to provide therapeutic and community-based responses to address offending behaviour and support regional communities.

The member for Cootamundra raised a concern that the amendments in the bill are not sufficient to address the ongoing issue of regional young offending. As has been noted, this legislation is one part of a multifaceted response to a highly complex issue. Beyond the specific programs being developed and implemented in Moree, the New South Wales Government will invest \$12.9 million to fund and implement a range of statewide regional crime prevention initiatives including, one, expansion of youth action meetings, or YAMs, in nine police districts; two, expansion of the Safe Aboriginal Youth Patrol Program, or the SAY program, to an additional five Closing the Gap priority locations to be determined in consultation with communities, reducing the risk of young Aboriginal people being victims of crime and the risk they will become persons of interest in relation to a crime; and, three, the continuing rollout of \$7½ million in justice reinvestment grants, with grant funding available to recipients as early as June 2024.

The member for Ballina and the member for Sydney echoed the concerns of the member for Murray that the Bail Act amendments will have a negative impact on young people, especially Aboriginal young people. I reiterate that we do not take this reform lightly and that the Government remains committed to working with communities and our Closing the Gap partners to develop long-term therapeutic and community-based approaches to address offending by young people on a broader scale. The member for Ballina noted that The Greens will move amendments to this bill. The Government will oppose those amendments, and I will speak to them in the consideration in detail stage. The member for Ballina also raised concerns about the disproportionate impact that the performance crime offence would have on Aboriginal people.

The Government appreciates that, in general, increasing penalties exacerbates the over-representation of Aboriginal people in the criminal justice system. In light of those concerns, new section 154K has a targeted threshold. First, a person cannot be found guilty of the offence in new section 154K (1) unless the finder of fact is satisfied that the underlying motor theft offence or breaking and entering offence occurred. Second, that person

must also be found to have disseminated material for the purpose of advertising their offending conduct. Where those matters have been established beyond a reasonable doubt, the maximum penalty that will apply is the total of the maximum penalty available for the underlying motor theft offence or breaking and entering offence plus two years imprisonment. However, sentencing courts will continue to have discretion in determining what sentence to impose in the particular circumstances of the case.

The appropriate and proportionate approach in proposed new section 154K seeks to avoid overreach of the criminal law and undue contribution to over-representation of Aboriginal people in the criminal justice system. Further, proposed new section 154L of the Crimes Act will require a statutory review of the offence two years after it commences. This ensures that we do not set and forget and that we actively review and reflect once that offence has been in operation. The member for Ballina also noted that The Greens will move amendments to the performance crime offence sunset provision. I will address that in the Committee of the whole.

I thank the member for Orange for supporting the bill and for highlighting the concerns of his community, which the bill seeks to address. I echo his admiration for existing programs aimed at diverting young people away from the criminal justice system. I note that the development and rollout of therapeutic programs in regional areas is a key part of the Government's efforts to address youth offending. The member for Upper Hunter questioned why the bill introduces a new test rather than extending the show cause provisions to children. For adults the show cause test applies for certain types of serious offending and reoffending in some circumstances, including motor vehicle and property theft while on bail. Show cause does not apply to young people. That is in accordance with the recommendation of the 2014 Hatzistergos review of the Bail Act 2013 that young persons should be exempt from the show cause provisions but remain subject to the unacceptable risk test, given their inexperience and vulnerable position.

Importantly, proposed new section 22C does not impose an onus of proof on the accused person in the way that the show cause test does. It is crucial to understand that. That is an appropriate safeguard, given the difficulties young people experience in navigating the criminal justice system. This new test targets only risk of future offending and not other broader bail concerns which can be considered as part of the unacceptable risk test. The reform is intended to ensure that, if necessary, a young person can be remanded to address the risk of further offending. The amendment introduces a bespoke test that sets a higher bar for a young person's release when they are charged with that type of serious repeat offending.

The member for Upper Hunter also queried why the amendment to the Bail Act sunsets after 12 months. The amendment is intended to be a time-limited response to address an acute and urgent need. It represents a small part of the greater picture that this Government has planned in response to youth and regional crime. The Government recognises that these amendments will work in tandem with community-based responses that we have announced and support regional communities' work in addressing these issues. The impact of the amendment will be monitored by the Department of Communities and Justice over this time.

The member for Upper Hunter and the member for Wagga Wagga called for a regional crime inquiry. The bill is an immediate response to a particular increase in youth crime and particular types of offending that is causing considerable community concern. It should be noted that the bill is not being introduced in isolation and that other policies and mechanisms are being introduced and considered. The legislation is complemented by other Government announcements about regional crime and a place-based response in Moree. I thank the member for Barwon for his support of the bill, and I note his call for diversionary schemes. That represents a small part of the greater picture that this Government has planned in response to youth and regional crime. The Government recognises that these amendments will work in tandem with community-based responses that we have announced and support regional communities' work in addressing these issues.

The member for Barwon and the member for Wagga Wagga noted that the complex issues of youth offending cannot be solved by legislation alone. The Government knows that and agrees. That is why the Government announced a considered plan of programs that, when implemented together, will help tackle crime and support young people across multiple regional communities. This is about looking at regional communities as a whole and seeing where government actions can make a real difference. The member for Castle Hill queried why drug offences are not included as relevant offences in the bill. Extending the measures beyond motor vehicle theft and serious break and enter could result in young people being unnecessarily remanded into custody. Young people charged with drug offences will continue to be subject to the unacceptable risk test through which bail authorities can make decisions about bail.

I take the opportunity to address comments made in *Legislation Review Committee Digest No. 11/58*. The committee referred to Parliament's observation that the bill increases the circumstances in which a young person may be remanded in custody, which may have consequential impacts on the presumption of innocence. By definition, remanding a person in custody necessarily involves a person's detention prior to conviction. The bail framework is a balancing act of preserving community safety and recognising a person's general right to be at

liberty. Recognising the seriousness of placing a young person into custody, this bill is deliberately targeted to be limited in scope and time to the extent of any adverse impact.

The committee noted it is unclear from proposed new section 154K of the Crimes Act whether an accused person can be convicted of the performance crime offence without the need to establish the fault element of the underlying offence or whether a person must merely commit an act or omission of "motor theft" or "break and enter" regardless of whether there was intent or fraud. Therefore, the performance crime offence proposed by the bill may be characterised as a strict liability offence. To establish the offence in proposed new section 154K of the Crimes Act, the prosecution must prove all of the elements of the underlying motor theft offence or breaking and entering offence—that is, the physical and fault elements. The prosecution must also prove that the offender disseminated material to advertise the offending.

The committee also referred to Parliament the retrospective application of the amendment to the Bail Act. The provision extends to offences committed before the commencement of the provision but only to bail applications made after the commencement of the provision. This will ensure that relevant prior offending on bail is captured, which is precisely the conduct causing community concern and requiring an immediate response. The amendments made by this bill offer a targeted and considered approach to respond to an urgent and pressing need in our communities. I commend the bill to the House.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

**Consideration in detail requested by Mr Michael Daley, Mr Alister Henskens and Ms Tamara Smith.**

#### Consideration in Detail

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** By leave: I shall propose the bill in groups of clauses and schedules. The question is that clauses 1 and 2 and schedules 1 and 2 be agreed to.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (20:42):** By leave: I move Government amendments Nos 1 and 3 on sheet c2024-024G in globo:

No. 1      **Onus of proof**

Page 3, Schedule 1[1], proposed section 22C. Insert after line 15—

(2A)      To avoid doubt, the requirement under this section to establish that bail should be refused for the relevant young person remains with the prosecution.

No. 3      **Performance crime offences triable summarily**

Page 6. Insert after line 12—

#### Schedule 3      Amendment of Criminal Procedure Act 1986 No 209

##### [1]      Schedule 1 Indictable offences triable summarily

Insert after Table 1, item 16E—

#### 16F      Performance crime offences

An offence under the *Crimes Act 1900*, section 154K, if the motor theft offence or breaking and entering offence that underlies the offence is already prescribed as an offence under this Table.

##### [2]      Schedule 1, Table 2

Insert after Table 2, item 4G—

#### 4H      Performance crime offences

An offence under the *Crimes Act 1900*, section 154K, if the motor theft offence or breaking and entering offence that underlies the offence is already prescribed as an offence under this Table.

Amendment No. 1 will insert proposed new subsection (2A) into new section 22C of the Bail Act 2013. Proposed new subsection (2A) states:

To avoid doubt, the requirement under this section to establish that bail should be refused for the relevant young person remains with the prosecution.

As I clearly stated in my second reading speech, the Government does not intend for the new bespoke bail test to reverse the onus. However, simply for the avoidance of doubt and to respond to concerns raised by a number of

stakeholders, the New South Wales Government is moving this amendment to clarify that the requirement to establish that bail should be refused rests with the prosecution under the new test in new section 22C.

Amendment No. 3 proposes to make it clear that the performance crime offence can be prosecuted summarily in the Local Court in some circumstances. Where the offender is a child, the performance crime offence can be dealt with summarily in the Children's Court without needing to be a table offence under the Criminal Procedure Act 1986. The purpose of this amendment is to specify that for adults the performance crime offence may also be prosecuted summarily in the Local Court in particular circumstances. This will be particularly relevant when the underlying conduct that forms the basis of the performance crime offence, being the break and enter offence or motor theft offence, could appropriately be dealt with in the Local Court. The new performance crime offences cover an array of break and enter or motor vehicle theft offences that are table offences and adds an additional two years to the maximum penalty available for the underlying offence if the offender disseminates material to advertise their crimes—for example, on social media. The new performance crime offence also covers break and enter offences that are strictly indictable and would therefore be dealt with in the District Court.

Accordingly—again, for the avoidance of doubt and for clarity—Government amendment No. 3 clarifies that the offence of the performance crime in new section 154K (1) of the Crimes Act 1900 will be either a table 1 offence, where the underlying motor theft offence or breaking and entering offence is in table 1, or a table 2 offence, where the underlying motor theft or breaking and entering offence is in table 2. This amendment will still enable the prosecution to elect to have the performance crime offence dealt with on indictment, where appropriate, consistent with all other table offences. That will also mean that if the underlying offence is strictly indictable, the performance crime offence will also be strictly indictable.

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (20:46):** The Greens support Government amendments Nos 1 and 3. Amendment No. 1 makes it clear and explicit that the onus of proving that a defendant should not be granted bail rests with the prosecution. We believe that this is needed and warranted, because there would be an absolute danger that the defence would have to go to great lengths to argue that their client should be granted bail. As written, concerns were raised by stakeholders that the onus of proving that a person should be granted bail was moved to the defendant. Amendment No. 1 will make it clear that the onus of proving that a defendant should not be granted bail will rest with the prosecution. That is a positive change and clarification because, as we know, most defendants in these circumstances often have very limited capacity for legal counsel. Amendment No. 3 will ensure that this charge can be considered as a table 2 charge. What we have just heard is that it makes it explicit whether it is either a table 1 or a table 2 offence. I am not sure that we needed that explanation, but it makes it clear for the judicial officers.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (20:47):** I make a short contribution to indicate that the Opposition will also support Government amendments Nos 1 and 3. They are procedural in nature. The onus is a matter which should not be changed, so the clarity with respect to that matter is appropriate. The capacity to elect between the different tables is also being made consistent, notwithstanding the creation of the new offence. We also think that is sensible and we support that change.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (20:48):** I also offer The Greens' support for Government amendments Nos 1 and 3 on sheet c2024-024G. As my colleague the member for Ballina has said, we support and recognise that there is support for these minor amendments, but I indicate that The Greens still have serious concerns about the substantive nature of the bill. It is rare that a government seeks to amend its own bill. The Greens will propose amendments that address the long title of the bill and seek to clarify other elements, but I will come to those later. In his reply the Attorney General said that it is important that the Government acts cautiously when proposing such reforms, but if the Government is seeking to amend its own bill to clarify certain matters that have been raised then, clearly, it has not acted as cautiously as it could have. As a result, serious concerns arise about the impact of the legislation on children and young people—14- to 18-year-olds—who have to rely on the actions of the Attorney General and his department. The fact that the New South Wales Labor Government is proposing amendments to address concerns about potential lack of clarity in the bill as introduced in this House indicates to me that caution has not been taken.

The bill will have lifelong impacts particularly, and disproportionately, for First Nations people. I urge the Government and the Attorney General to consider whether undertaking this reform now is what they want to be doing to address juvenile justice issues in this State. I ask whether the Attorney General moving amendments to make small fixes to the bill indicates that the bill is a knee-jerk reaction to the Government's need to look like it is doing something to address the serious problem of crime in regional New South Wales. Members know that the legislation will do absolutely nothing. We heard last week, and we heard from the member for Ballina today, that there is a genuine commitment across the political spectrum to address the issues in a comprehensive and whole-of-government way. Yet the New South Wales Labor Government is relying on its old tactic of saying that

law and order will solve everything and that somehow locking up First Nations children and young kids will solve the problem.

Members may not want to hear it, but it is important to realise this proposed law will have a permanent impact on First Nations people. Perhaps the Attorney General has detail on the numbers of young people that will be affected. How many will be impacted directly? Perhaps the Attorney General can respond to that. Will it be 10 young people, or will it be 20 or 100? What do the stats from the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research indicate? What does it predict will be the number of young people affected? In the minutes that we are taking to debate the bill, we should consider how many lives it will impact. Maybe 10 young people, or maybe 100 or 200. The impact of this temporary, 12-month piece of legislation on those young people will be permanent. It will impact not only them but also their children because intergenerational trauma caused by incarceration, particularly for First Nations people, has long-lasting consequences into future generations. We might feel uncomfortable about the time it is taking to debate the proposed amendments, but I ask members to think about the lifelong impact these laws will have on the young people who will be incarcerated for longer—and the impact of that on the State budget—and on future generations as we fail to close the gap.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** The question is that Government amendments Nos 1 and 3 on sheet c2024-024G be agreed to.

**Amendments agreed to.**

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (20:54):** I move Government amendment No. 2 on sheet c2024-024G:

**No. 2 Relevant offence**

Page 3, Schedule 1[1], proposed section 22C(5), line 26. Omit "offence.". Insert instead—

offence, or

- (c) an offence under the *Crimes Act 1900*, section 154K, if the underlying offence is a motor theft offence or serious breaking and entering offence.

The amendment will ensure that all targeted offending is captured by the new bail test proposed in new section 22C in the bill. The amendment adds the performance crime offence in new section 154K (1) of the Crimes Act as a relevant offence for the purposes of the bail reforms where the underlying offence is a motor theft offence or a serious breaking and entering offence as defined in new section 22C. It is the intention of the New South Wales Government that motor vehicle theft and serious break and enter offending will be subject to the new bail reforms regardless of whether that offending conduct forms part of the new performance crime offence. The underlying conduct that forms the basis of the performance crime offence, being the serious break and enter offending or motor vehicle theft, is already captured, but the amendment will ensure that the new performance crime is explicitly specified as an offence that the new bail test applies to.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (20:55):** The Opposition supports the amendment. It is impossible under new section 154K to have a double jeopardy situation, where a person is charged with both a performance crime offence and either the motor vehicle theft or the breaking and entering offence. That means that the new performance crime is outside of the operation of the new bail laws in the bill as it currently stands. We see sense in the amendment. Again, it seems to be a matter, as the member for Newtown said, that has come about because of a more matured consideration of the bill. We support the amendment.

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (20:56):** We do not support Government amendment No. 2, which makes the performance crime relating to a motor vehicle theft or serious break and enter offence an offence that is considered under the overall bail changes. We do not support it because we do not support the legislation. As the member for Newtown and other Greens members have said in debate today, we do not think that this new law, including the new supposed "post and boast" performance crime offence, is going to make much difference at all. Many members, including me, have said that there are young people for whom the prospect of incarceration is not a deterrent, so some of the underlying premises around this proposed law are deeply troubling. I am not just making that up. Not only are the Law Society of New South Wales and the Aboriginal Legal Service concerned, but so is the New South Wales Bar Association. There just simply has not been the time.

I am honestly struggling with the very light detail in the bill. None of us really know how it is going to operate. I firmly do not believe our judges and magistrates require it. Apart from the new offence, its provisions are already in the law. We get that the Attorney General has moved the amendment to make some things very explicit, but we oppose it. I look forward to moving The Greens amendments, in particular the one regarding when we should review the bill. I will speak to that shortly. As the member for Newtown said, we would love to see some evidence-based data on how to genuinely disrupt and change a life of crime, because we have heard from many members today on both sides of the Chamber evidence of what we see once a young person has been

institutionalised. They get institutionalised and brutalised and, statistically, they end up committing worse, more serious and more heinous crimes.

I heard a member talking today about pushing the issue down the road. It really is pushing it down the road, even if we only look at it from the perspective of public safety and victims. I am very disappointed because I thought Labor members were very supportive of a rehabilitative model—a restorative justice model—but I see them doubling down on law and order. I have sat here for nine years listening to that kind of argument from Coalition members and I expect it from them, but I do not expect it from Labor. Today I heard Labor members overwhelmingly focusing on the other part of the bill, which is the so-called wraparound services. Labor is focusing on Moree for wraparound services, but there is overwhelming evidence that they are needed across the State. We could have all come together and had a serious taskforce to deliver that, but instead we are tinkering with something that is legally not required at all, just to satisfy *The Daily Telegraph*. That is what it feels like. I do not care how Labor dresses it up; The Greens see it as optics.

I have grave concerns about how it will operate, and I join many legal minds in the State in having those concerns. The Greens do not support the amendment because we fundamentally do not support the legislation. I cannot make head nor tail of why this is being done—why we did not get our inquiry and why we did not have a full and frank conversation about the impact of the law and how many young people will be affected, to honestly assess whether it will make any difference whatsoever to the crime rate for break and enters and car thefts in regional New South Wales.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell):** The question is that Government amendment No. 2 on sheet c2024-024G be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....75  
 Noes .....7  
 Majority.....68

**AYES**

Aitchison, J  
 Amon, R  
 Anderson, K  
 Atalla, E  
 Ayyad, T  
 Bali, S  
 Barr, C  
 Butler, L  
 Butler, R  
 Car, P  
 Catley, Y  
 Clancy, J  
 Cooke, S  
 Cotsis, S  
 Coure, M  
 Crakanthorp, T  
 Cross, M  
 Crouch, A  
 Daley, M  
 Davis, D  
 Di Pasqua, S  
 Dib, J  
 Donato, P  
 Doyle, T  
 Finn, J

Griffin, J  
 Hagarty, N (teller)  
 Harris, D  
 Harrison, J  
 Haylen, J  
 Henskens, A  
 Hodges, M  
 Hoenig, R  
 Holland, M  
 Hornery, S  
 James, T  
 Kaliyanda, C  
 Kamper, S  
 Kemp, M  
 Kirby, W  
 Lane, J  
 Li, J  
 Marshall, A  
 McKeown, K  
 Mehan, D  
 Park, R  
 Perrottet, D  
 Petinos, E  
 Piper, G  
 Preston, R

Quinnell, S  
 Regan, M  
 Saffin, J (teller)  
 Saliba, D  
 Saunders, D  
 Scully, P  
 Singh, G  
 Sloane, K  
 Speakman, M  
 Stuart, M  
 Taylor, M  
 Tesch, L  
 Toole, P  
 Tuckerman, W  
 Vo, T  
 Voltz, L  
 Warren, G  
 Washington, K  
 Watson, A  
 Whan, S  
 Wilkinson, K  
 Williams, L  
 Williams, R  
 Williamson, R  
 Wilson, F

**NOES**

Dalton, H  
 Greenwich, A  
 Hannan, J

Leong, J  
 Shetty, K (teller)

Smith, T (teller)  
 Ward, G

**Amendment agreed to.**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (21:21):** I move Opposition amendment No. 1 on sheet c2024-028E:

No. 1 **Reports from BOCSAR**

Page 3, Schedule 1[1]. Insert after line 35—

**22D Reports from BOCSAR**

- (1) BOCSAR must, for each prescribed period, prepare a report about the operation of section 22C and related matters, including the following matters—
  - (a) the numbers of relevant offences committed during the prescribed period,
  - (b) the number of relevant offences for which the following persons were charged during the prescribed period—
    - (i) relevant young persons,
    - (ii) individuals who, at the time relevant offences were alleged to have been committed by the individuals, were—
      - (A) 10 years of age or more, and
      - (B) less than 14 years of age,
  - (c) whether the relevant young persons or other individuals referred to in paragraph (b) were on bail at the time the relevant offences were alleged to have been committed and, if so, whether the bail was in relation to earlier charges for relevant offences,
  - (d) whether relevant young persons and other individuals referred to in paragraph (b) were granted bail in relation to the offences with which the young persons and other individuals were charged and, if so, details of the particular offences with which the relevant young persons and other individuals were charged,
  - (e) a comparison between the matters mentioned in paragraphs (a)–(d) during the equivalent period immediately before the commencement of section 22C and the prescribed period.
- (2) BOCSAR must, as soon as practicable after preparing each report, give the report to the Minister.
- (3) The Minister must ensure that a report received under subsection (2) is tabled in each House of Parliament on the first sitting day after its receipt.
- (4) To avoid doubt, this section applies despite the expiry of the *Bail Act 2013*, section 22C.
- (5) This section expires 3 months after the day on which the last report received by the Minister is tabled under subsection (3).
- (6) In this section—

**BOCSAR** means the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research within the department in which this Act is administered.

**prescribed period** means each of the following—

- (a) the period starting on the commencement of section 22C and ending 6 months after that date,
- (b) the period starting on the commencement of section 22C and ending 9 months after that date,
- (c) the period starting on the commencement of section 22C and ending 12 months after that date.

**relevant offence** means—

- (a) a motor theft offence within the meaning of section 22C, or
- (b) a serious breaking and entering offence within the meaning of section 22C, or
- (c) an offence against the *Crimes Act 1900*, section 154K, or
- (d) another serious indictable offence within the meaning of section 22C.

**relevant young person** has the same meaning as in section 22C.

The amendment seeks to have the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, which is an arm of the Department of Communities and Justice, collate information relating to the temporary limitation on bail for young persons in relation to serious offences found in schedule 1 to the bill. It goes without saying that there is no point in doing a trial unless the results are measured. The amendment seeks to have the results not only measured but also reported back to Parliament on six-, nine- and 12-month intervals so that all members who have spoken passionately about

the bill will be in a position to follow not only the legislative amendments but also the other programs that form part of the press conference and media release from last week when the initiatives were announced. I ask members to support the comprehensive reporting mechanism contained within the amendment. On all sides of the debate, members have spoken about how they consider the issue to be important. If that is so, then it should be recorded and reported back to the Parliament. That is the thrust of the amendment. I ask members to support it.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (21:24):** The Government opposes the amendment. There are limitations on the administrative data that is currently available to Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research [BOCSAR] without necessary significant investment to upgrade a great many of its systems. It would be a very big and expensive undertaking for a change that is due to sunset within 12 months. Manual data mining and data linkage, at a minimum, would also be required. I am sure that would also take judicial resources away from critical tasks of hearing and considering criminal matters. The Department of Communities and Justice [DCJ] intends to monitor and evaluate the changes closely, utilising the expertise of BOCSAR.

However, the proposed amendment, as it is currently drafted, creates obligations that simply could not be fulfilled without significant manual effort and delay. This would likely include effort from busy judicial officers and their staff to manually input data with respect to individual matters. It would also probably include police as well as bail authorities. I do not want them to have to undergo all of these changes at short notice. The Government considers that monitoring and evaluating the provisions is important but intends to do so with existing administrative data resources by utilising the existing expertise of BOCSAR and DCJ officials.

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (21:25):** I have enormous respect for the Attorney General, but I am sure what he has just read was given to him by his departmental officials. Having been the Minister for the department, I will say a couple of things. Firstly, ChildStory records every child's interaction with the criminal justice system, whatever that may be, and that data is easily identifiable. Secondly, any child in Youth Justice—and this is what we are talking about, because if they have been detained on bail they will be in a Youth Justice facility—is updated daily. I know that because I used to sit in budget estimates and provide that data to the Opposition. The claim that this is somehow too hard to provide is just not accurate.

The fact that a Minister would say that it cannot be done when this data is produced at every budget estimates and for questions on notice does not bode well. It should be provided, given the serious consequences of this legislation for the children who will be impacted. With all due respect to the Attorney General, the information he has been provided is wrong. The House should send a message loud and clear that if the Government intends on pursuing this policy, we want transparency and accountability. We want to make sure that the data is provided to the House, in line with the sunset provisions that have been proposed as part of this legislation.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (21:27):** Nice speech, but the member needs to listen carefully to what I say and read the amendment. It is clear he has not.

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (21:27):** The Greens do not support the amendment. Whilst we understand the spirit of it, we want to go further and so will be moving an amendment shortly about the review timeline.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (21:27):** I am disappointed by the contributions of the Attorney General and the member for Ballina, because the amendment the Opposition seeks to move is more comprehensive than The Greens reporting amendment. If the Attorney General is serious about making a positive contribution in this area, I am surprised that he would say that there is not a preparedness by the Government to commit appropriate resources to properly measure what is happening over the 12 months of this trial. It is quite extraordinary and extremely disappointing—and this goes to its whole bona fides—that the Government is not prepared to properly resource and measure the results of the trial. I urge The Greens to reconsider their position and support the amendment. I also ask other members to support this incredibly important amendment, which will measure the outcomes of this trial.

**The SPEAKER:** The question is that Opposition amendment No.1 on sheet c2024-028E be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....34  
 Noes .....48  
 Majority..... 14

AYES

Amon, R

Henskens, A

Singh, G (teller)

## AYES

Anderson, K	Hodges, M	Sloane, K
Ayyad, T	James, T	Speakman, M
Clancy, J	Kemp, M	Taylor, M
Cooke, S	Lane, J	Toole, P
Coore, M	Layzell, D	Tuckerman, W
Cross, M	Marshall, A	Ward, G
Crouch, A (teller)	Perrottet, D	Williams, L
Dalton, H	Petinos, E	Williams, R
Di Pasqua, S	Preston, R	Williamson, R
Griffin, J	Saunders, D	Wilson, F
Hannan, J		

## NOES

Aitchison, J	Greenwich, A	Quinnell, S
Atalla, E	Hagarty, N (teller)	Regan, M
Bali, S	Harris, D	Saffin, J (teller)
Barr, C	Harrison, J	Saliba, D
Butler, L	Haylen, J	Scully, P
Butler, R	Hoenig, R	Shetty, K
Car, P	Holland, M	Smith, T
Catley, Y	Hornery, S	Stuart, M
Cotsis, S	Kaliyanda, C	Tesch, L
Crakanthorp, T	Kamper, S	Vo, T
Daley, M	Kirby, W	Voltz, L
Davis, D	Leong, J	Warren, G
Dib, J	Li, J	Washington, K
Donato, P	McKeown, K	Watson, A
Doyle, T	Mehan, D	Whan, S
Finn, J	Park, R	Wilkinson, K

## PAIRS

Davies, T	Minns, C
Kean, M	O'Neill, M
Roberts, A	Chanthivong, A
Thompson, T	McDermott, H

**Amendment negatived.**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (21:35):** I move Opposition amendment No. 2 on sheet c2024-028E:

No. 2 **Performance crime offences to apply to joint criminal enterprises, accessories etc**

Page 5, Schedule 2[1], proposed section 154K(1) and (2), lines 6–14. Omit all words on the lines. Insert instead—

- (1) This section applies if—
  - (a) a person's act or omission constitutes—
    - (i) a motor theft offence, or
    - (ii) a breaking and entering offence, or
    - (iii) another serious indictable offence, and
  - (b) the person or a relevant person (each an *offender*) disseminates material to advertise—
    - (i) the offender's involvement in the offence, or
    - (ii) the act or omission constituting the offence.
- (2) Each offender commits an offence (a *performance crime offence*) and is liable for a

The way in which the legislation has been drafted in respect of the performance crime offences is capable of being construed as requiring the offender in the principal degree to also be the same person who disseminates the

material to advertise the commission of the offence. By their nature, performance crime offences—this new type of offence that is being sought to be created for the first time in New South Wales—are likely to be a combination of the person who commits the offence in the first degree and other people, whether they be in a joint criminal enterprise or an accessory before or after the fact within the meaning of section 346 or section 546 of the Crimes Act, filming the person in the first degree who is committing the act or omission which constitutes the motor theft offence or the break and entering offence, and that other person who films the person in the first degree then posts that film up on social media.

As the offence is currently drafted in new section 154K (1), it does not punish a person who is a joint participant in the enterprise posting a video of someone else committing the crime. This amendment is geared towards capturing all of the persons who are part of the enterprise if they post it to social media. That is the purpose of the amendment. The reason for the amendment is to ensure that this new crime has teeth and actually captures the activity which it is directed towards. I ask members to support this amendment.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (21:38):** The Government opposes this amendment. The heading and the comments by the shadow Attorney General demonstrate that this amendment is intended to cover and address matters relating to joint criminal enterprises and accessorial liability. It also appears to seek to expand the category of underlying offences captured by proposed new section 154K to include all serious indictable offences. The drafting of the amendment and what it seeks to achieve are unclear, in particular, the reference to a relevant person. I read that reference several times today and could not understand it. The reference to a relevant person seems to hang as an unattached appendage. The term is undefined. It is not clear whom the person is or what the term is supposed to mean. That wording is absent from the rest of new section 154K of the Crimes Act.

Any proposed amendments with respect to joint criminal enterprise and accessorial liability are unnecessary as the offence in new section 154K is not intended to impact on or exclude the operation of joint criminal enterprise or accessorial liability. New section 154K requires the offender's act or omission to constitute a motor theft offence or breaking and entering offence. That would include where the offender is criminally liable for the underlining offence on the basis of, for example, joint criminal enterprise. If the offender also disseminated material to advertise the commission of that offence or their involvement in it, then they could be liable for the performance crime offence.

In addition, the performance crime offence incorporates a range of motor theft offences, including the offence of taking a conveyance without the consent of the owners under section 154A of the Crimes Act. That offence covers a range of conduct, including where a person steals a car and drives it and, importantly, where a person is a passenger in a car that they know is stolen. The performance crime offence would therefore apply where a person was knowingly a passenger in a stolen vehicle and disseminated material for the purpose of advertising their offending. The Opposition's amendment with respect to joint criminal enterprise and accessorial liability therefore adds nothing to the bill and is unclear and unnecessary.

That part of Opposition amendment No. 2 that includes serious and indictable offences within the scope of the performance crime offence would expand the underlining offence categories captured by new section 154K to capture the very broad category of serious indictable offence. Including all serious indictable offences in the performance crime offence would capture an enormous number of offences. Performance crime is an emerging phenomenon, and the offence in new section 154K of the Crimes Act is relatively novel. Queensland is the only other Australian jurisdiction with a similar offence, which is limited to advertising motor vehicle offending on social media. The offence in new section 154K takes a deliberately targeted and proportionate approach. It specifically applies to motor vehicle theft or breaking and entering offenders who disseminate material to advertise their offending conduct.

The performance crime offence targets motor vehicle theft and breaking and entering offences because of considerable community concern about that type of offending, particularly in regional New South Wales. We heard that from a number of members on both sides of the Chamber this afternoon. Performance crime is known to occur in connection with motor vehicle theft and breaking and entering offences. We 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 theft offending. There have been high-profile examples of this behaviour in the context of break and enter offences, sometimes committed in people's homes and sometimes while they are asleep. I have seen footage of that; it is disturbing. Advertising that kind of offending can encourage others to engage in similar criminal acts, which poses a further risk to community safety. That is why the bill specifically targets that limited type of offending.

The member for Wahroonga suggested that the performance crime offence should also capture sexual assault and domestic violence offences. There are already offences for recording and disseminating intimate images without consent under division 15C of part 3 of the Crimes Act. Further, New South Wales courts can

make rectification orders requiring the offender to take reasonable actions to remove, retract, recover, delete or destroy any intimate image that they have recorded or distributed. There are also existing mechanisms in place to address filming and disseminating very serious assault offences. They include Commonwealth eSafety Commissioner powers under the Online Safety Act to require online platforms to take down material depicting abhorrent violent conduct.

The Commonwealth Online Safety Act 2021 includes a number of powers that allow eSafety to request or require an internet service provider to block material that promotes, incites, instructs in or depicts abhorrent violent conduct. Abhorrent violent conduct is defined to include terrorism, murder or attempted murder, torture, rape and kidnapping. A targeted and proportionate approach in new section 154K of the Crimes Act aims to avoid unintended consequences or legal inconsistency while directly addressing pressing community concerns. New section 154L requires a statutory review of the performance crime offence two years after commencing. This provides an opportunity to monitor and assess the operation of the offence. For those reasons, the Government opposes the amendment.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (21:44):** I speak on a couple of matters. I address the matter that the Attorney General raised regarding the Opposition amendment to add "serious indictable offence" to the post and boast, or performance crime, provision. As I said in my contribution to the second reading debate, when I foreshadowed this amendment, the theory behind having a performance crime provision within the Crimes Act is that it is undesirable to have people glorify the commission of crime by filming it and disseminating it on social media and the like. If that is the underlying philosophy behind the provision, there is no sense as to why it would be confined to only two categories of crime.

Indeed, the Attorney General mentioned a number of different offences. He did not have any regard to a murder trial in the Supreme Court only weeks ago where a teenage victim was murdered. It was recorded on video by a group of minors and adults and posted on social media. It makes no sense for the law to punish more harshly the committing of motor theft and break and enter offences that are put on the internet than more serious crimes like murder, rape and so on. If an offence of performance crime was to be created, then it should be logically applied to serious indictable offences and not limited to only a couple of areas of offences.

The Attorney General raised the question as to who is the "relevant person". Within the totality of the Opposition amendments, which includes a specific reference in amendment No. 6 to section 346 or section 546, the relevant person is clearly the person in the joint criminal enterprise, which is also the heading of amendment No. 2. It is quite clear that this is to pick up not only the person in the principal degree but also the accessory or joint criminal operators. It is important that if the Government is serious about bringing forward this provision, even limited to two areas of criminal activity, then at least it be framed in such a way as to capture the activity that it is designed to capture. At the moment, unless a person has some physical gift to be able to simultaneously break and enter into a home and film themselves doing it—which requires more than two arms, on my calculation—then they will not be found guilty of this offence. We need to pick up the co-conspirators, and the way in which the legislation is currently drafted does not take into account the reality of the situation. That is why we move the amendment and that is why I ask members to support it.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (21:48):** Given the time, I will not drag out this debate unnecessarily. I will say that I do not agree with the characterisation by the shadow Attorney General. I believe it is wrong in law.

**The SPEAKER:** The question is that Opposition amendment No. 2 on sheet c2024-028E be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....34  
Noes .....48  
Majority.....14

**AYES**

Amon, R	Henskens, A	Singh, G (teller)
Anderson, K	Hodges, M	Sloane, K
Ayyad, T	James, T	Speakman, M
Clancy, J	Kemp, M	Taylor, M
Cooke, S	Lane, J	Toole, P
Coure, M	Layzell, D	Tuckerman, W
Cross, M	Marshall, A	Ward, G
Crouch, A (teller)	Perrottet, D	Williams, L
Dalton, H	Petinos, E	Williams, R

## AYES

Di Pasqua, S  
Griffin, J  
Hannan, J

Preston, R  
Saunders, D

Williamson, R  
Wilson, F

## NOES

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

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

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

## PAIRS

Davies, T  
Kean, M  
Roberts, A  
Thompson, T

Minns, C  
O'Neill, M  
Chanthivong, A  
McDermott, H

**Amendment negatived.**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (21:55):** I move Opposition amendment No. 3 on sheet c2024-028E:

No. 3 **Performance crime offences to apply to any act or omission constituting serious indictable offences (only to be moved if amendment No. 2 unsuccessful)**

Page 5, Schedule 2[1], proposed section 154K(1)(a)(ii), line 10. Omit ", and". Insert instead—

, or

(iii) another serious indictable offence, and

Amendment No. 3 further amends the performance crime provisions by seeking to add all serious and indictable offences in addition to the two categories of offence. Having regard to the divisions that have just been called, I do not think I need to say any more than that. I commend the amendment.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (21:55):** I shall be mercifully short. The Government opposes Opposition amendment No. 3. The Government understands that the purpose of the amendment is to include all serious indictable offences within the scope of the performance crime offence. For the reasons that I addressed at length in relation to Opposition amendment No. 2, the Government opposes the amendment.

**The SPEAKER:** The question is that Opposition amendment No. 3 on sheet c2024-028E be agreed to.

**Amendment negatived.**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (21:56):** I move Opposition amendment No. 5 on sheet c2024-028E:

No. 5 **Performance crime offences to apply to serious indictable offences (only to be moved if amendment No. 2 unsuccessful)**

Page 5, Schedule 2[1], proposed section 154K(3), lines 20 and 21. Omit "or breaking and entering offence". Insert instead ", breaking and entering offence or other serious indictable offence".

Amendment No. 5 makes it clear that serious indictable offences would apply to the whole of the section.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (21:56):** The Government opposes Opposition amendment No. 5. The Government understands that the purpose of the amendment is to include all serious indictable offences within the scope of the performance crime offence. For the reasons that I stated at length with respect to Opposition amendment No. 2, the Government opposes the amendment.

**The SPEAKER:** The question is that Opposition amendment No. 5 on sheet c2024-028E be agreed to.

**Amendment negatived.**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (21:57):** By leave: I move The Greens amendments Nos 1 to 9 on sheet c2024-032 in globo:

**No. 1      Threshold for granting bail to relevant young persons**

Page 3, Schedule 1[1], proposed section 22C(1), line 8. Omit "a high degree of".

**No. 2      Considerations for making decision about granting bail to relevant young persons**

Page 3, Schedule 1[1], proposed section 22C(2), line 15. Omit "offence.". Insert instead—

offence, and

- (c) consideration of the negative impacts on the wellbeing of the relevant young person if bail is refused, and
- (d) consideration of population density in relevant detention facilities and the availability of bed space if bail is refused, and
- (e) consideration of available non-custodial options that would monitor the relevant young person's compliance with existing bail conditions.

**No. 3      Review of new bail limitation**

Page 3, Schedule 1[1]. Insert after line 35—

**22D   Review of section 22C**

- (1) The Minister must refer the operation of section 22C to Portfolio Committee No. 5 – Justice and Communities to determine whether—
  - (a) the policy objectives of section 22C remain valid, and
  - (b) the terms of section 22C remain appropriate for achieving the objectives.
- (2) The review must be undertaken as soon as practicable after the period of 6 months after the commencement of section 22C.
- (3) A report on the outcome of the review must be tabled in each House of Parliament within 12 months after the commencement of section 22C.
- (4) This section expires 15 months after this section commences.

**No. 4      Application of amendments**

Page 4, Schedule 1[2], line 5. Omit "extends". Insert instead "applies only".

**No. 5      Application of amendments**

Page 4, Schedule 1[2], line 6. Omit "before". Insert instead "on or after".

**No. 6      Expiry of performance crimes offences**

Page 5, Schedule 2[1], proposed section 154K. Insert after line 22—

- (3A) This section expires 12 months after this section commences.

**No. 7      Definition of material for performance crime offences**

Page 5, Schedule 2[1], line 32. Omit "text,".

**No. 8      Timeframe for review of new performance crime offence**

Page 6, Schedule 2[1], proposed section 154L(2), lines 1 and 2. Omit "2 years". Insert instead "6 months".

**No. 9      Timeframe for review of new performance crime offence**

Page 6, Schedule 2[1], proposed section 154L(3), line 4. Omit "6 months after the end of the period of 2 years". Insert instead "12 months after the commencement of this division".

Amendment No. 1 seeks to omit in line 8 "a high degree". Amendment No. 2 seeks to insert "and". Amendment No. 3 would create a new section, section 22D, which would provide for a review of section 22C. We want two things. Firstly, with amendment No. 2, we would like to see the consideration of the negative impacts on the

wellbeing of the relevant young person if bail is refused; consideration of population density in relevant detention facilities and the availability of bed space if bail is refused; and consideration of available non-custodial options that would monitor the relevant young person's compliance with existing bail conditions. In a sense, we are forcing the consideration of those matters on the judicial officer. Secondly, with regard to amendment No. 3, the review of new bail limitation, I note that the shadow Attorney General said that the Opposition's review provisions, in terms of the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, were stronger. We disagree in the sense that our proposed new section 22D will mean:

- (1) The Minister must refer the operation of section 22C to Portfolio Committee No. 5 – Justice and Communities to determine whether—
  - (a) the policy objectives of section 22C remain valid, and
  - (b) the terms of section 22C remain appropriate for achieving the objectives.
- (2) The review must be undertaken as soon as practicable after the period of 6 months after the commencement of section 22C.
- (3) A report on the outcome of the review must be tabled in each House of Parliament within 12 months after the commencement of section 22C.
- (4) This section expires 15 months after this section commences.

The Greens believe that is necessary. We would have liked to see a full inquiry into this bill, as we have said repeatedly today. Another amendment provides that the bill's changes apply to offences committed after the introduction of this law and are not retrospective, and then there are a few other matters in amendments Nos 6 to 9.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (22:01):** I will be as quick as I can for members. With respect, the Government does not support The Greens amendments. Amendment No. 1 would lower the threshold so that the bail authority must not grant bail unless it has merely confidence. This is a much lower threshold for the granting of bail than the threshold currently proposed in the bill, meaning that the bill would not have its intended effect and that the test may not in fact impose an additional threshold of any significance. The Government's bespoke test of "a high degree of confidence" is intended to set an appropriately higher bar for a young person's release when they are charged with repeated serious breaking and entering and motor theft offending, including offending whilst on bail. The approach taken to this bail reform has been targeted and measured, and we have made clear that the new test does not reverse the onus for granting bail in the same way as the show-cause test. The Government bill 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 repeated alleged offending, while also avoiding, as much as possible, broad or unintended adverse consequences.

In respect of amendment No. 2, as I said, the bail test in the bill has been carefully developed to target a specific cohort of young people and specific categories of offending causing considerable community concern, with careful consideration of the matters to be considered by a bail authority when applying the new bespoke test. The Government does not support this amendment that seeks to change the matters that a bail decision-maker takes into account. In relation to consideration of the negative impacts on the wellbeing of the relevant young person if bail is refused, information of this nature will already be available to the court in its consideration of a bail application with respect to a young person, including through the assessment of bail concerns that a bail decision-maker is required to take into account.

In relation to the consideration of population density in relevant detention facilities and the availability of bed space if bail is refused, it will not be possible for a court to have information about the capacity of youth detention facilities available at the time of a bail application. In fact, it would have to be provided in real time to the court, I would think. And it will not be possible for the court to have information relevant to this factor, like, for example, the security classification of the young person. This is not an available consideration for bail in any bail decision under current bail legislation. In relation to the consideration of available non-custodial options that would monitor the relevant young person's compliance with existing bail conditions, the decision-maker is able to take into account available non-custodial options, being bail conditions, when making an assessment of the likelihood of a further offence.

The Government opposes The Greens amendment No. 3. The Government considers that monitoring and evaluating the provisions is important. However, given that the provision will sunset automatically after 12 months, the Government will monitor the operation of the provision through the Department of Communities and Justice [DCJ]. All the aspects that I spoke about in relation to the proposed monitoring provisions of the Opposition amendments apply. The Government will monitor the operation of the provisions through DCJ. The Greens amendments Nos 4 and 5 would prevent the retrospective application of the bail provision in the bill. The provision extends to offences committed before the commencement of the provision, but only to bail applications

made after the commencement of the provision. This will ensure that relevant prior offending on bail is captured, which is precisely the conduct causing community concern and requiring an immediate response.

The Government opposes The Greens amendment No. 6. A requirement for the performance crime offence to expire 12 months after commencement overlooks the seriousness of the conduct that is captured by the offence in new section 154K. The offence in new section 154K reflects the community's denunciation of performance crime in connection with motor theft offending and breaking and entering offending. This conduct glorifies the offending and can encourage others in the community to engage in similar offending, which poses a further risk to the safety of the community. This offence should not sunset after 12 months.

The Government opposes The Greens amendment No. 7. Omitting the word "text" from the definition of "material" in new section 154K (4) of the Crimes Act could make the offence unduly narrow. The definition of "material" in new section 154K (4) is also consistent with the definition used in the Queensland offence of publishing material on social media to advertise motor theft offending. The Government opposes The Greens amendments Nos 8 and 9. New section 154L of the Crimes Act requires the statutory review of the performance crime offence to be undertaken two years after the commencement and for a report on the outcome of the review to be tabled within six months after that. This is because time is needed for a new criminal offence to commence and matters to be detected, investigated, prosecuted and finalised by the courts.

Further, the conduct able to be prosecuted under the offence in new section 154K cannot have taken place before the bill commences. If the review was required to be undertaken six months after commencement and the report was to be tabled a further six months after that, as proposed by The Greens in these amendments, this would likely mean that there is insufficient data or evidence to draw meaningful conclusions about the operation of the offence. While new section 154L requires the statutory review to occur two years from commencement of the performance crime offence, this does not mean that there will be no oversight prior to this time. Following commencement, the operation of the offence will be closely monitored by the Department of Communities and Justice. For those reasons, the Government rejects the amendments.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (22:08):** I will be brief in explaining why the Opposition will also oppose The Greens amendments. Amendments Nos 1 and 2 concern tinkering with and changing the test for bail that is within the bill, and we do not support those changes. Amendment No. 3 concerns a reference to the operation of section 22C to Portfolio Committee No. 5 – Justice and Communities after six months of the operation of the new bail laws. I say two things about that. First, the committee can take on that work at any time if it desires to do so. It is not desirable, as a matter of course, to have references to parliamentary committees within legislation. Secondly, it is difficult to see what could be achieved after six months, particularly when The Greens do not support our BOCSAR data amendment, which would have given the committee something to think about and understand. Unfortunately, The Greens not supporting our amendment means that there will be no transparency over the performance of the legislation. It will be meaningless to have a parliamentary inquiry because, without the proper data, it will not be able to assess how the provisions are performing.

I was initially attracted to amendments Nos 4 and 5 when I thought that they would make retrospective the performance crime offences as well as the bail offences, but the provisions that they are seeking to change relate to the operation of the Bail Act. It is usual that procedural amendments have a retrospective effect and, because that is contained in the bill, we do not support those two amendments. Amendment No. 6 seeks to put a 12-month sunset clause on the performance crime offences, but it seems to ignore the fact that the performance crime offences are not limited to minors and are not part of the youth offenders trial. They actually apply to all offenders, so there does not seem to be any logical reason why it would have a 12-month sunset clause as the bail provisions do.

Regarding amendment No. 7, I find it somewhat bizarre that someone would think that it is a good idea to remove "text" from the definition of "material". The original version of the bill states "includes anything that contains data from which text, images or sound can be generated" for the purposes of dissemination. I do not understand it; it does not make sense. It should be sound, text and images because they are all relevant data that can constitute a performance crime and be put on social media. In our respectful submission, "text" should not be taken out. Amendments Nos 8 and 9 attempt to have the review of the performance crime offence reduced to six months rather than two years, which is the usual time frame by which a new statutory provision would be assessed. The Opposition does not support that amendment.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (22:11):** I speak in support of The Greens amendments, and I thank the member for Ballina for tabling them. When we discuss the bill and the amendments in detail, it is easy to forget that we are talking about making changes to legislation that will incarcerate First Nations young people in our State. It is easy to get distracted because members are feeling tired. It is late and we are ready for the amendments to be moved through. Members want the divisions to happen even though some members are not able to count, which keeps other members waiting for a long time. We forget that we are passing a bill that will incarcerate

young people and undermine the State's commitment to Closing the Gap. I encourage members to consider what they will do on 21 March on National Close the Gap Day, when they will post pictures of themselves showing their commitment to First Nations communities and to Closing the Gap.

Currently a petition is being run by the Aboriginal Legal Service urging the Premier to not turn his back on the Closing the Gap targets. I have been watching the numbers go up. Four minutes ago Hannah signed it. Five minutes ago Andrea signed it. Six minutes ago Sue signed it. Eight minutes ago Lizzie signed it. There are now 1,305 people who have signed the petition run by the Aboriginal Legal Service calling on Premier Minns to not throw more children in jail because it will make crime worse in regional communities. The petition urges the Government to have a new approach to how it deals with those matters. The Aboriginal Legal Service petition states that the new policy will increase youth incarceration and is a betrayal of the Closing the Gap commitments. It states that it:

- ignores decades of evidence on how to reduce ... crime
- prioritises punishment over investment in the proven prevention strategies that you promised to implement
- will cause crime to get worse
- will delay measures that could reduce crime

The petition is being continually signed by people in New South Wales and is supported by 60 organisations, including human rights organisations and First Nations organisations, and legal experts and academics. It has already been signed by 500 individuals from academia and other spaces. It states:

We the undersigned organisations ask you to urgently replace your punishment measures with prevention measures:

1. Resources allocated for local communities to support after-school, evening and weekend activities that engage at-risk young people.
2. Intensive and targeted programs and responses for at-risk children with appropriate referral services.
3. Formal community partnerships between police and Aboriginal controlled services.

I appreciate that members in this place are caught up in the minutiae and details of the amendments we are considering, but I urge them to realise what we are doing tonight. We are passing a piece of legislation that will see more First Nations kids locked up in New South Wales prisons. That is the last place those children need to be. Children do not need to be locked up in prisons; they need to be cared for by our community. The Greens are moving amendments to try to make some changes to the bill, but fundamentally it is a disgrace. I am truly disappointed in the New South Wales Labor Government for introducing it. The fact that it is happening two days before the Closing the Gap targets will be announced feels disgusting and despicable. I ask all those members in this Chamber who proudly changed their social media tiles and profiles to show their support for the yes campaign whether that actually meant anything, given that tonight they will pass a bill that will incarcerate more First Nations people in this State.

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (22:16):** I thank the member for Ballina for moving these amendments and for her earlier speech. I certainly share her opposition to the bill, but I cannot support the amendments. As was mentioned earlier, they fundamentally change the nature of the test for bail. I also address the comments that have just been made by the member for Newtown. I certainly hope that every member in this place wants to see a reduction in Aboriginal kids in detention. I put on record again that, during my time in the ministry, the former Parliament and the former New South Wales Government met the Closing the Gap targets. In fact, over the past 12 years there has been a 40 per cent reduction in children in detention. That is because of policies that have been supported by both sides of the House. A lot of those initiatives were related to family group conferencing, targeted early intervention and restorative justice. They have worked.

Does that mean that people should not fight harder, particularly for First Nations kids, who are over-represented in Youth Justice? Absolutely not. We should. I have made my views on this bill clear. But I cannot agree with the member's mischaracterisation that people's views in relation to these amendments are somehow incongruent with wanting Aboriginal kids out of detention. We all want to see fewer kids in Youth Justice. We also want to see fewer Aboriginal kids over-represented in Youth Justice. I respect the fact that The Greens have a strong view about it, but on this occasion I disagree with their method of achieving it. Therefore, I will not be supporting the amendments.

**The SPEAKER:** The question is that The Greens amendments Nos 1 to 9 on sheet c2024-032 be agreed to. A division has been called for. There being only five members for the question, the question is resolved in the negative. I direct that the names of those members be recorded in the *Votes and Proceedings*.

**Ayes, 5**

Ms J. Leong  
 Ms K. Shetty  
 Ms T. Smith  
 Mr A. Greenwich  
 Mrs H. Dalton

**Amendments negatived.**

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (22:24):** By leave: I move Government amendments Nos 4 and 5 on sheet c2024-024G in globo:

No. 4      **Long title**

Omit "and to amend". Insert instead "to amend".

No. 5      **Long title**

Omit "performance crimes.". Insert instead "performance crimes; and to make consequential amendments to the *Criminal Procedure Act 1986*."

These amendments simply amend the long title of the bill to reflect the changes made by Government amendment No. 3 to clarify that the offence of performance crime in new section 154K (1) of the Crimes Act 1900 will be either a table 1 offence, where the underlying motor theft offence or breaking and entering offence is in table 1, or a table 2 offence, where the underlying motor theft offence or breaking and entering offence is in table 2. I commend the amendments to the House.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (22:25):** The Opposition supports these amendments.

**The SPEAKER:** The question is that Government amendments Nos 4 and 5 on sheet c2024-024G be agreed to.

**Amendments agreed to.**

**The SPEAKER:** The question is that clauses 1 and 2 and schedules 1 and 2 as amended be agreed to.

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

**The SPEAKER:** The question is that the long title as amended be the title of the bill.

**Long title of the bill as amended agreed to.**

**Third Reading**

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....74  
 Noes .....7  
 Majority.....67

**AYES**

Aitchison, J  
 Amon, R  
 Anderson, K  
 Atalla, E  
 Ayyad, T  
 Bali, S  
 Barr, C  
 Butler, L  
 Butler, R  
 Car, P  
 Catley, Y  
 Clancy, J  
 Cooke, S  
 Cotsis, S  
 Coure, M  
 Crakanthorp, T

Griffin, J  
 Hagarty, N  
 Harris, D  
 Harrison, J  
 Haylen, J  
 Henskens, A  
 Hodges, M  
 Hoenig, R  
 Holland, M  
 Hornery, S  
 James, T  
 Kaliyanda, C  
 Kamper, S  
 Kemp, M  
 Kirby, W  
 Lane, J

Quinnell, S  
 Saffin, J (teller)  
 Saliba, D  
 Saunders, D  
 Scully, P  
 Singh, G (teller)  
 Sloane, K  
 Speakman, M  
 Stuart, M  
 Taylor, M  
 Tesch, L  
 Toole, P  
 Tuckerman, W  
 Vo, T  
 Voltz, L  
 Warren, G

## AYES

Cross, M	Layzell, D	Washington, K
Crouch, A	Li, J	Watson, A
Daley, M	Marshall, A	Whan, S
Davis, D	McKeown, K	Wilkinson, K
Di Pasqua, S	Mehan, D	Williams, L
Dib, J	Park, R	Williams, R
Donato, P	Perrottet, D	Williamson, R
Doyle, T	Petinos, E	Wilson, F
Finn, J	Preston, R	

## NOES

Dalton, H	Leong, J (teller)	Smith, T
Greenwich, A (teller)	Shetty, K	Ward, G
Hannan, J		

**Motion agreed to.***Community Recognition Statements***INDIAN AUSTRALIAN VOICE INC**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (22:36):** I thank the entire team of the Indian Australian Voice organisation, which recently hosted its Holi Mela Festival of Colours at Paramatta. I had the pleasure of attending with my son James and we had the opportunity to participate in the colour throwing. We were both covered from head to toe in a rainbow of coloured powder, which got absolutely everywhere. Holi is such a joyous occasion celebrated throughout much of the world. It recognises the arrival of spring in India and the victory of good over evil. In New South Wales, the Festival of Colours is also a chance for us all to appreciate the wonderful diversity of our State's multicultural society. Over 190,000 Hindus call this great State of New South Wales home. I recognise the president of Indian Australian Voice Inc, Anuj Kulshrestha, for successfully hosting this event as well as for all his and his team's efforts over the years. I thank Indian Australian Voice Inc and everyone who attended the fantastic event. I look forward to next year.

**CAMPBELLTOWN PARKRUN**

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (22:37):** I congratulate Campbelltown Parkrun on its 10-year anniversary. That is a remarkable achievement the team at Campbelltown Parkrun has delivered for the people of Campbelltown. So many students and people remain active in Campbelltown. Over the 10 years, the Campbelltown Parkrun team has achieved 8,583 personal best times. Possibly most impressive of all is everyone who has been involved over the years, whether it is Mark, Paul, Shelley or Isabella, and what they have done is simply remarkable. I congratulate them on 10 years of achieving such great results. I thank them for their contribution to the people of Campbelltown.

**TRIBUTE TO LANCE CORPORAL JACK FITZGIBBON**

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (22:38):** I recognise and pay tribute to the late Lance Corporal Jack Fitzgibbon. On 7 March 2024, at 33 years of age, Jack died following a parachute accident during a military exercise. On Monday he was laid to rest in a service with full military honours. Jack was a member of the North Bondi RSL sub-branch, where he was considered a brother. Jack was resolute and audacious in his contribution to our nation. He placed service to others above his own personal safety. He served in the 2nd Commando Regiment as a 126 Signals Squadron communicator who was integrated into Oscar Platoon of Alpha Company. He was an experienced army parachutist. Along with the recognition of Jack, I also pay respect to the service and immense sacrifice of Jack's family and the daily burden shouldered by the families of all members of the special forces. Jack's service is valued. Our community, this Parliament and our nation honour him.

**THE PONDS HIGH SCHOOL**

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (22:39):** I commend Mr Greg Thomas, The Ponds High School's stage head teacher, and dedicated officers from Riverstone Police Area Command, senior constables John Bollard, Brad Martin, Rob McFarlane and Constable Jack Hamilton, for their incredible work. Together, they have launched a transformative PCYC program at The Ponds High School. The program tackles student disengagement by offering engaging fitness activities and fostering a culture of respect on Fridays during fifth and sixth periods, which culminates in a weekly barbeque. The impact is undeniable—attendance is up, and student engagement is

flourishing across the board. I thank Mr Thomas and those officers for the vital initiative. Those kinds of programs have the power to reshape a student's high school experience completely. They have truly gone above and beyond for the kids of The Ponds High School.

#### ROBERT CONSTABLE

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (22:40):** It is not every day that I get the opportunity to acknowledge the Sausage King who won the sausage fest. I congratulate Singleton butcher Robert Constable, who is now officially the Australian Sausage King after the Australian Meat Industry Council's competition that was staged in Queensland's Sunshine Coast. Robert recently brought home the prized trophy for the nation's best continental sausage, which he won with his German bratwurst. It is the pinnacle of Robert's 33-year career in the meat industry and his highest honour after putting his product before judges over the past 20 years. Robert told *The Hunter River Times* that the German bratwurst is his best seller. In addition to competing in the prestigious national Sausage King event, Robert was also one of the judges of the national Apprentice of the Year competition. He praised the aspiring butchers for "their passion and willingness to learn and take on feedback".

**The SPEAKER:** Something should be said about the next Sausage President, as we move away from these monarchist attributions for sausages. The sausages were born into this; they did not ask for it.

#### SOUTH WEST MOUNTIES MAGIC

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (22:41):** From sausage kings to queens of the court, this past weekend I had the pleasure of attending the launch of Netball NSW's newest Premier League team, the South West Mounties Magic. The event, held at Mount Pritchard Community Club, was—excuse the pun—full of magic and was a great opportunity to meet the league's newest team. South West Mounties Magic is a partnership between the Liverpool City Netball Association and Mounties Care, with both under-23 and open teams set to take on the State's best in 2024. The addition of the Magic reinforces the importance of the game in the fast-growing south-west corridor, which has long been a breeding ground for some of netball's best talent. I congratulate Liverpool City Netball Association President Rebecca Wakefield, Dale Hunt and the Mounties Group on their hard work and vision in bringing the Magic from an ambitious idea to a reality. I wish the Magic all the best in their first game this Wednesday and for the season ahead. Here's to a long and successful future for the South West Mounties Magic.

#### PICTON MAGPIES OLD BOYS

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (22:42):** I was pleased to attend the Sportsman's Long Lunch, held on 15 March at the Camden Civic Centre and organised by the Picton Magpies Old Boys. The joyous social event serves as the main annual fundraiser, with proceeds raised contributing towards planning and improvements at the Victoria Park playing fields in Wollondilly. Additional funds raised are distributed to the junior and senior clubs and wider community, benefiting many young sportspeople. Beyond just the current members of the Picton Magpies Rugby League Football Club, the Picton Magpies Old Boys—also known as "The Mob"—actively support ex-players who have fallen on hard times and assist during any local community emergencies. The Mob provide the social connections that strengthen the community, enabling players to take the sense of inclusivity beyond the playing field and their sporting years into all aspects of their lives. It was only a few years ago that we had a plan to stop any advertisements on club land. Thanks to clever thinking, an alteration to the local environment plan and some leadership has ensured that the club survives today.

#### BEVERLEY DONALD

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (22:43):** On 7 March a valued member of my community, Ms Beverley Donald, was the proud recipient of the Cabramatta Local Woman of the Year award for 2024. Beverley's involvement in the community has positively impacted the lives of many overseas immigrants. For 15 years she has graciously volunteered her time in local churches, teaching English to those learning it as a second language. She has taught bible studies at local Anglican churches for 20 years and has been a member of the Anglican Historical Society Diocese of Sydney since 2006 and an editor since 2017. To ensure our history is not forgotten, Beverley wrote many local studies, books and journals, including *Liverpool the first Macquarie town: An historic guide*, *Hargrave Park? Never Heard of it: The story of a forgotten suburb*, *A Little Bit of Country: An Oral History of Badgerys Creek* and *Foundations of Faith: Christian Churches in the Fairfield area*. By actively working with her local community, Beverley has helped change the lives of many. For that I thank Beverley Donald for all her work.

#### LAURIE ORCHARD, OAM

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (22:44):** I recognise Mr Laurie Orchard, retiring choir conductor at the Laurieton Men's Shed. Laurie, the choir's founding director, began teaching music and

accompanying the male vocalist group on the piano back in 2014. Music devotees on the Mid North Coast have enjoyed 10 years of Laurie's involvement with the Laurieton Men's Shed choir. The choir performs beloved old-time classics and during this time has given more than 100 recitals for locals in a range of settings, including in our aged-care facilities. Laurie's choir has rekindled memories and moments as those residents sing along to the melodies of yesteryear. Laurie is now 96 years old, having been a musician for as long as he can remember. Over the past 90 years Laurie's passion and talent have seen him achieve notable success. Laurie was a founding member of the Mitchell Conservatorium in Bathurst, the State's first rural conservatorium. Topping off his impressive career, in 2022 Laurie received an OAM for his enduring contribution to communities through music and as an educator. Laurie has made a significant and enduring difference to the lives of so many through the magic of music, and for that I thank him.

#### ASIAN AUSTRALIAN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (22:45):** Established in 2013, the Asian Australian Lawyers Association is driven by volunteers who uphold the values of cultural diversity, equity and access to justice at their core. With 1,300 members nationwide, the association stands as a peak body representing lawyers with an interest in Asia, and Asian Australian lawyers. Over the past decade the association has achieved numerous milestones, from spearheading landmark surveys such as *The Australian Legal Profession: A snapshot of Asian Australian diversity in 2015* to the establishment of the esteemed William Ah Ket scholarship in 2017. Those accomplishments are testament to the tireless efforts of the association's volunteers. In particular I thank New South Wales branch president Dora Cheung, secretary Michael Tangonan and vice-president Yvonne Lam for their unwavering commitment to our society. As the association broadens its reach and impact, I look forward to its continued work in this space.

#### JOSH SHEARMAN

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst) (22:46):** Josh Shearman is a young man living life to the fullest in Bathurst, despite his disabilities. After completing his education at Kelso high school and undertaking multiple work experience placements at local businesses, including Cranstons Transport, Bathurst Regional Council and Harris Farm Markets, Josh found a love for mail. With assistance from his family, Josh founded his own small business. It gave him purpose and meaning as well as involvement in the local community. JLS Mail Link provides a courier service for local businesses to have their mail picked up and delivered. Josh enjoys greeting people, handing over the mail and travelling around the region. When I recently met Josh, his family expressed to me the joy they see in him every day when he gets up and puts on his uniform. Local businesses have supported this endeavour, with over 13 businesses now using his services. Josh has never let his diagnoses of autism, Pettigrew syndrome or scoliosis slow him down. With an extremely supportive family and a great team of carers who have supported him throughout the years, Josh has created a fulfilling life. Well done, Josh.

#### MICHELLE HEYMAN

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (22:47):** I congratulate Michelle Heyman on being selected for the Matildas football team. The 35-year-old was confirmed in Tony Gustavsson's Matildas squad for the recent Olympic qualifiers against Uzbekistan, in which she scored a total of five goals to cement a place for the Matildas at the upcoming Paris Olympics. The Illawarra Stingrays product from Barrack Heights initially retired from international football due to a multitude of reasons, mainly missing out on World Cup selection in 2019. In 2020 Michelle came back to the W-League and played an incredible season. She won the Julie Dolan Medal, scored multiple goals and loved every minute of it. An anterior cruciate ligament injury to captain Sam Kerr opened the door for selection for Heyman, who is currently the leading goal scorer in the domestic A-League Women competition. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour electorate, I congratulate Michelle on this incredible sporting achievement and wish her well in the upcoming Olympic qualifiers with the Matildas.

#### CLEAR SKY SOLAR INVESTMENTS LTD

**Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (22:48):** It was a pleasure to attend the 10-year anniversary celebration for Clear Sky Solar Investments Ltd at the Four Pines Brewery in Brookvale on 21 February. This small, committed group has achieved extraordinary success, raising over \$20 million in funding from community investors for solar photovoltaic systems on commercial roofs around Australia. Together they have supported 83 solar projects to get off the ground, totalling 18 megawatts of solar, all while returning profits to their investors. The team at Clear Sky Solar Investments Ltd have been absolute trailblazers in community energy. Big congratulations go to the visionary and tireless team behind Clear Sky Solar Investments Ltd: Warren Yates, Christina Kirsch, Neale Siebert and Kylie Hitchman. I thank them for their leadership. It is only upwards from here. Clear Sky Solar Investments Ltd is currently looking for investors for new projects. Investing in a Clear Sky Solar Investments project means directly powering Australia's transition to renewable energy and getting a great return on investment.

### WOY WOY ACTIVITY HUB

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (22:49):** I congratulate and thank the fantastic staff at Coastlink for their beautiful Seniors Week meet and greet morning tea at the newly upgraded Woy Woy activity hub last week. It was wonderful to get to know so many beautiful seniors from the peninsula and across the Central Coast who had travelled in Coastlink's community transport to join the fabulous morning tea. Visitors now settled on the coast for their sunset years had arrived from Turramurra, the Blue Mountains, Brisbane, the United Kingdom, and even from Texas in the United States. The sun was shining brightly and delicious smells from participant Mary's handmade sausage and spinach rolls—even with a gluten-free option—wafted out of the hall as community members arrived through the beautiful, freshly planted gardens. The activity hub now looks spectacular with freshly painted walls and newly polished floors, and it was cleaned to perfection by the wonderful Terri, who did a beaut job organising so many facets of the event. I thank all the staff members, transport drivers, carers and organisers—all with hearts of gold—who genuinely want to work to improve the lives of our seniors on the Central Coast.

### AVA DRURY

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (22:50):** I recognise one of my younger constituents, Ava Drury from Wamberal, who at the age of 15 is achieving great things in the sport of cricket. While Ava has only been playing competitive cricket since 2020, she has enjoyed considerable success playing for Terrigal Matcham Cricket Club and at representative level, including winning a first grade competition at just 13 years of age. Ava was selected in the under-19s Central Coast team that won the country championships for the first time in 2023, playing a crucial role as the leading wicket taker. Ava also captained the under-16s Central Coast team to their first ever country championships win. She was also recently selected in the female under-16s New South Wales country team that competed at the national championships in Hobart, with Ava playing a significant role in the team's success, as the second-highest wicket taker, with 13 wickets. For her performance Ava was selected in the Team of the Tournament. Ava continues to give back to her local community by working with the Terrigal Matcham Master Blasters program, and she is a great role model for younger aspiring female cricketers. Congratulations, Ava. Keep up the great work.

### SYDNEY SERBIAN FESTIVAL

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (22:52):** With 60,000 visitors last year, the Sydney Serbian Festival is the largest display of Serbian culture outside of Europe and is a highlight of the Serbian-Australian cultural calendar every year. This year's festival consisted of vibrant displays of traditional folkloric performances and, of course, cevapi and rakija, which characterise the distinct heritage and pride of the Australian-Serbian community. It is a sign of the significance of the Serbian-Australian community in New South Wales that Premier Chris Minns, His Grace Bishop Siluan from the Serbian Orthodox Church, and *Australian Idol* contestant Ivana Ilic were all enthusiastic participants. The history between our countries stretches back to World War I, where 1,500 Anzacs were involved on the Serbian front, even before Gallipoli. Liverpool has a large and thriving Serbian community that makes a tremendous contribution to our local community, sporting clubs, arts and culture, and economy. I congratulate the Serbian Orthodox Youth Association for successfully organising this year's celebration.

### LENNOX MONAGHAN

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence) (22:53):** I congratulate a proud young Bundjalung man from the Clarence Valley, Lennox Monaghan. Lennox is extremely well known throughout the Clarence Valley and beyond for his extraordinary digeridoo playing skills, but he is soon set to make his on-screen debut in the upcoming Stan original feature film *Windcatcher*. Starring alongside Australian pop icon Jessica Mauboy, Lennox plays a young Percy Boy, an Aboriginal child living in a small country town who, with help from his friends, decides to compete in an upcoming athletics carnival and, in doing so, defeats a group of bullies. While filming *Windcatcher* in Melbourne last year, Lennox spent up to nine hours a day for five days a week on the set. We are very proud of what Lennox is achieving, and I am sure this is the start of a long acting career. We will be watching Lennox on the telly over the Easter long weekend.

### JOHN AND DOREEN MCLOUGHLIN

**Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (22:54):** I acknowledge John and Doreen McLoughlin of Jindabyne. Not only is John a great Labor man but he is also a community hero—as so many country Labor people are. Every Christmas, John and Doreen create a truly amazing Christmas lights display at their home. Over the years it has become a major attraction. John and Doreen get nothing but thanks for their 10 weeks of hard work. Every donation they receive from visitors goes straight to the community. Last Christmas they raised over \$10,000, with over \$8,000 going to the Snowy Mountains Care and

Early Learning Centre and over \$2,000 going to the Thredbo Early Childhood Centre. The money for the early learning centre will go towards refurbishing and improving the outdoor play area, so children have a safer and more enjoyable space in which to learn. When not doing the lights, John can be seen volunteering at the bar for the Bushpigs rugby union team or in a host of other community roles. I thank John and Doreen. Jindabyne would be a much poorer place without them.

#### JENNIFER ROSE

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (22:55):** I acknowledge Jennifer Rose for her tireless work in the community and as the long-serving, much-loved community health sister for a large area of the Western Riverina. From 1963, Jenny, based in Hillston, travelled enormous distances, giving reassurance and practical advice to many young mothers in isolated areas. In 1996 Jenny started a local branch of Can Assist in Hillston, as president, and then secretary up until October 2022. She is now the assistant president and patient liaison officer. When the local Uniting Church was unable to secure a minister, Jenny took the church to the people, bringing the local community together. Jenny is an advocate for pastoral care and end-of-life support for families going through difficult times. She has delivered hundreds of funerals with a personal touch, including raising funds for those who are destitute. Always empathetic to the vulnerable in the community, Jenny helps in finding accommodation and access to basic groceries and clothing. Jenny has the respect of the wider community for the love and care she has bestowed on so many families.

#### EAST HILLS ELECTORATE COMMUNITY CABINET

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (22:56):** I acknowledge the success of the Community Cabinet held in East Hills last Friday. We saw an impressive turnout, with over 200 community members and organisations engaging with the Premier and his ministerial team. Held at Club Condell Park, the event facilitated robust discussions on pressing issues and provided a platform for locals to voice their concerns directly to decision-makers. Major issues raised during the question-and-answer session included the escalating cost of living, the importance of policing in the community, the Western Sydney University Milperra campus redevelopment, the need for increased funding and support for healthcare and disability services, and the removal of the wages cap for crucial professions such as nurses and teachers. I was very lucky to chair the forum, and enjoyed having chats with residents and community groups about how the New South Wales Government can better serve them. I thank the Premier and the Cabinet Ministers for holding the Community Cabinet meeting in East Hills. The initiative underscores the Government's dedication to listening to the diverse voices of communities across our community.

#### BRADY CLARKE

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy) (22:57):** I recognise and congratulate Captain Brady Clarke from Menai Fire Station for 25 years of service with Fire and Rescue NSW. Captain Clarke has served not only locally within the shire but statewide in natural disasters and emergencies. Captain Clarke has exemplified the values of courage, resilience and selflessness during his 25-year tenure, and has certainly saved hundreds of lives. His bravery and sacrifice, and that of everyone else who serves our community at Menai Fire Station, is to be commended. His contributions during natural disasters and emergencies have been nothing short of heroic, embodying the very essence of what it means to be a firefighter. Captain Clarke's work and service inspire us all, and the community is immensely proud to celebrate this milestone.

#### CHRISTOPHER WILSON

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (22:58):** I recognise Fire and Rescue NSW Inspector Christopher Wilson for his service to Fire and Rescue NSW and the communities of New South Wales during a career as a professional firefighter spanning over 40 years. Inspector Wilson started his career with Fire and Rescue NSW as a recruit firefighter on 19 July 1985 and has served at stations across the Greater Sydney area such as Leichhardt, Stanmore, Lidcombe, Parramatta, Ashfield, Guildford, Fairfield, Cabramatta, Horningsea Park, Liverpool and the zone offices at Parramatta and St Andrews. Inspector Wilson will perform his last official shift on Tuesday 19 March and take extended leave from 20 March until his official retirement from service on 12 December 2025, culminating in 40 years, 4 months and 23 days of service to Fire and Rescue NSW.

#### NARDIA GUILLAUMIER

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (22:59):** Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises Kiama resident Nardia Guillaumier, who recently won gold at the World Indoor Rowing Championships in February 2024 in Prague. Nardia finished her category, the women's 45 to 49 years 200 metres, in seven minutes and 16.4 seconds. That marked a personal achievement for her, having clinched a silver medal in the same category the year prior, with a time of seven minutes and 20 seconds. Nardia outpaced the competition, securing the top spot over Germany by six seconds. Adding to her achievements, she also claimed a fourth place in the women's

45 to 49 years 500-metre indoor rowing category, completing the distance in one minute and 33.7 seconds. At the 100-metre mark, Nardia was 29 metres behind the leaders of the race, in fourth position. She began her power home at the 700-metre mark. With 350 metres to go, Nardia moved into the second spot, and with 300 metres left she powered home to claim victory. I extend a huge congratulations to Nardia Guillaumier of Kiama.

#### **NORM STANLEY**

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (23:00):** I take this opportunity to recognise Norm Stanley, a volunteer of Marine Rescue Jervis Bay. In early March Norm was manning radio operations at the Huskisson base when he noticed a woman struggling in the outgoing tide by the Huskisson pool. Norm sprang into action and ran downstairs and around the beach to assist. When Norm arrived on the scene, a member of the public helped him to get the woman back to shore. The rescued woman was a British tourist and, while shaken, she was uninjured and very grateful to Norm and the member of the public who participated in saving her. It is so easy to underestimate how fast the water flows on an outgoing tide and how quickly conditions can become dangerous. If Norm had not reacted as swiftly as he did, it could have been a very different outcome. Norm is an experienced and valued member of the Marine Rescue volunteer family, and I thank him for his efforts and his ongoing service to the community.

#### **ZONTA CLUB OF NORTH SYDNEY**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (23:01):** Over the weekend the Zonta Club of North Sydney and the North Sydney Community Centre hosted an International Women's Day project to create breast care cushions. For those who do not know, Zonta is a leading global organisation that aims to empower women worldwide through service and advocacy, and we are fortunate to have more than 30 clubs across New South Wales. The cushions are generously donated to women in Sydney and rural hospitals around New South Wales to increase their comfort after breast cancer surgery. A team of Zonta Club of North Sydney volunteers meets regularly to prepare the breast cushions, and then they are completed at the annual Sip and Stuff event, which they held on Saturday just gone. Breast care cushions are not provided by hospitals, yet they are so appreciated and welcomed, not only for their practical use but also because they are handmade and offer thoughts of care and good wishes during what is often a difficult time for breast cancer patients. Congratulations to the Zonta Club of North Sydney. They set an ambitious goal of stuffing, sewing and wrapping 250 cushions for those who need them most. In my last few seconds, I wish happy birthday to Luke.

#### **LOFTUS VOLUNTEER BUSHFIRE BRIGADE**

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (23:02):** This month marks the seventieth anniversary of the Loftus Volunteer Bushfire Brigade. We honour its members both past and present. This brigade has a proud history and over the years has put in a lot of effort developing its members and strengthening its relationship with the community. That includes responding to bushfire and flooding incidents, including in Woronora, Wisemans Ferry and the Mid North Coast, attending motor vehicle incidents and hazard-reduction activity. The Loftus brigade is now well established and can boast more than 70 members. It is deeply respected by the local community it serves. I thank each and every one of the volunteers for their dedicated service, especially those who fought to protect communities during the 2019-20 fire season. I congratulate them all on their hard work, dedication and commitment to the community and the service, and I wish the best to this fine brigade for its seventieth anniversary and for many more years to come.

#### **PITTWATER ELECTORATE ANZAC DAY COMMEMORATIONS**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater) (23:03):** Each year, the Pittwater and broader northern beaches community comes together for an array of events to commemorate Anzac Day and honour those who have served our nation. We are so fortunate to have several active and passionate RSL sub-branches and organisations that devote so much time to ensuring that Anzac Day services run smoothly. I thank Palm Beach, Avalon Beach, Pittwater, Narrabeen and War Vets RSL sub-branches for all their efforts in supporting our local veterans and families of those who served. Maintaining the Anzac Day tradition is important to our community. Our young leaders, school captains and local cadets often take part in Anzac Day events and services, as well as commemorations throughout April held by the Terrey Hills Progress Association, the Newport community, the Church Point community, Furlough House and various schools. From the Anzac Sunday marches to traditional dawn services and other commemorative services, there are many opportunities to mark one of Australia's most important national days locally. I look forward to joining with my community at those events to remember and thank those who have served.

#### **MATTHEW BLAKEMORE**

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (23:04):** I congratulate Matthew Blakemore on being awarded Citizen of the Year at this year's Central Coast Australia Day Awards. Matthew is an asset to have in our

community. He lives with autism and an intellectual disability. Whilst working two jobs, he still has the time to shine a light on the needs of young people with a disability and the challenges they face in our society. The dedication Matthew displays in building a greater understanding of young people with disability is exemplified in his appointment to the research board of the University of Technology Sydney to assist in research with a project currently being developed. More impressively, Matthew was asked to speak about his transition from school to work with the Prime Minister at Parliament House and is also working with Next Level Inclusion to develop an Easy Read document for organisations and the Government, stemming from his difficulty with literacy as a young person. I commend Matthew for this great achievement and for all the contributions he makes to foster an inclusive society, and one in which all are equal.

#### **PETER BACHA, OAM**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (23:05):** I highlight the significant contribution that Peter Bacha, OAM, has made to the world of sport. Peter recently became a most deserving recipient of the 2024 Medal of the Order of Australia for service to football and the community. A founding member of Rydalmere Football Club in 1979, Peter's tireless dedication and involvement spans an incredible 44 years. Peter has been president since 2000 but during his time at the club has worn many hats—and, if you know Peter, his hat is as infamous as the man himself. He is a life member of the Granville and Districts Soccer Football Association, was awarded the Laurie Ferguson Shield in 2011, City of Parramatta Local Citizen of the Year 2011, Rotary Club of Carlingford community service award in 2022 and the Parramatta Community Contribution Award in 2023. I thank Peter for his dedication and passion that he pours into the families, players and volunteers of Rydalmere FC while also supporting other community sports right across Western Sydney.

#### *Bills*

### **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS (CARE AND PROTECTION) AMENDMENT BILL 2024**

#### **Returned**

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

#### *Private Members' Statements*

### **MARRICKVILLE LEGAL CENTRE**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (23:07):** Since 1979 the Marrickville Legal Centre has provided free legal services to vulnerable people in Marrickville and the inner west more broadly, as well as to people from across the south-west and southern suburbs of Sydney and beyond. The centre services a population of over 1.2 million people. Back in 1979 the centre comprised a handful of law students working many volunteer hours from Marrickville Town Hall. Back then their work focused squarely on local migrant communities. As the number of people seeking help expanded, along with the issues people needed help with, so too has the Marrickville legal service grown and strengthened over the years. Today the centre is based out of offices on Illawarra Road and the Addison Road Community Centre and still relies on the dedication of volunteers and a small band of employees who work tirelessly to support those in need.

My electorate office regularly refers people to the Marrickville legal service, whether it be for help with youth legal issues, general legal concerns, tenancy related matters or for assistance with domestic and family violence related matters. The centre is central to ensuring vulnerable people receive free legal advice and advocacy. The centre is committed to embracing technology to reach even greater numbers of people and make accessing legal information and support as easy and accessible as possible. In 2020 the Marrickville Legal Centre launched a new virtual legal assistant named NALA following a \$250,000 grant from the New South Wales Government Access to Justice Innovation Fund. NALA stands for New Age Legal Assistant and is at the forefront of how technology can assist clients to identify their legal concerns and access free information. In more complex circumstances, NALA can help direct people to appropriate services and supports, or link clients up with solicitors or formal legal advice via the centre. When the service launched in 2020, the centre's then managing principal solicitor said:

NALA is not designed to replace face-to-face services, but to better triage so the most critical matters and most vulnerable in our community are attended to first.

Just like first responders, frontline legal services must attend to enquiries urgently before legal issues compound into crisis.

By helping to triage the large volume of inquiries, NALA helps ensure that the small team at Marrickville Legal Centre is able to focus more quickly on those with complex urgent needs. Since launching four years ago, NALA has become pivotal to helping people access legal support, especially during the COVID lockdowns when a mix of restrictions and increased demand for legal services put extraordinary pressure on the centre. NALA is just one

of the many ways that the Marrickville Legal Centre is thinking outside of the box. As the technology around artificial intelligence continues to evolve, so too does the centre's ambition for the NALA project. The centre is at the forefront of adapting technology to support vulnerable people, all while navigating the complex ethical and social landscape around artificial intelligence. The clear principle is that the technologies are used to help people identify legal problems and connect to information or services. NALA does not provide legal advice.

Since July 2023, more than 6,000 sessions have used NALA, connecting users with over 4,800 resources and helping people to resolve over 3,000 legal issues. Of course, NALA does not replace the face-to-face work of this small dedicated and expert team, led by Justin, Vasili, Tu, Lucy and many others. They work tirelessly providing face-to-face support for vulnerable people in youth services, domestic violence, family law, tenancy and strata law, and criminal law. Each year, roughly 7,000 people are helped by the team at the Marrickville Legal Centre, in addition to the 6,000 people assisted through NALA. Increasingly, its clients are drawn from communities in Sydney's south and south-west. The original focus of the centre—supporting migrant communities across Sydney—of course continues today, and the Marrickville Legal Centre does not hold back in providing advocacy to governments of all stripes on the legal and social justice issues that impact the people they serve. The work of community justice centres in analysing government policy and advocating for reform cannot be understated. I thank the Marrickville Legal Centre for its ongoing work on those very important matters.

Every day local residents visit my electorate office because they need urgent assistance with housing, tenancies, criminal matters, or because they are facing family violence. Every day my staff refer people to the Marrickville Legal Centre. I cannot imagine how much harder our job would be if we did not have the expertise, compassion and skill of the staff at the centre. On behalf of the many residents who have sought and received help, I sincerely and warmly thank the Marrickville Legal Centre for supporting residents, for making legal services more accessible and relatable, and for working for a fairer justice system and on the issues that matter to the people of Marrickville.

#### **RURAL AND REGIONAL SKILLED WORKFORCE**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (23:12):** In the midst of the national skills crisis and the housing crisis, it is timely to draw attention to any barrier placed by government on utilising skills available in rural and regional New South Wales. Recently I was contacted by an Albury constituent regarding equity for regional and rural people in applying for statewide government service roles, especially ones that pertain to rural people and could be done remotely with a small amount of goodwill or productive structuring.

Anita Star responded to an advertisement for a New South Wales health project officer to lead research in understanding the influences on doctors choosing to maintain careers as rural generalists. As a rural health practitioner based in Albury, Ms Star has qualifications, including a PhD, and significant quantitative and qualitative research experience. A requirement for the position was to work at least two days per week in the Sydney office. Available technologies would overcome the barriers of remote work. Would Ms Star's rural lived experience be a valuable asset to the role? Ms Star says she raised this question with the recruiter. She told me that she "was given a very flat no before even applying for the role or being given the chance at an interview".

This Government has to start thinking statewide and lift its horizon for a moment above the western suburbs of Sydney and, as *The Daily Telegraph* noted, its fixation on winning seats to lift it out of minority. The regions are a skills powerhouse. They already contribute expertise to manufacturing and research projects in capital cities. But the stop-start nature of policymaking ensures that employers and the manufacturing, health research and education sectors cannot provide a regular and sustaining flow of work and opportunities that come from consistent government interest and support. This makes the recruitment and retention of highly skilled individuals stressful, both financially and emotionally.

Many roles in government no longer require weekly attendance at departmental offices. People want more flexibility in their employment to look after the needs of children or personal health issues, squeeze in more fitness activities and contribute to their local community. This is all about wellbeing, which in turn can deliver healthier, happier and more fulfilled and engaged employees. The Productivity Commission's second report in the New South Wales Remote Working Insights series presented early analysis of remote working patterns in New South Wales during the pandemic. Its modelling showed that remote working could "permanently boost New South Wales productivity" when the pandemic ends. Workers and employers have reported benefits from remote working. The report states that, for employees, working remotely:

- reduces their commuting time
- improves their sense of wellbeing
- allows them to work flexibly around their other commitments and activities.

Working from home can improve employment opportunities, and avoiding the commute reduces the cost of working, and that is expected to induce an increase in labour supply. That may include more work opportunities for people who face barriers to labour force participation, such as parents, others with carer duties, people with a disability that hinders commuting or people who live regionally. It is also considered that working-from-home policies can promote a more gender-balanced workforce.

Employers—and government is a major employer—can work to get the mix right for their tasks. There are a number of powerful examples of the benefits of governments boosting research in regional New South Wales. In July 2021 the Coalition supported cancer research through NSW Regional Health Partners, with funding of \$7 million with the Cancer Institute NSW. NSW Regional Health Partners chairman Stewart Dowrick said the \$7 million injection will help people in rural and regional New South Wales who are often excluded from research.

The Rural Health Research Institute at Charles Sturt University will bring to the community the country's best and brightest researchers in the field of rural health. The then Commonwealth health Minister, Greg Hunt, said the institute would underpin a new direction in rural health research, "ensuring that rural health solutions are located in rural locations involving rural people". I thank Anita and all who work to open city-minded doors to regional insights and valuable contributions, as well as TAFE NSW and Charles Sturt University, which actively promote the skills from their regional homes. One day rural and regional skilled workers will not have to scale this unproductive barrier nor explain how they manage to get through a working day outside Sydney's embrace.

### ILLAWARRA WOMEN'S TRAUMA RECOVERY CENTRE

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (23:17):** I give the Parliament and my community an update on the progress of the Illawarra Women's Trauma Recovery Centre. I stood in the House back in 2020 and described my delight in securing \$50,000 in funding to support the development of a business case to establish a domestic and family violence trauma recovery centre in the Illawarra. I thank former Minister for Health Brad Hazzard for that \$50,000, which enabled us to kick off the project. This project was never political, and Mr Hazzard's unwavering support will never be forgotten.

My burning desire for the construction of what is now known as the Illawarra Women's Trauma Recovery Centre was shared by Sally Stevenson, the general manager of the Illawarra Women's Health Centre, and Dr Patricia Cullen of the University of New South Wales as we stood together on 16 March 2020 to make the funding announcement. On 4 June 2020 I stood adjacent to the opposition benches—just quietly, it is much better to be on this side of the House—and said that I looked forward to standing in this Chamber and announcing the centre's official opening. That day is today.

I am delighted to inform the Parliament that last Friday I attended a soft launch of the centre in a wonderful location in Shellharbour city centre, right in the heart of the Illawarra. The centre is now open and will give victims and survivors access to not only an adequate support resource but also a physical place of care that focuses on long-term holistic recovery and rehabilitation. My community is grateful for the support of my good friend the Minister for Health, fellow Illawarra MP and true team player, Ryan Park, who made an election commitment to the tune of \$2 million to fully fund the construction of the centre leading into the March 2023 election.

The Illawarra Women's Trauma Recovery Centre is the first of its kind in the world and provides comprehensive and long-term support to women who have experienced domestic, family or sexual violence, helping women on their journey to long-term healing and recovery. It has been co-designed with women with lived experience, professional experts and service providers to ensure the best level of care. Through an innovative wraparound approach, the centre will support women to live independent and secure lives for the wellbeing of current and future generations. The team of counsellors has an extensive understanding and training in trauma- and violence-informed care, and our centre provides a culturally safe place for women of all backgrounds. They believe the best pathway to healing and recovery is through long-term, wraparound and highly practical support to meet clients' holistic needs. This includes but is not limited to safety, health, legal, financial, housing and employment support. Facilitating strong social networks is critical for recovery.

As the experience of domestic, family and sexual violence can be very isolating, their therapeutic group work focuses on providing education and support in a safe group setting, led by a qualified practitioner, to help women gain knowledge and skills as well as to form connections in their healing. The centre will also provide community-led groups to help to generate a sense of community and connection amongst women through peer support groups centred around activities such as cooking, arts, yoga and more. This centre is purpose built with consideration of the women and children it is designed to help. There is a massage room, a group therapy room, a custom-built kitchen and many consultation rooms. The curvature, fit-out and colour choice of the centre provide a calm, welcoming and safe environment, and there is a children's room that has a window to the adjoining consultation room so that mothers and children can see one another. This centre is a great start, but we all know that there is more work to be done. I will continue to fight for all survivors of family and domestic violence.

I thank again Sally Stevenson from the Illawarra Women's Health Centre, and Judy Daunt and all of the women who are employed at the health centre and do a fantastic job.

### BATHURST HEALTH SERVICE

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst) (23:21):** I raise in this House the concerns raised by my constituents relating to car parking at the Bathurst Health Service. The Bathurst Health Service is undergoing a \$200 million redevelopment. It is currently in its design phase. But, after a number of community consultation meetings and in the latest design released, it has one glaring omission, and that is additional onsite parking. The Bathurst Health Service is located along suburban streets and on a hilly topography, and today parking continues to be an issue for visitors, patients and staff members who are forced to walk from many blocks away to get access to the hospital. This is unfair to those people who are elderly, with young families or with disabilities. By the time they get to the front doors of the hospital, they are completely exhausted.

The \$200 million redevelopment that is currently being designed will expand the health services in this precinct, which is welcome, and it will see more doctors, nurses, patients and visitors to the hospital, but it appears we have less car parking. Parking needs to be included in this redevelopment as a top priority. For health bureaucrats to say that it is not warranted for a campus of this size, or that the issue will be resolved with more public buses or more lines marked in the street, is not acceptable for a hospital that serves the region.

Let me paint you a picture as of today. A local mother with two young children wrote to me. Her youngest child, who has just started kindergarten, was diagnosed with leukemia and requires treatment every fortnight at Bathurst hospital. The treatments are intense and have affected the little girl's ability to walk, weakening her muscles, nauseating her after each treatment. Every fortnight, this mother drops one child to early-hours care before school and begins the lengthy hunt for a parking space somewhere near the hospital. She then has to carry her sick little girl blocks to the hospital to receive lifesaving treatment. Afterwards, she carries her crying and vomiting child for blocks and uphill back to the car she could not park close to the hospital. She will repeat this process week in and week out, making an already difficult time just that much more difficult.

A staff member of Bathurst hospital tells me they have to arrive around 45 minutes early to each shift just so that they can find a parking space and clock on to their shift on time. Staff at a hospital do an incredible job caring for the sick and the injured. They do not have time to be moving cars during their shifts. Therefore, those who finish late at night, like this staff member, must walk back scared for their safety to their car, which is parked blocks away in the dark. I have reports of staff members being followed and approached, and even cars being broken into. The current secure car park does not have enough parks for the staff on shift, let alone any visitors or patients who face the same reality.

A local care worker reached out expressing their concern about the difficulty parking when taking clients to the hospital. These are sick and elderly individuals who cannot walk long distances, especially not uphill or downhill. This care worker explains that they have a care of duty and cannot do their job safely or effectively with the current state of parking at the Bathurst hospital. They cannot drop off their clients at the door and leave them unattended, and they cannot force them to walk from the nearest available car park. Instead, they do lap after lap of the car park, wasting precious time and regularly missing appointments.

This is three of over 2,000 stories of similar experiences that I have received, not to mention the countless stories of neighbours being parked in their driveways. We do not want to see a repeat of the failings of the Bathurst hospital when it was redeveloped 15 years ago. I have studied the most recent designs and have been left bewildered. Not only is there no allocation for new car parking spaces, but also I have found out that community green space where part of the current car park is will be removed—an extension to the new community health facility, where even more car parking will be removed. This design will make car parking even worse at the Bathurst Health Service.

When I fought for the \$200 million redevelopment, I was assured by NSW Health that additional car parking on site would be a part of the design. In fact, we are seeing less. I am disappointed with the community consultation that has taken place. Less than 24 hours notice is given to the community to attend a handful of face-to-face consultation meetings that all take place during work hours. Despite all these community consultations, in less than a month we have had a petition running that has already achieved more than 2,000 signatures. The community response has been immense. At some point, everyone in the community will need to access the hospital and its services, and we want to ensure that when the time comes there will be easy access to do so. I also thank the Minister, whom I met with today to sit down and raise a number of these issues. I ask the Minister and the Government to ensure that additional car parking on site is considered as part of the redevelopment.

### MOUNT OMEI MODERN ART GALLERY

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (23:26):** Tonight I bring this House's attention to an unassuming property with a big history and huge impact on the artistic and cultural landscape of Liverpool. The historic Mount Omei art gallery sits on the southern boundary of All Saints Catholic Senior College on Leacocks Lane in Casula. The building on the site dates back to the 1930s. Although Mount Omei started out as a quaint scientific laboratory for industrial microbiologist Dr Wolf Klaphake, his wife, Alice, converted it into Western Sydney's first private modern art gallery space in 1976, after his passing. The modern art gallery became a popular gathering place for local artists and craftspeople. Alice was a feisty artist and community activist, whose gallery attracted artists and visitors like Lloyd Rees, Margo Lewers, Elisabeth Cummings and Gough Whitlam.

Mount Omei was not only a landmark in south-west Sydney; it was often referred to as "Alice's Wonderland", as the Klaphake family has called Mount Omei home since 1947. Alice later sold the property to the New South Wales Government to become part of a Georges River cultural corridor. It is well connected to the Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, where an amphitheatre was built in recognition of her contribution to modern art in the region. However, she and her son, Van Klaphake, continued to occupy part of the property under a permissive occupation agreement with the New South Wales department of planning. The land is currently controlled by NSW National Parks, which in 2012 drafted a plan of management for Leacock Regional Park.

An aspect of the plan of management was to assess the Mount Omei residence and associated buildings for heritage value. If those were found to be of significance, a heritage action statement to guide future management and works was to be prepared. Geoff Ashley of Ashley Built Heritage was engaged by the National Parks and Wildlife Service [NPWS] and the Office of Environment and Heritage in 2016 to conduct a heritage assessment. His report outlines the rich legacy of supporting emerging artists and the broader social impact of Mount Omei over many decades. However, since the heritage report was released, the NPWS has not clarified its plans for the site or its capacity to preserve the artistic and cultural importance of the site.

Instead they commenced NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal proceedings to terminate Van Klaphake's lease at Mount Omei. Earlier this month Van received word that he had exhausted his appeals and needed to vacate the property. He is concerned that Mount Omei is earmarked for demolition. He is also concerned that if the property is left vacant, it could deteriorate or become a target for vandalism and squatters. Back in 2016, when concerns were first raised about the future of Mount Omei, artists, friends and others who have benefited from its legacy came together to rally in support. They organised exhibitions onsite and ran a campaign to demand answers from the previous Government, but none were forthcoming.

In response to the outpouring of community concern for the property, my colleague the member for Leppington, a former Liverpool councillor himself, moved a motion at an ordinary meeting of Liverpool City Council in late December 2022 to note the heritage significance of Mount Omei and request that the council write to the National Parks and Wildlife Service to seek clarification on its intentions for the buildings on the site. Some 15 months have passed since that motion was unanimously passed and correspondence was sent from Liverpool City Council to the National Parks and Wildlife Service. However, the council is yet to receive any correspondence from the service. In response to recent developments, Councillor Karress Rhodes moved an urgency motion to impose an interim heritage order on the site to avoid any possible demolition, sale or disposal of the site until the council's concerns have been addressed. I was proud to have joined those in favour of the motion in a vote of seven to three.

I recognise the work of the Friends of Mount Omei Modern Art Gallery and the Liverpool Art Society Inc. in highlighting the issue and for their strong voices in safeguarding local arts infrastructure. I call on the National Parks and Wildlife Service to protect the valuable artistic and cultural heritage of south-west Sydney by developing a heritage action statement for Mount Omei that clarifies its plans for the site and enables the space to nurture and develop the next generation of artists and creatives in Liverpool. Liverpool is home to an immense wealth of creative talent and its artistic community deserves adequate local exhibition space. Mount Omei is one of those necessary venues and I urge the National Parks and Wildlife Service to consider that in its decision on the site.

### KERRS CREEK WIND FARM

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (23:31):** I bring to the attention of the House an issue that has been causing a great deal of concern and division amongst many in my community: the proposed Kerrs Creek Wind Farm project. The proposal is for 63 turbines of up to 280 metres in height across 9,500 acres of agricultural farmland approximately 30 kilometres north of Orange. The project lies just inside the boundary of Dubbo Regional Council right on the boundary of, but not in, Cabonne Council. It is located just inside and on the boundary of the Central-West Orana Renewable Energy Zone. The height of the turbines alone is slightly less than the height of Sydney's Centrepoint Tower, which is 309 metres tall. They will be some of the largest turbines

in Australia. The wind farm's bulk and scale, and the change it would create in the rural landscape, has caused many landholders, especially those nearby, to be legitimately concerned. I have attended two community forums that were held in Molong over the past few months by a locally formed group called Voice for Cabonne. Each meeting has had over a hundred people attend—some in favour of the project but many against—who have many questions still unanswered.

The project proponent is RES, a foreign-owned company with its Australian headquarters based in Brisbane. RES representatives attended the first forum in December but did not attend the last one held in February. After the way that they were quizzed at the first meeting, it did not surprise me that they declined the invitation to attend the second one. One of the major observations raised in the forums was the lack of apparent consultation and community engagement that RES have had with some adjoining property owners and the broader Molong community. I was contacted by one landholder, whose land adjoined the proposed area, who had not had any contact with anyone from RES. The first they heard about the matter was after the first meeting via one of my social media posts.

Presently the project is in its scoping stage. A secretary's environmental assessment requirements was issued in October 2023 and it is expected to enter public exhibition in mid-2024. Once open for submissions, there will be just 28 days for objections and submissions to be lodged. That seems to be a short period of time for objectors to get their submissions filed and seems unfair because the proponents will have had many months to get their submissions prepared and lodged for exhibition. Some of the other issues that have been legitimately raised by locals and adjoining landholders are the impact that the precinct will have on land values, especially those adjoining properties that will be visually impacted and the aural and visual health impacts in terms of noise and the flickering of the turbine blades. Research has indicated that there may be negative physical and mental health impacts from being close to the turbines.

What will happen to insurance premiums? An insurance broker attended the last meeting and indicated that premiums will increase, not only for the landholders who will have the turbines on their properties, but also for landholders of adjoining properties as well. The broker indicated that premiums could rise from between 250 per cent to 700 per cent. That is a huge increase. The broker also informed the meeting that contingent liability and subrogation third party insurance will add significant expense to insurance for farmers. In the recent March-April edition of the NSW Farmers magazine, *The Farmer*, there was an article on this very issue. Other issues that have been raised include access and damage to road networks to get the huge trucks and turbines to site; native bird kills from birds being struck by the turbines; aerial bushfire-fighting capabilities—in other words, planes and helicopters will not be able to fly through those areas in a fire due to smoke impacting visibility; who will be responsible for the decommissioning of the turbines and what will happen with old infrastructure once they have expired; and who will be responsible for and pay for the rehabilitation of the site.

The other issue of concern, especially for Cabonne Council, is the community benefit fund. It would seem on face value that all funds will go to the host local government area, in this case Dubbo Regional Council. However, in this particular case, Cabonne will have the project on its doorstep. Its roads will need repairing. Its communities will be most impacted. So it only seems fair and reasonable that, in those particular circumstances, Cabonne is entitled to a piece of the pie from the benefit fund. The other important issue is that the turbines are fracturing communities. They are very divisive. They have divided communities and families. I do not begrudge anyone prepared to host the turbines. If they can set up their families and drought-proof their properties, no-one should judge or begrudge them. Nobody knows what other people's personal circumstances are. RES and EnergyCo need to do more consultation, engagement and work with those affected landholders to sufficiently address their concerns.

#### UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (23:36):** Constituents have contacted me with serious concerns about the increasing use of disinformation, particularly online. Sometimes it seems that we are losing our collective sense of the truth. It can be hard for ordinary people to discern fact from propaganda or to determine whether a source can be trusted. It has only worsened with the increased use of social media, generative artificial intelligence, sophisticated photo editing and deepfake technology. When we cannot trust Kate Middleton with a family photo, we clearly have a problem.

We also live in a world marred by global conflict. Propaganda and misinformation have long been a tool of war. They have probably existed as long as conflict has. Even Mark Antony and Octavian used propaganda against each other in the Roman civil war of 44 BCE. The Germans considered Britain's superior propaganda as a key factor in its defeat in World War I. Before and during World War II, the Nazis dedicated huge resources to Goebbels' propaganda machine, which was a crucial contributing factor to the tragedy of the Holocaust. More recently, we have seen the effect propaganda has had in the invasion of Ukraine by Russia. Russia has been accused of running a sophisticated disinformation campaign to justify its invasion of a sovereign nation. The

propaganda questions the legitimacy of Ukraine's statehood and spreads fake news that Ukraine is controlled by Neo-Nazis. The Russians have even blamed Ukrainians for attacks and atrocities they themselves committed.

The corrosive effects of disinformation in war are obvious. It is disappointing, then, that our Federal Government appears to have fallen victim to misleading information regarding the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, more commonly known as UNRWA. UNRWA provides much-needed aid and protection for Palestinian refugees. Since the horrendous attacks on Israel by Hamas on 7 October last year and Israel's response leading to the deaths of 30,000 Palestinians, the organisation has been at the forefront of the resulting humanitarian crisis. In late January Israeli officials made allegations that 12 UNRWA employees were involved in the 7 October attacks and that the organisation was connected to Hamas.

Along with other nations, Australia immediately pulled its funding for UNRWA. The decision came the day after the International Court of Justice [ICJ] ordered Israel to take serious measures due to the likelihood of a plausible genocide in Gaza. The UN special rapporteur for Palestine said that the decision to suspend funding could be a violation of the UN genocide convention and defied the ICJ's ruling. Either way, the decision to pull funding meant the UN agency—the primary organisation providing food in the area—would be unable to deliver aid to Palestinians as the crisis raged on, yet a month later the UN had still not received evidence from Israel that UNRWA employees were involved in the attacks.

In early March, multiple reputable media outlets reported that UNRWA employees had been detained and coerced by Israeli authorities, leading to false admissions under duress. After campaigning from community organisations, including many in my electorate of Leppington, Australia reinstated its funding to UNRWA on 15 March. I am pleased by that development, but I remain deeply concerned about the Federal Government's kneejerk reaction to the initial reports.

A single unsupported accusation by a combatant nation was enough to immediately trigger a cessation of funding to one of the only organisations providing relief to civilians during one of the greatest humanitarian crises in recent memory. It took months of investigation, campaigning and accusations of torture for it to finally be reversed. The presumption of innocence and natural justice are among the core values of our democracy, which we should apply to our engagement in international relations. I welcome the reinstatement of the Australian Government's funding to UNRWA and urge it to consider the historical lessons about the use of propaganda and disinformation during war, throughout this conflict and others into the future.

### HOUSING SUPPLY AND PLANNING

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (23:41):** In recent weeks and months I have met with and heard from many constituents in my local community who have shared with me their deep concerns and frustrations with the proposed changes to the New South Wales planning system. I will share some of those concerns on behalf of my community with members of this place. New South Wales needs greater housing supply, but we must ensure it is done well and done sustainably. There is a housing crisis and renters like me are being hit the hardest.

However, before we undertake huge changes to the planning system in New South Wales, we must ensure we are doing it in the right way. We need good strategic planning, not a lazy one-size-fits-all non-policy. My community is very dense—we are vibrant and inner urban, and there is a high proportion of strata properties. We love the bustle and the energy—Mr Temporary Speaker knows my community very well—and our status as a dense inner-urban community dates back many decades.

We are very happy to have density done well. I live in an apartment and I love raising my children in an apartment. But in the meetings I have held and the correspondence I have received, one sentiment resounds very clearly—an apprehension regarding the planning changes proposed by the Minns Labor Government. Those concerns are not borne out of any resistance to progress, innovation or change, but rather from a deep-seated desire to safeguard the integrity of our communities and the environment in which they thrive.

One of the most prevalent concerns expressed is the potential loss of the few green spaces and recreational areas we have. Moreover, there needs to be more certainty regarding the potential loss of heritage and historical landmarks in the face of new developments. Like me, my constituents cherish the rich tapestry of history and culture that defines our neighbourhoods and villages, and they are rightly concerned about the erosion of those valuable assets. Across the North Shore community are areas of conservation that the changes could significantly impact. Areas such as Bydown and Harrison streets in Neutral Bay and Hayberry Street in Crows Nest contain terraces and homes that are over 100 years old. One Lavender Bay resident noted that they:

... object to the current conservation and heritage zones/properties being overridden. The community has worked hard to maintain some history and character, and this new zoning ignores all this.

A collaborative and united approach is needed to allow the local community to meaningfully address the housing crisis while ensuring we do not irrevocably damage what we love and value about our local area. Additionally,

there are concerns about the potential strain on existing infrastructure and services, and the need for existing infrastructure to service any significant new developments in my local community.

Those members who have travelled along Spit and Military roads will know that traffic on local roads in my electorate is a key issue, particularly across Neutral Bay, Cremorne and Mosman. The Military Road-Spit Road corridor is one of the most congested in Australia. With the cancellation of the Beaches Link tunnel by Labor and Transport for NSW undertaking an internal review of the State's key corridors—without any community engagement, I might add, which is a real shame and an indictment on its process—further increasing density across these suburbs will only add to traffic congestion on our local roads. This congestion is not only the bottlenecks on that road corridor but also the rat-running on our local streets and the risks it presents to kids walking to school, people trying to get the bus and the overall safety of people in our communities.

It is also worth noting that bus services are still running to a reduced timetable. Many buses are already full by the time they reach my community at Spit and Neutral Bay junctions from the northern beaches. Being a downstream community, we are impacted by everybody who comes through, whether it be on public transport or our roads. One Mosman resident noted:

The capacity of key infrastructure and essential services such as water and sewerage, electricity and telecommunications, schools, hospitals, parks, sporting grounds, roads and public transport, must be considered.

Consideration must be given to ensure that local communities can access adequate services and amenities. This can only be achieved on a case-by-case basis with local communities, not a wideranging blanket reform that ignores these considerations. Furthermore, there are concerns relating to what constitutes a "town centre" under the new changes. Many local villages across the North Shore community could meet these criteria, yet it is unclear whether they would be included or excluded from the proposed changes.

While councils do not always get everything right, many do have advanced strategic and master planning processes in place, one example being the current plan out for Neutral Bay. The department should work closely with these councils instead of imposing a blanket approach that ignores the individual needs of each community. I thank members of my community for sharing their views with me. I want to make sure that any changes are guided by equity and sustainability into the future.

## HOUSING SUPPLY

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (23:46):** Tonight I talk about the housing crisis facing this country. Firstly, I underline that term "housing crisis"—which was just used by the previous speaker, the member for North Shore—which is now generally accepted as the term we use to describe the housing system we have created in this country. That is not a good thing. I will also talk about the provision of more safe, secure and affordable housing—which is increasingly a demand in my community and all communities across the State—and how we might get to these important changes sooner.

I note that the Minns Labor Government has introduced a raft of initiatives and changes, and achieved broad community consensus, I think, that we need to dramatically increase supply to make housing more affordable. That includes dramatically increasing the density of housing construction in this State. These are good things. My concern, though, is that the growing demand for more safe, secure and affordable housing—houses that are built as homes and not investments—may still fall before the profit motive, which underpins most, if not almost all, of our housing industry in this State. The role of profit in the housing industry was starkly exposed during the 2019 Federal election, when changes to capital gains tax and negative gearing proposed by Labor were opposed by the then Liberal-Nationals Government and most of the community.

The expectation of profit and its role in housing supply is yet to be fully and properly assessed, but I make this observation from one part of my electorate, The Entrance township. As I speak, there are six approved development applications [DA]. Some were approved over 20 years ago. They were even granted commencement, which is important for someone who holds a DA to have. In effect, it becomes a "zombie" DA, remaining in force until the owner of that land decides to proceed. The situation in my electorate says to me that we may have land, we may have development approvals and we may even have approved DAs, but we will not get any building done until the profit expectations of the owners of those DAs are met.

What is to be done? Can we reduce the profit motive? I think that we can, and the Government could. The Government could build more, and that should happen, but it has been a long time since a government built houses in this State, so we need to look elsewhere. Our community housing providers are the answer. Community housing providers exist for one purpose and one purpose only: to build homes. They exist to satisfy the need for homes that are affordable. Any return on investment is reinvested into the business of housing. There is no profit, so the controversy over capital gains tax and other taxes is eliminated. This is the answer to a world where housing is provided on the basis of need instead of being a consequence of the naked pursuit of profit.

And can it be done? Yes, it can. We have done it before. In the 1990s, Labor took an industry that provided a service—the superannuation financial services industry—that was provided on the basis of profit to the few, and supported the establishment of a not-for-profit sector, the industry superannuation funds. It created a retirement industry system that benefited our entire community. We can do it again. Our community housing providers exist. The industry is small, but it is growing—but it needs support so that it can compete more robustly with the for-profit sector. We can have a future where housing is more affordable—where housing is provided on the basis of need, rather than profit. We have done it before, and we can do it again.

### REGIONAL YOUTH CRIME

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence) (23:51):** Tonight I speak of my total support for the mighty fine men and women of the NSW Police Force. Those officers will be out on the beat tonight in my electorate of Clarence. I also acknowledge that this evening this House has amended some of the bail laws in New South Wales. I hope that will be the first step in solving a burning issue in regional New South Wales. I recognise the urgent need for this Parliament to conduct a regional youth crime inquiry. I agree that a community cannot simply lock its way out of a crime problem, but I do acknowledge the Government's first response in the form of the Bail and Crimes Amendment Bill 2024, which passed this House earlier. It is a start, but it will not fix this complicated issue on its own.

In my electorate of Clarence, as in other electorates in regional New South Wales, there has been an alarming increase in regional youth crime. I listened to the debate in this place intently throughout the afternoon, and I can share some of the stories that have been flooding in—and they have been flooding in—to my electorate office. They have certainly been ringing alarm bells with me. The changes made through the bill are modest, but they are a start. Every day I receive emails, phone calls and messages about regional youth crime. When I walk down the street, whether it is in Casino, Evans Head, Yamba, Grafton, South Grafton or Maclean, my constituents have no issue in pulling me up. I am glad that they do so, because it is my job to bring their issues to this place.

Jane wrote to me recently and said, "We are terrified in our own home. This includes my 90-year-old mother, whose home has been broken into. Our family home has been broken into three times. Night stalkers have been picked up on our cameras at 2.00 a.m. When I drive down to the post office, we are being stopped in the car by teenagers who are blocking the road. This is very, very scary. We have been forgotten after the February 2022 floods, and we are now being terrorised by children and teenagers." Another person who wrote to me and asked to remain anonymous, which I will respect, said, "I live on the coast and I work in Casino. I have never seen anything like this happen to our communities in the past." Our communities are doing it tough, our elderly are being targeted and our shop owners are simply exhausted. Kids are reoffending within days of being released on bail. I am hearing stories that kids are out of control. Elderly ladies have been attacked in their homes. One Coraki resident has been attacked in her home 14 times. A young mum in Casino had masked men wielding axes outside her bedroom window. Jodie wrote to me and said:

Many of my elderly friends have been terrified in their own homes by youth offenders breaking in and assaulting and stealing valuables and cars. Local farms have been raided with losses of heavy machinery and other equipment.

Sharon, who contacted my office yesterday, said that on the weekend she was stoned while trying to get into her vehicle. Damage was done to the car and she was hit by rocks. Later she had a thickshake thrown at her front door. Linda reached out and said that her home has been broken into 13 times and her car was stolen. It is important that the House and the Parliament understand that those things are happening. I understand they are uncomfortable to hear but they are happening in the bush. It is time to pull the bandaid off, get to work in this place and get an inquiry underway. The sooner we start, the sooner we can have good policies in place to overcome this significant issue.

### PUBLIC TRANSPORT ACCESSIBILITY

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (23:56):** Geographical mobility is paramount to every person in New South Wales. For us to live our best lives, we need to be able to move from point A to point B. I have made my thoughts about our public transport system and its accessibility needs known in this Chamber. In particular, access for people with a disability and the elderly at our train stations is a must. I welcome the New South Wales Government's commitment to upgrade Chester Hill train station.

The proposed scope of work includes a new lift and stairs connecting Chester Hill Road to the station platform via a new concourse; enhanced accessible multi-modal connections, including a new accessible parking space, an accessible kiss and ride space, additional bike parking, and upgrades to the existing bus stops on Chester Hill Road and Waldron Road; and accessibility upgrades to the station, including a new family-accessible toilet, hearing loops, platform regrading, tactile indicators and associated electrical upgrades.

There will also be continuous canopy coverage from the station entry to the boarding assistance zones; canopy replacement along Chester Hill Road; enhancements to safety and security at the station and surrounding areas, with improved lighting, CCTV and wayfinding; and placemaking enhancements such as murals and landscaping. Train stations are gateways into communities. The proposed scope of work sets up Chester Hill train station to reflect the incredible community it serves. I will do my best to keep the people of Chester Hill informed and engaged as we build them a better train station.

### WASTE TO ENERGY PROJECT

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (23:58):** Today I indicate again my opposition to the Veolia waste-to-energy project in my electorate of Goulburn. I stand in this Chamber in obstruction of the purported waste-to-energy project proposed at the Veolia eco precinct located outside of the village of Tarago. The small village in my electorate is attempting to cohabit alongside a landfill that takes 40 per cent of Sydney's waste, and its residents will have to continue to live with it for at least the next two decades. The current system sees the municipal solid waste of Sydney sent to two transfer terminals, where it is sorted and loaded for transport by rail to Crisps Creek, and then by truck to the Woodlawn landfill. The \$600 million project proposes an additional step once the waste is delivered to Tarago, incinerating 380,000 tonnes of rubbish to generate steam and electricity to the tune of 39 megawatts—the equivalent of powering 50,000 homes annually.

The proponent would like us to believe that the waste-to-energy project is safe. If the project is safe, why did the Minister for Energy oppose the Western Sydney incinerator, telling us that "this project should not go ahead and the Government should stop it now"? If it is safe to build the facility in regional towns, then why not build it in Sydney? Sort the rubbish at its source and save the trains and trucks that would have taken it to Tarago. Recent studies found that toxic PFAS are not fully degraded by the high temperatures during waste-to-energy conversion, or incineration, and can be emitted from the plant via ash, gypsum, treated process water and flue gas.

It is well known that PFAS are a group of nearly 15,000 synthetic chemicals that are present in numerous household and industrial products—products that will be found in the waste that is transported to the Veolia precinct. It is also well known that PFAS do not break down in a timely manner. They are found in soil and water, which leads to a bioaccumulation in our bodies via the food chain. I have grave concerns for my community that the Veolia proposal would become a concentrated depository for PFAS for all of Sydney's industrial waste over an extended period. The community has been clear about their concerns about the effects that the facility will have on not only food production but also the health of residents living near the Woodlawn Advanced Energy Recovery Centre. Those concerns about toxic PFAS should be shared by the Government.

Community concern and opposition is palpable. We do not want rubbish burnt in our backyard. Evidence of that is seen across the region, with bumper stickers, posters in shops and signs nailed to fences and gateposts. I have made that sentiment known to my colleagues, and I have shared all concerns raised through my office with the Premier, the Deputy Premier, the Minister for Regional New South Wales, the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces and the Minister for Energy. As the planning framework suggests, the entire community will have plenty of opportunity to voice concerns about the incinerator. I will continue to oppose and advocate for policy change. Furthermore, I will continue to urge the applicant to withdraw its development application, due to the strong opposition to the project from the community and surrounding regions.

I have no doubt that if the applicant does not heed the call to withdraw the project, the community response in opposition will be prolific. We, as a community, must now bear considerable angst as we wait for Veolia to respond to submissions and the subsequent steps in the planning framework. I will continue to be vocal in my opposition to the incineration of waste in the electorate of Goulburn, to protect the health and safety of our community, the agricultural sector and the precious waters of the Sydney catchment.

### HEALTHCARE WORKERS

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (00:02):** Access to quality health care is core business for the New South Wales Government. While it works towards upgrading the capital infrastructure of the healthcare network, it needs to be proactive in ensuring that hospitals are equipped with the healthcare professionals needed to meet community healthcare demand. That is why I am happy to see that more than 3,400 graduate nurses and midwives recently started work in New South Wales public hospitals. The graduates will gain invaluable experience across a broad range of clinical settings, as well as in community health care. South Western Sydney Local Health District, which covers hospitals such as Fairfield and Bankstown-Lidcombe, received 400 graduate nurses and 26 graduate midwives. I extend my deepest welcome and thanks to those nurses and midwives as they work towards bolstering the healthcare network and making a difference to the lives of many families in Fairfield and Western Sydney.

## DROUGHT RESILIENCE PLANNING

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (00:04):** Tonight I raise my concerns about what appears to be a glaring omission from the State Government's Regional Drought Resilience Planning Program. The program is co-funded by the Federal Government's Future Drought Fund and the New South Wales Government. Its aim is to support identified regions in the State to develop drought resilience plans that can be implemented by councils and their communities to manage future risks. On the one hand in the Upper Hunter electorate, Singleton, Muswellbrook and Upper Hunter Shire councils are cooperatively sharing \$450,000 to develop and start to deliver the Upper Hunter Drought Resilience Plan. Upper Hunter residents and business owners are currently helping the three councils to draft the plan by providing their insights into past experiences to counter the impacts of drought. An online survey to help shape the evidence-based strategy will close this Friday.

Yet, on the other hand, the first area where drought made its presence felt in winter last year, Dungog shire, heads into the approaching winter with no plan. Concerned that Dungog had been overlooked for the Regional Drought Resilience Planning Program, I wrote to Minister Moriarty to seek clarification as to why. The Dungog area was one of the first in the Hunter region to be identified by the Department of Primary Industries [DPI] as being drought affected in June last year. According to the Combined Drought Indicator, the situation only deteriorated during spring and summer. Even the most recent DPI report for February 2024 shows Dungog and much of my electorate in drought, including several areas, especially in the western half, which are in intense drought.

My farming constituents in the Dungog area have contacted me to ask when the Government will announce drought support measures to assist them with this drought declaration after the monthly release of the drought indicator reports. I am at a loss to explain how the Government has not assisted the Dungog community to build drought resilience even though DPI describes it as experiencing drought. According to the Regional Drought Resilience Planning Program's website, the program "aims to build capability and empower regional communities to plan and act early to reduce and respond to drought risks". The development of the drought plans will consider growing the self-reliance and drought resilience of regional communities, including the agricultural sector; improving natural capital of agricultural landscapes for better environmental outcomes; and strengthening the wellbeing and social capital of rural, regional and remote communities. It will enable small council-led consortia of between two and six councils to better prepare for, respond to and recover from drought.

Among the suggestions that I would like to put to Minister Moriarty is that the Upper Hunter Drought Resilience Plan be expanded to include the Dungog local government area, bringing together four neighbouring councils. Alternatively, the Cessnock, Maitland and Mid Coast council areas on either side of Dungog could form a further drought resilience planning area. All of those local government areas are located within the eastern flank of the Hunter Local Land Services catchment and the Upper Hunter electorate. The Maitland area contains the agriculturally productive areas of Lorn, Bolwarra, Largs and Phoenix Park, and west to Maitland Vale and Lambs Valley, which are also within my electorate. I say to the Premier and his agriculture Minister that this matter requires a sense of urgency.

We do not know when a good season will return or whether Dungog and the Upper Hunter are heading into a harsh winter that will require handfeeding again. Some farmers in the Upper Hunter electorate have been fortunate enough to be in the path of occasional soaking storms, only to have the green veneer of pasture growth sapped by the scorching summer conditions. The WaterNSW website provides an indicator of just how much the level of our major storage dams has dropped. Sadly, evaporation has taken its toll on on-farm dams. They have lost that La Niña full look they had after July 2022. In closing, I say that the Premier and the Minister should not let this be a missed opportunity for Dungog and the Upper Hunter electorate, should farming conditions deteriorate further over the winter and spring to come.

## SOUTH WEST GOANNAS RUGBY LEAGUE CLUB

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (00:09):** Last year in this House I spoke about the plight of the South West Goannas, a local rugby league club. In late November the club was unceremoniously expelled from the upcoming 2024 season by New South Wales Rugby League and other Group 6 clubs. Media at the time reported those events as "Battling club sensationally booted from 2024" and "Rugby league fans around the Macarthur region are in shock." In my speech at the time, I strongly urged the relevant decision-makers to reconsider their decision and the club's exclusion. After giving that speech, I was contacted by numerous people from across the rugby league fraternity, among them players, administrators and journalists. Many have expressed similar views to mine in support of the Goannas. One or two were not so supportive, and that is their democratic right.

However, I am pleased to provide the Chamber with an important update on this critical matter for rugby league in my part of the world. Last month the Goannas were reinstated to the 2024 competition. The club

successfully argued its case to the New South Wales Rugby League appeals board, ably backed with legal support from Byles Anjos Lawyers. With their season back on track, the team has been working overtime to get ready for the big season ahead with former National Rugby League stars Greg Eastwood and Brad Takairangi heading the roster. I popped down to training a couple of weeks ago to give the Goannas some rousing words of encouragement in anticipation of their round one clash with the Narellan Jets that took place this weekend. My rousing words seem to have done the trick. Despite a 12-0 deficit at half-time, the Goannas went on to score six unanswered tries in the second half to take the game 34-12. Special mentions go to Wylleon Baker, who bagged two tries, and Brad Takairangi, who had a perfect five from five with the boot. Comeback kids both on and off the field, a special thanks must go to the club's president, Mark Baird, and vice-president, Korj Kadir, for their commitment and perseverance. I wish the Goannas all the best for the season ahead.

### HAWKESBURY ELECTORATE ROADS

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (00:11):** For the residents of Hawkesbury, local and State roads are the lifeblood of our region. They get us to safety in times of floods and bushfires. Those roads connect residents to work, school, sporting venues, medical appointments, shopping centres and hospitals across the Hawkesbury region and Western Sydney. They move our produce to market and get tradies to destinations every day. State roads are carrying increased traffic as the west grows, and housing is rapidly expanding along the major corridors. Roads like Richmond Road and Blacktown Road are critically important connector roads, but they are becoming unmanageable, and congestion is choking our region. Every morning I see tradies on Richmond Road and connecting streets delayed and frustrated, trying to reach their jobs on time. The previous Liberal-Nationals Government recognised the importance of upgrading Richmond Road and committed \$385 million to upgrade two sections of the road and to make it more flood-resilient.

Investigative reporter Sarina Andaloro, from Channel 7, recently featured a story telling us that the Minns Government is walking away from commencing road construction for many key road projects in this term of Government. Works might begin for many of them after the 2027 State election. That is a betrayal by the Minns Government, which claimed there would be no never-never road projects. Instead, we are getting extended years of planning and design. The Transport for NSW website lists three Richmond Road projects: an upgrade to six lanes between the M7 motorway to Bells Creek, Colebee; an upgrade to six lanes between Bells Creek and Townson Road, Marsden Park; and an upgrade to four lanes from north of Elara Boulevard, Marsden Park. Unfortunately, those projects are barely out of the concept stage. The Government project website indicates that those projects are in the strategic design stage; the strategic, concept and detail design stage; and the planning and field investigation stage respectively. That smacks of a lot of desktop work going on but no shovels in the ground. I fear the intent is to go slow on the Richmond Road upgrades for the next three years and then make some grandiose announcements as we head towards the next State election.

You cannot take the people of Western Sydney for granted. It is not helping families and businesses stuck in worsening traffic. Endless planning does not bust congestion. I asked the Minister for Roads in the other place to provide an update on the Bells Line of Road corridor improvement project. This Federally funded project is managed by Transport for NSW. The project website provides no updates about design or construction. I am receiving representations from the Bells Line of Road Business Council, asking for an update, and there is nothing I can tell them. The Minns Government is relentlessly pressuring councils to approve more housing, and that is exactly what is happening along the length of Richmond Road. It can be clearly seen. The housing development is astounding but the road infrastructure is not keeping pace with the new suburbs. Our region cannot wait another four years to start upgrades on Richmond Road, and I think the member for Londonderry, Minister Prue Car, would agree with me.

These lengthy project timelines come on top of the cancellation of road infrastructure by the Albanese Labor Government. Infrastructure Minister Catherine King punished New South Wales by cutting 17 road and rail projects, including cancelling two commuter car parks in Western Sydney, dropping the upgrade of the Great Western Highway through the Blue Mountains, abandoning stage two of the Mulgoa Road upgrade and walking away from any contribution to the M7-M12 interchange development. We see big promises by Labor prior to elections; they then take the knife to important Western Sydney infrastructure projects once they come into government.

Labor takes Western Sydney for granted. I am calling on the Minns Government to honour its election commitments and get on with the construction of the Richmond Road upgrades. Premier Minns needs to go down to Canberra to demand that the Federal Government restore funding for Western Sydney infrastructure. The Premier must urgently direct Transport for NSW to get on with substantive works on the Richmond Road upgrade project now, not wait until the next election approaches. The people of Hawkesbury, and Londonderry for that matter, deserve nothing less.

## PLANNING POLICY

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (00:16):** I speak to address a pressing concern that resonates deeply with communities across our great State and most certainly in my electorate of Willoughby, and that is the proposed planning reforms put forth by the Labor Government. These reforms, whilst purporting to shape our future, are rife with shortcomings that disregard the voices and visions of our communities. First and foremost, I am compelled to address the most pressing issue facing the Willoughby electorate. The proposed planning reforms threaten to reshape our communities and homes, particularly where the proposed Transport Oriented Development Program reforms would overwhelm a 1.2 kilometre-radius across many suburbs of the Willoughby electorate. This would impact families, schools, roads and the very fabric of our communities, to say the least. While the need for additional housing is undeniable, we must not overlook the potential consequences on our everyday lives. Increased housing density brings with it challenges such as parking scarcity, worsened traffic congestion and disruptions to many functions and elements of our communities.

The Government has addressed none of these issues. The proposed reforms demonstrate a concerning tendency towards a one-size-fits-all approach. As we know, communities are diverse, each with their own unique character, needs and aspirations, yet the Government's approach fails to recognise this diversity. Instead it opts for blanket policies that overlook the nuanced intricacies of localities. What works for one area may not necessarily work for another. Imposing uniform regulations disregards the individuality of our communities. This lack of flexibility and customisation undermines the essence of community-driven development and risks alienating residents who rightly expect their voices to be heard in shaping the future of their communities. Furthermore, the Government's plan lacks foresight when it comes to infrastructure.

If these proposed plans are to be undertaken, there is a glaring absence of a coherent strategy to adequately accommodate this growth. Without sufficient investment in infrastructure such as transport, schools and healthcare facilities, our communities risk being overwhelmed by an influx of residents. The strain on existing resources would undoubtedly diminish the quality of life for current and future inhabitants, highlighting the short-sightedness of the proposed reforms. The disregard for our heritage conservation sites is equally troubling. These sites are not relics of the past; they are an integral part of our local identity, character and streetscape that connect us to our history, heritage and environment, yet the proposed reforms fail to afford them the protection and recognition they deserve. By neglecting to safeguard these sites, the Government risks erasing vital aspects of our collective memory, streetscape, beauty and much more, robbing future generations of enjoying and appreciating such true heritage values and benefits.

In stark contrast, my party has proposed a collaborative approach, working hand in hand with communities to identify suitable locations for increased housing, schooling and healthcare facilities. By actively engaging with residents, my party would ensure that development aligns with the aspirations and values of the people it seeks to serve. This model would not only foster a sense of ownership and pride within communities but also result in more sustainable and inclusive outcomes. Moreover, the Coalition recognises the need to address the pressing issue of the impact of immigration on the housing market. By working closely with Canberra to reasonably and effectively reduce immigration levels, we would aim to alleviate the strain on housing supply and affordability. This measured approach acknowledges the interconnectedness of Federal and State policies, working towards a more balanced and sustainable future for all.

Additionally, the Liberal Party proposes targeted initiatives to support home buyers across all stages of life. For example, stamp duty exemptions for older people looking to downsize would help to bring much-needed relief in an increasingly competitive market. Such incentives would not only stimulate housing activity but also promote intergenerational equity, ensuring that everyone has a fair opportunity to secure a place to call home. That is a vital imperative, as I reflected upon in my maiden speech in this place. Furthermore, we would encourage local councils to play their role in shaping communities by incentivising collaboration with residents. By empowering councils to work closely with community stakeholders, we would foster a sense of ownership and accountability in the planning process. This more bottom-up approach would ensure that decisions reflect the diverse needs and aspirations of the people they affect, resulting in more responsive and inclusive outcomes.

The proposed planning reforms by the Labor Government fall short of addressing the complex challenges facing our communities today. With a blatant disregard for community voices, a one-size-fits-all approach and a lack of infrastructure planning, among other flaws, those reforms risk undermining the very fabric of our communities. There is a shared recognition of the need to lift housing supply, but it must be met with careful consideration and foresight, not the lazy, one-size-fits-all, bad Labor policymaking that we see before us today. Willoughby and New South Wales deserve better than this Labor Government.

## DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (00:21):** When I first entered Parliament, just under a year ago, I asked the local police in my community what their greatest concern was. What was the issue that took up most of their time? For some reason, I thought it would be car theft, drugs or crime that is visible. But I was deeply saddened that it was, and still is, domestic violence [DV]. I am getting nods across the Chamber. I will talk about the issue of escalating domestic violence cases in the eastern suburbs, distressing cuts to funding and some of the brave local women and their supporters who are speaking out. The NSW Women's Safety Commissioner, Dr Hannah Tonkin, said:

Domestic, family and sexual violence ... traumatises individuals, destroys families and undermines our ability to achieve equality in the community. It can be experienced by anyone, regardless of their background. It affects all groups, demographics, identities and communities.

I reiterate that key point: It can be experienced by any community. Since being elected, I have had the opportunity to talk to local women, police, DV groups, charities and constituents about the prevalence of domestic and family violence in the eastern suburbs, to listen to their stories and hear what needs to be done for our local community. Last week's crime statistics confirm what many have already told me. We have seen a 16.2 per cent increase in domestic violence related assaults in the eastern suburbs in the past two years. Last year alone there were 778 reported cases of domestic violence in the east. Plenty more go unreported, and many women self-report to the agencies. In New South Wales, police respond to a call about domestic and family violence every four minutes. Often, statistics like those seem cold—just numbers on a page. But they are sobering statistics. Behind every one of those statistics is the story of an individual.

Last Friday I spoke with two of my constituents with a lived experience of domestic violence. They were strong women, both with children in local schools. They were working hard to rebuild their lives and ensure stability, financial security and certainty for themselves and their children, particularly through finding long-term housing. What got to me was how hard they sought to hide their own stress and fear of their situations from their children. They did not want their children to worry. They are amazing mums. I note that priority 6 of the NSW Women's Safety Commissioner Strategic Plan 2024-2027, released last week, did talk directly to the issue of economic safety and security. It highlighted the reality that DV generates significant financial costs for women and contributes to high levels of financial stress.

Often what I have heard in my community is the prevalence of economic abuse as a form of domestic and family violence in the eastern suburbs. Unfortunately, economic abuse remains poorly understood in the community, so I am glad that the plan has prioritised it. We know that economic security is a key factor influencing a woman's decision to leave, stay in or return to an abusive relationship. What has been made clear from my conversations with constituents, women's groups and charities in recent weeks is just how important it is that we have a well-resourced DV service in the eastern suburbs.

That is why it was incredibly disappointing that the Federal Government recently decided to discontinue funding to a DV support charity in the eastern suburbs, the Lokahi Foundation, which currently provides case management support for 35 women and their families. The eastern suburbs cannot afford a net loss in funding and services for DV in our community. Today in Parliament, when asked about the cuts to the Lokahi Foundation, the Minister with responsibility for domestic and family violence services confirmed, "There is currently no funding available for the Lokahi Foundation." She said that the clients can be serviced by existing State government funded services. But I know those services are oversubscribed, and they cannot cope. Our services deserve financial security and stability. A begging-bowl approach to DV funding does not work. We cannot afford to lose more funding as cases are increasing. That maths does not work. Vulnerable women and families rely on those services, and we cannot let them down.

## REGIONAL YOUTH CRIME

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (00:26):** First, I acknowledge the contribution of the member for Vaucluse about domestic violence. When I spoke on International Women's Day I said that in every country there are differences in how women are treated but that one thing is common worldwide: domestic violence. Until we can purge it from the community, women will never have equality or the opportunities they need. I now turn to youth crime. A few weeks ago in the Lismore suburb of Goonellabah, local person and former policeman Andre Els called a meeting about youth crime in that area. The offences ranged across home invasions, breaking and entering, car theft et cetera. Some caused physical and psychological harm to people. Andre had also been communicating about the subject on Facebook and elsewhere. A few hundred people turned up to the meeting. The Federal member, the mayor and I were there with the local residents, who said they want help and more support in the community.

A whole range of responses and options were canvassed. One of the things that came up was that the offenders that we knew of were all young and some were repeat offenders. The community were happy that the police were doing everything they possibly could, including conducting Operation Regional Mongoose. The speakers included a woman who was so traumatised it was palpable. I could feel her fear. I said that we all have the right to feel safe in our homes. Another man, a former policeman, who had collaborated with Andre, gave a harrowing account of what happened one night. It was a very respectful meeting. Some people talked about wanting the young people contained. Some of them wanted containment in jail; others wanted places that they could take them to. I said that under the Children (Protection and Parental Responsibility) Act police have the power to take the children or the young people, but they have to have somewhere to take them.

We also discussed bail laws—changes were made to them tonight. Programs were also discussed. One man whom I know well—and he will not mind my naming him—is Bradley Walker. He runs the Magpie Centre in Goonellabah, where he is trying to work with the youth to prevent them from committing crimes and being sent to jail. He spoke openly to the crowd and said, "Look, I'm sorry, but I used to be one of those young people who broke into homes et cetera." He spoke so openly that everyone listened very respectfully and very quietly. He also said, "I can tell you: Jail doesn't work. We need to do other things."

Another mother who was present said that she thought her young fellow had been out committing crimes for about 18 months. She was pleading for help. Someone said, "We need more." I have talked about Just Reinvest. I am working with that local group and when Parliament adjourns and I return home we will meet to discuss what we can do with Just Reinvest moving forward. People also talk about BackTrack—and members have mentioned it here. We know how good BackTrack is. In my electorate I have BackTrack, North Tracks Works and RiverTracks. BackTrack is in Tenterfield and North Tracks Works started in Lismore, modelling itself on BackTrack. RiverTracks is in Murwillumbah. All those organisations are working with youth.

I give a shout-out to them because they are all voluntary committees with few paid workers. They are always trying to get money together and I am always trying to get more for them. They care for dogs and do all sorts of other things. Patrick, a local real estate agent, started North Tracks Works in Lismore and the local police superintendent became involved. We stumped up the money to get it incorporated and the group is doing terrific work. There is a lot we can and must do in this space.

### **TERRIGAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR AWARD**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (00:31):** Recently we celebrated International Women's Day and it is with great pride that I recognise some of the amazing women in my electorate of Terrigal. The following women were nominated by their peers as outstanding members of the community for the 2024 Terrigal Woman of the Year Award. Jenny McCulla has been a strong and passionate advocate for her community through her ongoing work as a member of the Davistown Progress Association since 2014 and as president since 2015. With a focus on improving infrastructure for the Davistown area, Jenny works collaboratively with all levels of government to ensure community concerns are raised and that suitable projects and upgrades are submitted for available grant funding.

Since retiring from the corporate world, Judith Andrews has volunteered her corporate expertise and time for many years both to Central Coast Living Options, which is a community-based not-for-profit organisation providing services for people with a disability, and to other not-for-profit organisations on the Central Coast. Judith is also the President of Women's Golf at the Everglades Country Club. Maggie Vincent was nominated for her ongoing volunteer work for various community groups. As the Rotary Club of Terrigal president, Maggie was instrumental in setting up the DCAF Kincumber Dementia Cafe Creative Arts Workshop. Maggie works in collaboration with the NDIS on a project called the Waves Mentoring Project, mentoring groups of young people with disability to learn new skills and create social events. Maggie also volunteers at Days for Girls in Bensville, and this year became vice-president of the 3 Villages Community Group Inc.

Fiona Duignan was nominated for her community service as a volunteer member of the Copacabana Surf Life Saving Club for over 21 years. Fiona was recently recognised as the 2023 Administrator of the Year in the Surf Life Saving Central Coast Awards of Excellence. Fiona keeps the wheels turning and is someone who can build capacity, with the ability to motivate, engage and retain members—which can be hard in a small club. Fiona has implemented many changes, including establishing an enthusiastic communications team and a publicity officer role to uplift member and community engagement in club activities. Lynette Drummond was nominated for her community service as a volunteer member of the MacMasters Beach Surf Life Saving Club since 2000. In the 2022-23 season, Lyn was awarded Surf Life Saving Trainer of the Year from Surf Life Saving Central Coast. The impact Lyn has had on training and development at the club has been significant. Her personable approach and understanding of different learning styles have made her an effective trainer and motivator.

Beris Meldrum was nominated for her ongoing community contribution to the Terrigal Surf Life Saving Club. Beris is a local hero and was recognised as such in 2022. Beris is an all-rounder at Terrigal Surf Life Saving Club and is known to everyone. Beris is the director of finance, a volunteer lifesaver and a volunteer for the function centre. Gail Santi was nominated for her community service to the Springfield community as the president of the Springfield Residents Association. Having grown up in Springfield, Gail has been described as the Erin Brockovich of Springfield. Gail is a passionate advocate, volunteering tirelessly to ensure that Springfield continues to be a safe and wonderful place for families and the community to enjoy.

Julie Redfern was nominated for her community service through her involvement as a member of the Terrigal Surf Life Saving Club as a volunteer lifesaver and as part of the executive leadership for the club as director of administration. Julie has already won numerous community awards recognising her longstanding volunteer work, including winning the 2022 NSW Woman of Excellence based on her professional and volunteer service. Taia Sansom is the instrumental group president of the 3 Villages Community Group Inc. In this role she has organised environmental initiatives and advocated for funding of shared outdoor furniture, such as playground equipment and picnic tables, to ultimately improve the community's atmosphere and environment.

It is with great pleasure that I acknowledge Louise Vangestel, who is Terrigal's 2024 Local Woman of the Year. As a keen paddler, Louise saw an opportunity to set up an outrigger canoe club on the Central Coast. Growing up in the bush, Louise saw firsthand the gap evident between Aboriginal people and white Australia. Louise was determined to establish a club that supports local Aboriginal youth through the development of specific paddling programs targeted at building connection to land and culture. In 2022 Louise established the Tarragal Outrigger Canoe Club. The club's vision is to recognise our local Indigenous peoples and to work to increase the social equity of Indigenous youth, specifically through its partnership with the Frank Baxter Youth Justice Centre and the Bara Barang Corporation Ltd. Louise's vision has brought about meaningful change to the community, melding cultures and removing barriers to anyone wanting to paddle.

My congratulations go to all of these incredible women as nominees for Terrigal's 2024 Woman of the Year. The decision was incredibly hard to make. They are all deserving winners and they are all local heroes. I am proud to have truly outstanding women in the Terrigal electorate working day and night to make our community a better place. I thank them for their dedication and wonderful contribution to our grateful community.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 00:37 on Wednesday 20 March until 10:00 the same day.**

*Written Community Recognition Statements*

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

**JILL CAMERON - CRONULLA SENIOR OF THE YEAR AWARDS**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I congratulate Jill Cameron of Cronulla on being a finalist in the 2024 Cronulla Senior of the Year Awards. Jill joined Elouera Surf Life Saving Club with her children and has been a member for 35 years. She achieved her Bronze Medallion and went on to be an active patrol member and vice-captain. Jill also served on the junior committee and as an age coordinator for the surf awareness clinic and was a member of the club's march past team at the Australian Titles. More recently Jill has been extremely active in the administration areas, assisting with day-to-day office tasks, and has been one of the major contributors to Elouera's Silver Salties program, which helps get seniors involved in physical activity and the surf lifesaving community, as well as making social connections. Jill coordinates the program for Elouera and the club says it has received a great amount of positive feedback from participants and other community organisations.

**GARY RIGNEY - CRONULLA SENIOR OF THE YEAR AWARDS**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I congratulate Gary Rigney of Caringbah South on being a finalist in the 2024 Cronulla Senior of the Year Awards. Gary is a much-loved volunteer for GyMEA United Football Club and goes about doing the jobs that make sure club members get to enjoy their football each week. He has taken on the time-consuming role of ground controller for more than 10 years, getting out of bed early to mark the fields at GyMEA Bay Oval. Gary has also looked after putting the garbage out every Wednesday, organising the equipment room and maintaining gear for the players. Gary has also spent more than 10 years on the club committee. When his children were younger, he was coach of their teams for several years. GyMEA United FC secretary Penny Hummerston says Gary has been dedicated at this role and has always put the club first, contributing a lot of time, especially in the pre-season. Gary was recently awarded life membership of GyMEA United Football Club for his dedication and commitment.

### TANG MEDIA'S UNITING FOR SUCCESS 2023 NETWORKING EVENT

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—I had the great pleasure of attending the "Uniting for Success 2023" event organised by Tang Media on the 9th of December 2023. Tang Media is a prominent media company in Western Sydney, specialising in creative content, advertising, and events across different industries from culture to business. The Uniting for Success 2023 was a business networking event, taking place in Smithfield. I appreciate the excellent opportunity to meet and speak with business leaders across different industries from Australia and all around the world. I had a great time catching up with people with new business innovations and developments. I commend business leaders for their seamless efforts and passion for bringing about new and better products and services for customers and communities. Alongside networking, the event was filled with colourful festivities and entertainment such as lion dances, music, and delicious cuisines. I thank Mr Hoang Nha Tang for the kind invitation, Ms Erika Lam and everyone who was involved in making this memorable event.

### BRAESIDE HOSPITAL

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—I am profoundly reminded of the incredible privilege I have to play a part in bringing joy and happiness to people's lives. The 2nd of December 2023 was particularly special as I had the opportunity to join forces with the amazing Sinilia Radivojevic, Veronica Simonet, Kiara Santini, Rebeca, and a dedicated team of volunteers at Braeside Hospital. Together, we embarked on the heart-warming mission of delivering Christmas presents to many patients, adding a touch of festive cheer to what is a very difficult and worrying time in their lives. I extend my sincere gratitude to Ms Sinilia Radivojevic for her gracious invitation and commendable work in orchestrating events that bring so much joy and happiness to our community. Being part of this initiative not only fills me with a sense of fulfillment but serves as a constant reminder of the positive impact we can collectively make.

### CBANSW (CHINESE BUILDING ASSOCIATION OF NSW) GALA DINNER 2023

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—Attending the 2023 CBANSW (Chinese Building Association of NSW) Gala Dinner at The Star Event Centre in Sydney on 18 November 2023 was an interesting experience. The grandeur of the event was evident with a turnout of over 808 guests, creating a vibrant atmosphere for networking and collaboration within the building and construction industry. The evening was marked by a series of captivating speeches, entertaining performances, and presentation of awards. Notably, the panel discussion brought together distinguished experts from various facets of the building and construction industry, including the NSW Building Commissioner, representatives from the Urban Development Institute of Australia, the Property Council of NSW, Fair Trading and Safe Work and more. The gathering highlighted the CBANSW's commitment to fostering collaboration and knowledge-sharing within the industry. The panel's depth of expertise underscored the association's dedication to promoting best practices and ensuring the construction of high-quality houses and units in response to the urgent needs of NSW. I look forward to witnessing the positive impact and progressive contributions that this Association will make in advancing the standards and excellence of the building and construction sector in our State.

### VALE DR TONY RECSEI

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga)**—I regretfully inform the House of the passing of Dr Tony Recsei of Warrawee. Tony was a member of the Rotary Club of Turrumurra since 1982, and a member of Rotary since 1975. He became President in 1996-1997. Always ready to volunteer, Tony organised the Red Shield Appeal for 19 years and was on hand to support projects from Youth Exchange hosting to the Bobbin Head Cycle Classic. I met Tony at various Rotary functions over the years and through communication with my office. Tony cared deeply about the city's development and fought against Ku-ring-gai Council's Draft Housing Strategy. We had a long discussion when I first became an MP about how to best promote housing while retaining the character of our area. He was President of Save Our Suburbs community group which promotes sustainable living and opposes over-development forced onto communities, such as what the current NSW Labor Government has proposed for the local community. He was known for his record-breaking number of letters to the Editor on this issue. I extend my sincere condolences to his wife Greta, children, grandchildren, great-granddaughter and the rest of his family and friends. Vale Dr Tony Recsei.

### THE TROFFS PASTORAL COMPANY

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—Mr Speaker, I would like to congratulate the connections of The Troffs Pastoral Company on its dominance of the Glamis Shield, which recognises the quality of stock on offer at Forbes' annual first-cross ewe sales, held each year in January. At this year's 45th sale, The Troffs won a seventh Glamis Shield in eight years for a pen of over 200 nine-month-old ewes, which were presented in immaculate condition according to judge Isaac Allen. The Shield was presented to Geoff and Leisa Jones, custodians of The Troffs. Judging notes pointed to the structural correctness and conformation of the penned ewes, which was true

to type. The Jones' have a tried-and-true combination at The Troffs, using Darriwell Merino blood ewes and Glamis Border Leicester rams to produce stock which typifies the Forbes district's strength as a lamb stronghold, both for meat and wool. Mr Speaker, it's no secret life on the land is tough but the last few years have produced added hardship with mice and flood impacting on farming communities. I salute their resilience and congratulate The Troffs on remarkable consistency despite everything life on the land has thrown at them.

#### JAY OPETAIA

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—Mr Speaker, Orange's push to house a centre of excellence for greyhound racing in NSW continues to gain momentum and when the city produces young trainers the calibre of Jay Opetai, it's easy to understand why. Named 2023 Young Achiever of the Year at the Greyhound Racing NSW presentation dinner at Wentworth Park, Jay was a standout candidate for the honour considering his outstanding results during that year. During 2023 Jay prepared 16 winners and 26 placegetters from 71 starts with Street of Dreams claiming the Group 3 Chief Havoc Cup at Gunnedah. In 50 starts since last October, Jay's dogs have recorded 15 wins and numerous podium finishes, with kennel star Go Bears the highlight, claiming the Group 2 Richmond Derby. In 2022 Agland Luai, garnered attention for Jay's kennel by qualifying for the Million Dollar Chase, eventually claiming a prize cheque when finishing fourth. Jay was just 19 at the time. Now 21, Jay's record would be the envy of more seasoned campaigners within the industry. I congratulate Jay on a great start to his career and look forward to him fulfilling his potential, supported a centre of excellence in his hometown.

#### ANDREA AUSTIN

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—Mr Speaker, unwavering, compassionate and loyal are words the Parkes community has used to describe one of their own, Andrea Austin. For 35 years, Ms Austin has been an integral part of BaptistCare Niola Aged Care in Parkes before announcing her retirement in January this year. With a policy of making residents feel like they have their 'best day every day', Ms Austin has become known as Niola's go-to-girl by her colleagues and residents. Her commitment to people-first care has enabled her to touch the lives of a huge number of families, making her a much-loved member of the Niola community. Born and bred in Parkes, Andrea won't be a stranger to her friends and former workmates at Niola, where her in-laws are residents so she will be a visitor. Travel and spoiling her grandchildren are also on the agenda. Mr Speaker, aged care is one of the most important, yet under-valued vocations in our country and in regional and rural NSW it is vital for communities to function. I thank Andrea for her empathy, loyalty and the unwavering care she has provided at BaptistCare Niola.

#### DYLAN BRAAN

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to congratulate Dylan Braan, from Warilla, for winning a gold medal at the Para Power Lifting Pro Classic on the Gold Coast on 3 February 2024. Dylan lifted an impressive 153 kilograms to win in his first ever official registered competition. 25-year-old Braan was born with anterior horn cell spinal cord disease which is a rare polio which only himself and one other person in the world has. This means he requires the use of a wheelchair for mobility. Paralympics 2028 is one of Dylan's goals. He is competing in all the upcoming World Cup events and getting used to competing internationally as well as national competitions. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Dylan on his very well deserved gold medal result and wish him well in all his future sporting endeavours.

#### BLAKE MACKRELL

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to congratulate Blake Mackrell, a student at the Shellharbour Anglican College, who proudly represented NSW Country Cricket in the U/17 National Cricket Tournament held in Newcastle City from 10 January 2024. Run by Cricket Australia and hosted by Cricket NSW, the championships are an annual event featuring the best top-grade, country cricketing talent with elite male and female teams representing their states and territories. Blake's team came home victorious, winning the championship. Blake's outstanding bowling skills were also recognised as he claimed the bowling award, having taken an impressive tally of 17 wickets at an average of 9.35 for the tournament. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Blake on this achievement and wish him well in his future sporting endeavours

#### COURTNEY MARSH

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to congratulate Courtney Marsh, a student at Corpus Christi High School, for being selected into the Step Up into Teaching Program. This year saw the introduction of the first external scholarship program offered through The Australian Catholic University which is called the Step Up into Teaching Program, offering Year 11 students the opportunity to fast track their careers in teaching. Courtney has already successfully completed 2 units of the first year's teaching degree which grants her automatic admission into a teaching degree at ACU in 2025 and significantly lessens her workload in her first year of the

degree. This opportunity also has provided Courtney with some great insights into university life and has greatly assisted in preparing her for a career in teaching. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Courtney on this achievement and wish her well in her future teaching studies.

#### **A T JONES ALBURY - PETER & TONI FLOWER RETIRE AFTER A COMBINED 86 YEARS OF SERVICE**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to extend my congratulations to two remarkable individuals Peter & Toni Flower, as they embark on a well-deserved journey into retirement after a combined service of over 86 remarkable years at A T Jones Pty Ltd in Albury. A T Jones Pty Ltd holds a special place in our hearts as a family owned business, serving our community since 1933. Under the guidance of manager Warwick Jones, this one stop Pump Sales & Repairs business has thrived, overcoming many economic challenges over decades of challenge and change. As we celebrate Peter and Toni's retirement, I acknowledge their roles as being pivotal in shaping the identity and reputation of A T Jones Pty Ltd. The power of your experience and expertise have earned you the respect and admiration of colleagues and customers whilst serving our community needs. Undoubtedly both have left an incredible mark on the business, a true legacy of hard work and dedication. Well done Peter and Toni, as you embark on your retirement, creating new memories filled with joy and relaxation.

#### **BUDDING ARTISTS MAKING THEIR MARK - BRIGHT BIRDS PROGRAM**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to acknowledge Evie Meikle and Jen Tait who have both played a pivotal role in steering The Bright Birds project. This work of creativity and inclusivity is specifically designed for young adults with disabilities and who are navigating their way into the world of art in Albury. Thanks to Jen Tait's vision and determination, a studio space was secured in the former Charles Sturt University building behind Adamshurst, providing the perfect environment for artistic growth and expression. The Bright Birds Program currently has ten budding artists ready to embark on their creative journey. The program aims to help the artists nurture and develop their skills, and immerse them into the world of art experiences. Under the guidance of Jen Tait and the dedicated team, these artists will also explore their unique styles and unleash their creativity, with the ultimate goal of establishing themselves as working artists and creating new works of art. I am grateful for the invaluable contributions and enthusiasm of Evie Meikle and Jen Tait and all those involved in the Bright Birds Project, as they make their mark in the world of art.

#### **CHRYSLERS ON THE MURRAY**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to extend my appreciation to Elko Performance, Rod Taylor, the Albury Wodonga Chrysler Club and volunteers for their invaluable support and continued sponsorship for Australia's biggest event on the border, the 2024 Chryslers on the Murray. For an impressive 31 years Chryslers on the Murray has been an event of automotive excellence, celebrating their 100th year of Chrysler in 2024. Thanks to the dedication of Elko Performance and the leadership team, this event has flourished, showcasing over 850 Chryslers from across Australia and delighting enthusiasts and visitors alike. Beyond the automotive event there is the boost to local tourism, bringing thousands of visitors, with hotels bustling and restaurants thriving, injecting vital economic energy into our border community. This year \$14,000 will be generously donated to three local fire brigades, recognising the crucial role they play in keeping our community safe. Well done Elko Performance, Rod Taylor, the Albury Wodonga Chrysler Club and all the volunteers for your outstanding contributions and to the success of this event on the Murray.

#### **LOCAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR AWARD NOMINEE - GENEVIVE DESLANDES**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in recognising Genevieve Deslandes, one of Ryde's nominees for the 2024 Local Woman of the Year Award. Genevieve's dedication to our community and unwavering commitment to uplifting others make her an exemplary nominee. Genevieve serves as a Headspace mentor, where she has consistently offered guidance and support to countless young people in need. She is also a staunch advocate for women, championing their rights and empowerment in every aspect of her work. I am reliably informed that her work is impeccable and has made a bigger difference to her mentee's lives than she possibly appreciates. Her leadership and compassion make her a shining example for others to follow. The nomination for Ryde Local Woman of the Year is a testament to her outstanding contributions in the community and her tireless efforts to make a positive difference. I trust it will serve as lasting recognition of her remarkable achievements and dedication to service. It is an honour to congratulate her on this well-deserved recognition.

#### **LOCAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR AWARD NOMINEE - DONNA ARMSTRONG**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in recognising Donna Armstrong, one of Ryde's nominees for the 2024 Local Woman of the Year Award. Donna's unwavering dedication to the Ryde Little Athletics Centre has been truly commendable. As President, she exemplifies leadership, consistently delivering high-quality athletics events in our community and enthusiastically steering the club's administration. Donna's

proactive approach has brought about significant improvements to the track and facilities, including securing a complete resurface of the field, additional storage space, and enhancements to the clubhouse through collaboration with Ryde Council. Despite much of her work being behind the scenes, Donna's impact on the growth and development of the Ryde Little Athletics Centre has been undeniable, even during the challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic. Her commitment to fostering a supportive and thriving environment for young athletes is genuinely inspiring. Donna's nomination is a testament to her dedication and contributions to our community. I am proud to recognise her accomplishments and extend my best wishes for continued success in her endeavours. Congratulations, Donna, on this well-deserved recognition!

#### **LOCAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR AWARD NOMINEE - ALISON HALLWORTH**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in recognising Alison Hallworth, one of Ryde's nominees for the 2024 Local Woman of the Year Award. Alison is a true legend in our community, leaving her mark on our community through her boundless generosity and unwavering dedication. As a devoted mother, wife, and friend, Alison's compassion knows no bounds. She tirelessly extends her hand to those in need, offering her time and support without hesitation. Her remarkable efforts within her school's P&C have just been instrumental, raising significant funds and spearheading initiatives that have profoundly impacted our community. Alison's journey as a stroke survivor has transformed her into a passionate advocate for stroke awareness. Her advocacy work has not only educated others about the signs of a stroke but have also inspired countless individuals to prioritise their health. Alison's nomination for the Local Woman of the Year Award is a testament to her selflessness and profound impact on our community. We recognise her contributions with immense pride and gratitude. Congratulations, Alison! Your tireless dedication and compassionate spirit make you truly deserving of this recognition.

#### **COUNCILLOR TRICIA HITCHEN**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I rise to commend Clr Tricia Hitchen for her extraordinary service as a Penrith City Councillor for the last twelve years, including two years as Mayor and three years as Deputy Mayor. It is with great sadness to know that she has confirmed her intention to not recontest the next Council election. Clr Hitchen has always been a fierce advocate for the community and has secured many important outcomes. She has improved the lives of so many through her passion to ensure that people with disabilities have equal access and opportunity to enjoy the facilities that Penrith City has to offer and was instrumental in Council opening multiple adult change rooms across the area. Clr Hitchen has always put the community above politics. If there's an opportunity to work with people and organisations to benefit the community, Clr Hitchen is always in the front seat driving the progress. She has been a strong advocate in dealing with domestic violence and, whilst Mayor, her Mayoral Charity Ball raised \$60,000 for The Haven – Nepean Women's Shelter. I congratulate and thank Clr Tricia Hitchen for her service.

#### **TERINA-GRACE RAPANA-HOTERE - 2024 YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I congratulate and commend St Clair local Terina-Grace Rapana-Hotere for being one of twelve exceptional young leaders from across NSW to have been selected to join the 2024 Youth Advisory Council. Her selection follows an extensive recruitment process that saw 717 young people aged 12 to 24 apply. Terina-Grace and her peers will serve on a Council whose purpose is to advise the NSW Government on issues that are relevant to young people across NSW. My Parliamentary colleagues would be aware of some of the attributes that Terina-Grace brings to this role. It was only last August that I spoke in Parliament about the debating achievements of Terina-Grace and her debating team. I'm so proud to know her list of achievements continues and that her qualities will be of further use in advancing the cause of our state's youth. I congratulate Terina-Grace and thank her for her service to the Youth Advisory Council.

#### **ORAN PARK PROBUS CLUB**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I congratulate and commend Oran Park Probus Club on reaching the milestone of their 10th anniversary since their formation in February 2014. The Probus mantra is 'Fun and Friendship in retirement', and the Club is open to all who wish to enjoy themselves in retirement. It's wonderful that retirees have a network through which they can form friendships, socialise and maintain their mental health. Members of the club enjoy a wide variety of events such as meetings, coach and train trips, meals, coffee, chat sessions, theatre, craft, walking groups, among other fun activities. Oran Park Probus Club has approximately 64 members and is looking to grow their membership to around 100. I thank the members of the club for all they do for each other and for being so welcoming to new members. I congratulate the Oran Park Probus Club for this great milestone and wish them many more joyful decades ahead.

### OPTIMAL HEALTH OPENING

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)**—Leppington, as an emerging community, has been waiting for the vital services to match its growth. That's why it was an immense privilege to cut the ribbon to Optimal Health Medical Centre in Leppington Village. I joined the team at Optimal Health, as well as several of my new neighbours in the Leppington Village Shopping Centre to celebrate this important opening in Leppington. My electorate's population has grown quickly. Lots of housing has been constructed over the last decade, but we have been lacking the essential services and infrastructure. With the Leppington Town Centre rezoning and services like Optimal Health have been beginning to pop up in Leppington. I look forward to seeing our community mature and develop in the years to come. Thank you to Dr Steven, a fellow Bonnyrigg High School alumni, for inviting me to this event. It is always a privilege to be there to watch new local services open their doors.

### PETER MOORE OAM

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)**—I congratulate Peter Moore who was recently awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia as part of this year's Australia Day Honours List. The OAM was in honour of his many years of service to the game of cricket across our great state, especially in my patch of South Western Sydney. An avid cricketer since the Under 12s, his career continued through to the seniors until a broken finger saw the end of his wicket keeping duties, where he turned to umpiring and administration. Peter was previously the Secretary of the Fairfield Liverpool Cricket Association for 16 years and is now the President. A role he has held since 2011, making him the longest serving President in the association's history. He was awarded life membership in 2013 and last year oversaw the Association's centenary. Peter is also President of the mighty Hoxton Park Tigers Cricket Club, the biggest club in the district and based in the great electorate of Leppington. I congratulate Peter on a well-deserved accolade and his continued contribution to the sport.

### LITTLE PILOTS ACADEMY

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)**—On the 9th of November I had the pleasure of visiting Little Pilots Academy in Middleton Grange. Little Pilots is a small childcare centre in Middleton Grange, taking its name from the aviation themed streets around the suburb. These streets in turn took their name from the former Hoxton Park Airport. Zedna Mardini opened the small centre and is one of many small childcare owners opening around my electorate to accommodate the influx of young families to the outer South West. I look forward to visiting and partnering with services like these. I know Zedna for one is passionate about practical solutions to improve safety for families in our growth suburbs. I want to thank all the staff for their hospitality in hosting me and I would like to thank Ramin, Fateh, Thomas, Liam, Cordelia, Ibrahim, Emily, and Alicia for their beautiful artwork that now hangs proudly on my office wall for all to see.

### GOODSTART EARLY LEARNING CENTRE WENTWORTHVILLE

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—It was great to visit Goodstart Early Learning Centre in Wentworthville on Monday, 26th February 2024. Goodstart is Australia's largest provider of early learning and care. It is a not-for-profit organisation, supporting over 56,000 families and 67,000 children across the country. It has over 600 centres across Australia, including 5 in our local Electorate of Prospect. Goodstart Early Learning Wentworthville offers a preschool program and long day care. All of the rooms, from Nursery to Kindergarten / Preschool, are set up in line with their Early Years Learning Framework, with sensory and play-based learning opportunities. They also have a cook on premises five days a week, providing healthy and nutritious meals, while also catering for children with food allergies. Goodstart Early Learning Wentworthville teaches children about contributing to the local community and being active members of society. Through visits to the centre, excursions and participation in community events, the centre goes above and beyond to give children a head start and reach their full potential. Thank you to Lisa Gibson, NSW State Manager and the Goodstart Early Learning Wentworthville team for the wholistic supporting the centre offers our Western Sydney community.

### OUR LADY QUEEN OF PEACE, GREYSTANES – MICHAEL HOPLEY

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—On behalf of the Western Sydney community, and personally, I would like to sincerely thank Michael Hopley for his service as Principal of Our Lady Queen of Peace [OLQP] Primary School, Greystanes. Michael, Mr Hopley as he is known around the community, retired after 26 years of dedicated service to Catholic Education in the Diocese of Parramatta. A welcoming, compassionate and committed educator, Michael has gone above and beyond to wholistically support our community. As a leader in our OLQP School, Parish and community, Michael has been integral to shaping young minds for generations. With an all-encompassing approach to education, Michael helped students develop life skills to reach their full potential – inside and outside the classroom. Michael has overseen building and development projects to transform the school physically and pedagogically. These projects have given our students the best learning resources and technology, to inspire life-long learning and success. A true witness to the school's patron, Our Lady Queen of

Peace, Michael accompanied every student, teacher and parishioner with kindness, faith and hospitality. Thank you again Michael for supporting our community. I wish you and Margaret the very best in your well-earned retirement.

#### **SOUTH SUDANESE COMMUNITY – SAINT BAKHITA MASS**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—The Electorate of Prospect is home to many wonderfully vibrant Equatorial African families who enrich our local community. The Reverend Vincent Long OFM Conv, Catholic Bishop of the Diocese of Parramatta, concelebrated the Saint Bakhita Mass with our community at St Patrick's Church, Mary, Queen of the Family Parish, Blacktown, on Sunday 11th February 2024. Saint Josephine Margaret Bakhita is Patron Saint of South Sudan, modern slavery and human trafficking survivors. She was born in 1869, abducted as a child, forcibly converted to Islam and forced to walk almost 1,000 kilometres barefoot before enduring more than a decade in slavery. She was bought and sold several times until she finally secured her freedom. Saint Bakhita's story of deliverance is an inspiration to people seeking their own physical and spiritual deliverance. Her story resonates with people from all walks of life, across the Electorate of Prospect and Western Sydney. The Saint Bakhita Mass and community celebration is an annual event held by the Diocese of Parramatta, the Australian Catholic University, and the South Sudanese Australian Catholic Community. Thank you to Bishop Vincent for concelebrating the Saint Bakhita Mass with our local African and multi-faith community.

#### **DORRIGO UHA**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—I rise today to acknowledge more than 40 dedicated volunteers from across the Mid North Coast who recently gathered in Dorrigo for the United Hospital Auxiliaries 2024 Regional Forum. They represent a greater number of tireless volunteers across the local area that have collectively contributed more than 60,000 hours of service to their respective local hospitals. In the past financial year alone, their efforts have contributed to raising a remarkable \$457,885 for the purchase of essential equipment that enhances patient care and comfort and ensures that our healthcare facilities remain at the forefront of medical excellence. The forum serves as a platform for volunteers to exchange insights, share ideas, and foster friendship among like-minded individuals committed to making a difference in healthcare delivery. I would like to give special mention to Dorrigo UHA members Sandra McGuire and Shirley Tyson who were recognised at the forum and presented with 20-year service badges. Your efforts have not gone unnoticed and the impact that you have made to our hospitals and the community is truly immeasurable. Thank you again to the United Hospital Auxiliaries and its volunteers.

#### **FUNDRAISING FOR WIRES**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—More than 120 locals demonstrated their shared love of wildlife and original acoustic music at the Alofa Sands Surf Club Cafe in Nambucca Heads where organiser, Georgia Cortes Rayner plans became a reality with a Wildlife Information Rescue Service Mid North Coast [WIRES MNC] fundraising event. The beautifully executed performance of the indigenous acoustic music was highly received by the local audience with Nambucca Valley local musicians graciously giving their time and musical talents for this wonderful event. The astounding \$4300 that was raised will help the Wildlife Information Rescue Service Mid North Coast in the Mid North Coast continue to save lives and improve their effectiveness and capacity to care for sick, injured, and orphaned wildlife. It is hoped that these extra resources will ease some of the burden that the WIRES carers carry. The funds raised—thanks to these amazing local artists and kind local businesses—will go a long way towards providing WIRES volunteers with the supplies they need to care for the wildlife entrusted to their care. The success of this wonderful makes me delighted and I commend all for their contribution.

#### **KEMPSEY CANNONBALLS SHINE AT INAUGURAL RUGBY 10'S TOURNAMENT**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—Both the male and female Kempsey Cannonballs left their mark on the inaugural Rugby 10's tournament in Port Macquarie. Teams from all over the East Coast, Wagga Wagga and Queensland attended the competition. Kempsey Cannonballs women's team qualified for the Semi-final. However, the team had to forfeit due to low numbers. Meanwhile the men's Cannonballs side won their semi-finals after playing their sixth game of the day, they narrowly missed out on the title to Wagga City Internationals, as runners up of the competition. Rugby 10's organiser Michael Reid said the inaugural event was partly inspired by the Crescent Head Rugby 7s tournament. He said the event was a great success. The quality of the teams was good, fast paced, with competitive games. Congratulation to both the Mens and Women's Cannonballs teams, both teams did well especially, the Mens Cannonballs team being runner up in the competition. It is hoped the event will become an annual affair and the Cannonballs will continue to shine and perhaps "bring home the bacon" next tournament.

### CLARENCE VALLEY SPORTS AWARDS

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—Clarence Valley's talented athletes, sports clubs and local sports personnel were celebrated during the 2023 Clarence Valley Sports Awards at the Bowlo Sports and Leisure Yamba on February 10. As the annual event proudly celebrated a decade of sporting legends, close to 200 people gathered in anticipation. The Clarence Valley Sports Awards highlight the strength and skills of the local sporting community, and the volunteers who dedicate countless hours to enable competitions, tournaments, and sports carnivals to go ahead. Brooke Hanson, one of Australia's most recognised Olympians, who has enjoyed a decorated career in the pool was guest speaker for the occasion. Grafton Paralympian Jessica Smith, who was unable to attend the event, was inducted into the Grafton Shoppingworld Wall of Fame during the night. Andrea Thomson was the recipient of the People's Choice Award for Junior Female Legend of the Decade following another outstanding year in the pool. Clarence Valley BMX Club rider Tahlia Marsh was overwhelmed to receive both the Junior Female Legend of the Decade and People's Choice Senior Legend of the Decade titles on the night. Congratulations to all participants, winners, and volunteers over the past sporting year!

### YAMBA ROTARY TURNS 40

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I would like to offer my congratulations to Yamba Rotary Club as they celebrate 40 wonderful years in the community. Working tirelessly to assist, fund and coordinate many infrastructure projects including the Yamba Rotary Defibrillator Project. Supporting several annual community events including the Twilight Markets, Family Fun Day on Main Beach and Eat Street Yamba. Supporting local schools and assisting many local students to attend Rotary youth programs and exchange programs to overseas countries. The Club's current focus is on the awareness and prevention of domestic violence in the local and wider community. I commend Yamba Rotary Club on their outstanding efforts and achievements over the past 40 years, well done!

### CLARENCE VALLEY COUNCIL

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—Congratulations to Clarence Valley Council who have taken the silver award in the Australian Street Art Awards in the Best Monument or Memorial category for the 2022 Flood Memorial Murals project. The 2022 Flood Memorial Murals project was one of thirty-four public art experiences recognised as the best in the country at the Australian Street Art Awards, commissioned by Clarence Valley Council, funded through the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation. Artist Nitsua's mural on the Lawrence water tower, designed in consultation with students at Lawrence Public School, depicts a child gazing up at the moon, with a Rainbow Lorikeet soaring through the valley symbolizing the everlasting flow of the mighty Clarence River. Artworks by Al Stark painted on the pylons under the Harwood Bridge depict four female river sentinels, embodying the stories and dreaming of river and sea. These works commemorate the floods which affected Yamba and surrounding villages, they stand as reminders of the power of the Clarence catchment. Artwork installed on planter boxes in Prince Street, Grafton, represents the work of twenty artists who were invited to tell their flood stories. Congratulations to all artists on these wonderful artworks and to Clarence Valley Council, well deserved.

### PENNANT HILLS HIGH SCHOOL WINTER CARNIVAL

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga)**—Local festivals bring people in the community together and enable organisations to raise funds for worthwhile causes. In 2022, the Pennant Hills High School Winter Carnival was held for the first time. I was generously invited by the P&C President Dayan McLeod in 2022 and again in 2023, with the school joining the newly formed Wahroonga Electorate. It was all the fun at the fair with rides, raffles, food, markets and more and I had the pleasure to speak with Principal Ross Warren and Carnival Director Michelle Scott. The carnival saw large community turnout, and not just from the school community. It also helped to raise necessary funds which will go back to the school. I commend the P&C and school community, including all the staff and people on the day for making this event happen for the benefit of the school. I look forward to seeing it continue next year.

### KU-RING-GAI CHAMBER OF COMMERCE SMALL BUSINESS PANEL

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga)**—October was Small Business Month in New South Wales, and it was a great opportunity to recognise the contribution small businesses make to our communities. I had the pleasure of being on the panel at the Ku-ring-gai Chamber of Commerce business event and discussing many of the current issues facing our small businesses. The Ku-ring-gai Chamber of Commerce has been incorporated since 2009, including suburbs from Wahroonga, Warrawee, Turramurra, St Ives, Pymble, Gordon, Killara, Lindfield and Roseville. The panel discussed many issues facing small businesses, including the rising operational costs and the draining labour shortages that are crippling many industries. We discussed other ongoing hurdles, including navigating regulation, workplace safety, rising rental costs and cost-of-living and keeping up with the

frequent changes to regulatory compliance. We also discussed newer challenges that businesses are facing as a result of evolving technology, including cybersecurity. It was fantastic to be able to share my views on each topic as well as hear from successful business owners and entrepreneurs from the Wairoa electorate.

#### **WORLD LYMPHOEDEMA DAY**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—Wednesday 6 March marked World Lymphoedema Day and March is Lymphoedema Awareness month. The disease of Lymphoedema is a chronic and permanent swelling of one or more body parts. It does not discriminate on the basis of age, gender, sexuality or race. Anyone, anywhere, at any time can develop this lifelong condition. I was pleased to host local GP, Dr Debbie Geyer and advocate Yvonne Hughes and Margie Malouf, who spoke of the condition and the tremendous work that the Lymphoedema Association of Australia does to raise community awareness and action. Dr Geyer serves as Vice President and is dedicated to its mission of ensuring that people living with lymphoedema get the information, treatment and support they need to live well, regardless of where they live. I wish the Lymphoedema Association well, thank these advocates and commit to working further with the Association, as it continues to provide essential support and advocacy for those living with the condition.

#### **INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY BREAKFAST - REDLANDS SCHOOL**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—To celebrate International Women's Day, I had the pleasure of being a guest at the International Women's Day Breakfast at Redlands School in Cremorne on 12 March. Led by the School's students, the 'Count Her In' breakfast featured inspirational guest speakers including Vicki Condon AM of the Raise Foundation, and my colleague the Hon Bronnie Taylor MLC. The panel discussion facilitated by the schools Liz Green was exceptional, insightful and entertaining. The audience was deeply touched and encouraged by these women and their remarkable stories of candour, courage and capacity to lead, inspire and serve. I applaud the incredible group of student leaders who played an integral role in making this event such a success. I thank the school community of Redlands for including me in their IWD festivities. The event was a real credit to the Redlands School community and its mission to inspire our young people to excel and 'let their light shine'.

#### **CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—Since its founding by Ian Kiernan and Kim McKay in 1989, Clean Up Australia Day remains a fantastic community event that invites all of us to make a practical difference to our natural environment. I was once again delighted to take part in the annual Clean Up Australia Day on Sunday 3 March. The local Willoughby Clean Up Australia Day effort was a wonderful example of teamwork and community service. I joined the 1st Northbridge Scouts and other residents under the leadership of Northbridge local, Charles Alma. A true champion of his community, Charles has been an active leader of Clean Up Australia Day on the Northbridge foreshore since it commenced thirty-four years ago. In 2024, Charles was pleased to report that there is less rubbish, many fewer needles and fewer cigarette butts compared with previous years. That said, our team still found bag loads of rubbish to remove and there is still more progress to be made in keeping our local foreshores, waterways, parks and reserves clean. I encourage our community to keep up the great work, not just on Clean Up Australia Day but every day.

#### **GARY RAYMOND, RFPANSW, APM, OAM, DIP VET**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—I recognise Gary Raymond, RFPANSW, APM, OAM, Dip VET. Gary's career has been one of incredible service and dedication to the community. He began his career as an Ambulance Officer with the Ambulance Service of New South Wales where, at the age of 18, he was put in charge of a trauma ambulance in Sydney. From here Gary joined the New South Wales Police Force where he served as a General Duties Officer, Rescue Instructor and Operator, Designated Detective, Peer Support Officer, Senior Royal Commission Investigator, Duty Officer, Commander, and Terrorism Risk Assessor. Gary worked many tough cases including the Hilton Hotel Bombing, Granville Train Disaster, Luna Park Ghost Train Fire, and many more incidents. Despite having a tough and traumatic upbringing, this never dampened Gary Raymond's desire to help and serve others. Now retired, Gary keeps busy serving others as the Chaplain to the Police Post Trauma Support Groups as well as being a member of the Salvation Army's Suicide Prevention and Bereavement Board for the Australian Eastern Territory. Recently Gary was an inspirational guest speaker at the Kenthurst Rotary Club. Thank you, Gary, for your dedication and service to your community.

#### **BRUCE FRASER FIELD**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—I recognise the service to the community of Bruce Fraser. Bruce was the founding member and inaugural President of the Glenhaven Soccer Club. Bruce, with a few residents had a dream to develop Holland Reserve at Glenhaven into the home of the Glenhaven Soccer Club. At the time the Reserve was very overgrown with a small patch of cleared grass. A proposal was put to the Council in July 1990 and work commenced to develop the Reserve in August 1990. Glenhaven Soccer Club played its first match at

Holland Reserve in 1992. Bruce was the President of the Club for ten years and he remained an active member for the following twenty years. Sadly, Bruce passed away on 1 July 2023. As a tribute to Bruce's long-standing service to the community the Deputy Mayor of the Hills Shire Council, Councillor Mitchell Blue moved a motion in December last year to name the playing field within Holland Road Reserve as 'The Bruce Fraser Field.' On 9 February 2024, The Hills Shire Council placed a sign on the field naming the field, 'Bruce Fraser Field'. Thank you to Bruce Fraser, for your dedication and exceptional service to the community.

#### **NORWEST SUNRISE ROTARY CLUB – ROTARY YOUTH LEADERSHIP AWARDS**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—I recently had the pleasure of meeting two inspiring people at the Norwest Sunrise Rotary Club. Sophie Poredos and Isaac Choi spoke to the Club regarding their experience at the Rotary Youth Leadership Awards, otherwise known as RYLA. RYLA is a week-long program open to people aged 18-28. RYLA was held between 6 January 2024 and 12 January 2024 at the conference centre at Murrumbateman, NSW. The program aims to equip young people with leadership skills and to build connections, by facilitating access to influential and inspirational speakers. Sophie said, "through this week-long program, the challenging activities questioned my understanding of leadership and how that looks in local communities." I commend Rotary for offering such valuable programs to young adults in our community. The formation of strong community leaders is an important task with an important outcome. Congratulations to Sophie and Isaac for your participation in the RYLA program. I am certain Sophie, Isaac, and other RYLA graduates will make great leaders of future communities. Finally, thank you to the Norwest Sunrise Rotary Club for your commitment to the youth of our community.

#### **NIKOLA STOJANOVSKI'S 100TH BIRTHDAY**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—I would like to wish a special Happy Birthday to Nikola Stojanovski for celebrating his 100th birthday this month with his family by his side at Hixson Garden Aged Care Centre in Bankstown. This extraordinary milestone is one to be celebrated in our community contributing to our diversity and connectedness. Having served in World War II in the Yugoslavian army, Nikola has lived a full life. His journey from Macedonia to Australia in 1986, driven by the desire to support his family showcases his selflessness and dedication. Throughout his life, he loved gardening and nurtured his own veggie patch for his 4 children, 9 grandchildren and 13 grandchildren to use and enjoy displaying his generosity and love for his family. His secret to his longevity is to "not sweat the small things" and appreciate life's simple pleasures, such as reading the newspaper, gardening and spending time with family. On this momentous occasion, we celebrate Nikola's incredible life and wish him continued health and happiness. May his days be filled with love, joy, and cherished moments with family. The presence of our seniors truly makes our community brighter. Happy Birthday, Nikola!

#### **BANKSTOWN WOMAN OF THE YEAR – MONA MAHAMED**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—I would like to acknowledge Ms Mona Mahamed for receiving the Bankstown Woman of the Year Award. It was an honour to attend the NSW Women of the Year Awards on the eve of International Women's Day and celebrate the incredible achievements of women in our State. Mona is the founder and CEO of Community Support Services Incorporated [CSS] which offers support to the culturally and linguistically diverse women and families in our community. Her dedication is nothing short of incredible, with CSS supporting 27,000 people from CALD communities. The non-profit social enterprise delivers education, employment and practical support for vulnerable people, including those struggling with isolation and financial stress. Mona embodies a sense of empowerment and growth evident through the delivery of self-empowerment workshops for women, school holiday, art and craft activities for kids, social connection programs for the elderly, and much more. Congratulations Mona! It is inspiring to witness the incredible efforts of Mona and her team in fostering diversity and connectedness within our diverse community. I am sure she will continue to support marginalised women and their families in empowering them to thrive in our society.

#### **ISSAM OBEID - WINNER OF 2024 VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—I am proud to acknowledge Mr Issam Obeid as the well-deserved winner of the 2024 Volunteer of the Year Award. This recognition is a testament to Mr Obeid's unwavering commitment, tireless dedication, and exceptional contributions to the Bankstown community. Throughout the year, Mr Obeid's passion for community service has not only inspired others but has also played a crucial role in fostering a sense of unity and goodwill within the Bankstown electorate. His enthusiasm and commitment to organising impactful events, planning essential programs, or simply offering help whenever it is needed is heart-warming. Mr Obeid has consistently demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to making the

Bankstown community a better place for all. His ongoing selfless acts of kindness have left an indelible mark on the hearts of the community as he provides his assistance to those in need in a positive way. The Volunteer of the Year Award reflects Mr Obeid's outstanding character, leadership, and the positive influence on the well-being of our community. I extend a heartfelt congratulations to Mr Obeid and express my deepest gratitude for his invaluable contributions and wish him continued success.

#### WARREN SMITH OAM

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney)**—I would like to congratulate Mr Warren Smith on his 38-year career as a board member at the St Marys Rugby League Club. Warren spent 35 of those years serving as President of the club, this is a remarkable achievement. Warren has been a pillar of the St Marys community. During his presidency, Warren supported local charities and businesses within my electorate, while offering guidance and support to the members of the St Marys community. Warren is especially well known for his dedication to the St Marys Saints Rugby League Club, who would not be where they are today without Warren's guidance and support. Although Warren will be retiring at the end of this month, I know that he will continue to be a vital part of the St Marys community. The community and I are so proud of Warren. Thank you, Warren, for your dedication and support, we wish you all the best for the future.

#### JENNY GELDART

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise today to recognise Jenny Geldart. Jenny was recently nominated for the Goulburn Electorate Local Woman of the Year Award for her outstanding contribution to the Murrumbateman district. Jenny moved to the Murrumbateman district in 1996 with her young family and since this time has worked tirelessly in a variety of roles to support the community. Jenny is the founding member and President of the Yass Valley Band, where she provides mentorship for young musicians, donating her time to Yass High School and their music program. Each year Jenny has played the Last Post on Bugle at the Anzac Day Dawn Service at Bowning and whilst representing the NSW State Emergency Service, Jenny plays the Bugle at the Police Remembrance Day Service in honour of fallen Police. Jenny is the Community Engagement Officer and Storm Heights Specialist with the Yass Unit of the NSW State Emergency Services. Organising many community events with a focus on educating children, alongside their parents about what to do during storm events. I commend you on your tireless contribution and leadership within the community.

#### CHRISTINE WURSTEN

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise today to recognise Christine Wursten. Christine was recently nominated for the Goulburn Electorate Local Woman of the Year Award for her outstanding contribution to the community of Goulburn Mulwaree. Christine is the President of the Tallong Community Focus Group and the owner operator of The Shed in Marulan. Christine has been pivotal in her role with the Tallong Community Focus Group and the Tallong Apple Day Festival. Volunteering many hours of her time to progress a range of community projects, including upgrading of the community park in Tallong. The Tallong Apple Day Festival has become an outstanding success for the Tallong community and thanks to Christine's dedication continues to draw visitors from near and far. I take this time to recognise and congratulate Christine for her tireless work within the community and thank you for your dedication.

#### BINNY SHEPHERD

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise today to recognise Binny Shepherd. Binny was recently nominated for the Goulburn Electorate Local Woman of the Year Award. Binny has been described as a truly remarkable woman, who has selflessly given many hours of her time volunteering with Chris Riley's Youth off the Streets and continues to volunteer in the Op Shop in Bowral. The charity store supports the work undertaken to care for young people who are disadvantaged, homeless, drug dependent, and or recovering from abuse. The support provided aims to assist young people to turn their lives around, overcoming significant disadvantage, immense emotional trauma, which may have been caused by neglect, physical, psychological, and emotional abuse. Binny's compassionate and caring disposition has seen her devote time to assisting, visiting, and inquiring about those who are ill, isolated, and lonely individuals across the Robertson and Burrawang area. It is with sincere recognition that I commend Binny for her tireless, respectful and community minded spirit. I thank her for her time and dedication in helping others.

#### CENTRAL COAST COUNCIL – 2024 GREEN DESTINATIONS STORY AWARDS

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—Mister Speaker, I want to offer my congratulations to Central Coast Council for their achievement with the Central Coast winning first place in the global Green Destinations Story Awards at the world's leading travel trade show, ITB Berlin. The Central Coast was the only Australian certified ECO Destination recognised on the international stage at ITB Berlin 2024 and is leading the way for sustainable

tourism on a global scale. Council has worked tirelessly over many years to achieve ongoing global best-practice sustainable destination standards and support our local tourism industry on their own sustainability journey with Ecotourism Australia's Certifications and Programs. Their winning story is a testament to the whole region's commitment to sustainability and is an inspirational model for other Australian and international destinations to grow sustainability from the ground up. Council's destination marketing and management initiatives have resulted in winning accolades and major awards over the last few years, including this current global win, but equally significantly, Council's support has also helped grow local business, economic growth and jobs in the sector. Congratulations to Central Coast Council on achieving this outstanding global award!

### **MARINE RESCUE TERRIGAL**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—Mister Speaker, last week I had the pleasure of attending Marine Rescue Terrigal awards ceremony on the foreshore of the Haven at Terrigal. Marine Rescue is a volunteer based; not-for-profit professional organisation dedicated to keeping our boaters safe on the water as well as playing an important part on educating on marine safety on the Central Coast. Volunteers Shaun Smith, Darren Wright, Adrian Nicholas and Czeslaw Lawicki from Marine Rescue Terrigal received the Commissioner's Citations for their actions during the 2017 New Year's Eve display explosions at Terrigal Haven, which resulted in two people being thrown into the water and rescued by Marine Rescue NSW crew. The volunteers involved in the rescue have been recognised for their courage, bravery, teamwork and dedication to saving lives on the water. Congratulations to these wonderful volunteers on this well-deserved recognition. Commissioner Barrell also presented Marine Rescue Terrigal volunteer John Finn with a 2nd Clasp National Medal for his 35 years of service to Marine Rescue NSW and the Royal Australian Navy Reserve, whilst Greg Berrington received the Unit Commander's Life Membership. Thank you to our volunteers at Terrigal Marine Rescue for your ongoing service and for keeping our community safe.

### **JACK HARPER**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—I congratulate Mr Jack Harper, a budding Young Auctioneer hailing from the Central West town of Cowra, on being selected as a finalist in the 2024 ALPA NSW Young Auctioneers competition. Recently, Jack attended Sydney with thirty-nine other NSW stock agents to refine his auctioneering abilities and secure a spot in the top 10 2024 ALPA NSW Young Auctioneers competition. Jack will be representing Allan Gray & Co. at the Sydney Royal Easter Show on the 22nd of March 2024, where he will be tasked with selling three steers. The judges will assess Jack's clarity, diction, manner, and livestock-value knowledge. In 1989, the NSW Stock and Station Agents Association held its first Young Auctioneers competition, where the winner received the John Weeks Memorial Trophy. This tradition remains 35 years later. Hoping to retain the John Weeks Memorial Trophy within the Cootamundra Electorate after Harry Waters of Gundagai won last year's competition, I look forward to witnessing Jack in action. Congratulations and all the best again, Jack; see you soon.

### **KEITH WOOD**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Mr Keith Wood after he announced his retirement from a stellar career of service in originally the Royal Australian Navy [RAN] and of more recent times the Gundagai RSL. Keith has been serving as the RSL Secretary for the Gundagai Branch for ten years and is looking forward to being able to direct more of his time towards working as chairman with the Local Area Health Advisory Committee [LHAC] at the Gundagai Hospital. Keith enlisted at age 15 and a half, initially completing his trade training at HMAS Nirimba in Quakers Hill, before commencing a lifelong series of postings both at sea and back on land, including HMAS Melbourne, HMAS Sydney, the HMAS Perth and finally as the engineer of HMAS Brisbane. Keith was the engineer on the last steam ship of the RAN. Keith was then posted to Cairns where he oversaw the maintenance organisation before being posted to Canberra. Keith and his wife have begun to enjoy cruising, with Keith admitting cruising was certainly not on his agenda after retiring from the RAN. I wish to convey my deepest thanks to Keith for a lifetime of service.

### **AMBER BLYTHE**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—I would like to take this opportunity to recognise and congratulate Ms Amber Blythe. Amber and her fantastic team of ladies at Amber Blythe Conveyancing – Ash, Laura, Susan, Casey and Amber have been named 2024 Business of the Year for the Australia Day Awards in Young. Amber has an impressive 17-plus years of conveyance expertise, founding Cultiv8 Conveyancing in Pty Ltd in 2018 and then Amber Blythe Conveyancing Pty Ltd in 2021. Amber has completed her Bachelor of Laws [LLB] at Charles Sturt University. Amber and her all-female staff pride themselves on being the "local Conveyancer" serving the Hilltops region. Amber was recently honoured as part of Young High Schools Wall of Renown in 2023 and is a very proud Young High School Alumni. I visited Amber and her team on the 4 March, marking the start of International Women's Week 2024 and I am delighted to report they are doing some incredible

things in the ever-changing world of conveyancing. These wonderful ladies are actively kicking goals in the community and deserve to be celebrated for their amazing work. Well done to Amber and her team.

#### **LIVERPOOL NEIGHBOURHOOD CONNECTIONS IWD LUNCHEON**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)**—I recently joined the wonderful clients and staff of Liverpool Neighbourhood Connections for their International Women's Day Luncheon at their home in the Warwick Farm Community Hub. Liverpool Neighbourhood Connections are a local grassroots organisation providing direct relief and tools to create brighter futures in the Liverpool community. In addition to their main home at Warwick Farm, the team at LNC conduct regular outreach to Heckenberg, Cecil Hills, Lurnea, Casula and Moorebank, giving so many in and around the Liverpool electorate the opportunity to engage in their programs. People of all ages, backgrounds, and cultures came together to share their unique stories and insights. It was really lovely to hear from so many women across the Liverpool community about what International Women's Day means to them. We don't often get an opportunity to reflect on the strides made for women in so many aspects of society, and this was one of those chances to celebrate how far we've come and acknowledge to work still to do. Thank you to LNC co-CEO Carole Anne Priest, and the entire team, for organising this event and for your continuing dedication to supporting our community.

#### **MAX LOPES**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)**—I wish to recognise the outstanding achievements in public speaking of Max Lopes from Freeman Catholic College in Bonnyrigg Heights. Max, a Year 11 student, recently competed in the Grand Final of the Catholic Schools' Debating Association Public Speaking Competition, placing in the top twelve of students in Catholic Schools. The CSDA is the largest and oldest debating and public speaking competition in New South Wales, having been established over 50 years ago. The debating and public speaking competitions are open to all Metropolitan Sydney Catholic High Schools, with the competition having expanded into the Wollongong Diocese in recent years – which makes the CSDA all the more competitive! The CSDA's public speaking competition takes place over three hotly contested rounds in term 1. It is with admiration and respect that I congratulate Max on his outstanding achievement. He is a credit to his school and to the broader Liverpool community, and I look forward to seeing him excel in public speaking into the future.

#### **EILEEN O'CONNOR CATHOLIC SCHOOL**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—On Friday 15 March I attended the annual Bishop's Breakfast at the Epping to listen about the exciting new Eileen O'Connor Catholic School. This new school will join 44 schools in the Catholic Diocese of Broken Bay. It will be a 200 student Kindergarten to Year 12 centre of excellence based at Tuggerah on the Central Coast. Importantly, it will connect to existing primary and secondary schools and parish communities across the entire of Broken Bay, that includes the Davidson electorate. To date, 46 students with a disability are enrolled in the new school's support network, including students at St Martin's Catholic Primary School at Davidson. I recognise one local student, Leo, who's story was shared at the breakfast. Leo – you inspire us all! I also recognise the leadership of Bishop Most Reverend Anthony Randazzo DD JCL, Danny Casey, the Director of Schools, and Fiona Dignan, the new principal, for their leadership in ensuring education in Broken Bay is inclusive for all students. I commend Fiona's passion and dedication, and share her words that the Eileen O'Connor Catholic School is a place "Where we can inspire hearts and minds".

#### **ARTHUR KRUST OAM**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—I recognise Gordon resident Arthur Krust OAM, who has marked 70 years as a lay preacher. The Killara Uniting Church Parish recognised his service in their March 2024 journal. Arthur commenced lay preaching when he was 17 years old, having been accredited by the Methodist Church. In the early years, he has the task of open-air preaching outside Ryde Cinema. He tells the journal it's been an absolute joy and privilege to serve as a lay preacher, "I have been greatly blest to serve with so many saints". Arthur says it's his conviction, that there's a continual struggle in a world between good and evil, that has challenged him to be a part of the fight for good. On Australia Day 2009, Arthur was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia [OAM] for "Service to the building and construction industry, and to the community through church and service groups". I have known Arthur and his wife Elizabeth for almost a decade. They are warm, considered and thoughtful. I am proud to call them my friends. I commend Arthur on having strong values and ideals to make our world and community an even greater place.

#### **CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY 2024 - ST IVES TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—On Sunday 4 March 2024 I joined St Ives Towards Sustainability [SITS] for the annual Clean Up Australia Day. Clean Up Australia Day was established by Ian Kiernan AO in 1989. Over the past three decades, more than 21 million Australians have donated more than 38.5 million hours of their time. In 2024 at the St Ives Village Green, 44 people helped volunteered to clean up our local community.

We collected 33.9 kilograms of rubbish. This mostly included plastics (such as small plastic fish used for sushi), bottles, wet wipes and cigarette butts. These items do not break down timely or naturally. I encourage everyone to place their rubbish in the bin. If it is recyclable, place it in a recycling bin, or at one of the local Return & Earns at Belrose, Gordon, Roseville Chase, or St Ives. I recognise the team at SITS Alizee Vanderveken, John Byrnes, Luke Collard, Pranita Sambhus, and Pearl Fernandes. Thank you for bringing the community together for Clean Up Australia Day and for your ongoing leadership towards supporting our natural environment.

#### TARA SENAM

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—Last week, I had a fantastic time celebrating International Women's Day with the fabulous women in the Gosford electorate. We are so lucky to have many inspiring female leaders in our community. Today, I would like to praise a hospitality rockstar, an innovative industry expert, and a passionate ambassador for youth and young adults, Tara Senam. Tara started working at a cafe when she was twelve years old, telling her parents that she would buy her own cafe one day. Fast forward to now, Tara is the CEO and Director of Meraki Group which owns 6 different venues across the Central Coast. Her two latest restaurants in the Gosford electorate, Little Miss Mezza in West Gosford, and Kefi in Koolewong have created such a buzz in the community due to their flavoursome menus and top-notch customer service. Tara is the perfect description of the phrase "beautiful inside and out" for her dedication to raise fund for various not-for-profit organisations such as Central Coast Kids in Need, and Coast Shelter. From the bottom of my heart, I thank Tara Senam, and her commitment to our community.

#### GOSFORD GOLF CLUB PARAGOLF PROGRAM

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—With immense pleasure, I want to acknowledge the Gosford Golf Club for their inclusive ParaGolf Program, which provides all-terrain wheelchairs called the ParaGolfer, allowing an inclusive and accessible experience for all golfers. Gosford Golf Club has a humble beginning as a virgin bushland with nine sand greens at Jusfrute Park, and thanks to the amazing works of its members, who undertook most of the construction works in the early 90s, this fantastic Golf Club is only 3 years shy from its 100th anniversary. It is our privilege to have such a fabulous venue, which has always been a social club for people to connect, and a scenic recreation destination for local community and tourists to enjoy a great sport. With only five ParaGolfers available for public use in NSW, with one at Gosford Golf Club, the Club are putting their mission in practice; to promote inclusiveness within sport, ensuring that our entire community can access the joy of sport. I applaud the team at Gosford Golf Club for making their inclusive mission a reality for our community.

#### YARRAN

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—A huge congratulations and thank you so much to the fabulous team at Yarran in East Gosford. The Yarran team has been involved in various forms over 40 years to support young people with disability in their early years of life, providing support for everyone to live up to their true potential. The team at Yarran tailors for early childhood education, early childhood intervention, and NDIS support to wraparound school-aged children of all needs. They support families who are already connected to the NDIS as well as early childhood education centres to improve the support provided to kids with disability. The team are vibrant, passionate, professional, and deeply compassionate, and tirelessly deliver services from Lake Munmorah in the north, to Mooney Mooney in the south of our beautiful Central Coast. Early childhood educators are incredibly important in our community, and those educators at Yarran provide intervention support to make life better for every single young person. Put simply, the educators at Yarran are worth their weight in gold. Thank you ever so much to the fabulous team at Yarran, and everyone connected with your services.

#### SAYNO2DV INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY EVENT WOLLONDILLY

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—The International Women's Day Pamper Event held by the SayNo2DV Camden Wollondilly Domestic Violence Committee was an uplifting morning, raising vital awareness about the domestic violence services available within the Wollondilly area. The event had over 300 attendees and prioritised women's wellbeing and self care, creating a supportive environment for those present to connect, share experiences and reflect on the resources available in Wollondilly for women. While there is still a long way to go in addressing the appalling statistics around domestic and family violence, the persistence and hard work of organisations such as the SayNo2DV committee is making inroads and making a difference in the lives of those who might find themselves in a situation of violence or abuse. Working in Wollondilly and surrounds, the SayNo2DV committee collaborates closely with Camden and Wollondilly Shire Councils along with NGOs and community services, contributing to the ongoing efforts to combat domestic violence and provide support to survivors. I commend and thank the SayNo2DV committee as they continue to spearhead initiatives aimed at creating safer environments and a secure future for individuals impacted by domestic violence.

### STURT GALLERY AND STUDIOS

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—For eight decades, Sturt Gallery and Studios in the Southern Highlands has quietly solidified itself as the premier location for education and training in contemporary craft; epitomised in its internationally renowned Sturt School for Wood. Sturt was the first post-war crafts studio of its kind in Australia, offering courses, residences, workshops, and exhibitions focusing on woodworking, ceramics, textiles and jewellery. In this post-industrial age of mass produced, low quality goods the importance of an institution like Sturt cannot be understated or undervalued. The skills and knowledge of the handicrafts taught there contribute to the culture and the history of Mittagong itself. Founded in 1941 by visionary educator Winifred West with the goal of providing a place for educational excellence that respected and cared for its natural bush surroundings, Sturt Gallery has for decades nurtured artists, artisans and craftspeople. Beyond just the skills that were trained and honed within the Studios, Winifred West was driven to create connections between the individual and the community, and this is seen through the immense pride that the local communities of the Highlands have in Sturt. I look forward to seeing the talent, creativity and excellence they produce in the future.

### RESTORATION OF VALUABLE RIPARIAN ZONES IN WOLLONDILLY

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—I was pleased to participate in the recent tree-planting launch of an exciting community restoration project. The Great Eastern Ranges has joined with Amazon Web Services in a two year long project to enhance the riparian habitat in Wollondilly, focusing on several sites around Picton, Thirlmere and Buxton, starting last week at the Picton Showground. Along with Wollondilly Shire Council, Greater Sydney Landcare, landholders and community groups, this project aims to improve water quality, reduce stormwater runoff and erosion and increase biodiversity in riverine habitats. The enthusiasm and efficiency at the tree planting event underscored the pressing need for regeneration in this area following the devastation of the Black Summer bushfires. The project aims to improve, expand and reconnect habitats for local wildlife through management of the weeds, erosion and excess sediment that also pose a threat to water quality. Wollondilly forms a vital part of the Sydney water catchment, and this project will deliver an additional 32 million litres of water to the Sydney catchment each year. This is an important project for soil, erosion, and weed management as our region and habitats recover after floods and fires.

### PARTH SHAH

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—Congratulations to Charlestown District Cricket Club's Parth Shah, who became a father for the first time the week before first day of the Newcastle District Cricket Association's first-grade minor premiership match against Hamilton-Wickham. By all accounts, Parth proceeded to deliver an exceptional display of bowling. During the match on 2nd March, Parth took 6 wickets for 21 runs from a combined 13 overs (3 for 16 and 3 for 5). A fantastic contribution with the Hanwicks being dismissed for 80. Charlestown declared at 7 for 227. It is wonderful to see such an excellent display of cricketering prowess and uplifting to hear how much the experience was enjoyed by Shah himself. Charlestown captain Daniel Arms said: "Had a baby on Monday, first kid, then comes back and it was the best I've seen him bowl all year... It was good fun, he was happy and nicking blokes off like he's done his whole career." Charlestown is currently third on the ladder. I wish them every success.

### KAY FITZGERALD

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—The Newcastle Show is a highlight of the calendar for the Lower Hunter, and this year was no exception. For 122 years, the Newcastle Show has attracted entries in categories including canvas work, needlepoint, tapestry, crochet, beading, knitting, mosaics, macrame, paper arts, textiles, weaving, spinning, embroidery, and patchwork—a dazzling array of talent, skill and dedication which is somehow both extraordinary and every day. Amongst the many skilled craftspeople whose works were on display was Whitebridge local Kay Fitzgerald. She has won an array of ribbons for her handicrafts, representing a range of skills, from stitching, crocheting and knitting, to embroidering, pasting and painting. Kay remembers every quilt, dress, dolls bedding set and wall-hanging she has entered into the show. Her crafts are incredible, and I want to thank her and her fellow handicrafters for keeping these extraordinary artist traditions going strong.

### MEG DOLAN AND JENNY'S PLACE'S EMPOWERED WALK

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—A big thank you to Meg Dolan for standing up, speaking out and encouraging the Hunter community to step up and speak out by participating in Jenny's Place Annual Empowered Walk. The Empowered Walk is a positive community call to action and a chance for everyone to show their solidarity to end the cycle of domestic and sexual violence. It is heartening to know that more than

300 people registered for the event on 18 February. As Meg stated, "The Empowered Walk is a public opportunity for everyone to be a visible and united force in calling for social and systematic change." It's also an imperative opportunity to come together to encourage and celebrate the many brave warriors, just like Meg, who are using their story and voice to inspire change. Meg has said that she wants to help dispel the burden of shame that victims carry and remove the stigma associated with asking for assistance, and remind women and children facing domestic violence are not victims, they're warriors. I couldn't agree more.

#### ELLIE SMITH

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast)**—Congratulations to Ellie Smith from Jilliby who won her second women's Elite Downhill National Championships. The fastest racers in Australia competed in the 2024 GWM Mountain Bike National Championships at Awaba Mountain Bike Park at Freemans Waterhole on March 16th. The 23-year-old finished the course in a time of 4:05.18, despite having a crash, Ellie kept clear with 14 seconds between silver medallist Elise Empey. Ellie was amazed to receive her second national championship and found it special to be competing at her home downhill track. There was pressure for the racer, though the end result was soon to amaze and relived the pressure. This is a great achievement from Ellie Smith considering the wet weather conditions just days before the Championships and blitzing first place. Only 3 weeks before the Championships Ellie was officially crowned Elite Queen of Cannonball at Thredbo's 2024 Cannonball MTB Festival for the second time. Ellie has a record in competing nationally and overseas in many World Cups including Lenzerheide, Andorra and France. Currently, she is a fully qualified Sheet Metal Fabricator completing her apprenticeship and TAFE locally on the Central Coast.

#### WYONG WOMEN'S SHED

**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)**—Wyong Women's Shed celebrate their 5th Anniversary with President Kim Moylan, Vice President Colette Burton and active members, special guests from Lake Haven Bunnings, Wyong Leagues Club, Creightons Funerals and Creating for Charity. It was great to celebrate with the members of the group and hear how Wyong Women's Shed has positively impacted their lives by offering a variety of benefits, including a supportive environment, friendship and to learn arts and crafts. Making connections and building relationships is important for our wellbeing, creating a safe space. The celebration brought all the members together sharing a grazing table full of fruits, sandwiches, and sweets. The Wyong Women's Shed members have worked on projects such as donating beanies to Orange Sky, Sensory Mats and adult bibs for Bethshan Gardens Nursing Home, ANZAC Day Poppy wreath for Toukley RSL which is on display in their foyer. Also, the group donates their sewing creations to Creating for Charity who distribute to charities and community organisations. Congratulations on celebrating 5 years of achievements and may you have many more to come.

#### BARBARA DEWHURST

**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)**—Local resident Barbara Dewhurst from Alino Living's Lake Haven Court celebrated her 92nd birthday. Barbara is born on February 29, 1932, in England, a leap year birth date setting her age of 23 years old and marking this occasion in style. Barbara's vibrant personality matches her bright colour and flair for fashion, shining through in every interaction with a keen intellect and a warm heart. Throughout her life, Barbara has been passionate about dancing, attending dance lessons and exploring the Isle of Man, having visited seven times. Many good memories are held with Barbara throughout her life, and she will cherish them forever. To celebrate the special occasion, Lake Haven Court organised a memorable event, complete with a photo wall featuring Barbara's journey through the years. A talented singer performed Barbara's favourite tunes, while family, residents and staff came together to honour her. Barbara's daughter, Susie, was present, along with other close family members. I wish Barbara a day filled with laughter and joy, happy birthday.

#### OLDER MEN, NEW IDEAS

**Dr JOE MCGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—In February, I was honoured to speak at a meeting of OM:NI in Wagga. OM:NI, which stands for Older Men, New Ideas, is a terrific organisation which has quietly been working away behind the scenes in Wagga for 23 years to make a real and lasting difference for older men in the community. Recognising that older men, especially those who have lost their partners, are at risk of becoming isolated and depressed, OM:NI provides a safe and confidential place for men to learn how to better share their feelings, listen to others and make social connections that in some cases can be literally lifesaving. Older men are alarmingly over-represented in suicide statistics but groups like OM:NI are helping those men to find comfort and support. Among the many who have contributed to this success are Marika Kontellis and David Scott of the

Council on the Ageing, OM:NI leaders Dr Raymond King OAM, Frank Deluca, Peter Piltz, Peter McCallum and the Murrumbidgee Primary Care Network's Shelley Gledhill. Thank you to all for doing so much for the older men of Wagga Wagga and surrounds. It is important that we make older men more aware of OM:NI.

#### **ST JOHN'S JRL GOOD SPORTS**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker, I would like to congratulate the St John's Junior Rugby League Club on being named the 2023 Good Sports National Community Club of the Year! As part of the Good Sports program, the club has tackled topics such as alcohol, illicit drugs, smoking, mental health, and safe transport and by influencing healthy behaviours, the club and its volunteers have received well earned recognition. By implementing new policies and guidelines that focus on the well-being of their members plus educational sessions that highlight the risks associated with unhealthy behaviours, the club has seen a noticeable shift in players' attitudes and a decline in antisocial behaviour. By expanding the focus of the club to more than just the game, St John's activities have become more community focused and they have grown from just a sports team into a supportive and inclusive community. Well done to every member of the St John's Junior Rugby League Club. Players, Coaches, Parents and Supporters – your commitment to the Good Sports program has shown just what's possible when each member of a club is committed to a common goal! I'm sure you'll be kicking goals on and off the field this season!

#### **EMILY WILLIAMS, SIMONE GROUNDS AND ERICA LUNNEY**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker, I would like to congratulate Dubbo's Erica Lunney, Emily Williams, and Simone Grounds on their success at the recent Master's NSW Track Titles. The three ladies had outstanding individual performances, all bringing home an impressive collection of medals! Erica, Emily, and Simone not only excelled at individual events; these three ladies also contested the explosive Teams Sprint where each rider completes only one lap. The first rider is responsible for getting the team started with the first lap and then "swinging up" and allowing the remaining riders to come through at top speed. The second rider then keeps pace and swings up the track to allow the third rider to finish the event. These three ladies completed the distance in 57.67 seconds to secure gold and top spot on the podium. Their collective success is a testament to their hard work, perseverance, and commitment to excellence in their sport. Their achievements should not only bring pride to themselves but serve as an inspiration to aspiring riders. Their next event will be the National Track Titles in Brisbane where they will compete in the Master's Division and I wish them successful rides in the titles.

#### **AIRLINK 50**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker, I would like to congratulate Airlink, Dubbo's Local airline, who are celebrating 50 years of flying high! Established in February 1974 by Olaf Weyand as an aircraft charter operator Airlink has become an integral part of regional transportation in the NSW Outback. Dubbo local, David Miller, acquired the company in 1989 and grew operations to include scheduled passenger services that commenced in 1991, after Hazelton Airlines sold their Western NSW routes. Regional Express purchased Airlink in 2005 and continued to operate the airline under the Airlink brand until 2018 when it was sold to the current owners, Aviation Logistics. Airlink currently operate services to Dubbo, Walgett, Bourke, Lightning Ridge, and many other regional towns as well as offering a charter service, to provide vital safe and reliable air services to support the people of Western NSW. Whilst operating and supporting locals over 50 years, Airlink have built some significant relationships, including their work with Taronga Western Plains Zoo flying animals and zoo staff to remote release sites! 50 years in business is a significant milestone and I congratulate them on this remarkable achievement. I also express my sincere gratitude for the vital service they provide.

#### **2024 LONG HAI DAY COMMEMORATIVE SERVICE**

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping)**—I recently had the honour of attending the 2024 Long Hai Commemorative Service at the Boronia Park Cenotaph in Epping. The 8th Royal Australian Regiment (8 RAR) Association (NSW Branch) in conjunction with the Epping RSL Sub-Branch have been instrumental in our local community with assisting veterans and continuing our national tradition of honouring those fallen in battle. The 8 RAR gives special attention and focus to those who died during Operation Hammersley (1970) where the regiment played a key role. At this service we came to pay tribute to a soldier of the 1st RAR by the name of Private Harry Winston White who fought in Vietnam from 1965 till his heroic death on 16 May 1968 at Long Binh, South Vietnam. Private White was 23. As he was an old boy of Epping Boys High School it was fitting that a plaque be dedicated to him at his local cenotaph. My thanks go to the 8 RAR for organising a most solemn service and to the students of James Ruse High Australian Army Cadets for their service as the Catafalque Party.

#### **STACY JACOBS**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Congratulations to Stacy Jacobs, who was highly commended in the 2024 Maitland Local Woman of the Year Awards. Stacy's

focus is supporting young people in our community. Stacy's works with many organisations and schools in the region to provide young people with experiences that they may otherwise miss. For many years Stacy has provided free driving lessons assisting more than 100 young people to get their Ps. More than 10 years ago Stacy started a free formal clothing collection for students in years 10 and 12 that has grown in popularity and is now online. Stacy provides low-cost mental health first aid courses in schools and the community and is working with East Maitland Rotary Club to add to this work in 2024. Stacy also manages a small library in Rutherford that distributes free books. Stacy is a member, board member or life member of Maitland Basketball Association, PCYC Cessnock, Family and Community Services Cessnock, East Maitland Rotary and is on the NSW Hidden Treasures Honour Roll. Thank you Stacy for your dedication to the community of Maitland.

#### **DR SALLY KEIR**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Congratulations to Dr Sally Keir, who was highly commended in the 2024 Maitland Local Woman of the Year Awards. Well over a decade ago, Sally recognised a need for peer support for cancer patients in Maitland. Rather than lament the lack of such an organisation, the Maitland Women's Cancer Support Group was born. Sally is a pivotal and much-loved 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. Sally is also co-founder, with the late Sue Harley, of the Hunter/Maitland Lymphoedema Support Group, and setting up and running the Hunter Lymphology Clinic in Maitland, dedicated to clinical education of undergraduate physiotherapy students. Sally is a committee member of the Lymphoedema Support Group of NSW; board member of Lymphoedema Association Australia and volunteering on their social media and support group committees, and as the editor of Lymph Exchange, the journal of the Australasian Lymphology Association. Sally regularly speaks about lymphoedema to the ENCORE program, as well as to other groups as an invited speaker. Thank you Sally for your dedication to the community of Maitland.

#### **JENNY CRIDLAND**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Congratulations to Jenny Cridland, who was highly commended in the 2024 Maitland Local Woman of the Year Awards. Jenny 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 with Volunteers for Palliative Care Maitland. Throughout her remarkable journey, she has consistently provided support to clients and their families without any breaks in service. Despite enduring the heartbreaking loss of her own husband to dementia, Jenny has remained steadfast in her commitment to helping others during their most challenging times. Jenny works tirelessly for those in need and is currently actively caring for four clients and their families, dedicating over 30 hours each month to visiting them, accompanying them in the community, maintaining regular phone contact and supporting their family members. Jenny's compassion and nurturing nature shines through in every selfless decision she makes, demonstrating her unwavering dedication to those she supports. Thank you Jenny for your dedication to the community of Maitland.

#### **VALE JIM COOK**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I pay tribute to Jim Cook, late of Burraneer, who passed away in February aged 93. Jim was a stalwart for many years of the Rotary Club of Cronulla, of which he was a member from 1965 to 2023. Jim served as president in 1969-1970 and was secretary for a number of terms between 2003 and 2017. In 2015 as secretary, he was involved with the installation of six bronze plaques around the Cronulla War Memorial that Jim said were designed to remind the community of the enormous sacrifices made by servicemen and women. Jim received several Paul Harris Fellow awards named after the founder of Rotary for contributions to the Rotary Foundation that invests in life-changing sustainable projects. Rotary Club of Cronulla president Jean-Philippe de Jong said of Jim "His 58-year membership to our Club exemplifies unparalleled loyalty to Rotary, quite possibly setting a district or even national record. Jim's legacy of selfless service to our community through Rotary will forever be cherished." I extend my sympathy to Jim's family and friends, particularly his wife Ellen and children Margaret, Ian and Jennifer.

#### **YALLARWAH PLACE**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—On 20 February, patients, their families and community celebrated the 25th anniversary of Yallarwah Place, a vital community hub for ATSI people who need to travel to John Hunter Hospital for medical care. The anniversary recognises the significance of this place to the Hunter community, also serving non-indigenous families as the need arises. Yallarwah Place reflects reconciliation and our shared journey together, featuring one of the earliest combined Indigenous and non-Indigenous memorials in this country. Yallarwah Place – "resting place" in the Awabakal language - has been a source of solace, support, and comfort for thousands of patients and their families across the Hunter New England Local Health District since its inception. On the grounds of JHH, the site includes Uncle Bob's accommodation centre (named after

Aboriginal Elder, the late Robert Smith), as well as the Bicentenary Memorial Walk and Circle of Reflection for quiet contemplation. The hub was established from a dream by Paul F. Walsh OAM and Susan Harvey, and Deputy Head of the Wollotuka Institute at the University of Newcastle, Dr Raymond Kelly. If this is what dreams can do, then let's have more dreaming!

#### **SIMPSON SHOES**

**Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend)**—After 93 years of service, expertise and product knowledge, Simpson Shoes will be closing its doors for the last time. With a rich history in shoemaking and repairs in earlier years, and more recently in the sale of comfort shoes, the business motto - "Outstanding service for the perfect fit" - sums up why they will be missed. One of the final frontiers of an era of local business when products were made with care for local people, the store at 100 Elder Street Lambton was bought in April 1934 after the business was established in 1931 by bootmaker Stephen Simpson, by renting a shed in the back yard of the local pub. The store has been run by the third-generation owner Craig Simpson for 4 decades. He has kept and treasured items owned by his father and grandfather – old machines, shoe lasts, patterns, the original workbench and tools. The Simpson Shoes legacy ends in March 2024 - but there is no substitute for artisanal quality and the commitment that a dedicated family brings. Many thanks for all that you have done for the local community.

#### **MERCIA HARDY**

**Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend)**—Mercia Hardy was a strong, contentious personality, attracting a lot of controversy, demonstrating great courage and fortitude as she confronted the patriarchal society of her time. Born in the USA circa.1869, Mercia's family migrated to Australia, settling in the Wallsend district, where she owned a millinery shop prior to marrying Mayor of Lambton Council George Hardy in 1886. They owned the Carrington Hotel on the corner of Nelson and Tyrell Streets, along with some adjoining shops. Mercia, exposed to the politics and social expectations of public life, nominated in 1922 for the Wallsend Council. The Newcastle Sun on 27 November read: "Lady Candidate – Standing For Council – Wallsend Live-Wire Will Shake Things Up". The reporter's summation was: "She is a brisk little woman, and is full of business". She was not elected as Mayor of Wallsend. Mercia was all about progress - relentless property investor and generous philanthropist, raising funds for the Wallsend Hospital, active with the Wallsend Red Cross Ladies Group and an important influence establishing recognition for local war veterans in the area. Mercia died in October 1937 and is buried beside George at Wallsend Cemetery.

#### **A TASTE OF IRELAND**

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith)**—It is fitting that just after celebrating St Patricks Day that I acknowledge and congratulate Emu Heights local Olivia Kennedy on her outstanding international Irish dancing career. What began as a hobby at the age of 4 soon captivated the young teen and she set her sights to competing in England and moved there at age 14 to further her training and compete in the European division. In 2020, at 18, Olivia battled through the COVID national border closures as the performing arts industry took a massive hit. During this period, she changed focus from competing and would instead move on to touring with an Irish Dance Show. Now, at age 20, Kennedy has been able to live her dream by performing Irish dance by touring England and Taiwan with 'Lord of the Dance'. Olivia has now returned to her home turf to tour Australia with 'A Taste of Ireland'. I'm particularly excited that fresh from performing in all corners of the world, Olivia is back showcasing her talents for the Penrith community at the Joan this Thursday.

#### **LAPS FOR LIFE**

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith)**—Throughout the month of March, nine participants from Penrith RSL Swimming Club have banded together to raise money for ReachOut Australia's Laps for Life. Laps for Life is a national initiative challenging individuals and swimming clubs to come together to swim laps to help raise awareness of youth mental health and suicide prevention. Sadly, suicide is the leading cause of death for young people in Australia, and it's a situation that's only going to get worse until more help is targeted and delivered in this area. Penrith RSL Swimming Club Vice President Richard Long got the idea for Laps for Life from his wife to bring suicide awareness and support a large number of young swimmers in his Club. This month, Penrith RSL Swimming Club participants have been challenged to swim at least 120 laps to achieve a fundraising goal of \$2000. Congratulations to all involved with Penrith RSL Swimming Club as they are more than halfway toward their fundraising goal. It is vital that we as a community continue to support their initiative as we aim to help young people feel better about themselves, today and the future, no matter what challenges they are facing.

#### **PENRITH BUS FORUM**

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith)**—I want to acknowledge all the Penrith residents who came to our Bus Forum on the 15th February at Penrith RSL. Also to give a big shout out to all those Penrith locals who took the time to put in written submissions. One of the reoccurring themes was the inadequate coverage and frequency

of our Penrith bus services. In a thriving and growing city our public transport services are vital. Given we only have one heavy rail line which also extends over the mountains to service beyond Western Sydney so many of our residents and students rely heavily on buses. Our Penrith area includes a major hospital and University that services one of the largest geographical catchments in the Sydney area so accessible reliable public transport is crucial. I thank Dr Marjorie O'Neill MP for taking the time to attend the Penrith Forum and interact with our community.

#### **MICHAEL BOWEN**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises Michael Bowen from Bomaderry. After winning gold in the WorldSkills Australia National Championships last year, Michael has been selected in the Australian team that will take on the world's best. Michael entry into the world of Industrial Mechanics began during a TAFE open day which resonated with his lifelong fascination with understanding how things work. Michael has never looked back. Forgoing traditional schooling in favour of home education, Michael's learning was tailored to his skills and interests – in particular, hands-on experience. This self-directed educational route may have been somewhat unconventional, but it equipped him with a keen understanding of mechanical systems and a clear vision. Competing in WorldSkills provided him with a platform to not only test his abilities but to experience the diverse fields of his trade. Michael's mentor, David Baldwin, has been a source of inspiration and guidance, offering insights drawn from a wealth of experience in competitions. While competing at Lyon 2024, Michael has some clear goals: to push himself and learn as much as possible about industrial mechanics and to forge global connections. A huge congratulations and well done to Michael Bowen.

#### **NSW SENIORS FESTIVAL AWARDS**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales officially recognises NSW Seniors Festival award recipients across the Kiama electorate whose service has helped to build up and strengthen our region. I would like to acknowledge: Robyn McMillan, the Secretary/Treasurer of Kiama Art Society, Kiama Community Radio, Gwen Addison from Presbyterian Op Shop, Dr Michael and Mrs Ann Barbato, Ian Usher from Bomaderry Lions Club, Donald Brown President of Kiama Table Tennis Club, John Le Carpentier and Soul Fit Co Volunteers Bev Sherwood and Gay Emmerson, Michael Mitchell, President of Nowra Bowling Club and Kiama U3A for its provision of learning services to seniors were all nominated for recognition. This Friday afternoon on 22nd March 2024, I am hosting a special afternoon tea and community event to honour, recognise and officially acknowledge these outstanding local seniors and volunteers with framed certificates in recognition of their distinguished contributions. The NSW Seniors Festival is from 11th-24th March 2024. The theme of the festival is 'Reach Beyond!' The Kiama electorate is extremely fortunate to have some incredible seniors doing wonderful things and I am delighted as their representative in Parliament to highlight some of these efforts through these seniors awards.

#### **KIAMA WOODCRAFT GROUP**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises the Kiama Woodcraft Group. On Saturday 27th March and Sunday 28th March 2024, the Kiama Woodcraft Group recently hosted its annual expo at Kiama Masonic Hall spotlighting the talents of its approximately twenty active woodworking members. I acknowledge the President David Bywater, Secretary Barry Mather, Treasurer Tony Walsh and Mal MacRae. Each member displayed their unique woodcraft practices, producing awe-inspiring pieces which blended functionality with artistic beauty. The members, offer a diverse array of creations that cater to various tastes. The gallery continues to evolve, with new works at monthly club meetings. If you missed the exhibition and are interested in purchasing pieces you can do so from the woodcraft website. A highlight is definitely the people's choice award – a creation from a block of wood! The talent is phenomenal, and I joined in with other keen local residents to vote for the best design which added to the community participation and enjoyment across the weekend. There was incredible craftsmanship on display at the annual showcase which is a credit to each of the Kiama woodworking members and volunteers who contributed to making the expo a success.

#### **MOOREBANK-LIVERPOOL DISTRICT HOCKEY CLUB OPEN DAY**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—On 9 March 2024 I had the pleasure of attending the Moorebank-Liverpool District Hockey Club open day, which marked the start of the hockey season and the reopening of the Kevin Flack Field, a state-of-the-art field with the latest artificial turf technology. It was a pleasure to meet and chat with the executive team, including President Damon Brooks, Secretary Tan Le, and Treasurer Virginia Ireland about the club's needs. Moorebank-Liverpool District Hockey Club is one of the largest amateur hockey clubs in Sydney, and the only one located in the electorate of Holsworthy. It was a pleasure to meet with the members and families that are part of the club, and I look forward to following their success on the field this upcoming season!

### HIMYANA ASSOCIATION

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)**—On 7 March 2024 I had the pleasure of joining the Himyana Association for their International Women's Day dinner, celebrating our diversity and the theme of "inspire inclusion". The event was marked by plenty of singing, dancing and celebrations, and I had the honour to speak on the importance of IWD and the bumps on the journey to public office. The evening also focused on "Handing victory across generations", where it is incumbent on us all to pass on advice and tips for success to the next generation. I would like to thank Shahla Khamis from the Himyana Association for facilitating the event, and I look forward to supporting the group and wonderful ladies into the future.

### VOLUNTEER ROBYN PHILLIPS

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise the achievements of Robyn Phillips who was recently bestowed the Katie Walker Award, achieved for her outstanding volunteer service to the Country Education Foundation (CEF). I congratulate Robyn for volunteering at the Country Education Foundation, Gwydir branch for the past 10 years and serving as Secretary since 2019. Robyn's passion is helping youth in the Gwydir area achieve their educational and career aspirations, through acquiring grants or scholarships to support their access to further education. I commend Robyn for hosting numerous events for fundraising. Such is her devotion, commitment and enthusiasm for sourcing funding for Gwydir CEF, she has greatly contributed to the branch's sustainability. The wider community is grateful for Robyn's hard work and dedication to the youth in the Gwydir region.

### ARMIDALE TREE GROUP CELEBRATES 40 YEARS

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise the achievements of the Armidale Tree Group for celebrating an impressive 40-year milestone. The group was founded in 1983 as a not-for-profit group, dedicated to rural conservation and providing environmental management, revegetation, weed management, consultancy and reporting services for the community. I congratulate the driving force behind this initiative, President David Steller, Vice President Paul McFarland, Treasurer Chris Nadolny, Secretary Narelle Clarke, as well as Peter Metcalf, Kate Boyd, Kerry Steller, David Carr, Lorna Wicksteed, Barton Dixon and Liz Anderson. Special thanks to all the volunteers on their tireless efforts to reverse the effects of dieback on eucalypts in the New England, along with the many improvements the group makes through community projects, whether it be by on-farm tree plantings, public community plantings, bushfire recovery efforts or by the protection of habitats and alike. I commend all those involved with the Armidale Tree Group, the legacy of their hard work and tireless efforts to conserve and to improve our environment and community, will be far reaching for years to come and generations to enjoy.

### AUTHOR MICHAEL ANDERSON

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise Michael Anderson for his recently published debut novel *Shrimp Coptales*, which is a collection of five detective stories based on real people and places. I congratulate Michael not only on the publication of his book, but also for his significant and enduring contribution to the Moree community. Whether this be through supporting children in school, his volunteer work with many community organisations and events, as well as being a presenter on the local radio station 2VM for 34 years. I commend Michael for his significant contribution to literature and on his tireless contribution to his local community of Moree.

### HAPPY HOLI!

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)**—I was delighted to attend the Holi Mela in Prince Alfred Square alongside the Minister for Multiculturalism, Lord Mayor Councillor Pierre Esber and several parliamentary colleagues. It is one of the highlights of my role as an MP to attend days of joy like Holi. Celebrating new beginnings by showering others with the colours of spring is a wonderful way to ring in the new season. The symbolism of the rainbow of colours thrown over us all which represents the vibrant tapestry of colours and cultures that make up our society is profoundly moving. The timeless message of the triumph of good over evil resonates across the entire community and serves as an inspiration in the face of life's many challenges. I am proud to represent the Parramatta electorate that encompasses Little India in Harris Park, plays host to all the significant Indian festivals and recognises our Indian diaspora is a cornerstone of our community. Thanks to India Australian Voice Inc., their president, Anuj Kulshrestha, the Indian Australian Arts and Cultural Association and emcees Dr Neeraj Duggall and Swecha for your kind invitation and coordinating such a joyful event. Wishing everyone a happy Holi.

**ARCHANA BULATHSINGHALA**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)**—It was a pleasure to meet local resident Archana Bulathsinghala to present her with a State Representative Award for representing NSW in the 2023 Australian National Dragon Boat Championships noting this is nothing new for Archana as she also represented NSW in the 2022 Nationals. It is amazing to see the resurgence of dragon boat racing in Australia given its origins are believed to be around 5th and 6th century AD on the banks of the Yangtze River in southern China. Dragons are one of the most important creatures in Chinese mythology and believed to be the controller of rain, rivers, the sea and all other kinds of water; a symbol of divine power and energy and of imperial power. Archana started dragon boat racing in 2021 as a way of spending more time outdoors. Her motivation is also tied to COVID lockdown, which generated some incredibly sad stories and outcomes but there were also some positives, and this was so for Archana who developed a renewed appreciation for the great outdoors and all the benefits it brings. I congratulate Archana on her achievement and wish her the very best in her future endeavours.

**JAMES YONG**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)**—James Yong has had significant success in the sport of Dragon boat racing. I recently had the pleasure of presenting James with a State Representative award for representing NSW at the 2023 Nationals based at Albury Wodonga and the 2022 Nationals held in Adelaide. James also represented Australia at the Macau and Hong Kong Dragon Boat festivals in July 2023. Dragon boating requires discipline, fitness, mental toughness, and lots of training. One of the aspects of the sport that many participants consider a highlight is the fact it is the ultimate team sport. Each paddler must stroke at the same time, with the same form. There is great camaraderie as teams develop as a unit and learn to work together. In a world where loneliness is increasingly present, this is a great way to build physical and mental wellness while building community. It is pleasing, but not at all surprising, that the sport is expanding in NSW with teams popping up from Lennox Head in the north to Eden in the south. I congratulate James for his many achievements and thank him for his infectious passion along with his work to build up Dragon racing as a sport.

**SYDMAL INTERNATIONAL WOMENS'S DAY**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)**—Women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds often have additional difficulties in accessing health and support services, for a range of reasons. That is why it was so important that Dr Niveditha Manokaran and Dr Linnet Basil were the featured speakers of the International Womens Day celebration hosted by the Sydney Malayalee Association, in Liverpool. These practitioners in women's health and mental health and wellbeing were on hand to share tips on how women can care for themselves and resources available in our community. The Sydney Malayalee Association, or Sydmal, was founded 45 years ago and does fabulous work in promoting the rich culture and heritage of the Malayalee Diaspora in Sydney. There were also displays of group dance, music, games, a photobooth and a food stall. The event proved to great celebration of the women in the association and an enjoyable function for all those families in attendance. I extend my sincere thanks to Lima Vijay, convenor of Sydmal's Women's forum, as well as President Beena Ravikumar and members of the executive committee.

**AMY CLARKE**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—I acknowledge a generous and selfless member of the Pittwater community, Amy Clarke. Amy is the founder of Confetti Rebels, an apparel brand with a goal of making people feel happy and confident. Each item is designed to spread joy and positivity, promote inclusivity and empower individuals to embrace their authentic selves and celebrate their unique identities. Beyond her amazing work helping people make a statement with their clothing and accessories, Amy is an active volunteer, from compiling hampers for women at the Northern Beaches Women's Shelter, to assisting with the Alfresco Community Kitchen in Martin Place. I first came across one of Amy's posts in a local Facebook Group, where she was asking locals if they could contribute anything to the Alfresco Community Kitchen. This is something Amy does regularly, opening her home for people to drop off donations, or travelling to collect them herself. Amy goes above and beyond to serve those in need, and she brings our whole community along with her. Thank you, Amy, your passion and positivity makes Pittwater and the world a brighter place.

**GEORGIE'S HOUSE**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—I recently had the opportunity to attend the launch of Georgie's House, a not-for-profit dedicated to supporting young people in the Pittwater region. Sadly, too many young people suffer mental health challenges. Georgie's House was created out of a desperate passion to support and empower young people to embrace their mental wellbeing, make connections and flourish. Its name pays homage to the first lighthouse keeper of the iconic Barrenjoey Lighthouse, George Mulhall. Just as George was there to shine a light through darkness and guide ships out at sea, the team at Georgie's House seek to help young people navigate the

ups and downs of life. Thank you to the many locals who are supporting Georgie's House, including so generous supporters, Charli & Scott of Awaken Avalon, who provided a fantastic setting for the launch, Amy and Matt Young of Laing + Simmons Real Estate, and more. Thank you to CEO, Jack Jones and board members, Gary Zamel, Dr Rachael Murrhiy, Kylie Clark and Andrew Earl, for your vision and passion to help young people. I am sure Georgie's House will make a difference in so many lives.

#### **PITTWATER ARTISTS TRAIL**

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—I recently had the opportunity to attend the Pittwater Artists Trail 2024 Group Exhibition Opening Night at the Newport Community Centre. The exhibition is a sensational display of local artists work and doubles as a charity fundraiser, with each artist donating work to be auctioned in support of this year's nominated charity, the BeCentre Foundation. The Pittwater Artists Trail is an alliance of artists who collectively open their studios to the public twice a year, creating a trail for art lovers. Supported by several generous local sponsors, the Trail is a fantastic initiative that helps to promote local artists and provide our community with opportunities to view spectacular art close to home. Thank you to the 2024 Artists for your work to create an active local art community, I particularly thank Jan Cristaudo and Karen Hick for their leadership and work coordinating the Trail. I am pleased that recognition of the Pittwater Artists Trail is now preserved in the records of the oldest parliament in our nation.

#### **AVA JACOB**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoynes)**—I would like to take the opportunity to congratulate Ava Jacob, from Russell Lea, who recently competed at the 2023 Australian Cross Country Championships in Canberra. Ava is 12 years old and ran in the 3km event, placing 3rd and bringing home the bronze medal. A wonderful effort. Ava's determination and hard work earned her a place to run in the National Championships. Currently she holds the 1st position for her age division in Cross Country at the NSW PSSA All Schools Cross Country Championships which was held earlier in the year at Eastern Creek. Ava has been running for a few years now and is enjoying her training. I wish her all the best as she prepares to compete in the NSW State Athletic Competition in October in the 800 and 1500 metre races. I had the opportunity to meet Ava late last year and I am so proud of her impressive display of passion, athleticism, and great sportsmanship. On behalf of our local community, I want to wish Ava all the very best. Keep up the great work!

#### **LUKE LEE**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoynes)**—I take this opportunity to acknowledge Luke Lee. Luke is a young sporting star in our community. He has recently represented NSW at the national level for swimming. At the National Championships, Luke set a new record in the Boys 13-14 years 4x 50m Medley Relay as part of the NSW team. In the individual division he placed 1st in the Boys 13-14 years 200m Backstroke and 200m Freestyle. To add to his medals, he also placed 2nd in 50m Backstroke. At the NSW All Schools Championship, Luke impressively set two records in the boys 12-14 years 200m and 400m individual medley. He placed 1st in the Boys 14 years 50m Backstroke and Boys 13-14 years 200m Backstroke. Luke also came 2nd in Boys 12-14 years 200m Freestyle and the Boys 14 years 100m Freestyle. On behalf of the Drummoynes electorate, I sincerely congratulate Luke and commend him for his hard work and determination. This is an incredible achievement. In the year of the Olympics, it's wonderful to celebrate our local rising stars with a bright future ahead. I wish Luke all the very best for his success. Keep up the great work!

#### **JEREMY LENTHEN**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoynes)**—I recognise a local sporting star, Jeremy Lenthen, who has lived in Five Dock his whole life. In 2023, Jeremy came first in the 12-13 year old boy's Final at the National School Sports Athletics Championships held in Launceston, becoming the National 800 metre champion. This recent achievement in Athletics is a testament to his resolve and resilience which also saw him breaking many school records. In August last year, Jeremy also participated in the National Primary Schools Basketball Championships in Perth, as a representative team member in the NSW Team. A committed athlete and team player who broke his wrist just under four weeks out from the National Basketball Championships preventing him from training before the Basketball Championships. The plaster was removed only four days prior to the Championships. In addition to his athletics and basketball commitments, Jeremy has played local sports including AFL for Drummoynes Power and cricket for Concord Briars for several years as well as kung fu, swimming, rugby union and soccer. These are only a few of Jeremy's achievements, he also excels academically. Congratulations Jeremy, I wish you all the best.

#### **BONDI ACTIVE**

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse)**—I would like to congratulate Bondi Active and their CEO Briony Oayada for their ongoing support of the Australian Literacy and Numeracy Foundation (ALNF). I recently

attended the launch of Bondi Active's new collection, Riptide, at a beautiful sunrise smoking ceremony on Bondi Beach. Bondi Active have always sought to move the Bondi culture beyond the 2026. These partnerships do just that, demonstrating the character of our community by giving back. Bondi Active are committed to donating 10 per cent of proceeds from the collection to assist in the growth and development of ALNF's multi-award-winning Living First Language Platform. Congratulations Bondi Active. I look forward to supporting more of your endeavours in the future.

#### **PROFESSOR PAUL PRIESZ AND DR GONZALO AGUIREBARRENA**

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse)**—I would like to congratulate Professor Paul Priesz and Dr Gonzalo Aguirrebarrena on the continued success of St. Vincent's Psychiatric Alcohol and Non-Prescription Drug Assessment (PANDA) Unit. Funded by the former Coalition government, this unit was the first of its kind to be opened in Australia. It is vital for members of the community who are facing addiction and mental health issues to be able to receive the care they need in a safe environment that will lead them down the road of recovery. Such care not only better the individual, but the community as a whole. Their work ensures that a previously underserved patient pool is seen and treated. It has also facilitated a greatly improved patient flow across emergency departments. It is a testament to their success that the same PANDA model is now being rolled out in other locations. I look forward to supporting St Vincent's and the PANDA unit in the future.

#### **OCEAN LOVERS FESTIVAL**

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse)**—I would like to recognise Anita Kolni and Carolyn Grant for the ongoing success of the Ocean Lovers Festival. In 2024 the Festival returns to the Bondi Pavilion and will run from 20-24 March. Born in Sydney's iconic Bondi Beach, the Festival provides 4 days of free entertainment and events. Their purpose is to inspire and engage the community on ocean issues and provide hope by showcasing solutions and innovation that are improving the health of the ocean. Every year it continues to grow and attract new partners. Attendees this year will be treated to Project Restore a partnership with the Sydney Institute of Marine Science and the NSW Department of Environment. Congratulations Anita and Carolyn and good luck with this year's Festival.

#### **SENIOR CONSTABLE RAY KERRIDGE RETIRES AFTER 21 YEARS OF SERVICE**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I would like to commend Senior Constable Ray Kerridge of the St George Police Area Command, who recently announced his retirement after 21 years of exceptional service. Since joining the NSW Police Force in 2003, Ray has exemplified dedication, professionalism, and commitment in every facet of his duties. Some of Ray's specific roles and expertise have included anti-theft, the bike response unit, and the crime management unit. Through this impactful service, Ray has not only left a mark on the St George community, but also within communities throughout wider New South Wales. In times of great crisis, Ray helped to provide relief during the NSW flood crisis and was involved in the COVID-19 response. Police officers like Ray have ensured that the St George Police Area Command remains one of the most respected and diverse commands in the state of New South Wales. I would like to once again thank Senior Constable Ray Kerridge for his service to the St George community and wish him a retirement that is filled with relaxation and joy.

#### **THE SOCIAL BREWERS - 2 YEAR ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I would like to congratulate an upstanding local business, the Social Brewers in Mortdale, who are celebrating two years of service to our community. Two years ago, the Social Brewers became the very first brewery in the St George region. After tens of thousands of beers and ciders served (responsibly) and many happy customers, I would like to recognise them for their efforts. They have had a tremendous run so far, with many locals visiting each week to enjoy great beer and cider on tap, an array of food trucks and live music. It's a place to catch up with friends and family, and somewhere where people can get to know their neighbours. Local small businesses are truly the backbone of our community, and I could not be more proud of the work that owner, Beau Curtis and his family have put in to keep this wonderful establishment going. I wish them every success and look forward to seeing them continue to thrive over many years to come.

#### **CONGRATULATING KIM FENWICK**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I would like to thank a wonderful contributor within my community for her efforts over the years, Kim Fenwick. Kim is the Multicultural Community Liaison Officer at the St George Police Area Command and is now moving to the Liverpool Police Command to continue her public service to our state's diverse communities. In her time serving the St George area, she has worked alongside multiple charity organisations that support our multicultural community. Organisations have included Advance Diversity Services and the Kogarah Storehouse, which supports vulnerable communities. She has also supported our culturally diverse communities by conducting crime prevention workshops for migrants and elderly residents,

as well as taking part in water safety initiatives. Kim is truly a community hero and I could not be more thankful for her efforts over the years. She has been a wonderful contributor, not only to one of the finest Police Area Commands in the state, but also to the success of the many multicultural communities in the St George region. I wish Kim all the very best as she continues to support culturally diverse communities in the Liverpool region.

#### **OUR LADY STAR OF THE SEA CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL'S STUDENT LEADERS**

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)**—I congratulate the incoming student leadership team of Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School on their appointment recently. 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 be professional leaders of the future. I use this occasion in NSW Parliament to acknowledge the student leadership team for 2024, namely School Captains Jude Mamo and Huxley Hughes, Vice Captains Lucy Madden and Stevie Kosta and Prefects Ava George, Matilda Nobbs, Aiden Lyne and Cooper Nunes. With the guidance of their incredible Principal, Michelle Bourne, 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 Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School's motto of 'Living the Gospel values through our actions and attitudes'.

#### **SYLVANIA PUBLIC SCHOOL PARLIAMENTARIANS**

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)**—I congratulate the incoming student leadership team of Sylvania Public School on their recent 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 be professional leaders of the future. I use this occasion in NSW Parliament to acknowledge the student Parliamentarians for 2024, namely Prime Minister Lachlan Whalen, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Wellbeing Benjamin Barreto, Minister for Sports and Technology Hunter Saleh and Minister for Arts and Environment Tayla Collis. With the guidance of their incredible Principal, Mat Egan, 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 Sylvania Public school's motto of 'discover and endeavour'.

#### **MIRANDA NORTH PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENT LEADERS**

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)**—I congratulate the incoming student leadership team of Miranda North Public School on their appointment recently. 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 be professional leaders of the future. I use this occasion in NSW Parliament to acknowledge the student leaders for 2024, namely Capitan's Remi Dews and Alex Mastroieni, Vice Capitan's Lily Stephens and Lucas Ha and Prefects Anna Poniris and Jamie Reece. With the guidance of their incredible Principal, Ross Angus, 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 Miranda North Public School's motto of "Endeavour".

#### **TRIBUTE TO FORMER LIFELINE TENTERFIELD ADVOCATE LISA DALTON**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I wish to acknowledge the great work done by Lisa Dalton, former Community Advocate and Community Engagement at Lifeline Tenterfield. The free workshops that Ms Dalton helped to deliver through her role have helped an immeasurable number of local people. More than 600 people attended these workshops as part of Lifeline's Recovery and Resilience Project during the past 19 months. Ms Dalton's promotion of education and awareness around mental health and suicide prevention in the Tenterfield area really drove this project, funded by an Australian Government grant. She helped many people in different ways and achieved so much in her role as one of Lifeline's trusted, knowledgeable, and passionate Community Advocates. While the project is concluding, Lifeline at 13 11 14 remains accessible to those in need of support. I would also make special mention of Ms Dalton's role in organising the Tenterfield Volunteer Festival. Volunteers play a vital role within our community, and I thank all local volunteers for their varied contributions to improving wellbeing and quality of life for others. I wish Lisa Dalton all the best in her future endeavours and her continuing work with the Tenterfield Lions Club.

#### **VALE, PAUL O'NEILL, LISMORE SPORTING LEGEND AND LEADING BUSINESSMAN**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I join Lismore Mayor Cr Steve Krieg and many others paying tribute to the late Paul O'Neill, one of our city's sporting legends and owner of Lismore Nissan and Kia, who passed away

last week aged 64. My sincere condolences to Mr O'Neill's wife Wendy, children Victoria and Paul Jnr, and daughter-in-law Molly. Paul O'Neill is being remembered as a man of two great passions – for his family and for his community, particularly in the sporting arenas of speedway and rugby league. A legendary speedway driver, Mr O'Neill won the Australian Grand National Sedan Championship twice; in 1986 and 1988, among many career wins on his home track and domestic raceways. As a driver and a sponsor, Paul O'Neill is known for basically putting Lismore Speedway on the map. "He was about getting things done – never needed thanks," attests the speedway fraternity. Mr O'Neill was a highly respected past president of the Marist Brothers Rams, taking it from a struggling rugby league football club to a financially secure one and competitive on the field. He was also very successful in business, awarded for Elite Dealership Service 11 years in a row.

#### **A WIN ON WASTE FOR KYOGLE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I'm so pleased that Kyogle Council has finally secured a win on a long-overdue issue -- the removal of the waste levy financial impost from the Kyogle Local Government Area. I particularly want to thank the former Kyogle Mayor, Cr Danielle Mulholland, the Council's former General Manager Graham Kennett, who initiated the push, and all councillors who backed it in with unanimous and concerted lobbying. I was pleased to advocate for this change. This is a major win for Kyogle residents who won't have to pay to dispose of waste at landfill sites for the next three years. The exemption will remove the \$94 per tonne cost from the disposal of all waste landfill and its estimated it will save Kyogle Council and ratepayers about \$400,000 a year. The waste levy is being removed from the Kyogle Local Government Area for 3 years from 1 March 2024 to 30 June 2027. Councillors have been lobbying about this for many years because it never made sense that the Kyogle LGA was levied in the same category as coastal councils, while Tenterfield, a similar rural area, did not have to pay the levy.

#### **KAREN ILES**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)**—On behalf of the Sydney electorate, I recognise Karen Iles who has been a leading voice for sexual assault survivors, women, First Nations people and social justice. Karen is a Dharug Aboriginal woman, and the Founder and Principal Solicitor of Violet Co Legal & Consulting, a woman-led, Indigenous-led, social enterprise. Violet Co works to provide just and fair outcomes for women and First Nations people and helps them to navigate the legal system. Most notably, Karen, with her lived experience, has campaigned to create legally enforceable duties to ensure aggravated sexual assault and other crimes are investigated by police. Karen has numerous Non-Executive Director board roles including The National Justice Project, First Australians Capital, Our Watch and Marist180. Karen was also appointed to the Australian Catholic Safeguarding panel in 2022 to review claims of sexual assault within Catholic Church institutions and is a current appointee to the New South Wales Law Society Employment Law Committee and advisor to Teach Us Consent. I thank Karen for her tireless work and her fierce commitment to social justice and for her contribution to Sydney and to vulnerable members of the community.

#### **DR ANNE SUMMERS, AO**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)**—On behalf of the Sydney electorate, I humbly recognise Dr Anne Summers AO who has been a leading voice for feminism and equality for over five decades. Her outstanding career spans activism, writing, journalism, and politics, significantly contributing to our nation's social fabric. Fifty years ago, Dr Summers squatted in and co-founded Australia's first women's refuge, Elsie's Women's Refuge in Glebe, providing safety for women and children which started the refuge movement. A year later, her trailblazing book, *Damned Whores and God's Police*, offered a critical feminist perspective on Australian history. Her fearless journalism, exemplified by her Walkley Award-winning investigation into NSW prison conditions, sparked reform. As head of the Commonwealth Office of the Status of Women, Dr Summers was pivotal in securing the Sex Discrimination Act 1984. She was also editor of the feminist magazine *Ms.* in the United States of America. She has been a vocal advocate for women's rights, challenging societal norms, and her authoritative commentary and leadership continue to shape public discourse on critical issues facing women today. Dr Summers' achievements were recognised with an Officer of the Order of Australia award in 1989 for service to journalism and to women's affairs.

#### **ROBYN GREAVES**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)**—On behalf of the Sydney electorate, I wish to put on the record the impressive record of Robyn Greaves as Coordinator of the Kings Cross Community Centre. I have been told that Robyn has been serving the Kings Cross community for 40 years in this role; an extraordinary achievement! This work has seen Robyn acting as a key point for information and referral for all sorts of help and support, including getting a home for longtime residents who can no longer afford the private market. My office has taken many calls from Robyn with updates and information about someone needing help with housing. With a committed group of volunteers and the Community Centre's op shop, Robyn has helped people with food, clothing and

furniture. She has excellent networks within the local community to find resources and support. I congratulate and thank Robyn for many years of service to both the Kings Cross community and the long list of individuals who have needed help.

#### **SYDNEY HARBOUR MINI CHALLENGE**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Congratulations to the Port Macquarie Maroro Outrigger Canoe Club for securing wins at the Sydney Harbour Mini Challenge, held on the 1st March at Rose Bay. The Port Macquarie Outriggers have much to celebrate, arriving home with gold medals in the Women's Under-60s and over 60s division. The 12 km race saw teams of six battle it out on the water against some fierce competition including international teams. I congratulate the local medallists Clare Southwell-Keely, Melinda Hazelgrove, Isabella Gardiner, Sue Fretten, Fiona Baker and Chayanne Harihi (steerer) from the Under-60s Women's team. I also applaud the Over-60s Women's champions Lynn Lovering (steerer), Kerry Owens, Derelle Douglas, Karen Newman, Jane Lundberg and Glenys Cummings. Formed in October 2004, the Port Macquarie Maroro Outriggers Club hold social and racing sessions weekly on the beautiful Hastings River. Fitness, competition, social interaction and fun are at the centre of outriggering in Port Macquarie. The Club welcomes new members who may wish to give outriggering a go. A wonderful achievement which clearly shows training, teamwork and fun are the keys to success.

#### **POPPY MCINTYRE**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—I'm excited to share with the Parliament the news that Year 11 student Poppy McIntyre from St Columba Anglican School Port Macquarie has secured a place in the revered Permaculture Education Institute. Described as the leader in permaculture education, the Institute of Cononadale, Queensland aims to teach students a way of designing one-planet ways of living focussing on restoring planetary and human health in an ever-changing world. Port Macquarie student Poppy McIntyre was one of only ten young leaders worldwide to be selected to participate in the Ethos Fellowship for Young Scholars program. Poppy will congregate with nine other students from around the world to participate in the 12-week intensive Fellowship. Permaculture is an approach to land management that acknowledges the flourishing natural ecosystems. Poppy will delve into permaculture design that seeks to regenerate the natural environment while supporting food systems to sustain communities. The program will also identify permaculture business planning through innovative models. I congratulate Poppy for accepting this extraordinary opportunity in permaculture education, only reserved for a handful of students worldwide.

#### **JIYA JAMU - PORT MACQUARIE LIONS CLUB YOUTH OF THE YEAR**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Congratulations to Jiya Jamu from Mackillop College who has been awarded the Port Macquarie Lions Club Youth of the Year. Each year in Port Macquarie schools are invited to nominate an admirable and worthy representative who demonstrates leadership qualities, academic skills, sporting and cultural engagement and a passion for community service. Jiya was nominated by Mackillop College for the local Port Macquarie Lions Club Youth of the Year for her leadership abilities, public speaking aptitude and commitment towards her studies. Jiya was asked to deliver a five-minute speech and back it up with two impromptu subjects at a recent Lions Club meeting. During the event, Jiya covered the importance of storytelling and spoke confidently and with poise on social awareness and values. Her ability to communicate with the audience impressed the judges and ultimately supported her progression to the next round of the competition. Jiya will now compete against other schools across the Mid North Coast with the motivation to become the Lions Youth of the Year. Public speaking is an admired and desired skill and I congratulate Jiya for pursuing this pathway to success.

#### **HUGO CURRIE AND JAMES BOETTO**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—Today, I tip my hat to two remarkable young men who laced up their running shoes for a gruelling physical and mental challenge to help others in need. Hugo Currie and James Boetto, of Wagga Wagga, recently completed the 4x4x48 event, running four miles (6.4 km), in four-hour periods over 48 hours to raise money for SANE, which provides free mental health support for people with complex mental health conditions and trauma. The run is designed to push participants beyond their comfort zone, overcoming fatigue and pain to reach their goal and completing it was no easy feat. Overcoming heat, fatigue and lack of sleep, the two friends ran 48 miles (77 km), and raised \$4,800, with donations still coming in. SANE helps people with complex disorders such as schizophrenia, bi-polar disorder and PTSD. Through counselling and access to specialists, SANE is making a real difference, especially in rural and regional areas. Amazingly, these very fit and very dedicated young people are already planning to run again next year and raise even more money. Thank you, Hugo and James, for testing your own mental and physical limits for such a great cause.

### LIZ CHAPMAN

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—Small schools have big hearts thanks to the staff, students and parents who make up school communities. One inspiring example can be seen at Ladysmith Public School near Wagga Wagga, and in particular, Liz Chapman who retired late last year after 40 years of dedicated service. Mrs Chapman's bond with the school began in 1983 when the first of her three children enrolled, strengthening as she worked there as a teacher's aide and cleaner. She also donated uncounted hours to raising money and attending functions. The school has been a family passion, with Mrs Chapman's husband Garry driving the school bus for 50 years and still getting behind the wheel when needed. On her retirement, Mrs Chapman received a Director's Special Award and touching tributes from the children in a video made for the occasion, showing her affection for the students and staff clearly reciprocated by a grateful school community. Even in retirement, she continues to help by volunteering for lunch duty on Fridays. She says her journey with the school was a joy, reflected in the memories she holds and the friends she made. Congratulations and thank you, Mrs Chapman, for your decades of service.

### SYDNEY KURDISH COMMUNITY

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)**—Today I bring to the attention of the House Sydney's local Kurdish community, who held a peaceful rally on February 17th to mark the 25th anniversary of the imprisonment of Kurdish Workers' Party leader Mr Abdullah Öcalan. Mr Öcalan and the Kurdish Workers Party have called for recognition of Kurdish people's cultural and political rights. The 25th anniversary of his imprisonment marked an important day for the Kurdish community, as they noted that Mr Öcalan has now been held for longer than Mr Nelson Mandela was imprisoned in South Africa. The community's action in Sydney was part of a global protest calling for Mr Öcalan's release, which was organised and held across most continents on the same day. Many people of Kurdish origin have made Sydney their home, adding to the richness of our diverse community. The Australian Kurdish community in Sydney are a valued part of our society and I am pleased to support the Federation of Democratic Kurdish Society Australia, Democratic Kurdish Community Centre of NSW and Sydney Kurdish Youth Association in advocating for the release of Mr Öcalan.

### BOOMALLI 25TH ANNIVERSARY RECONCILIATION WALL

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)**—Today I bring to the attention of the House the Boomalli Aboriginal Artist Co-operative's wonderful Reconciliation Wall exhibition, "Restoration of Truth", hosted in the NSW Parliament over summer. Boomalli – which means "make a mark" in Bundjalung, Kamilaroi and Wiradjuri languages – has a proud history as an Aboriginal cultural organisation. They were the first exhibitors on the Reconciliation Wall in 1998 and it was fitting to have them return for this 25th anniversary. The exhibition featured more than 40 artworks representing some of Australia's most talented artists - including Annette Kennedy, Arone Meeks, Blak Douglas, Brianna Geary, Dr Bronwyn Bancroft, Charmaine Davis, Chenava Bancroft-Davis, Danny Eastwood, Darren Charlwood, Deborah Taylor, Debra Beale, Ella Noah Bancroft, Euphemia Bostock, Gordon Hookey, Gordon Syron, Graeme Walker, Hayley Pigram, Helen Low, Jai Walker, Jake Soewardie, Jamie Eastwood, Jasmine Sarin, Jeffrey Samuels, Joanna Cassidy, Joe Hurst, Jude Jarrett, Kevin Winanggaay May, Kim Healy, Maddison Gibbs, Nathan Falk, Nioka Lowe-Brennan, Nola Taylor, Rubyrose Bancroft, Sharon Smith, Sooty Welsh and Wanita Lowe. Congratulations to all these great artists and the wonderful Boomalli Cooperative that has exhibited them.

### INNER WEST ACF

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)**—Today I bring to the attention of the House the Australian Conservation Foundation Community Inner West. This fantastic local group is dedicated to protecting the remarkable natural environment of the inner west. They are campaigning to increase local tree canopy coverage and to restore habitat for native wildlife and birds. Their efforts to work with the local community to promote the cultivation of local native flora is in pursuit of restoring habitat for the vulnerable Grey-headed Flying Fox, which they have recently chosen as their mascot. I recently met with Vivienne Rose Diamond, Ros Vaughan, Beverly Lloyd and Naomi Scott of the local inner west ACF group, who talked to me about the current canopy coverage in Sydney's inner west being a mere 16.4 per cent. They raised concerns about the health and sustainability of our urban environment. I commend their efforts to not only reduce the rate at which our inner west tree canopy is lost, but to work with others to turn this around and grow our tree canopy cover for the benefit of all in the inner west.

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