



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Eighth Parliament
First Session**

Thursday 21 March 2024

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday 21 March 2024

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

The Speaker read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

Announcements

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY PHOTOGRAPHS

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

[Notices of motions given.]

Bills

AUTOMATED EXTERNAL DEFIBRILLATORS (PUBLIC ACCESS) BILL 2023

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Gareth Ward, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (10:19): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to present to the House the Automated External Defibrillators (Public Access) Bill 2024. As outlined in the overview, the objects of the bill are to mandate the installation, registration and maintenance of automated external defibrillators [AEDs] in certain buildings and vehicles. The bill requires the Minister to keep a publicly accessible register of the defibrillators, including their location, and to develop a strategy to inform the public about defibrillators. What good is a defibrillator if it is locked away in a canteen or behind a roller door in a private building when it is urgently needed? Other jurisdictions have found an answer to that important problem with quite a simple solution. Put simply, the bill will save lives. It will do so by ensuring that life-saving devices are where they need to be and that they are adequately maintained so they work when they are needed, accompanied by a digital register that is appropriately regulated.

Each year approximately 3,800 people in New South Wales experience an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest, and, sadly, 90 per cent are unable to be revived. Studies have shown that the combination of CPR and a defibrillator can increase survival rates by up to 70 per cent. The bill will make defibrillators mandatory in public buildings such as schools, libraries and sporting facilities along with all modes of public transport. The bill will also require defibrillators to be tested every 12 months and require signage highlighting the presence of a defibrillator in a building or a vehicle.

Plagiarism is the sincerest form of flattery. The bill follows the lead of the South Australian Government's initiatives in making the life-saving devices publicly and readily available by way of their Automated External Defibrillators (Public Access) Act 2022, although this bill is better. Our bill also builds on the work of the former New South Wales Government and the former Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Victor Dominello, who instigated the digital register of defibrillators in New South Wales. Whilst I commend the work of the previous Government in setting up a data register for defibrillators, more needs to be done to ensure that the system is working properly, the hardware is where it needs to be and the public is educated about defibrillators: how to use them and how to get them when they are needed. I note that other countries such as Canada, the United States and South Korea, as well as 15 European countries, already have mandatory registers.

Why more needs to be done is best explained by examples from my electorate and beyond of people whose lives have been saved by the devices. There are so many examples I could give on how a machine in the right place saved a life, but I will share one very inspiring story. Just before Christmas last year a 50-year-old man, otherwise fit and healthy, was playing in a summer football competition and suffered a sudden cardiac arrest during a match. He had no history of any heart issues.

He was fortunate to be saved due to early intervention by a doctor who happened to be playing on the next field using an AED that was retrieved by breaking down a canteen door. He was still conscious when NSW Ambulance arrived. Quite simply, minimising avoidable deaths from cardiac arrests should not be left to

chance. A key element of addressing such outcomes is to have a publicly accessible defibrillator at as many spaces as possible. The community knows the value of the machines and I am sure all local MPs are inundated with requests from sporting and community groups for grant funding for defibrillators all year round. I know I have been, and I am proud to have delivered so many of the devices across my electorate.

The Local Sport Defibrillator Grant Program continues to provide funding for defibrillators but this Labor Government capped that initiative at \$500,000, whilst also targeting Labor electorates using socio-economic data to justify the adjustment when previously the fund was open to every part of our State. It is class warfare of the worst kind. Using public money to decide who receives the life-saving devices is so wrong. We should not have to prioritise the distribution of the life-saving devices on the basis of any factor other than need.

In fact, if anything, we should be prioritising the installation of the devices in places where they do not exist—not by bank account balances. The bill ensures that the devices are where they need to be. It is concerning that the many playing fields at which many cardiac arrests do occur do not currently have the devices. The devices are not expensive but their life-saving value is incalculable. The bill is not about ideology; it is about life-saving outcomes. It provides an audit as a consequence and will shore up our knowledge of where the devices are and ensure that they are placed where they need to be.

Whilst I will not read the entirety of the bill, I will turn to key provisions. As outlined in clause 2, the Automated External Defibrillator (Public Access) Act 2024 is to commence on the day that is two years after the date of the assent to the bill. It is not a rushed bill. This provision allows time for the work that has been already started to be properly analysed and for the register to be reviewed, improved upon and consolidated with other versions of AED registers in the State. It also allows time for the departments of health and emergency services to prioritise locations, distribute the defibrillators and roll out education and awareness programs so that the public is aware of the devices and understands how to use them. I turn to proposed section 4, which I will reproduce in full because I want to make clear what the bill is mandating. Proposed section 4 (1) requires accessible defibrillators in relevant buildings, which include:

- (a) a large commercial building,
- (b) a government building,
- (c) an educational establishment,
- (d) a correctional centre,
- (e) a retirement village within the meaning of the Retirement Villages Act 1999,
- (f) a facility that provides residential care within the meaning of the Aged Care Act 1997 of the Commonwealth,
- (g) an entertainment facility,
- (h) a major recreation facility
- (i) a caravan park,
- (j) a casino or other venue where gambling is authorised, other than a venue where the only gambling authorised is the selling and buying of lottery tickets.

In accordance with proposed section 4 (2), the following vehicles are relevant vehicles where defibrillators must be stored:

- (a) an emergency services vehicle,
- (b) a public passenger vehicle.

Proposed section 4 (3) states:

- (3) The regulations may—
 - (a) prescribe a building as a relevant building or a vehicle as a relevant vehicle, and
 - (b) exclude a building from being a relevant building or a vehicle from being a relevant vehicle.

Finally, proposed section 4 (4) states:

caravan park, correctional centre, educational establishment, entertainment facility and recreation facility (major) have the same meaning as in the standard instrument set out in the *Standard Instrument (Local Environmental Plans) Order 2006*.

When a similar bill in the great State of South Australia was introduced by the Hon. Frank Pangallo, MLC—a private member's bill, but supported by the Government at the time—there was commentary about its introduction. Foreshadowing comments from this Government in response to my bill, I note comments by Michael Eburn, PhD, who has provided commentary on the law that applies to emergency services and emergency management. Leaving aside his commentary that private members' bills rarely succeed, Mr Eburn went on to observe that it was unlikely that a government would accept a bill that would impose significant costs on the government such as the

development of a register, education, training and the installation of the defibrillators but he acknowledged that he was wrong after the South Australian Government supported the bill.

The good news is that New South Wales has most of those costly components already in place today; the work has already been done. Frankly, alongside James Vernon from my office and the wonderful team at Parliamentary Counsel, the legislative heavy lifting has been done. It does not need to be a private member's bill; I would be happy for the Government to introduce the bill as its own should it not wish to support a private member's bill. The issue should be beyond politics. The former yellow Wiggle, Greg Page, champion of Heart of the Nation and advocate for initiatives such as this one, said:

260 young Australian lives are lost to Sudden Cardiac Arrest every year. Sudden Cardiac Arrest can happen to anyone, anywhere at any time—with or without a pre-existing condition. But there is hope! By getting AEDs (defibrillators) into schools, Cardiac Arrest survival rates increase from 12% to over 75%.

Mr Page knows all too well the power of the machines. For me as a local member, I want to give a voice to the people I represent like Mr David Toohey, a Gerringong resident and cardiac arrest survivor, who said, "I was very fortunate an AED was 20 metres away from where I crashed my car, and the bloke that came to my aid happened to be a former ambulance officer. The defib kickstarted me and he continued CPR for another 20 minutes till the ambulance arrived." The defib saved David's life.

I thank the different health and welfare groups that engaged with us throughout the extensive consultation we had on the bill. I also thank people in my electorate that expressed an interest in ensuring that we better regulate, identify and highlight the existence of defibrillators. In particular I acknowledge people like Chris Bevan of Jamberoo, who has met with me about continuing to apply pressure on the Government to ensure that defibrillator access is something that is, firstly, beyond politics but, secondly, done properly. In so many respects we have stumbled into the current situation. Whilst there have been obvious improvements, the bill seeks to follow other jurisdictions where there has been legislative leadership so that regulation can ensure the oversight and administration of these life-saving devices. I am sure members in this House know people whose lives have been saved as a result of what is a relatively inexpensive device, and I know that members across the political divide have campaigned for the devices in their electorates.

All of us know the value of defibrillators, but New South Wales needs a system that ensures a defibrillator can be accessed when it is needed. We must not have the incredible situations when people might know that one exists but it is behind a locked door or when they might access one but the battery is flat. We must make sure that defibrillators are working, are accessible and are there when people need them. People must also be trained appropriately to use them. All of those things have been done in other jurisdictions. South Australia has shown the way, and I believe New South Wales can do the same. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

ICAC AND OTHER INDEPENDENT COMMISSIONS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (INDEPENDENT FUNDING) BILL 2024

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mrs Helen Dalton, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (10:31): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Today I introduce the ICAC and Other Independent Commissions Legislation Amendment (Independent Funding) Bill 2024 to the Legislative Assembly. This incredibly important bill is designed to smash the shockingly high levels of corruption that are currently damaging politics in New South Wales. The previous New South Wales Government voted against the bill. Shortly after it voted the bill down, several of its MPs resigned from Parliament with various clouds hanging over them. The Minns Government is a year old, and I have high hopes that it will take a stand against corruption by voting for the bill. This is a chance for us all to end the dark and dirty era of corruption in New South Wales politics and make a fresh start. That said, I am keeping a close eye on this Labor Government when it comes to ClubsNSW. I was concerned to hear that the Government is not releasing the results of the trials of the cashless gaming card, as revealed in *The Sydney Morning Herald*. I sure hope this one-year-old Government does not continue to run the protection racket that Labor has been running for ClubsNSW for years.

Voters are sick of seeing scandal after scandal. We have had sports rorts, dodgy dams, dodgy Daryl, Watergate, bushfire relief pork-barrelling, council grant scandals, icare, pipeline rorts, mysterious grants for Wagga Wagga, Chinese government companies buying New South Wales water licences and secret emails from government officials favouring irrigator groups. A new scandal emerges almost every day. The Liberals and

The Nationals in the previous Government viciously attacked our anti-corruption body, and the attacks did not just come from State politicians. Former Prime Minister Scott Morrison had the arrogance to call ICAC a "kangaroo court", while former Minister Stuart Ayres accused ICAC of being a waste of money.

One has to wonder why the Liberal and Nationals MPs hated ICAC so much. What were they afraid of? What else did they have to hide? The fact that certain politicians attack our anti-corruption body so much is the exact reason we need to strengthen ICAC by ensuring that it is properly funded and completely free from political interference. That is exactly what the bill does. We need more oversight of government, not less. As we know, when politicians do not have anyone looking over them, they get up to no good. When there are no consequences, there is more crime. Proper rules and scrutiny of how taxpayers' money is spent is what separates First World democracies from Third World dictatorships. We need to draw a line in the sand and say that enough is enough. We must protect our democracy, and the bill is the perfect start.

The former State Government's attack on ICAC is part of a broader campaign against scrutiny. The previous Government would fight scrutiny in all forms, whether it was attacking the likes of the ABC or formal oversight bodies. Under the previous Government, our watchdogs were slowly being turned into lapdogs. As a result, our watchdogs were so terrified of losing their funding that they were unable to do their jobs properly. Lapdogs know not to bite the hand that feeds them, and that is why funding must be independent. Previously, I have reported numerous scandals to ICAC and the Ombudsman. I have provided clear evidence of councils misusing ratepayers' money and bureaucrats favouring certain groups and excluding others but, sadly, I have kept getting the same response. "Yes, that sounds bad," I am told, "but we've decided not to investigate."

Many decisions not to pursue corruption are clearly related to funding. How can ICAC investigate matters properly when it is hampered by a funding shortfall of at least \$4 million—and probably more—due to Government cutbacks? No government should be allowed to cut funding to an anti-corruption body. The purpose of the bill is to ensure that the bodies entrusted to look over our Government are independently and properly funded. The bill will ensure that ICAC staff can do their jobs without worrying about losing them and will mean that ICAC will no longer be reliant on the whims of a government for its funding. It provides clear oversight of the adequacy of funding for ICAC, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission, the NSW Electoral Commission and the NSW Ombudsman. It does so by allowing the annual funding for those bodies to be allocated separately from other agencies and free from political interference. It is such a no-brainer.

There is no doubt that the bill has overwhelming support amongst members of the public. The bill was drafted on the basis of the four recommendations that were made in the New South Wales ICAC special annual report. The bill gives effect to each of those four recommendations. Recommendation 1 proposes:

That the parliamentary oversight committees for the NSW Independent Commission Against Corruption, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission, the NSW Ombudsman and the NSW Electoral Commission ... make recommendations as to the funding priorities.

That is a parliamentary committee, not Cabinet, which is crucial. Recommendation 2 proposes:

That the annual budgets ... include a set contingency fund to address unbudgeted financial demands, with access to the funds governed by prescribed criteria and approval of the relevant parliamentary oversight committee.

Recommendation 3 proposes that the abovementioned oversight bodies:

... be directly allocated their annual funding through the Appropriation legislation, rather than the funding being allocated to the relevant Minister, so that they are not subject to reductions in funding during the financial year.

Recommendation 4 is probably the most important recommendation. It proposes that the New South Wales Government remove the oversight bodies from the dreaded Premier and Cabinet cluster.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich): The time for consideration of general business notices of motions (for bills) having expired, the House will now consider general business orders of the day (for bills). I set down resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a later time.

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

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 8 February 2024.

Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (10:39): I am pleased to contribute to debate on the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment (Virtual Stock Fencing) Bill 2024, and to outline the Government's position on the bill. As someone who has been involved in the rural industries sector for some years, both in and out of Parliament—although I am not a farmer, I have been strongly involved in agriculture—I am well aware of the issues that the member seeks to address with this legislation. It is

well intentioned, and the member for Orange is to be praised for his efforts to support the agricultural sector by proposing to allow the use of virtual fencing on stock animals. However, there are a number of things that the Government would look at before allowing the use of virtual fencing, and a number of points that will require consultation because of their wide-ranging implications and potential unintended consequences.

We need to consider a number of animal welfare parameters. For those reasons, the Government will oppose the bill. However, we have discussed with the member the possibility of referring the bill to a committee for inquiry. The Government notes that there have been significant advancements in the operational understanding of virtual fencing over the past decade. That includes enabling effective and minimal-stress virtual fencing for animals. However, there is still more work to be done to understand the impact of the technology on all stock animals. It is critical that any move to allow virtual fencing in New South Wales has fully considered the scientific advice commissioned by the interjurisdictional Animal Welfare Task Group. The bill as it stands does not align with that advice and does not adequately protect animal welfare and the community.

I will speak about virtual fencing, the importance of our primary industries sector and the Government's work on animal welfare. Virtual fencing devices are currently prohibited in New South Wales under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, also known as POCTAA, unless use is conducted in accordance with the Animal Research Act 1985. The Government is participating in a national process through the Animal Welfare Task Group to assess the animal welfare impacts of virtual fencing technologies. That process aims to ensure that alterations to legislation relating to virtual fencing are appropriate and will not result in negative animal impacts. Virtual fencing involves the containment of animals without a physical fence by using signals from a device attached via a neckband. The neckbands use GPS technology to monitor animal movement and behaviour. An audio cue signal warns the animal that it is approaching the virtual boundary, and that is followed by an electrical pulse only if the animal does not respond to the audio cue.

The Government recognises that this has potential to be a useful technology for farmers as an internal fencing solution, facilitating a simpler process for rotational grazing and natural resource management, amongst other benefits. I am sure that members would appreciate that fencing on properties is expensive and it is a major outlay for farmers. It is often subject, unfortunately, to being destroyed by bushfires. There are many challenges for farmers in replacing their fencing following natural disasters. The technology certainly has potential to be used for internal fencing to speed up that process. Importantly, the technology should be used only for internal fencing. For safety reasons, it should not be used as a replacement for physical boundary fencing.

The Government strongly supports the primary industries sector and is always looking for opportunities to support farmers in the important work they do. That was demonstrated in the 2023-24 budget, with an additional investment of \$298.5 million toward biosecurity and agricultural programs. That included supporting sheep and goat farmers to implement mandatory individual electronic identification across New South Wales to provide traceability, with a \$39 million partnership with the Australian Government. The New South Wales Government also invested \$11.1 million for the Farm Business Resilience Program to help farmers to prepare for and adapt to climate change.

The Government will continue to do everything it can to support farmers and to see our primary industries thrive and grow. However, when considering the issue of implementing virtual fencing, it is critical that consideration is given to expert advice and the inclusion of animal welfare safeguards. The Government has been clear from the start that it is committed to ensuring a robust and modern animal welfare framework in New South Wales. That approach is no different when considering this bill. The Government has specifically committed to the introduction of a new animal welfare framework in New South Wales through reviewing the POCTA Act. That process will present an opportunity to consider important issues, like virtual fencing, and undertake consultation with key stakeholders.

I turn to the detail of the bill and will explain why the Government does not support it at this stage. The bill before the House proposes to amend POCTAA to permit the use of virtual fencing devices. The bill defines a virtual fencing device as "GPS-enabled sensors and collars capable of delivering electric pulses and cues" and "for the purposes of confining, tracking and monitoring stock animals". The Government notes that virtual fencing has several benefits, including better utilisation and protection of natural resources, and protection of wildlife; improved monitoring and managing stock to improve health, early disease identification, emergency management in natural disasters and adverse weather conditions, and better allocation of feed resources; and flexibility in the containment and movement of livestock to not only optimise ecological and financial goals, but to also improve the farming lifestyle via shorter working hours.

Advice from the Animal Welfare Task Group emphasises the need for appropriate animal welfare safeguards when considering virtual fencing. That is why allowing for the use of these devices is something the Government will consider following further consultation. This more considered approach would mitigate unintended consequences, should the Government propose allowing the use of such devices, by ensuring that

appropriate animal welfare safeguards are in place. There are several issues and omissions to highlight in relation to how the bill defines "virtual stock fencing device". The definition creates ambiguity as to what type of cue may be delivered to an animal. It is essential that virtual fencing devices initially deliver a non-aversive—that is, audio—cue prior to aversive electric pulses to enable associative learning for the animal. The definition also contains no parameters on the voltage level of electric pulses delivered to stock animals through the collar. No safeguards have been included to prevent the delivery of higher voltage and more frequent electric pulses to animals.

The definition permits the use of virtual fencing devices on stock animals, which under the current definition in POCTAA would include cattle, horse, sheep, goats, deer, pigs and poultry. The scope is quite broad, and that would be a concern given expert findings that more research is needed to assess the suitability of virtual fencing devices for stock animals other than cattle. I am sure that the member's intent is for the devices to be used on cattle, and that is the way I had considered it as well. As I have said, the bill does not align with expert advice, does not appropriately safeguard animal welfare and would potentially result in significant unintended consequences, with flow-on impacts to biosecurity and safety.

The bill would permit virtual fencing technology to be used on all stock animals. The Government's current understanding of the advice is that that would not be appropriate. We would like to see further consultation on the use of virtual fencing. That is why we need to do more work on this. We would like to see limitations on virtual fencing devices. The key characteristics that virtual fencing technology and its application must have to minimise animal welfare impacts include the presence of secure, physical outer boundaries; well-designed collars with appropriate animal welfare safeguards; comprehensive training for human operators; the use of an initial non-aversive audio cue to give the animal the opportunity to respond appropriately before any electric shock is delivered; electric shock cues that are of the minimum impact necessary to be aversive but not harmful or provoke excessive stress responses; and enabling the animal to have predictability and controllability of its situation.

One concern is that the bill does not specify that virtual fencing cannot be used as boundary fencing. The Government views that as an issue. As I have mentioned, the Government acknowledges the potential benefits of virtual fencing when appropriate standards are in place, but there is a concern that not specifying that virtual fencing cannot be used as boundary fencing may have risks for community safety. The expert advice is clear that virtual fencing cannot be used as boundary fencing because of the risk that livestock may breach the external virtual fencing boundaries and move onto roads and other public spaces. That is an unacceptable risk to both the community and biosecurity, and it is an example of why the Government would like to do further work on the bill. There are appropriate alternatives for how the Parliament can consider the important issue of virtual fencing but, at this stage, the Government does not support the bill. I commend the member for Orange for bringing the bill to the House.

Mr Rory Amon: Don't commend him. Just support the bill.

Mr STEVE WHAN: I hear the interjection from the member for Pittwater, who demonstrated his knowledge of rural communities in this place last year by saying that the former Government paved highways across New South Wales in gold.

Dr Hugh McDermott: Gold?

Mr STEVE WHAN: In gold.

Mr Rory Amon: When did I say that?

Mr STEVE WHAN: It is in *Hansard*, my friend.

Mr Rory Amon: Really?

Mr STEVE WHAN: Yes. The member for Pittwater's National Party colleagues might say that is over-egging the record a tad. Perhaps his views on cattle farming are just as out of touch. I have spent quite a bit of time working in agriculture, as a previous agriculture Minister and shadow Minister, and then working with irrigators for a long time, so I may have a bit more familiarity with those parts of the State than the member for Pittwater does. It is commendable that the bill is before the House. I, along with the member for Orange, see internal fences as an important part of future stock management in New South Wales.

The Government wants to do this properly, which is why I foreshadowed that I am expecting the Government will have discussions with the member about the potential for referring the bill to a committee. I hope that means that in the not-too-distant future, the Government will be able to agree to an amendment to the POCTA Act that allows virtual stock fencing to be used for cattle in New South Wales. I indicate that the Government does not support the bill but that it is positive about the future prospects of virtual stock fencing.

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (10:52): I make a brief contribution to debate on the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment (Virtual Stock Fencing) Bill 2024. I note the Minister's reference to the fact that the Government will not support the bill but is looking, together with the member for Orange, at referring it to a committee. There are important things to look at, so the Opposition does not oppose referring the bill to a committee. I put on the record that it may not require a bill. The amendments in the bill could probably be done more effectively and easily through a regulation. I would implore the committee, however it is set up, to look at that. If it is to be a bill—and I have spoken to the member for Orange about this—we need to include amendments regarding compliance with any applicable standards that might be published by Standards Australia and/or guidelines published by the Department of Primary Industries to make sure that standards are being met and that the Department of Primary Industries has input into those standards. That is sensible.

I generally agree with comments made about the type of livestock that could be contained but, again, using regulations might give more flexibility more quickly. It may only be cattle at the moment, but it may not be too long before goats are included. A regulation power would offer more flexibility and may not be a bad idea because things are changing quickly in agriculture. From a safety perspective, boundary fencing being excluded is important to bear in mind, given that we do not want animals wandering aimlessly down roads. Virtual fencing is a simple thing to implement, in many ways, but it does require further investigation. The member for Orange touched on the fact that there have been great results in places like New Zealand and Tasmania. In New Zealand, more than 150,000 cattle are now being held using virtual collars, which is great. That is a good thing to encourage. It is supported by the NSW Farmers Association and by Meat and Livestock Australia.

There needs to be more investigation as to the types of animals virtual fencing could be used on. For natural disasters like flooding and fires, where impacts are felt quickly, internal fences—boundary fences are different—would be a great way of enabling the quick management of animals. I first spoke to the member for Orange about virtual stock fencing when I was the agriculture Minister, and we looked at some of the scenarios that could arise. Unfortunately, at that time, we were experiencing the worst floods in living memory and it was difficult to get it on the agenda. In general, the Opposition is supportive. If the bill is referred to a committee, I hope there is a place for everyone to be at the table and work through it in a meaningful way.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (10:55): I contribute to debate on the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment (Virtual Stock Fencing) Bill 2024. Firstly, I acknowledge the hard work and best intentions of the member for Orange. It is not well known, but one of my first jobs, as a 17- or 18-year-old, was working as a jackaroo outside of Barcaldine in Blackall. In fact, I grew up in Rockhampton and my stepfather was a stockman, so I know the stock industry from that time very well. The bill is important and is of interest to me. The livestock industry is a critical component of regional economies and makes up a significant portion of the primary industries landscape. New South Wales's primary industries sector is known for its innovation and is renowned as one of the most efficient sectors in the world. With that in mind, the Government has considered the bill before the House. The intent of the bill is to leverage that innovative mindset and provide producers with the ability to use new technology that could improve farm productivity and natural resource management significantly. However, the development and drafting of the bill is extremely problematic.

I turn my attention to one of the major limitations of the bill. As it is currently drafted, the proposed amendments to the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979, or POCTAA, would allow the use of virtual stock fencing devices on all stock animals. That is one of the key reasons that the Government opposes the bill. By referring to stock animals, the bill would open up the use of virtual fencing devices on all stock animals as defined in POCTAA. The definition of stock animals in the Act is wide and includes cattle, horses, sheep, goats, deer, pigs, poultry and any other species of animal prescribed for the purposes of the definition. When considering the bill, it is important for members to understand that virtual fencing technology is relatively new, which means that further work needs to be done to understand how it works and its impact on all stock animals. Currently, the technology is most well understood and researched in relation to cattle.

Permitting the use of the technology on species other than cattle is not appropriate without conducting more research into how the technology performs on other stock animals. As such, the bill runs the risk of having significant unintended consequences and negatively impacting animal welfare. There is simply not enough evidence about how the technology could be applied to chicken, sheep, deer or any other stock animal, and what the potential animal welfare impacts would be on those animals. For example, would electrical impulses delivered to those animals through a virtual fencing device achieve the desired outcome of containing them in the designated area or would the animals simply ignore the device and breach the designated area? More to the point, would the technology cause those animals substantial distress or injury? We simply do not know with sufficient confidence. In the absence of those answers, the Government cannot support the bill.

That was backed up by an independent scientific literature review commissioned by the inter-jurisdictional Animal Welfare Task Group in November 2023 which found that the deployment of technology, training of human

operators and associated animal welfare safeguards are much more advanced for cattle than for sheep or other animals. That literature review demonstrates that significant research has been conducted on the application of that technology across a range of cattle farming systems including rangeland beef, extensive pastoral beef, pasture-based dairy production and intensive grazed dairy production systems. Most of those studies indicated high rates of compliance with the virtual fencing technology. The literature also indicated that outcomes were improved for cattle where the cues are predictable, and the animal has control to avoid the cues. Because the bill is not based on evidence and expert advice to appropriately safeguard animal welfare and ensure safe and effective use of technology, the Government will not be supporting the bill.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich): It being 11.00 a.m., in accordance with standing and sessional orders, debate is interrupted for question time and the routine of business. I set down resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a later time.

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I extend a warm welcome to the Chamber to student leaders and staff from Toongabbie Public School, guests of the member for Winston Hills. I acknowledge from Glen Innes Severn Council, Mayor Rob Banham and General Manager Bernard Smith, guests of the member for Northern Tablelands. I recognise and welcome to the gallery Mayor Daniel Linklater from Wentworth Shire Council.

Members

MEMBER FOR BARWON

MEMBER FOR COFFS HARBOUR

MEMBER FOR LANE COVE

MEMBER FOR TWEED

The SPEAKER: The member for Barwon, the member for Coffs Harbour, the member for Lane Cove and the member for Tweed have upcoming birthdays. I hope they all have wonderful celebrations planned.

Announcements

COOPER GALLERY

The SPEAKER (11:05): I refer to the protest that occurred in the Cooper Gallery yesterday. I advise members that the Cooper Gallery is not occupied today due only to numbers, but there will be restrictions on the use of the Cooper Gallery for a period not yet determined while the Clerks, security and I look at the operation and use of the Cooper Gallery to ensure the safety of everybody, including the general public, protesters, parliamentary staff and members. I have significant concerns about the kind of activity we saw yesterday, particularly in the Cooper Gallery. The gallery is still in use, but in a more limited and curated manner.

Question Time

MINISTER FOR POLICE AND COUNTER-TERRORISM

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (11:07): My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. Minister, police do not trust you. The public does not trust you. Your colleagues do not trust you. When will you resign as police Minister?

Mr Ron Hoenig: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: I recognise that the member for Newtown is on her feet, but she was not when I called the Leader of the Opposition. I will deal with the point of order from the Leader of the House, and I will then hear from the member for Newtown.

Mr Ron Hoenig: The question is in breach of virtually every provision in Standing Order 128. It contains argument, imputation, ironical expression and expressions of opinion. The Leader of the Opposition knows he cannot ask a question like that.

The SPEAKER: I thank the Leader of the House. The Leader of the Opposition should know that my inclination is to agree with the Leader of the House at this stage. He may wish to reword the question.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: I will reword the question.

The SPEAKER: Before the Leader of the Opposition rewords the question, I will hear from the member for Newtown.

Ms Jenny Leong: When I was outside the Chamber, there were people who wanted to come in and watch question time. They have been informed that the gallery is full, but I can see that there are seats in the gallery. We are in a difficult situation in terms of democracy. My understanding is it is a public gallery and this is public question time. I appreciate that there was a disturbance yesterday, but if there is a decision to not allow the public into the public gallery during question time that is a bigger concern. I appreciate that we need to be aware of security concerns. I absolutely respect that. But it is problematic that members of the public are currently sitting in the foyer and being told by parliamentary staff that the gallery is full when it is very clear that it is not.

The SPEAKER: The member for Newtown will resume her seat. I will give an explanation of what has occurred. It was reported to me that two members of the public were seeking to access the Speaker's gallery today. Access is granted at my behest, and my behest only. I was told that they were identified as being two of the protesters who I ordered to be removed from the gallery yesterday. If that is the case, I will not allow those people into the gallery today. They can perhaps seek an audience with me—not necessarily through the member for Newtown—and offer some explanation and maybe even an apology. My concern is the safety of this House, members of this Chamber, parliamentary staff and members of the public whom I have allowed into the Speaker's gallery. That is my primary interest, not the interests of a small number of people whom I have prevented from entering the gallery today.

Ms Jenny Leong: Mr Speaker, I have another question.

The SPEAKER: The member for Newtown will resume her seat. I will not entertain debate.

[Interruption]

I have no way of identifying them. The member for Newtown will resume her seat. I am taking this action for the safety of this Chamber.

[Interruption]

The member for Newtown will resume her seat or she will leave the Chamber.

[Interruption]

The member may give me that advice, but that is her opinion. I will not change my mind. I cannot discern who those people are, but I know they are associated—

[Interruption]

I direct the member for Newtown to remove herself from the Chamber under Standing Order 249A until the end of question time.

[Pursuant to standing order the member for Newtown left the Chamber at 11:12.]

Mr Alister Henskens: Point of order: We have now lost a significant amount of time from question time. This is the time to hold the Government accountable, which is a Westminster tradition.

The SPEAKER: The member for Wahroonga is completely correct. The Clerk will restart the clock for question time.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. Given the Minister's track record, including on the Clare Nowland tasering—

Mr Ron Hoenig: Point of order—

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: I am six words—

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat. The Leader of the House rises on a point of order.

Mr Ron Hoenig: The Leader of the Opposition cannot start a question like that because it infringes Standing Order 128. He is a silk; he knows that. He must ask the question without making purported statements of fact.

The SPEAKER: If the Leader of the Opposition does not reword the question, I will uphold the point of order.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: May I be heard on that? To the point of order: The opening words were "Given the Minister's track record". There is nothing pejorative in those words. It does not say it is a good track record or a bad track record. There is no imputation; it is a neutral proposition. I am going to articulate aspects of the Minister's record in a non-pejorative way.

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order. I will hear the question. The Leader of the Opposition has the call.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. Given the Minister's track record, including on the Clare Nowland tasering, the march on the Sydney Opera House, handling rural crime, transparency with the public and the Steve Jackson appointment, when will the Minister resign as police Minister?

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order. The member for Keira will come to order.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (11:14): I will not be resigning, but I am happy to talk about my track record. As I said yesterday, the police commissioner and I have been incredibly busy working together, making sure that the lives of New South Wales police officers are the best they can be. Just this morning, we attended a terrific breakfast meeting with a research group in the Strangers' Restaurant of this Parliament to discuss mental health and post-traumatic stress disorder [PTSD] of officers in New South Wales.

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

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: I was very disappointed not to see the Opposition's police spokesperson. We were talking about emergency services workers and PTSD.

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: I was there with the commissioner, of course, and it was excellent. I was pleased that it was in the Parliament. In addition to looking at mental health and ensuring that we retain police—because we know retention is a problem—the police commissioner has implemented another initiative in the NSW Police Force, which is absolutely backed by the Government. We inherited a 1,500 shortfall in the Police Force. What did we do? Within the first few months of being in government, I started work with the police commissioner to address it. We came up with the initiative of paying the recruits in Goulburn. That has been an enormous success. In fact, we have seen an uptick in older recruits who have a trade behind them. We want people in our NSW Police Force who have life experience. That is another great track record achievement of mine. Close to 1,000 people have applied to become a member of the NSW Police Force.

Mr Paul Scully: Those opposite cut a class.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: Exactly. The member for Wollongong is right. That is because members opposite do not support the police. All they do is bag the police.

Mr Mark Speakman: Point of order—

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: They are so busy blaming the police for a cover-up and blaming the police for this—

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

Mr Mark Speakman: It relates to tedious repetition. Day after day, the Minister will not talk about her own failures but persists in this tedious repetition that we hate police.

The SPEAKER: I appreciate the point of order. It is subjective. I cannot uphold the point of order.

ASSET PRIVATISATION

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (11:18): My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on the ongoing impacts of the former Government's privatisation agenda.

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:18): It is my duty to report to the House on the results of privatisation contracts pursued by the previous Government in 2013 and 2014. To set the scene, it is important members understand that in 2013 the previous Government sold Port Botany for \$4.3 billion. Port Kembla was sold in the same year for \$760 million.

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS: The Port of Newcastle was sold for \$1.7 billion. At the time, the then Premier said it was a great win for New South Wales. He said that we had achieved an incredible result.

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: In any event, the report is in and it details that the liability for the State of New South Wales, none of which was disclosed to the taxpayers of the State during that period, is anywhere between \$600 million and \$4.3 billion—secret contracts negotiated by the previous Government and not disclosed to the taxpayers of this State. As a result of those decisions, New South Wales taxpayers not only forgo the revenue they would have received as owner of those assets but also have an additional liability on top of whatever capital the State missed out on.

That is the result of the former Government's privatisation—sell for \$4.3 billion and then owe \$4.3 billion—and it is in addition to privatised assets. It seems that members opposite are massive supporters of privatisation. The Vales Point Power Station was sold for \$1 million, and the private owners of that power station onsold it for \$200 million. WestConnex was sold for \$20 billion and motorists on that motorway will pay \$64 billion in tolls to the private owners of that motorway. During this privatisation extravaganza, it should be noted that Rod Sims warned the former Government at the time. He said:

Privatising assets without allowing for competition or regulation creates private monopolies that raise prices, reduce efficiency and harm the economy.

In 2016 he said:

I see it getting worse. I think a sharp upper cut is needed in this area. That's why I am saying, 'let's just stop the privatisations'. It is increasing prices—

for regular consumers. After that warning in 2016, billions of dollars of government assets were sold off by the previous Government. [*Extension of time*]

We know that has a massive impact on cost of living for the people of New South Wales. It should be noted that *The Daily Telegraph* reports that some people are resorting to sharing a meal with their cat. *The Daily Telegraph* states:

Jordan Lane loves his cat Oscar so much that he ...

... has even posted pictures of the pair sharing a meal.

Mrs Wendy Tuckerman: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order. The member for Ryde will not be drawn into interjecting. The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mrs Wendy Tuckerman: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 73. If the Premier wants to make imputations about members, he should do so by way of substantive motion. I do not understand why the Premier does not like cats.

The SPEAKER: I thank the member for Goulburn.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: This is about them keeping their paws off our assets. Maybe it is not about the cost of living because the cat pram used by the member for Ryde cost \$400. I have to say, from looking at the photos, Oscar does not look too happy about it. He is a very sour puss. Oscar has had enough of being pushed around by the Liberal Party and so have the people of New South Wales.

Mrs Leslie Williams: Point of order—

Mr CHRIS MINNS: As a result of the former Government's privatisation agenda, the people of this State are going out the door backwards.

The SPEAKER: The Premier will resume his seat. Government members will come to order, particularly the member for Canterbury.

Mrs Leslie Williams: Obviously, my point of order is relevance, taken under Standing Order 129. I ask that the Premier be directed to address the question.

The SPEAKER: I understand that members are tired. I want to get through question time as best we can. I discussed with the Premier the possibility that cats would be mentioned today. Consistent with my past rulings, I rule that the Premier's comments breach the standing order. I remind the Premier to resume his seat when a member takes a point of order.

Mrs Leslie Williams: That was to be my other point of order. Every single member of this House, whether they are speaking—

The SPEAKER: I understand the point of order and I have already ruled on it.

Mrs Leslie Williams: Excuse me, can I finish? We have a right to be heard in silence. The Premier should uphold the standing orders.

The SPEAKER: The member for Port Macquarie will resume her seat.

NSW POLICE FORCE MEDIA ADVISERS

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (11:24): My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. To clarify, did the Minister's chief of staff or her office in any way propose Steve Jackson as the police commissioner's \$300,000-plus media chief?

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (11:25): I answered that question yesterday.

[Opposition members interjected.]

The SPEAKER: I cannot direct the Minister how to answer the question. Her answer was directly relevant. Members may claim it was a non-answer but it was a directly relevant answer, referring to what the Minister said yesterday.

REGIONAL TRANSPORT AND ROADS

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (11:25): Mr Speaker—

The SPEAKER: The Attorney General will come to order.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: My question is addressed to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads. Will the Minister update the House on the importance of the New South Wales Government's investment in improving regional transport and roads?

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (11:26): I, too, welcome the mayor of Wentworth Shire Council, Daniel Linklater, and the council's general manager, who are guests of the member for Cootamundra, and the mayors from Glenn Innes and Lismore. It is lovely to speak to the mayors. Government members have been having a great time speaking to mayors across the State. I must also acknowledge the great member for Cessnock. He is a fantastic representative of a fantastic community. I am sure the Attorney General agrees. This Government has hit the ground running to fix the mess resulting from the former Coalition Government's 12 years of failure and neglect across our regional road and transport network. That is a fact. The Government is making good on its election commitments of improving the road network.

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

Mrs Leslie Williams: You were happy to cut ribbons on our roads.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: I acknowledge the interjection of the member for Port Macquarie. I have been to her electorate a number of times. She should be very grateful for the \$390 million that this Government has given regional councils in this State to fix the mess left by members opposite. Let me provide some context. Members opposite were really proud when they rolled out \$1 per kilometre for regional roads for every \$5 per kilometre that they gave to the metro in our regions. They all clapped and said, "Aren't we a great National Party. Aren't we great country Liberals." Labor is the party of the regions and the country people. We are getting out there and doing the work that those opposite did not do. The best thing is that we promised that money over two years, but guess when we delivered it? We delivered all of it in November.

There is now so much more money in the regions. Just today I listened to the Premier, the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, the Minister for Emergency Services, the Parliamentary Secretary for Disaster Recovery, and the mayor of Lismore City Council, Steve Krieg, talk about the \$860 million under that tripartite agreement which will enable them to do the work on our roads network that needs to be done. But what do we see from members opposite? The member for Bathurst wants to keep his hands on the Bathurst Bullet. There is fighting going on there. They want to fight in the Central West; they do not want to deliver anything. That is the real problem. I should talk about how much everyone is loving what this Government is doing.

Mrs Leslie Williams: Point of order: Mr Speaker, I ask you to direct the Minister to address her comments through the Chair, as per the standing orders.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: I did.

Mrs Leslie Williams: No, you did not. You were talking to the audience.

The SPEAKER: I thank the member for Port Macquarie. I uphold the point of order.

Mr Clayton Barr: I seek additional information.

The SPEAKER: A further two minutes is granted. I remind the Minister to address her remarks through the Chair.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: It is all addressed to you, Mr Speaker.

The SPEAKER: I know.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: You have already been such a great Speaker in this place. I love how you do this. But what I really want to talk about is what is happening over there. We have put in new coach services for big and small communities. We have extra funding for the Clarence Town bridge. Where are my questions from you, shadow Minister? Or are you the Temporary Speaker? I am not sure anymore. What are you doing? What I am doing is building his bridge, which the Coalition failed to do. And Clarence Town is getting that school bus it has been requesting since 2016. We finished the Golden Highway upgrade a year ahead of schedule. We are building the M1 to Raymond Terrace. We are building Singleton Bypass. We are doing the Jervis Bay flyover. I have met with over 25 councils this year. I have travelled 8½ thousand kilometres on the network. People are saying thank you. The NRMA, Regional Cities and Country Mayors love what we are doing. But it is not only them. It is members in this Chamber. The member for Northern Tablelands said:

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

The member for Cootamundra said that the Regional Emergency Road Repair Fund is "a significant step towards ensuring the safety and convenience of our community members". That's local leadership right there. I commend the member for Cootamundra, and I do mean that. She is a great member. What are all these other Opposition members doing?

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

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: We are fixing the level crossing at Old Junee. There is still a campaign going on there and at Bathurst. We are doing things they could not do. We are getting on with the job of fixing their messes. There are more buses, more roads and safer level crossings. You're welcome!

The SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Kiama, I acknowledge three guests of the member for Campbelltown, from the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Sydney. Welcome to our Chamber. I would not want anyone to think that the Speaker has lost control of this House. Everything is going exactly as scripted.

KIAMA ELECTORATE PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (11:31): My question is directed to the Premier. In the Premier's first 12 months in office, his Government has cut public transport projects important to my electorate, like the Toolijooa passing loop; cut class places in accelerated learning classes at Illaroo Road Primary School; left ambulance stations in remote locations, like Kangaroo Valley, unmanned; and is considering selling off David Berry Hospital to developers. Is this just business as usual for his Government? Or is this how he treats people and punishes people who do not vote for him?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:32): I will take the question on notice.

REGIONAL SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (11:32): My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Education and Early Learning. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on how the Government is ensuring that all students have access to free, high-quality education through its investments in regional school infrastructure?

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (11:33): I certainly will. While Toongabbie Public School is not a regional school, I must say hello to its students in the gallery as the teacher tells them to wave quietly. I thank the member for Gosford very much for that important question about the investment of the Minns Labor Government, particularly in rural and regional schools. This is so significant because, as a government, we believe that every single child in New South Wales has a right to and deserves the best fee-free public education possible, no matter where they live, and we are deadset determined to deliver this.

Even before I get to the investment we have made in recruiting and retaining more of our wonderful teachers in these schools, we are investing in important school infrastructure in these communities, providing more learning opportunities and world-class facilities for special subjects and co-curricular activities in regional New South Wales. That important work boosts the morale of both the students and the staff at these schools.

Unfortunately, what we inherited upon coming to government was the complete opposite to that. The former Government left us with a 35 per cent increase in demountables in regional New South Wales.

Mrs Leslie Williams: Still no buildings at the Hastings school, though.

Ms PRUE CAR: Let me get right to the heart of this matter. I am spurred on by the need to respond to the constant heckling from the member for Port Macquarie, who suddenly seems to have found her voice for schools in Port Macquarie. Let me put on the record what is happening at Hastings Secondary College, at both its Port Macquarie and Westport campuses. The former Government absolutely botched the upgrade to the college. It promised that upgrades would be finished in 2022. We are now in 2024. Did that happen? Absolutely not. There were delays upon delays upon delays. But the Liberals and Nationals actually delayed it. That may be why The Nationals ran against the member for Port Macquarie. That may be what actually happened. But it has taken a Labor government to get on with the job at both campuses and actually deliver these upgrades. New classrooms, a new entry and facility upgrades are all completed. A new creative and performing arts building is completed.

Ms Liesl Tesch: Mr Speaker, I request an extension of time to hear more about public education in regional communities.

The SPEAKER: Members will appreciate the impeccable timing that the member for Gosford invariably displays; she had one second remaining and she nailed it. I grant an additional two minutes.

Ms PRUE CAR: As a former teacher in regional New South Wales, the member for Gosford would certainly like to hear more. The member knows what we have done and what we continue to deliver at both campuses of Hastings, including refurbished technological and applied studies facilities, upgraded classrooms and new sports facilities. As well, we are upgrading so many other regional schools across New South Wales. We are delivering major upgrades to Orana Heights Public School and Dubbo South Public School, which are primary schools in the member's electorate. I shout out to the principals I met a few weeks ago at both of these schools, Annie Munro and Sharon Allman, for their wonderful advocacy. I am so proud of this Labor Government for delivering for that region, which is something the previous Government, with a Minister as the local member, failed to do time and again.

The SPEAKER: I warn the member for Dubbo to cease interjecting or he will be called to order.

Ms PRUE CAR: We are delivering at Bomaderry High School. I was there recently, talking about the major new upgrade we are investing in. The principal, Ian Morris, was so glad because it is finally happening.

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

Ms PRUE CAR: He said to me he knows it will be a game changer.

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

Ms PRUE CAR: It hurts especially for the member for Kiama because Bomaderry High School is his alma mater. But it needs to be upgraded, and Mr Ian Morris said to me this whole facelift will be a game changer for the school.

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

Ms PRUE CAR: There will be 50 classroom improvements and upgrades to toilets, which are not often done. There was really substandard work on the toilets, which needs to be upgraded. That will ensure that that local comprehensive high school is more attractive, to drive more enrolments. We are committed to doing the work The Nationals failed to do and to delivering the upgrades to schools the people of regional New South Wales deserve.

The SPEAKER: As the education Minister resumes her seat, I will do a welfare check on our students in the gallery. Everyone is all good up there? Thank you.

MINISTER FOR POLICE AND COUNTER-TERRORISM

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (11:38): My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. Did the Minister's chief of staff or her office approach Steve Jackson about the \$300,000-plus media chief role?

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (11:39): I answered the question yesterday.

Mr Alister Henskens: Point of order: No question yesterday concerned any approach by the Minister or her staff with Mr Jackson, so it is an issue of direct relevance. The Minister has not answered the question that was asked and no question yesterday, nor answer, dealt with the matter.

The SPEAKER: I will not direct the Minister how to answer the question.

Mr Alister Henskens: I am asking for a ruling on the relevance of her answer because it is not a relevant answer.

The SPEAKER: No, because I would have to go back and examine the answers that were given yesterday.

Mr Ron Hoenig: To the point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Manager of Opposition Business will resume his seat. I will hear from the Leader of the House.

Mr Ron Hoenig: I can assist by giving copious references to rulings given by previous Speakers that the Speaker cannot direct what is contained within a Minister's answer to a question. If the Minister answers the question, that is all she has to do as long as it is directly relevant. Those rulings have been consistent over the years. The Manager of Opposition Business must know that.

The SPEAKER: I thank the Leader of the House. I have stated that I do not have the ability to direct the Minister how to answer the question.

Mr Alister Henskens: Further to the point of order: Mr Speaker, I did not ask you to make a direction to the Minister. I asked you to rule on whether her answer was relevant, having regard to the fact that no question traversed the same subject matter yesterday. The Minister is avoiding giving a relevant answer to the question.

The SPEAKER: To satisfy the Manager of Opposition Business, I rule that the Minister's answer was directly relevant.

NORTHERN RIVERS DISASTER RECOVERY

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (11:41): My question is addressed to the Minister for Emergency Services. Will the Minister update the House on action taken by the Government to provide a faster funding pathway for Northern Rivers communities to rebuild vital infrastructure following the catastrophic disasters?

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (11:41): I thank the member for Lismore for her question. We know how persistent the member for Lismore is. One of my colleagues said yesterday that she is constantly beating on their door, and I speak on behalf of all Ministers who feel the same. The member for Lismore is in my office so often I think she has her own swipe card. That joke fell flat, didn't it?

The Government has finally delivered on her request. When I visit the Northern Rivers, both as the shadow Minister and the Minister, the number one request that I receive is always for certainty: certainty that the Government will not forget about them; certainty about where people will live; and certainty that communities can get on with the business of reconstruction. This Government has well and truly heard that message. Today's announcement of a landmark agreement is something that we should all be incredibly proud of. Today the Premier, the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, the Minister for Regional Transport, the member for Lismore, Mayor Steve Krieg and I, representing the Reconstruction Authority, signed a tripartite agreement that will make life better and easier for councils in the Northern Rivers as they start to rebuild public infrastructure.

It is a huge change. Minister Scully—my twin—and I visit reconstruction zones and we have been to the area a few times. We faced people head-on and said, "We are here for a reset." We had only been Ministers for a couple of months and we visited because we had heard that people in the Northern Rivers were frustrated. We heard that from Parliamentary Secretary Saffin and from members on the other side of the Chamber. They told us, "Our communities feel like they have been left behind." So what did we do? Minister Scully and I went up there and spent several days with the communities. We said, "We are here to listen. We want to hear what you have got to say. What can we do better? How do we reset this?" One thing that was very clear was the communities wanted certainty.

So reset we did. Today's announcement is fantastic. I will explain how it works. Basically, there is a bucket of money. The flooding in the Northern Rivers was the worst in Australia's history. I do not need to go into the devastation again. It did so much damage—lives were lost and homes were destroyed. The community was bent but not broken, and they survived. It also damaged social infrastructure like the roads, the sewerage systems, the water treatment plants—all the infrastructure that builds a community and is needed for its survival. The way it

normally works is that councils are responsible for the repairs and need to pay the money up-front. [*Extension of time*]

Councils and local government areas that are doing it tough and dealing with so many other things have to pay up-front and then try to get that money reimbursed. It sounds like a great idea but the problem is it does not give local government certainty. They do not have that money to outlay, so the work does not get done straightaway. It gets delayed, and people get more and more frustrated. That reset allowed us to listen. At the local Community Leaders Forum, which is chaired by the Parliamentary Secretary and includes local MPs from across the aisle, community leaders and civic leaders asked, "How do we take ownership of this? How do we get a community-led recovery?" That is what happens when you listen to people and ask, "What can we do that would work?"

Today's announcement is fantastic because it is clear that we need to rebuild communities by making sure that we put the money up-front. It is a game changer. It does not send councils broke and it means that people in communities are not just surviving but thriving. We want to build back better. We want communities to thrive and we want to stand with them shoulder to shoulder. As a government, we are most proud of the commitment that we made. When Minister Scully and I went there it was not easy. People said, "Here you are. We have heard it all before," but, as the member for the Clarence knows, we gave our word. We delivered on that promise by making sure that we have resilient land packages that cover the home razings, retrofits and home purchases. The agreement shows that the Government is putting community at the heart of decision-making. I give a big shout-out to everybody there, who have real community spirit, and to the Reconstruction Authority, which in the past year has been an exceptional example of what government agencies can be. [*Time expired.*]

NSW POLICE FORCE MEDIA ADVISERS

Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (11:47): My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. Just to be clear, Minister, it is a question that we did not ask you yesterday.

The SPEAKER: No. The member for Vaucluse will just ask the question.

Ms KELLIE SLOANE: I just want to be clear, Mr Speaker, because the Minister is not answering the questions.

The SPEAKER: The member for Vaucluse will ask the question. Order!

Ms KELLIE SLOANE: Has the Minister sought assurances from the Cabinet Office that Mr Jackson's appointment meets the requirements under the Government Sector Employment Act?

Mr Chris Minns: Isn't there a way of raising an allegation without actually raising an allegation?

Ms KELLIE SLOANE: Mr Speaker, the Premier is smirking and making comments from the other side.

The SPEAKER: Order! I am not aware of anything other than the member's question, which was in order. The Minister has the call.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (11:47): I am advised that Mr Jackson has been appointed to the role of Executive Director, Public Affairs of the NSW Police Force on a temporary basis for six months. This appointment was made through a suitability assessment process in accordance with the rules of the Government Sector Employment (NSW Police Force) Rules 2017. That involved assessment of Mr Jackson's suitability for the role against the key selection criteria.

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

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: An interview process and national police check for non-sworn police officers were undertaken. A full merit process for an ongoing appointment to the role will be conducted in coming months.

TRANSPORT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (11:49): My question is addressed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. Will the inspirational Minister inform the House of the measures taken to ensure the integrity of the Transport Oriented Development Program in light of recent allegations?

Mr Alister Henskens: Point of order: Questions are not allowed to contain argumentative material or expressions of opinion.

The SPEAKER: Or epithets. I call the Minister.

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (11:49): That is the first time the member for Wahrenoona has got up on a point of order when I have been speaking this week. Isn't that interesting! But we will see who pops up later on. The Parliamentary Secretary is very much aware of the need to maintain integrity in any planning decisions, and that is exactly what has been done in the Transport Oriented Development program, as I outlined to the House yesterday. The 305 locations were considered to arrive at the 39 that were announced. That was a rigorous process, but overlaid with the rigorous process of looking at—

Mr Alister Henskens: Why won't you release them? Why are you claiming Cabinet in confidence?

Mr PAUL SCULLY: I'll get to you, mate. Don't you worry.

The SPEAKER: The member for Wahrenoona will come to order. The Minister will direct his comments through the Chair.

Mr PAUL SCULLY: The member for Wahrenoona is awfully chirpy for someone who has had a Wile E. Coyote moment this week when it blew up in his face. Probity measures—

Ms Robyn Preston: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Minister will resume his seat. The member for Hawkesbury rises on a point of order. The Clerk will stop the clock.

Ms Robyn Preston: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 75. No member shall be referred to as "mate".

The SPEAKER: I uphold the point of order. It is not the proper form of address for a member.

Mr PAUL SCULLY: I withdraw the reference because he is not my mate—never would be. I do not get that close to slippery characters like him.

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

The SPEAKER: No, he is not flouting my ruling.

Mrs Wendy Tuckerman: He is mocking the standing orders.

The SPEAKER: Members will stop being so sensitive. The Minister will be allowed to answer the question.

Mrs Wendy Tuckerman: How about you be fair in your ruling?

The SPEAKER: I direct the member for Goulburn to remove herself from the Chamber for a period of 10 minutes under Standing Order 249A.

[Pursuant to standing order the member for Goulburn left the Chamber at 11:51.]

Mr PAUL SCULLY: It was the right ruling, Mr Speaker.

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

Mr PAUL SCULLY: Members opposite are talking about flouting something, but they have been flouting our approach to probity when it comes to planning. One would expect, after the serious allegations that the member for Wahrenoona raised in this place but did not back up—he did not refer it to ICAC but left it to us to do—that it would have been explored in budget estimates a short time later. The shadow planning Minister in the other place asked away, no doubt confident that he could place his trust in the allegations made by his colleague the member for Wahrenoona—confidence that was badly misplaced. The member for Wahrenoona proudly heralds his status as a senior counsel. He may be senior in the Opposition ranks, but I have serious doubts about his counsel. He is no Rumpole and no Columbo; he is more Dennis Denuto—it's all about the vibe.

Mr Matt Kean: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 73. This has nothing to do with the question that was asked. I ask you to return the Minister to the leave of the question.

The SPEAKER: The Minister will be directly relevant to the question as it was asked.

Mr PAUL SCULLY: The question was about the integrity measures that were put in place, and they have been put in place from day one when it comes to the Transport Oriented Development program. That was outlined in great detail in budget estimates—another document that the member for Wahrenoona did not bother to read. Perhaps his source had not heard of that process, but the Secretary of the Department of Planning detailed all the measures that were put in place to make sure of the integrity of those policy recommendations. They included disclosure and public interest statements, need-to-know-basis staff reductions and an independent probity advisor.

Mr Stephen Bali: I seek an extension of time for further information.

Mr Ron Hoenig: From the inspirational Minister.

The SPEAKER: An additional two minutes is granted.

Mr PAUL SCULLY: I thank the Leader of the House; I appreciate that. With all of that in place and on the public record, one would think it was prudent to await the ICAC processes to examine the grievous claim of corruption. But the member for Wahrenga doubled down, claiming a giant cover-up by the Government and the private sector on this matter.

Mr Justin Clancy: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 73. Reflections on a member are permitted only by way of substantive motion.

The SPEAKER: That is correct, but in this case the threshold has not been reached. I do not uphold the point of order.

Mr PAUL SCULLY: We are so far away from that threshold. The only things that could be further apart are the member for Wahrenga and evidence. In the claim of a cover-up, there has been no exposition of the facts.

Mr Alister Henskens: There are documents.

Mr PAUL SCULLY: The member for Wahrenga claims he has documents, but what did he do with them? He hung onto them. He clung onto them tightly, not wanting to show anyone.

Mr Matt Kean: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr Matt Kean: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 74. Quarrels are not permitted. Mr Speaker, I ask you to direct the Minister to return to the leave of the question.

The SPEAKER: I uphold the point of order. The Minister is being a little quarrelsome. He will continue his answer.

Mr PAUL SCULLY: Sure. To suggest by way of interjection that he has documents but has decided to hold onto them and not provide them to the ICAC or to anyone else suggests that he actually does not have the evidence he claims to have. He is impugning all of the planning system as a result of not—

Mr Matt Kean: Point of order: Mr Speaker, you just made a ruling under Standing Order 74 and the Minister returned to being quarrelsome. I ask that you uphold your ruling.

The SPEAKER: I thank the member for Hornsby. The Minister will resume his answer, maintaining his improved demeanour. He said that he would be less quarrelsome.

Mr PAUL SCULLY: It is hard not to be quarrelsome, Mr Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Minister will do his best.

Mr PAUL SCULLY: The entire planning system has been impugned by the member for Wahrenga. Decent and serious probity measures were put in place, and he is clinging onto the documents like a life raft. But it is not a life raft for his leadership ambitions.

Mr Matt Kean: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: As the Minister's time has expired, there is no point of order.

TRANSPORT FOR NSW EMPLOYEE WORKPLACE SAFETY

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (11:55): My question is directed to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads.

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order. The Minister for Transport will come to order.

Mr GURMESH SINGH: New South Wales government employee Rochelle Hicks received a death threat against her on a Transport for NSW project in June last year, and no action was taken by the Government until it was reported in the media. On 23 November last year the Minister's chief of staff, in an email titled "Background", said that the victim "was doing a lot of self-promotion and media". Will the Minister be taking any action and sacking that staff member, or does the Minister find that type of behaviour acceptable in her "fresh start" Government?

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (11:57): I am so pleased to finally get this question on the record from the member for Coffs Harbour. I addressed it in budget estimates and was very clear about what that was, but I know that not everyone in the Chamber is reading or watching budget estimates. It is good to be able to be clear about it. That document was in a privileged section of the box. I am not sure whether privilege was removed. We did not make any further submissions on it because we thought it was in the interest of Ms Hicks for it to be completely transparent.

As I said to Mr Latham, who has dragged my staff member's name through the mud, I took those notes in a phone call that I got from the department. They were written down as I heard them on Ms Boyd's phone, because she was with me while I was travelling and I had my phone to my ear. About 10 days after that meeting, I asked her to email those notes to me so I had them in hard copy. I want to talk about the substance of those notes. I was very concerned about what they said. They were not the words of the person I was speaking to; they were reports of multiple issues that had been raised about the way that issue had been so poorly handled. That was what engendered my concern. I asked for a full briefing, which I got on the Monday. There was a safety investigation. At the very core of this, my sympathies go out to Ms Hicks. I have always said that, and I have always said that we will do whatever we can to address the issue.

[An Opposition member interjected.]

Please do not interject; you are not standing at the lectern. It is not a debate. Members opposite have had their chance to have this conversation.

The SPEAKER: The member for Coffs Harbour will come to order. The member for Wahroonga will come to order. The member for Port Stephens will come to order.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: I am so, so sorry to Ms Hicks. That is the most important thing. They have dragged this through the Parliament, and the way it has happened is disgraceful. They have cast aspersions on the public record against a staff member with an exemplary record of care and concern, and who was with me as the shadow Minister for Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. It is disgusting behaviour. They are throwing staff who are innocent of these things under the bus. It is the hypocrisy that really hurts me. I hope that Ms Hicks is getting some help. What is happening here is wrong and disgusting.

DISABILITY SUPPORT

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (12:00): My question is addressed to the Minister for Disability Inclusion. Will the Minister update the House on the New South Wales Government's commitment to ensuring ongoing support and advocacy for people with a disability?

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion) (12:00): I thank the member for Liverpool for her question and for her commitment to ensuring that her community is truly diverse, inclusive and accessible. I start by wishing everyone a happy World Down Syndrome Day. It is a day to celebrate the strengths and achievements of people with Down syndrome in our State and acknowledge their incredible contribution to our community. I am pleased to inform the House that today the Government has announced \$28 million in funding to ensure ongoing support and advocacy for people with disability in New South Wales. Funding for disability advocacy will continue for a further two years to ensure that the 1.4 million people with a disability in our State can access government-funded services. The funding will support the work of 19 amazing organisations across New South Wales, including Down Syndrome NSW, which has tirelessly advocated for the needs of people with Down syndrome in this State for 40 years.

Yesterday it was really awesome to host Down Syndrome NSW in Parliament to celebrate World Down Syndrome Day and to see firsthand, once again, how that organisation has changed the lives of people with Down syndrome and, most importantly, created a village to raise some of the most beautiful and kind people I have ever met. The disability advocacy funding goes to organisations that support people with disability to navigate local services. They help people with disability and their families in so many ways. It is so important for many families because it helps to cut down the noise and confusion in the disability services sector by providing information and advice tailored to their needs.

The program also funds organisations that are fighting for a more inclusive society, as well as funding great programs run by people with disability for people with disability. The program aims to assist all people with disability in New South Wales who need support to access government-funded services, regardless of whether or not they are on the NDIS. We know that one in five people in New South Wales live with a disability, but only a small proportion are participants in the NDIS scheme. The program also provides one-off funding grants for special and innovative projects to improve the lives of people with disability. I thank Down Syndrome NSW and all the hardworking disability advocacy organisations in New South Wales for everything they do to advise, inform and empower people with disability every single day. *[Extension of time]*

Many people in this Chamber will recall the long-fought community campaign to save disability advocacy funding after the former Government decided to cease the program altogether in 2018. I was very proud to fight alongside the now Parliamentary Secretary for Disability Inclusion, and the now Minister for Industrial Relations, and many other Labor and crossbench colleagues to ensure that those crucial organisations were not defunded after New South Wales entered into the NDIS.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: They wouldn't fund it.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: They wouldn't fund it. I still have the "Stand By Me" poster in my office. It was a powerful campaign that amplified the strengths and opportunities of people with disability in this State and forced the former Coalition Government to continue funding disability advocacy organisations.

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order. This is an important matter and I wish to hear the Minister.

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: We know that many stereotypes about people with disability continue to exist. They marginalise and exclude people in our society who have so much to offer. That is why our Government is committed to making our communities more inclusive and accessible, so people with disability can truly participate. The Government's \$800 million investment in Safe Accessible Transport upgrades will literally change the lives of people with disability. The \$350 million investment in specialist learning in public schools to support the one in four students with disability will build pathways of opportunity. We are also working closely with former Australian of the Year Dylan Alcott and Get Skilled Access to improve inclusion and accessibility in health, education, public sector employment and for tourism across the State. All that, while we are working through the recommendations of the disability royal commission and harnessing the opportunities of the NDIS review. We know that there is so much more work to do to make our communities more inclusive and accessible. This Government is up to the job.

YOUTH JUSTICE TRADE PROGRAMS

Dr JOE MCGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (12:05): My question is directed to the Minister for Youth Justice. Noting that the Minister has a fine head of hair and a carefully groomed beard—both of which were further enhanced by the styling he received from a student at the Riverina Youth Justice Centre during a recent visit—will the Minister explain how such skills-based programs are helping prepare young people in custody for a better future?

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (12:06): I think members were a bit worried when he started talking about my hairline. I thank the member for Wagga Wagga for his question, and for joining me and the Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education on a visit to the Riverina Youth Justice Centre. Once upon a time people like me who were looking for a hair makeover would have to fly to Turkey to get something done. Over the weekend I heard about tourism in Turkey, where you can get your hair done at a really good price. But we have a good deal on hair transformation.

I saw no better transformation than that of the member for Wagga Wagga. When I first met him in the car park, he looked like Tom Hanks in *Cast Away*. By the time we walked out of the juvenile justice centre, he looked more like John Travolta in *Saturday Night Fever*. The hair was not the giveaway; it was when I said to him, "Hey, Joe. You're looking pretty cool." He struck a pose like Travolta and replied, "Yeah, mate." In all seriousness, we were there to check out some of the great examples of the trade skills that are being taught across the youth justice system. We were joined by the skills Minister and the Skills NSW group. Felicity and her team do great work. This was a barbering course, and the young gentleman was learning the skills of barbering. We said that we were happy to have a haircut, and I got a beard trim as well. I saved \$10 on what it would normally cost me at Punchbowl, but it was okay.

The young man did really well. We had a conversation, and he was, as he would say, "shitting it". I will not say what it was he said that he was shitting. He said that he was looking forward to finishing his sentence and starting an apprenticeship. He was picking up pre-apprenticeship skills. I have spoken in this place on so many occasions about stories of hope and aspiration. The other lovely element was the gentleman who was teaching. His name was Shivan, and he had come from Iraq only four or five years before with his family. They have set up a barbering store and are giving back to the community. Shivan wants to teach this young man barbering skills and get him into an apprenticeship. The world comes full circle in a really good way.

There was another inspiring young man—I will not mention his name. He was a little bit older and was teaching crane operation skills. On completion, he could offer some work lifting concrete blocks using the crane. I thought that what he was doing was impressive, but I was more impressed when I heard that young man had been an inmate at a juvenile justice centre only 10 years beforehand and that this was his way of giving back.
[Extension of time]

We often talk in this place about those inspiring stories. Last year I visited OysterLife with the member for Bega. There Uncle Hillary teaches cultural skills to young people who are going off the rails or are on the wrong track and gets them work in the oyster farming industry, which we really need. I say to all members in this Chamber that we cannot give up on children. They will face their consequences, but we need to change their behaviour. It is not about seeking revenge; it is about changing behaviour and setting them up for a better future. Try a Trade operates in every one of the State's six Youth Justice centres. The Government is also partnering with other community groups as a form of diversion to offer carpentry, bricklaying, painting, building, crane operation and barbering.

There is a great program called Plate It Forward, where young people are learning skills to be able to work in the hospitality industry. Plate It Forward has created the Second Chance Kitchen program, where chefs from Rockpool Bar and Grill and Mr. Wong are teaching cooking skills. That is what second chances are about. The Government is not going to give up on young people; it will always find a way to their hearts to make a change. They do not choose their circumstances. They need to be given skills. I come full circle back to hairlines. There are members in this place, like the member for Heffron and the member for Tweed, who have impressive hairlines. Some of us can only look at them with envy. I am talking about the member for Hornsby, the member for Mount Druitt, the member for Cabramatta and me. As Humphrey Bogart once said, we will always have Istanbul.

The SPEAKER: I say to the Minister that his joke will be much better when read in *Hansard*.

PUBLIC SECTOR WAGES

Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (12:11): My question is addressed to the phenomenal Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety. Will the Minister update the House on the impact of scrapping the former Liberal-Nationals Government's wages cap?

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (12:12): I thank the amazing member for Riverstone. It has been nearly a year since he was elected, and he has done an excellent job. He is an excellent member representing north-west Sydney. It is an important question. My colleagues and I have spoken time and again about the crisis in essential services that we were left with and that we continue to fix. How can we forget the draconian wages cap of the previous Liberal-Nationals Government? Those opposite voted last year to continue to have a wages cap. On the one hand, they say one thing and vote a different way, but in their hearts—and it is in *Hansard*—those opposite support a wages cap and this Government does not. That law shackled the Industrial Relations Commission. It severely limited its ability to set fair and reasonable wages, and it turned the New South Wales public service from being an employer of choice to an employer of last resort. It was a law that left the public service with a recruitment and retention crisis.

At the time that Labor came into government, three-quarters of healthcare and education workers were thinking of leaving their jobs. Teacher resignations were outstripping retirements. Classrooms were merged, impacting our children's education and the State's future. Police shortages spread across the regions. The absolute shame of 12 years of those opposite and their legislated wages cap left essential service workers on award rates that were less than the national minimum wage. That is what those opposite oversaw. They could have prevented it when in government, but they chose to turn a blind eye.

The Government is now cleaning up the mess left after 12 years. There is a lot of work going on. There is a lot of award modernisation, line-by-line and consequential work going on. There is a lot of work that those opposite should have done, but they left it to us. The Government is happy to do the work, but those opposite have left many workers going backwards. In its first year, the Government has delivered the removal of the wages cap and a 4.5 per cent raise for health workers, firefighters, police, childcare workers and emergency services workers. It has delivered a historic pay deal for 95,000 teachers. [*Extension of time*]

There were 460 fewer teacher vacancies at the beginning of term 1. I love that statistic. The Deputy Premier has fixed it and is turning it around. It means that kids have got teachers in the classroom. This is a first-world country, and 12 months ago teachers were leaving. The Government is turning that around. There have been historic pay deals for our life-saving paramedics, recognising their professional qualifications. Those opposite did absolutely nothing, and this Government fixed it. As a result, as reported by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, New South Wales was the State with the highest quarterly wage rise last quarter. It is not just the public sector; the New South Wales private sector has the highest wage growth of any State or Territory in Australia. It translates directly into more take-home pay and helps with cost-of-living relief.

The Government has not stopped there. Removing the wages cap was the first important step, but the Government must be able to continue to provide long-term improvements to pay and a careful and responsible approach, which is what it is doing. It is being fiscally responsible but it is also listening to what the workforce is

saying. The workforce is telling the Government about some good, innovative approaches to best work practice. Those opposite would not open the door. The Government has got a mutual gains bargaining approach, and it is working. It means that everybody wins. The workers win, the public wins and the Government wins. That is important, and it is absolutely working. There will be more of this in the next tranche. I cannot wait to talk about the whole-of-government return to work strategy coming up after the break.

Documents

AUDITOR-GENERAL

Reports

The CLERK: In accordance with section 52B of the Government Sector Audit Act, I announce receipt of the Special Report of the Auditor-General entitled *Regulation Insights*, dated 21 March 2024 and received this day.

Committees

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON LAW AND SAFETY

Inquiry

Mr EDMOND ATALLA: As Chair: In accordance with Standing Order 299 (1), I inform the House that the Legislative Assembly Committee on Law and Safety has resolved to conduct an inquiry into community safety in regional and rural communities, the full details of which are available on the committee's home page.

Business of the House

SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr RON HOENIG: I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to permit:

- (1) That the time allocated for Government business be extended until the consideration of any Legislative Council messages regarding Government business is concluded.
- (2) The House to continue to sit after the conclusion of private members' statements to consider any messages from the Legislative Council regarding Government business, including the option for the Speaker to leave and resume the chair on the ringing of one long bell, with the House to adjourn without motion moved once consideration of the messages has concluded.
- (3) If any messages from the Legislative Council regarding Government business are received before or during private members' statements, for business before the House to be interrupted for the consideration of the messages forthwith and to resume once the consideration of the messages has concluded.

Motion agreed to.

Bills

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

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (12:21): I speak in support of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment (Virtual Stock Fencing) Bill 2024. Virtual fencing is a revolutionary concept in agriculture and land management. Hopefully, gone are the days of traditional barriers. Virtual fencing presents a sustainable and efficient solution for controlling livestock while maximising land use and preserving our environment. Farmers are always looking for efficiency measures, and this will be a game changer for farmers and consumers. Governments are always asking farmers to do more, with less, to provide affordable food and fibre. Unlike the member for Prospect, who probably only lasted until smoko when he had his station experience in Queensland, my livestock husbandry experiences have lasted a lifetime. Before I came to Parliament, I was running sheep at home for wool and fat lamb production. I am all over stock. On our place, we run a considerable number of beef cattle, and that goes to the heart of the bill.

Mr Philip Donato: A real farmer.

Mrs HELEN DALTON: I am a real farmer. I am also a Nuffield scholar and, after studying agricultural practices from around the world, I know that Australian farmers have a reputation for innovation. They are the envy of farmers in other countries. We are the best, but Government members just do not know it. The biggest

risk for farmers is laggard governments with poor policies. Every day we see poor, uninformed governments make decisions and, unfortunately, good farmers who have had a gutful leave the industry. Contemporary fencing costs around \$10,000 per kilometre, which includes material and labour for fence construction—if you can find the labour to do it. Virtual fencing offers a cost-effective alternative to conventional fencing methods. By leveraging cutting-edge technology such as GPS tracking and behavioural monitoring, virtual fencing provides precise and customised boundaries for livestock, eliminating the need for physical barriers that can be costly to install and maintain. As I said, it costs \$10,000 per kilometre.

Farmers also spend an inordinate amount of time checking their fences, particularly when native animals such as kangaroos are often caught in conventional fences. I have had the experience of releasing a joey that was caught, hanging upside down, while its frantic mother was hopping to-and-fro over the fence, very concerned about the joey. He was lucky. I was able to release that joey. Often we find animals that are hanging from fences, which is a horrible death. The benefits of virtual fencing extend far beyond economics. By reducing the reliance on physical barriers, we can minimise habitat fragmentation and disturbance to wildlife populations. Populations of kangaroos could move through the landscape; they have to jump over conventional fences. If you had virtual fencing, they could move through the landscape as they have done for millions of years.

It is time, however, that the New South Wales Government eradicated feral pests like pigs as part of the bargain. That is what the Government should be doing. I know that there have been pig-shooting programs, but a lot more needs to be done to clean out feral pests. The national parks are full of feral goats, pigs, deer and horses, and the native animals have been pushed out onto farms where there is reliable food and water. We need better management of our national parks. Virtual fencing promotes biodiversity and ecosystem health, fostering a harmonious balance between agriculture and the environment. Because conventional fences cost so much, it is almost set-and-forget when farmers are grazing. Farmers put a set stock rate on a paddock and, unless they are watching, the groundcover can often be eaten closer to the ground than it should be. Virtual fencing offers a real game changer as far as environmental benefits for groundcover. Moreover, virtual fencing enables more efficient land use allowing farmers and land managers to optimise pasture rotation and grazing patterns. It is a kind of science. Farmers understand; we do courses about it. I could spend all day talking about pasture rotation and grazing patterns, but I guess we have not got all day.

By strategically controlling the movement of livestock, we can prevent overgrazing, soil erosion and nutrient depletion, thereby enhancing the long-term productivity and sustainability of our lands. Farmers are looking for that. We are not the environmental vandals some governments portray us as. We want to look after our land, and virtual fencing technology will allow us to be even better than we have been before. Animals are incredibly sensitive and they gain respect very quickly, especially because we do have electric fences. When we erect a fence at home, we often attach an electric fence to keep cattle off, because they like to rub against the fence. When they rub against a fence, they push it over. Cattle learn very quickly that an electric fence is there and they have a lot of respect for it. That is the same for horses and sheep. We erect electric fences anyway.

I cannot see the difference between putting a collar on an animal and having an electric fence. There is no difference. In fact, an electric fence gives them a bigger shock than a virtual collar. Virtual fencing will allow further innovation. I see a collar and my mind starts racing: If that was allowed in New South Wales, we would then find innovations. We could put ear tags on sheep as well as cattle. That would be cheaper and more efficient, and I am sure someone is working on that technology. It could be utilised for sheep as well as goats.

We lead the world in stock husbandry and environmental stewardship. The member for Prospect talked about unintended consequences. What unintended consequences, for goodness sake? There are not any. In conclusion, virtual fencing represents a paradigm shift in how we manage livestock and utilise our precious natural resources. People have been working on it for years. By investing in this innovative technology, we can achieve significant cost savings, environmental benefits and improved land management practices. Together, we should embrace the future of agriculture and pave the way for a more sustainable and prosperous tomorrow. I urge the Government to go to a farm. Government members can come to my place, and I will show them what we do, how we manage our stock and how virtual fencing would be a complete game changer for us. It would save us in labour and materials. It is better for the animals, particularly native animals, and better for the environment.

Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (12:30): I contribute to debate on the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment (Virtual Stock Fencing) Bill 2024. This Government is committed to ensuring a strong and robust animal welfare framework in New South Wales. While it is acknowledged that the member for Orange introduced the bill with the best of intentions, the Government cannot support the bill in its current form, given the risks it would present to animal welfare in New South Wales. Instead, the Government will continue to work to understand the key issues relating to virtual fencing and how best to accommodate it within legislation. We want to ensure that our farmers have access to the latest technology, but we need to do so in a responsible way, and that is what the Government will do.

Virtual fencing has been considered at a national level. There is a national process underway on virtual fencing to review and understand its use on livestock. In 2021 the Agricultural Senior Officials' Committee referred the matter of virtual fencing to the Animal Welfare Task Group for review. An independent scientific literature review on animal welfare considerations for virtual fencing was subsequently commissioned by the Animal Welfare Task Group and published in November 2023. The independent review identified key characteristics of virtual fencing technology and its application to minimise animal welfare impacts. Additionally, the independent review found that the understanding and effectiveness of virtual fencing is much more advanced for cattle than other stock animals, and that further research is needed to determine the suitability and welfare implications for other stock animals.

The bill is not limited to cattle and does not contain any welfare or design requirements for devices for use on an animal. Based on what we know and expert advice, legislation permitting virtual fencing devices in this manner is not suitable. Whilst we understand the potential benefits of this new technology, we have a responsibility to ensure that any legislation to allow virtual fencing is based on thorough consultation and consideration of expert advice to appropriately manage animal welfare risks. That is what this Government will do.

In line with the Government's commitment to improving animal welfare in New South Wales, we have made five animal welfare related commitments. Those commitments are to review the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979, or POCTAA; ban puppy farms in New South Wales; create an independent office of animal welfare; review the funding arrangements for approved charitable organisations legislated to conduct compliance and enforcement activities under POCTAA; and introduce a fit and proper person regime that will prevent people convicted of an aggravated animal cruelty offence, or multiple or repeat animal cruelty offences, from keeping or breeding companion animals. Work is well underway on delivering those commitments, and the Government is working through previous consultation feedback from the community and stakeholders to inform the development of the new animal welfare framework. The commitments demonstrate the Government's clear intent to improve animal welfare outcomes in New South Wales.

Importantly, the commitment to review POCTAA also presents an opportunity for the Government to speak to stakeholders about ways the animal welfare framework can be improved. The Government has been aware of the issue of virtual fencing for some time and has been working through it in the appropriate expert forums such as the Animal Welfare Task Group. The review of POCTAA presents a chance for the Government to talk to stakeholders and experts about virtual fencing and consider how to appropriately allow for the use of those devices to support our farmers across New South Wales. Following that pathway will allow for a considered approach to the potential permission of virtual fencing technology alongside other improvements to the legislation. That approach is sensible and responsible. The bill is not sufficient in its animal welfare safeguards and, therefore, the Government does not support it.

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (12:36): I make a brief contribution to debate on the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment (Virtual Stock Fencing) Bill 2024. The Government is committed to ensuring a strong and resilient biosecurity framework in New South Wales. I acknowledge the member for Orange for introducing the bill. While I believe it was done with the best of intentions, a responsible Government cannot support the bill in its current form, given the risks it would present to biosecurity in New South Wales. While the intentions of the bill may be commendable, we must recognise the significant risk it poses to biosecurity in New South Wales if it is passed in its current form.

One challenging aspect of the bill is that it fails to prohibit the use of virtual fencing devices as replacements for physical property boundary fencing. While virtual fencing may offer benefits under certain circumstances, allowing its indiscriminate use as boundary fencing poses significant biosecurity risk to our communities. Expert advice is clear that virtual fencing cannot adequately serve as a substitute for secure physical boundaries. Without clear provisions to that effect, there is a genuine risk of livestock breaching external virtual fence boundaries and wandering onto roads and other public spaces. Such a scenario not only endangers public safety but also exposes our State to potentially devastating biosecurity threats.

We must recognise the role of livestock such as cows in the spread of weed seeds between pastures. As they graze and move about, they may unwittingly carry those seeds in their fur, hooves and digestive tracts, allowing them to spread them across significant distances. This phenomenon is well documented and poses a challenge to our agricultural sector and natural ecosystems. Studies have shown that up to 12 per cent of weed seeds can pass through the digestive systems of livestock and remain viable in animal faeces for extended periods, allowing them to germinate and establish new infestations. The introduction of invasive weeds into pristine pastures not only compromises agricultural productivity but also disrupts native ecosystems, leading to biodiversity loss and habitat degradation.

Based on these facts, permitting virtual fencing devices without appropriate safeguards to prohibit its use as boundary fencing presents a potential biosecurity risk. It increases the likelihood of weed seed dispersal and exacerbates the challenges faced by land managers in controlling invasive species. Weeds are a blight on our natural environment, the economy and community. It is estimated that the cost of weed impacts and weed management to the New South Wales agriculture sector is around \$1.8 billion per annum, and that is a conservative estimate. Throughout agricultural areas, weeds can out-compete crops and pasture species, resulting in lower economic returns and the need for expensive and ongoing control measures. As stewards of our environment and custodians of our agricultural resources, we cannot afford to ignore risks posed by weeds. We have a duty to ensure that our laws promote responsible agricultural practices while mitigating potential biosecurity hazards to our environment and communities.

While we acknowledge the intentions behind the bill, we cannot ignore the biosecurity risks posed by allowing virtual fencing devices to serve as property boundaries. By permitting such practices, we may facilitate the spread of weeds and compromise the health of our agricultural lands and natural habitats. The bill before the House is not sufficient in terms of its biosecurity safeguards and, as such, cannot be supported by the Government.

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (12:41): I contribute to debate on the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment (Virtual Stock Fencing) Bill 2024. Since my election, I have had the opportunity to serve on the Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development. At the outset, I state my support for our world-class primary industries sector that was worth an estimated \$21.2 billion in the 2022-23 financial year.

Mr Philip Donato: Hear, hear!

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA: Exactly. The sector would not been able to achieve those lofty heights of economic contribution without being innovative and adopting the latest technologies to increase productivity. That is also why I acknowledge the good intentions behind the bill before the House. It is an important debate to have because virtual fencing technology is an innovation that has the potential to provide many benefits to farmers. These benefits range from increasing farm productivity through better herd and pasture management, reducing labour inputs, improving workplace health and safety and improving ecological and natural resource outcomes, among others. My time on the Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development has given me the opportunity to gain a greater appreciation of how the primary industries sector tackles these issues across our great State.

These are all noble pursuits and well worth discussion today. However, we cannot rely just on these points. We need to look at how this technology will be implemented and ensure it is done in an appropriate and considered manner, using the best evidence available. That is why the Agriculture Senior Officials Committee, known as AGSOC, referred this matter to the Animal Welfare Task Group for review in August 2021. Importantly, the purpose of the review was to explore the regulatory issues associated with the use of virtual fencing technology with a view to national harmonisation. The task group subsequently commissioned a literature review into the animal welfare considerations for virtual fencing technology. That review was published online in November 2023.

In summary, the review found that the understanding of the various animal welfare implications of virtual fencing technology that allows for effective and minimal stress has advanced significantly over the past 10 years. The understanding of how to deploy the technology and train human operators has also had developments during this period. In the Australian context, these processes and associated animal welfare safeguards are much more advanced for cattle than for sheep or other animals. The review indicated that further research is needed to determine the suitability and animal welfare implications of employing virtual fencing on sheep or other animals. In addition, the review identified key characteristics that virtual fencing technology and its application should have to minimise animal welfare impacts.

These important considerations are not sufficiently addressed in the bill. Let me highlight how the bill is inconsistent with the advice prepared for the task group. Firstly, the bill would allow the use of virtual fencing technology on all stock animals, which include cattle, horses, sheep, goats, deer, pigs and poultry, despite the task group review finding more research is required for all animals except for cattle. Secondly, the bill does not outline any characteristics of the technology that will protect the welfare of animals on which it is deployed. Thirdly, the bill does not restrict the use of the technology for internal fencing only, despite the task group advice recommending that it not be used as a substitute for secure physical outer boundary fencing.

These are issues that need to be worked through in a considered way before virtual fencing technology can be permitted. That is why the Government does not support the bill before the House. But, like I said, this technology and this issue is of great significance to the primary industries sector as well as to all citizens across our State. Therefore, it is one that I know will be watched with great interest by all members of the House.

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (12:45): I commend the member for Orange for introducing the important Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment (Virtual Stock Fencing) Bill 2023, which represents a true collaboration of science and industry. I know the level of consultation that the member has undertaken to get this bill to Parliament. I state from the outset that I enthusiastically support this bill. The device is a product of scrupulous research and development, not only by peak bodies and industries but also by the CSIRO, which outlined the benefits as productivity and profitability through improved feed utilisation and better matching of animal demands to feed supply and quality; improved environmental and sustainability outcomes, such as reduced overgrazing and better weed control and nutrient management; and improved labour efficiencies and reduced capital investment in fencing.

I will not go into detail about the device itself because that has been covered off by many other members in their contributions. It should be no surprise to members in this place that properties out in Barwon can be 10,000 acres to 30,000 acres and well beyond that. They are big properties comprising vast acreage. It can cost millions of dollars in labour and materials to cell fence for cell grazing land of that size. We all know what cell fencing is. We have all probably heard it talked about. It is the idea that we can move stock around so that instead of overgrazing and punishing the ground, we can get better regeneration of feed after it rains and better productivity out of cattle. Virtual fencing allows for far more efficient land use and it helps to minimise overgrazing and soil degradation. It reduces obstructions for not only stock but also native animals. For people who hate exclusion fences, this is the answer. Skippy can hop through and jump along without having to worry about being tangled up in a fence, and the same applies to emus.

Virtual stock fencing makes it less likely for farmers to find animals entangled in fences. If anyone has seen an animal trapped in a fence—the worst part is finding them dead after hanging there for days, which is not very nice—there will be a lot less of that and fewer kilometres of fencing on a property. The CSIRO acknowledges virtual fencing as an animal-friendly fencing system. The collar works—and this is really important—by delivering an audible cue, followed by a safe and small electrical stimulus. After a short time, in some cases only one or two days, the animal learns from the audible cues and what they mean, which is that a single beep is a warning and if the beep becomes louder, the animal will probably feel a tickle in its neck. That is really all it is. Responding to the cues becomes a part of the animal's grazing behaviour. For example, when the animal wanders off, the audible cue will go beep, beep, beep, and the animal will learn not to go in that direction. That was me demonstrating a cow. Did you like that?

Mr Jihad Dib: Can Hansard put that demonstration in with the sound effects?

Mr ROY BUTLER: As we heard in the from the member for Orange in his second reading speech, virtual stock fencing is a valuable tool to combat stock theft, which is a growing problem. The rural crime investigators tell us that. A mock stock theft was conducted by the University of New England and a NSW Police Force group. They found they were able to assess the GPS-enabled stock collar and follow the staged theft. Information was immediately sent via an email to the farmer as high distance movement and high accelerometer movements as well as stock location. High accelerometers pick up the movement of something. Cows are not designed to go faster than about 30 or 40 kilometres an hour, so if they are moving at 120 kilometres an hour, something is wrong. That can sort out the theft, which is the sort of thing that will help farmers to reduce stock theft and will help the police to track stock movements when thefts occur. We cannot overlook the importance and value of being able to track stolen animals. Currently the estimate is that approximately \$5 million is lost from stock theft. That is a lot of money to take out of regional communities.

Virtual fencing will revolutionise livestock farming. It is already making life easier for farmers in Queensland, Tasmania, New Zealand and the United States of America, where virtual fencing technology has been incorporated into legislation. Farmers in these places can now monitor animals from their lounge rooms, gaining deeper insights into health and behaviour, thus improving their decision-making when it comes to animal husbandry, breeding programs and property boundaries, all with updateable algorithms to keep up with the ever-changing nature of farming.

Farmers in New South Wales have a lot to deal with: drought, floods, fires and fluctuating markets. I could go on and on about the challenges faced by farmers. After floods and bushfire disasters, traditional stock fencing is almost always a farm infrastructure casualty, imposing enormous labour and material costs for farmers to repair and replace. Virtual fencing removes the burden on farmers claiming insurance and may lessen the financial overheads of insurance premiums. That is something we will all be happy to hear about at the moment, because we are all paying elevated costs.

Virtual fencing allows farmers to have the real-time location of livestock, control its movements for rotational or strip grazing, and exclude it from riparian zones, which are areas along rivers. One of the issues with livestock along rivers is that the animals defecate and urinate, and some of the nutrient-rich faeces goes into the water, which has implications for water quality. By protecting riparian zones, we can minimise that. Livestock

can be excluded from areas prone to erosion. Where there are gilgais and washouts, being able to keep the hard-hoofed animals off those sensitive areas is important. Comparing the cost of one reusable device against millions of dollars in fencing, which needs constant maintenance, is a no-brainer for farmers and should be a no-brainer for this House. I will finish with a quote from the member of Orange, as I could not say it better myself. He said:

Incorporating virtual fencing technology into our legislation is not just a matter of economic and environmental progress; it is also about empowering our farmers to compete on a global scale.

Obviously, this Labor Government would love to support agriculture and would like to be seen as a friend of the farmer, and this is a great opportunity to demonstrate that. I commend the bill to the House.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell): I thank the member for Barwon for his physical demonstrations during his contribution. As the Minister said, I hope the *Hansard* captures that.

Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (12:51): I contribute to the debate on the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment (Virtual Stock Fencing) Bill 2023. From the outset, I acknowledge the Government's intent to oppose the bill. The Government is deeply committed to supporting our primary industries. We have consistently prioritised initiatives aimed at bolstering the resilience and productivity of our agricultural sector. In the 2023-24 budget, the Government made an additional investment of \$298.5 million directed towards critical biosecurity and agricultural programs. This significant funding injection includes targeted support for sheep farmers and goat farmers, through the implementation of mandatory individual electronic identification across New South Wales.

With a partnership investment of \$39 million alongside the Australian Government, we aim to enhance traceability within these sectors, ensuring greater efficiency and transparency in our agricultural supply chains. This investment not only strengthens biosecurity protocols but also facilitates better management practices, ultimately driving productivity gains and safeguarding the integrity of our agricultural sector. Additionally, we have allocated \$11.1 million for the Farm Business Resilience Program, recognising the urgent need to assist farms in preparing for and adapting to the challenges posed by climate change. This program offers tailored support and resources to help farmers build resilience against climate-related risks, such as droughts, floods and extreme weather events. Through this program, we are empowering our farmers to navigate the complexities of evolving climatic conditions and emerge stronger and more resilient.

I will turn to some of the issues of the private member's bill. The bill proposes to permit virtual fencing with limited safeguards. Virtual stock fencing involves animal containment using GPS technology in a device that is attached to an animal via a neckband. Typically, an audio signal warns the animal that it is approaching the virtual boundary, and this is followed by an electrical pulse only if the animal does not respond to the audio cue. Under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979, it is an offence to use an electrical device upon an animal, sell any electrical device or have in possession or custody any electrical device, unless use is conducted in accordance with the Animal Research Act 1985.

The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Regulation 2012 sets out that an electrical device includes any device producing an electrical discharge that is used in such a way that the animal in relation to which it is being used cannot move away from the device. These provisions, for example, prohibit the use of electric collars on dogs and therefore these devices attached to livestock. The bill proposes to amend the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act to permit virtual fencing devices, as defined in the bill as GPS-enabled sensors and collars capable of delivering electric pulses and cues for the purposes of confining, tracking and monitoring stock animals. The bill provides that virtual fencing could be used on all stock animals as defined in the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, which includes cattle, sheep, goats, horses, deer, pigs and poultry. The bill is proposed to commence upon assent.

A national process on virtual fencing is underway, with independent reviews supporting its use with cattle. In 2021 the Agriculture Senior Officials Committee referred virtual fencing to the Animal Welfare Task Group for review. An independent scientific literature review on animal welfare considerations for virtual fencing was subsequently commissioned by the group and published in November 2023. The independent review identified key characteristics that virtual fencing technology and its application must have to minimise animal welfare impacts.

The independent review found that virtual fencing animal welfare safeguards are much more advanced for cattle than other stock animals and that further research is needed to determine the suitability and welfare implications for other stock animals. The bill is not supported, as allowing virtual fencing for all stock animals and a lack of ability to include animal welfare parameters is inconsistent with the Animal Welfare Task Group's advice. The bill is not limited to cattle only. It would permit virtual fencing technology to be used on cattle, horses,

sheep, goats, deer, pigs and poultry. This is a concern, given the national review found that more research to assess the suitability of virtual fencing devices for stock animals other than cattle is needed.

The bill does not contain any welfare or design requirements that a virtual fencing device must meet before use on an animal. Such requirements are necessary to ensure that appropriate animal welfare safeguards are in place. This may include requiring that devices meet minimal welfare design parameters or that only devices from approved device manufacturers are permitted for use, user-training requirements et cetera. The bill does not prohibit the use of virtual fencing technology for boundary fencing. However, the group's advice outlines that virtual fencing should not be used as a replacement for secure physical boundary fencing. As such, the bill could pose a risk to community safety and biosecurity.

The bill is ambiguous as to what cue may be delivered to an animal and when it may be delivered. It is essential that virtual fencing devices initially deliver a non-aversive—that is, aural—cue prior to aversive electric pulses, to enable associative learning for the animal. The bill also contains no parameters on the voltage level of electrical pulses delivered to stock animals through the collar. No safeguards have been included to prevent the delivery of higher voltage and more frequent electrical pulses to animals. Virtual fencing technology needs to be considered carefully and implemented only in an appropriate manner. The bill has not been subject to consultation, and its impacts are not fully understood, which raises concerns about potential unintended consequences.

While the bill proposes an amendment to the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act to permit the use of virtual fencing, this is not the only option for implementation of its use. Virtual fencing technology can be allowed through an amendment to schedule 3 of the regulation to permit the use of specific virtual fencing devices for use on cattle only. That could include prescribed safeguards that align with the findings of independent scientific literature on animal welfare considerations for virtual fencing. Virtual fencing technology will be considered through the Government's commitment to review the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979. The New South Wales Government has made an election commitment to review the Act. Amending the Act prior to completion of that review would circumvent appropriate consideration of other potential concurrent amendments.

The Government has made five animal welfare-related commitments: review the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act; ban puppy farms in New South Wales; create an independent office of animal welfare; review the funding arrangements for approved charitable organisations that conduct compliance and enforcement activities under the Act; and introduce a fit-and-proper person regime to prevent people convicted of an aggravated animal cruelty offence, multiple animal cruelty offences or repeat animal cruelty offences from being involved in the keeping and breeding of companion animals. The review of the Act presents a chance for the Government to talk to stakeholders and experts about virtual fencing and consider how to allow for appropriate use of the devices to support our farmers across New South Wales. For those reasons the Government does not support the bill.

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (13:00): The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment (Virtual Stock Fencing) Bill 2024 was brought to the House by the member for Orange, Philip Donato, representing his community on this important issue. The Government wants to continue working with the member for Orange to enhance the bill and will make recommendations about ways to move forward. Animal welfare is of critical importance to the people of New South Wales; that is not in doubt. For a number of years there has been an incredible level of community engagement on the animal welfare matters that have been raised in this place. There is also strong community support for our primary producers who meet the State's needs for food and fibre. They have faced a number of challenges over the past few years. The bill addresses both animal welfare and primary production.

The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979 [POCTAA] includes provisions that prohibit the use of electrical devices on animals other than in certain situations, and reasonably so. The use of electrical devices on animals needs to be appropriately regulated. It cannot be allowed *carte blanche*. The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Regulation 2012 specifies that certain devices are electrical devices and outlines the circumstances and protections around their use. The bill amends POCTAA to establish that a virtual fencing device is not an electrical device for the purposes of POCTAA when it is used on stock animals. It does not include the types of safeguards that the regulation currently has in place for other permitted electrical devices. It allows the use of such devices on all stock animals, which is a broader application than has been shown to be appropriate by the scientific literature review undertaken by the Animal Welfare Task Group.

The intent of the bill is perfectly reasonable. It addresses an issue the Government is looking at closely. The Government is committed to reviewing the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act and will certainly consider virtual fencing as part of that process. The bill's execution of that intent is not quite there yet, so the Government cannot support the bill in its current form. The Government did not take lightly its decision to oppose the bill. A considered approach, informed by experts and evidence obtained through a national process undertaken by the Animal Welfare Task Group, led the Government to its position. While the benefits of the technology are not in question, the key takeaway from that national process is that appropriate animal welfare safeguards must

accompany the use of virtual fencing technology. I fully recognise the benefits that the technology would have for farmers. They have been well ventilated during debate on the bill. As with all new technologies, we must consider virtual fencing technology from all angles and adopt it cautiously. As the bill does not establish appropriate guardrails on the use of the technology, it is clear that inadequate consideration has been paid to that angle.

The member for Barwon, the member for Murray and, obviously, the member for Orange addressed critical issues such as productivity and the costs of putting up physical fencing. The member for Barwon also mentioned the benefits of virtual fencing for Skippy and the kangaroos. Sydney people will be happy that native animals will not get caught in fence lines. However, fence lines, whilst extremely expensive, keep not only stock in but other animals out—and maybe even people. There needs to be a discussion about the ideal use and location of virtual fencing as well as the appropriate use and location of mandatory physical fencing. The member for Barwon demonstrated in the House how virtual fences would work, which is something we do not get to see very often. I have been informed that a bull, if it sees a friendly cow and its animal urges take over, may rush through the virtual fence, cop a buzzing but not stop even if a road or other objects are in its way. That has the potential to create problems.

My understanding is that such issues still need to be addressed. But I am no expert and I am certainly not as knowledgeable as the member for Orange, who is probably thinking, "What is the member for Blacktown talking about?" Blacktown used to have five-acre chicken farms. It was the food bowl of Sydney many years ago. Some people might think we should trial virtual fences here in Parliament to make sure that MPs do not wander outside the precinct while Parliament is sitting. Perhaps they will beep when a member is electrocuted. Visitors in the gallery might like to use it on members if they had access to it. As I said earlier, physical fences function in two directions: to keep animals in and to keep people and feral animals out.

The issues raised in debate on the bill are extremely important. The Government wants to work closely with the member for Orange to ensure we support our farmers with appropriate technologies. Arguably, there is also the GPS issue. As a Sydney driver using GPS, half the time it tells me I am driving through a park. I am amazed at how accurate it can be out in the country to identify where a fence line is. Unfortunately, if you are on the Optus system—giving them an upper cut—as I am, half the time it does not work. I conclude my thoughts there.

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (13:08): First, I fully understand why the member for Orange has brought the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment (Virtual Stock Fencing) Bill 2024 before Parliament. But the Government does not support the bill at this stage, and I will outline some of the reasons. First, the bill is not limited to cattle only. Members would know that in 2021 the Agricultural Senior Officials Committee—the AGSOC—referred virtual fencing to the Animal Welfare Task Group for review. The review that it undertook identified key characteristics about virtual fencing technology and its application to minimise animal welfare impacts. The member for Orange would know that the review found that welfare safeguards are more advanced for cattle, but there needed to be further research to determine the suitability and welfare implications for other stock animals.

The bill is not limited to cattle only. It would cover horses, sheep, goats, deer, pigs, poultry et cetera. That is a concern given that the national review found that more research was needed. At this stage, the bill does not contain any particular welfare or design requirements that a virtual fencing device must meet prior to use on an animal. Such requirements are necessary to ensure that appropriate animal welfare safeguards are in place. That may include requirements that devices meet minimum welfare design parameters, that only approved device manufacturers are permitted for use, that there be user training requirements and more. The bill does not prohibit the use of virtual fencing technology for boundary fencing. However, the Animal Welfare Task Group's advice outlines that virtual fencing should not be used as a replacement for secure physical boundary fencing. As such, the bill in its current form could pose a risk to community safety and biosecurity.

The bill is ambiguous as to what type of cues may be delivered to an animal and in what order. It is essential that virtual fencing devices initially deliver a non-aversive cue—that is, audio—prior to aversive electric pulses, to enable associative learning for the animal. The bill also contains no parameters on the voltage level of the electric pulses delivered to stock animals through the collar. It is really important that that be established because no safeguards have been included to prevent the delivery of higher voltage and more frequent electric pulses to animals. Members who have ever been zapped by an electric fence—and I am sure there are quite a few of us—know what that is like. It is not pleasant at all, so it has to be moderated to ensure animal welfare.

The bill has not been subject to broad consultation. Without an impact statement, the impacts are not fully understood, raising concerns about potential unintended consequences. While the bill proposes an amendment to the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979 [POCTAA] to permit the use of a virtual fence, that is not the only option for its implementation. The allowance of virtual fencing can be made through an amendment to schedule 3

to the regulation to permit the use of specific virtual fencing devices on cattle only. That may be a more appropriate method to achieve what the member for Orange is trying to achieve. It could also include prescribed safeguards that align with the findings of the independent scientific literature review on animal welfare considerations for virtual fencing.

I make a few other comments about virtual fencing technology. It will be considered through the Government's commitment to review POCTAA. The New South Wales Government made an election commitment to review POCTAA, which I am fully apprised of. Undertaking these amendments separately and prior to that could derail other potential amendments. It is best to look at the issue holistically because the Government made an election commitment to do that. Virtual fencing will be part of it, but it will have a broader input of expertise and broader community consultation with all the stakeholder groups.

The Government has made five commitments related to animal welfare. I am not saying they will all happen, but the commitments include reviewing POCTAA, banning puppy farms in New South Wales and creating an independent office of animal welfare. I will just add a little bit there. When I served in Federal Parliament, there was quite a debate about setting up an independent office of animal welfare. That then proceeded, but it was quite a big debate because it was to do with the export of live animals.

Mr Jihad Dib: Yes, the live cattle, that's right.

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN: Yes, and I was deeply immersed in that debate. It was a rather fractious debate, but it was necessary to get to where we are today. I worked very closely with two of my former Federal parliamentary colleagues.

Mr Jihad Dib: Who were they?

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN: Joe Ludwig and Joel Fitzgibbon—my friends. Anyway, I had quite a bit to do with it there. The other two animal welfare commitments were to review the funding arrangements for approved charitable organisations legislated to conduct compliance and enforcement activities under POCTAA; and to introduce a fit and proper person regime that will prevent people convicted of an aggravated animal cruelty offence, multiple animal cruelty offences or repeated animal cruelty offences from being involved in the keeping and breeding of companion animals. People would think that that just happens automatically but, of course, these things do not. We have to take action here to amend the laws and do a whole range of other things to make sure that that happens.

The review of POCTAA presents a chance for the Government to talk to stakeholders and experts about virtual fencing and to consider how to appropriately allow for the use of the devices to support our farmers across New South Wales. Ultimately, that is what it is about—and I am sure that is why the member for Orange brought it to the House—while at the same time minimising any harm that we inflict upon animals when we deliberately intervene.

I already knew this about farmers, but it especially struck home during the floods. When I told people how many of their stock the farmers had lost in the floods, some people said to me, "Aren't they for the market anyway?" I said, "That's not the point". We are a meat-eating society and they are bred for that, but farmers want their animals to be treated kindly and to be looked after, from the paddock to the plate. I wanted to make that point as well. I think I have 10 seconds to go, so I will close my contribution there. I thank the member for Orange for bringing the bill to the Parliament.

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (13:19): I make a brief contribution to debate on the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment (Virtual Stock Fencing) Bill 2024. I commend the member for Orange for bringing this bill to the House. New South Wales has a world-class primary industries sector, the very best of which will be showcased and celebrated at the Sydney Royal Easter Show, which begins tomorrow. I will be attending the show on Saturday, although not in an official capacity. I acknowledge that the bill has been introduced with the best intentions by the very passionate member for Orange, and in accordance with the way he always advocates for the farming sector. He represents the farmers so well.

For the agricultural sector to be efficient, the latest technology must be applied to the management of primary industries and for cattle farming in particular. There is evidence that virtual fencing technology has the potential to provide a range of benefits to farmers. It could certainly increase efficiency and reduce costs. But it is important to consider how the technology will be implemented to ensure that it does not compromise animal welfare standards. The member for Orange has been passionate in his advocacy in this area. He has spoken to the Premier a number of times about its importance, and the Premier has been moved by the member's effective advocacy.

The Government, in accordance with its election commitment, is undertaking a review of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, known as the POCTA Act. To ensure that the bill and the sentiment behind it are not completely removed from active consideration, I propose that the bill be referred to the Legislative Assembly Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development for inquiry. If the Government is not in a position to respond appropriately to the report of the committee, I will seek that the House reinstate the bill, despite the fact that it may have lapsed, so that the issue remains at the forefront for consideration. Accordingly, I move:

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

- (1) The bill be referred to the Legislative Assembly Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development for inquiry and report with particular reference to:
 - (a) the provisions of the bill;
 - (b) the animal welfare, biosecurity and community safety implications of permitting virtual fencing;
 - (c) any benefits, issues or unintended consequences raised by the bill, and whether any amendments may address those; and
 - (d) any other related matter.
- (2) The committee shall report to the House by 22 October 2024.

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (13:22): In reply: I indicate at the outset that I do not oppose the motion of the Leader of the House to refer the bill to the committee for inquiry. I thank all the speakers who contributed to the second reading debate—the members representing the electorates of Dubbo, Prospect, Murray, Heathcote, Mt Druitt, Liverpool, Barwon, Bega, Blacktown and Lismore—as well as the Leader of the House. I am conscious of the time, but I will make some brief remarks highlighting some of the issues that were raised during the debate.

Virtual stock fencing is a state-of-the-art, high-tech agricultural technology. It would be a game changer for regional communities and especially for our farmers. Farmers, by and large, support this type of legislation and technology. NSW Farmers has been supportive, and I thank Xavier Martin for the support and leadership that he has shown on behalf of NSW Farmers. I appreciate that the Government needs to do due diligence and research; it is its function to be satisfied that if legislation is introduced, it will be fit for purpose and without unintended consequences. I appreciate that.

However, this matter was introduced in October 2023. I gave my second reading speech in February this year. The Government has had plenty of time to do some work on the bill. I appreciate that this is a private member's bill and not a Government bill. There is always a general reluctance to support private members' bills, whether from this Government or the previous Government. That is the way it is. I completely understand that. I appreciate the sincerity of the response from the Leader of the House, and his undertaking that if the bill is to lapse, it will be returned later this year. I appreciated those remarks and his genuine manner.

The virtual fencing technology is primarily aimed at internal fencing. Some issues have been raised about boundary fencing. Perhaps it was not clear in the legislation or in my second reading speech, but it is only used for internal fencing. It allows for the free access of native animals. Members have made statements about native animals being caught up in fencing, including kangaroos and emus. Tragically, animals do die from being caught in that way. It is a cruel, slow, horrible death. That is a reality of physical fencing on properties.

We have heard about the cost implications of fencing, especially for large-scale properties. The member for Murray, the member for Barwon and many other regional MPs would know of constituents who have thousands and thousands of acres. Properties can be 40,000 acres, or even more. The cost of fencing alone can amount to millions of dollars. This virtual fencing technology would significantly reduce that cost. There are also benefits for the environment, including cell grazing, rotational grazing, fencing off riparian zones, adding to the soil moisture content because of not over-grazing and not eroding the soils—all those things are environmental positives of this type of technology.

Mr Jihad Dib: Tell us about cell grazing.

Mr PHILIP DONATO: Cell grazing is rotational grazing, where farmers can move their stock in order to not over-graze areas and not reduce the feed too much. It allows moisture to be retained in the soil and feed to be retained. That is an important part of rotational grazing. With virtual fencing, with just the click of a button or the click of a keyboard, a farmer can do that from their phone or tablet or computer. They can easily move stock. It also has the benefit of reducing work accidents or potential work health and safety issues for farmers. They would not have issues like rollovers while moving stock on their farms with quad bikes, or other such things that can occur on properties. Without further ado, I support the motion to refer the bill to the committee for inquiry. I have nothing further to add, other than that I commend the bill to the house.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell): The member for Orange has moved a motion, to which the member for Heffron has moved an amendment. The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

Amendment agreed to.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell): The question is that the motion as amended be agreed to.

Motion as amended agreed to.

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

Motions

ESSENTIAL WORKERS

Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (14:31): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Condemns the previous Government for leaving behind a recruitment and retention crisis that has led to essential workers leaving the State in droves.
- (2) Acknowledges that the Government was elected to tackle the recruitment and retention crisis and understands that the current cost-of-living crisis is placing major pressure on New South Wales workers and their families.
- (3) Commends the Government for abolishing the wages cap and introducing a new framework of mutual gains bargaining to deliver productivity improvements and wage growth for essential workers.

In 2011 the then Liberal-Nationals Government overturned the Industrial Relation Commission's 80 years of independence and gave itself the power to deny wage increases and conditions for New South Wales public service workers. It capped public sector wage increases at 2.5 per cent per annum, making it a ceiling. Because of that, essential workers across New South Wales were held back. The former Government held back those workers' financial aspirations, which resulted in New South Wales public sector workers leaving the State in droves. There were vacancies across some of the State's most important sectors. There were over 1,000 vacancies in police and there was a shortage of bus drivers. Essential health workers, doctors and nurses were moving interstate to get the respect, wages and conditions that they deserve.

There were overloaded and combined classrooms, overflowing hospitals and understaffed police stations. Those opposite did not care about whether our State's children were getting the education they needed in schools in the Sutherland shire and the Illawarra. They did not care whether New South Wales residents were getting the timely medical care they required at Sutherland Hospital or Wollongong Hospital. They did not care whether our suburbs would have the appropriate police resources to keep families safe in suburbs like Helensburgh, as long as the budget's bottom line looked a little bit less red. Those opposite oppressed our wonderful New South Wales public service workers. They made it harder for essential workers to afford to live where their jobs are. When those workers could not afford to live where they worked, they moved out, and our State lost some of its most skilled and valuable workers.

After 12 years, the people of New South Wales were fed up. They saw through the unfairness and elected the Minns Labor Government. It comes down to values. Members on this side of the Chamber have the Labor values of fairness, equity, dignity, respect and opportunity. We have provided the New South Wales public sector with the biggest public sector pay rise in more than a decade. That includes over 2,500 public sector employees in the Heathcote electorate and their families. The Government went further and introduced a new framework of bargaining to deliver not just the basic respect that our essential workers deserve but actual wages growth. As a former union official, I know how important it is to have workers and their unions sitting at the table to be listened to and be a part of the decision process when negotiating for better wages and conditions—something we have not had in this State for over 12 years.

The Government knows how to respect and listen to workers. Those workers put their lives and the lives of their loved ones in jeopardy during the COVID pandemic. Their commitment to providing frontline services for the people of New South Wales during that time deserves to be recognised. Those opposite called them heroes, but that is all they did. Those workers did not just want thanks; they wanted action. Those opposite kept them down. They kept their hand on workers' heads, suppressing them every single day and pushing them down. The Minns Labor Government values frontline workers. Paying frontline workers enough money to provide for their families is morally the right thing to do. If we want to rebuild essential services to the world-class standards that we demand in New South Wales, we must recruit, train and retain the workforce. New South Wales now has the best paid teachers in the country. I have spoken to so many of those teachers who are thankful for the wage increase.

I say to the people of New South Wales that they should never forget that those opposite wanted to keep them down and suppressed their wages for 12 long years. They did not just keep a ceiling on wages; they never listened to or respected the people of New South Wales. The Minns Labor Government has not only abolished the wages cap, thanks to the Premier, the Treasurer and Minister for Industrial Relations, but has made nearly 1,700 teachers and support staff permanent. I thank the Minister for Education and Early Learning for that. It makes such a difference. Teachers tell me that they can now apply for home loans because they have job security. The Government is paying police students over \$30,000 to study at the academy so that they are not disadvantaged. I thank the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism for that. Members on this side of the Chamber respect and know how important the NSW Police Force is. It has seen an increase of 50 per cent in recruitment of new police officers to the NSW Police Force.

Last week I spoke to someone who was a teacher in Victoria but has moved to New South Wales because of the policy change. Medical students have scholarships. I thank the Minister for Health for that. The Government is planning and building affordable housing for those important workers. I thank the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces for that. All of those things are addressing cost-of-living pressures. The Government is getting on with the job. The Opposition has never, and will never, value frontline workers. Last year those opposite voted against removing the wages cap. Shadow Treasurer Tudehope said it was an effective tool.

Even during question time today, when the Minister for Industrial Relations was talking about the wages cap, those opposite agreed that they thought it was an effective tool. We now know what their intentions are for the future. Since being honoured to serve the people of Heathcote in this Parliament, I have seen nothing but a born-to-rule mentality and an ongoing sense of entitlement from many members of the Opposition—not all, but many. The Government will continue to remind frontline workers, their families and all of New South Wales that the Opposition voted against abolishing the wages cap.

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (14:39): I move:

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

- (1) Notes that the former Coalition Government maintained a fair and responsible public sector wages policy that delivered an average wage increase of 2.7 per cent per annum between 2011 and June 2022—50 per cent higher than private sector wage increases over the same period.
- (2) Notes that the average wage increases of 2.7 per cent per annum outpaced the average annual inflation rate of 2.3 per cent over the same period.
- (3) Notes that the Minns Labor Government's public sector wages policy has created a \$9.5 billion hole in the State's budget.
- (4) Condemns the Minns Labor Government for breaking its pre-election commitment that the removal of the wages cap would be funded by productivity gains.

The Government loves boasting about smashing, breaking through, abolishing and demolishing the wages cap. It went to the election with a promise that it never intended to keep: that any public sector wage rises beyond the existing wages policy would be fully offset by productivity savings so there would be a net zero effect on the budget bottom line. That was for one very simple reason, which Opposition members know: The Labor Party wanted to honour its promise to the unions about abolishing the wages cap to repay them the favour of getting into government, whilst also seeking to cover its back from any suggestion that in so doing it would be fiscally incompetent, which we now know is entirely the case. Remember that prior to the election, the Parliamentary Budget Office expressed serious reservations as to whether Labor could keep its promise of budget neutrality.

Furthermore, last year in budget estimates the Premier's Department confirmed that "there was no requirement for productivity reforms" relating to the 4.5 per cent wage rise for public sector workers. We all know that the half-yearly review shows a massive blowout of \$9 billion expenditure over four years on public sector employees when compared with the pre-election update. However, the half-yearly review did not factor in the Government's paramedics deal, which will cost \$500 million over four years, making that total \$9.5 billion. That is before the Government's mutual gains bargaining system and an unfettered Industrial Relations Commission came into effect. Mutual gains bargaining—apparently championed in the secret \$176,000 Industrial Relations Taskforce report by Anna Booth and Roger Boland—appears to involve sitting in a circle, holding hands and singing endless verses of *Kumbaya*. The Resolution Institute, of which Anna Booth is a fellow member, and CoSolve Pty Ltd, of which Ms Booth was until recently a one-third shareholder and director, have so far been paid nearly \$70,000 to deliver just five training sessions in mutual gains bargaining to agencies and unions.

Just last week the budget just took a \$1.65 billion hit with the recent Commonwealth Grants Commission decision on GST distribution. The Treasurer has signalled that his predicted slim surplus for 2024-25 is now vanishing. However, he has been quick to guarantee that Labor will not back down from its open chequebook approach to public sector union wages demands. In the half-yearly review, employee expenses were already set to hit 46.1 per cent of all expenditure in 2026-27. That is up from 5.1 per cent from when the Coalition was in

government. With GST revenue cuts now shrinking the pie and the Treasurer quarantining the public sector wages from any restraints, the Minns Labor Government must either further savagely cut services and supports to people in our local communities, increase debt or raise new taxes. We know members opposite plan on raising taxes and getting it from GPs, who we rely on to look after the health and wellbeing of every person in our community. That is not enough for members opposite. They are going to tax our GPs for five years of retrospective payroll tax that will see almost 400 practices across our State close. On top of that, GPs are going to have to levy an extra \$15 from each patient who goes through their doors. That is the way members opposite want to run the State.

Since member for Heathcote is so proud of her motion, let's have a look at her election commitments, because the reality is that with Labor having less money available in the budget, it is going to have to start cutting somewhere. Is the member for Heathcote prepared to tell her constituents that she will not be able to deliver on her election commitments? The reality is that the \$180 million to deliver Heathcote Road is now at risk. Is the member for Heathcote going to cut the Helensburgh Police Station? Is she going to cut the school hall at Sutherland Public School? We know she likes taking credit for school halls, particularly ones that she had nothing to do with delivering, like the one at St Patrick's that she was crowing about and taking credit for the other day. The reality is that that was finished while we were in government and she knows it. In fact, it was a delayed opening due to COVID. Maybe the member will cancel her plans for the Bulli bypass. All I know is that the hardworking people of the Heathcote electorate are worse off because of that member and her failed representation of them.

[Government members interjected.]

That is actually true, but when we were in Government we introduced many measures to support women and families through enhanced public sector employee provisions, including 14 weeks of paid parental leave for any parent providing primary care. We also introduced up to two weeks of paid parental leave for a parent who is not providing primary care. There was paid leave in the event of a miscarriage—a State first—pre-term birth or when undergoing fertility treatment, and we introduced up to 20 days family and domestic violence leave.

I challenge members opposite to tell me that those are not important things. The reality is that on this side of the House, at all times when in Government, we were committed to not only managing the budget but delivering for the people whom we were representing. Members opposite have failed the State. They have failed to manage the budget, but they are still not prepared to admit that there is a \$9.5 billion black hole. They are still not prepared to explain to the people of New South Wales what they are cutting first and failing to deliver.

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (14:46): I support the motion and I am pleasantly surprised to see members of the Opposition actually participating in the debate, unlike last week when they vacated the benches and showed disrespect for our public sector workers. I also note the contribution of my friend the member for Heathcote. Like her constituents, the people of Liverpool have suffered greatly because of the neglect and arrogance of the former Government when it came to providing essential services. One of the main reasons that I put my hand up at the last election was that members of my community came to me to talk about extended wait times in emergency departments, the impact on their children of the number of teachers leaving the profession and the many other public services that were impacted. The previous Government ignored the people who provide the services we rely on. We know that is a recipe for disaster because, too often, those disasters have played out.

Opposition members are now leaving the Chamber. They do not even have the respect to participate meaningfully in the debate. That is what it comes down to: The commitment this Government gave to the people of New South Wales at the last election was that it would fix our essential services and would start by respecting the people who deliver those services. That is what we have been doing. When we abolished the wages cap, we abolished a system that said, "No matter what you do and no matter how hard you work, we don't want to hear about it, and we're not going to pay you the wages you could get working for a private operator or by moving interstate."

We abolished a system that said to our essential workforce, "The extra training you've done, the skills you've acquired and the ideas you have to improve productivity—none of that matters. You're just getting a 2.5 per cent wage increase." We abolished a system that said the cost of living does not matter. We abolished a system where the former Coalition Government said to the people we rely on, "We don't want to listen. We don't want to negotiate. We don't want to hear your issues or reward you for the difference you make to our community."

The former Government said that to the people who educate our kids, who care for us in hospital and who get us to and from work each day. It was not good enough, and the people of New South Wales saw right through it. They saw the value of our essential workers, and they saw the damage that the wages cap was doing to their essential services. My community saw right through it during the COVID pandemic. They saw the many frontline health, education, transport and other workers step up for them, and they saw them disrespected afterwards when they said, "We deserve more than thanks." That is why the Government has abolished the wages cap, and it is

why we have moved to a system of interest-based bargaining—a system where we look for mutual benefits for our essential workforce and our citizens. We talk about them. We find ways to work together. We negotiate, and we find a good outcome for everyone. We have now done that with our paramedics and teachers. We are proud that this State's teachers and paramedics will be the highest paid in Australia. They deserve their pay rise after more than a decade of wage suppression.

The green shoots are starting to show. Just last month I was at Cecil Hills High School, where I met a teacher who, a year ago, had decided to give it up. They decided they had been disrespected long enough, and they left the teaching workforce. This year they decided to come back, thanks to the policies of this Government. They decided to give our public education system another shot. We are working through 12 years of stagnating conditions under the previous Government. Award reform means stability and retention for an essential workforce. It means benefits for the whole community. The people who serve New South Wales and our community deserve our respect. They deserve to be listened to, and under this Government they will be.

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (14:50): I thank the member for Heathcote for moving a motion so I can show my support for frontline workers in this State. As someone from a family of public sector workers, I am very proud of the efforts my parents made in the good old Department of Main Roads, the Roads and Traffic Authority and the Department of Education. Frontline workers are so important in that governments cannot do anything without the support of our public service. Over the past 12 years, I understand that we recruited more nurses, teachers and police. We recruited 14,228 additional public health positions, 9,072 additional public education positions and 1,118 other additional positions. That was our great commitment to supporting the front line. Over my break, I very sadly read some more political books. One that caught my eye was about a person called Steve Bracks, who was a Labor Premier of Victoria. In the book he spoke about wages policy. Interestingly, he said:

We had to have a wages policy that ensured we didn't break the Budget.

In this, we again had to distinguish ourselves from New South Wales, which was rubber-stamping some of the highest wage increases in the country for police, nurses and teachers. John Brumby had gone to see New South Wales treasurer Michael Egan in pursuit of a consistent approach to wage rises around the country, but he had come back saying we couldn't rely on Sydney for help. Michael Egan had told him that the New South Wales approach to these things was to "just given the unions what they want". That sounded like a recipe for disaster. We knew we had to have a better approach.

That is former Labor Premier for Victoria Steve Bracks calling out this wages policy. I told the House that I would give a quarterly update on how many meetings the Labor Party is having with the unions. This "Matt Cross Quarterly Update of Labor Union Meetings" is to 31 December 2023. In the first two quarters, Labor met with unions 353 times. By the end of the year it was up to 469. Let us go through a roll call. At place number five we have the Minister for Transport, who has had 28 meetings in total. At number four we have the Minister for Education and Early Learning, with 42 meetings with union bosses. Coming in at number three is the Treasurer, with 54 meetings. At number two we have the Minister for Health, with 63 meetings. Who is number one? Any guesses?

Ms Eleni Petinos: The Premier.

Mr MATT CROSS: No. It is the Minister for Industrial Relations, with a whopping 94 meetings with unions. When Labor members are all about wanting to meet with stakeholders, who do they meet with? They meet with the unions and they say, just as Steve Bracks said Michael Egan said, "Give them what they want." The carpet is worn out from the back and forth. They say, "What do you want, union boss?" It is interesting that, as we came closer to 2007, the Labor Party decided on a different approach to mutual gains bargaining and introduced a thing called the *NSW Public Sector Wages Policy 2007*. It says that they "intended to maintain real wages by allowing for increases of 2.5 per cent per annum". If Labor members want to know about the wages cap, they should look at their own party.

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (14:54): What a day it has been so far. I thank my friend the member for Heathcote for moving the motion. I also thank members opposite for their remarkable contributions so far. They have given me a heap of material to work with. Let me start with the legacy of the last Government. It was one of privatisation. I said a few years ago in this House that they would sell their own dog. And they kept saying that they were the friend of the worker. Being lectured by the Liberal Party in New South Wales on being the friend of the worker is like being lectured by Joseph Stalin on the virtues of humanity. It is an absolute joke and an outrage. They know it. We just need to listen to the contributions of members opposite. Remarkably, the Liberal Party is in absolute shock that an industrial relations Minister would meet with the unions. Go figure. They probably should have done a bit more of that when they were in government.

Let us get back to the wages cap. We are now playing catch-up at an enormous cost to the budget. We wish that we did not need to do it, but we have to. Why? Because all of our essential workers were fleeing the tyranny of Liberal governments in New South Wales to the prosperous lands and social democratic areas of Queensland and Victoria where they got a fair wage. Our nurses, doctors, teachers, paramedics and everyone else were flying

the coop, going north and south to get away from that mob. Why? Because it is about a fair day's work for a fair day's pay.

Ms Eleni Petinos: You have to try harder.

Mr GREG WARREN: I acknowledge the interjection of the member for Miranda. In her contribution she tried very ineffectively to shift the direction of the debate and say that the member for Heathcote is going to sell this and do that. Members opposite are the ones who sold everything. The cupboard is near empty.

Ms Eleni Petinos: Not sell, cut.

Mr GREG WARREN: Cuts, privatisation and sell-offs—everyone living in the real world knows that members opposite are about nothing but fear and fake news. What they carry on with is nothing short of fake news. Their legacy of keeping the worker down is locked in. We know that they do not support the worker. Who needs enemies when frontline workers have friends like the Liberal Party in New South Wales? The reality is they suppressed them and kept them down. They sold off their assets and put up taxes, and now as a new government we must address all those matters, which we are committed to doing. We need only to look at the results so far by all the Ministers, particularly in the Health, Education and Industrial Relations portfolios. They have worked hard to make sure that workers in New South Wales get a fair day's pay for a fair day's work—a very simple concept that the New South Wales Liberal Party has never been able to grasp. They do not support the worker and never have. There is only one style of government that has always supported the worker in this great State: the New South Wales Labor Party.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (14:58): I thank the member for Heathcote for moving the motion. It is important that we remember the dark days of the Liberal-Nationals Government and the huge impact that its endless wages cap had on essential workers and, indeed, on all workers. The State is such a massive employer of workers that the wages cap of the Liberal-Nationals Government did not just impact those essential workers delivering care, education and support to our communities but also impacted wages across New South Wales. To see the Liberal-Nationals Opposition—it is always lovely to say that because it is nice to remind ourselves that Coalition members are in opposition—try to rewrite history by suggesting in the amendment that it maintained a fair and responsible public sector wages policy is just laughable. There is nothing fair and responsible about underpaying nurses to the point where they have to take leave because they are so stressed by not being paid enough. There is nothing fair and responsible about young kids being split into different classrooms because there are not enough teachers. Teachers are leaving the profession because they are unable to deal with the workload, stress and financial realities.

There is nothing fair and responsible about having bus routes cancelled and bus drivers unemployed, and about public service jobs not being filled because the former Liberal-Nationals Government failed to keep wages in line with inflation. The Greens believe it is not fair for any public sector workers to receive wages that do not allow them to function in our society. We should not be prioritising the profits of big corporations. The idea of a budget bottom line being placed ahead of the need to ensure that frontline and essential workers are paid for their work and valued how they should be valued is repugnant. I make it perfectly clear that The Greens stand in absolute support of the actions taken to abolish the public sector wages cap. But we will not stop there. We will ensure that people are not going backwards because other negotiations are taking place.

We know that the fires were outside the Parliament yesterday. We know that the demands of teachers go not only to public sector wage caps but also to workload. I welcome the fact that finally we are hearing discussions about teacher workload and pressures on teachers. I acknowledge that the member for Ballina is in the Chamber. She spent many years as a teacher and has been working closely with the union to push teacher demands. We know that any attempts to contract out, consult out or privatise elements of our public sector will further undermine the employment conditions of essential workers in this State. I urge the New South Wales Labor Government not to engage in a process of just protecting existing public sector workers but to address the privatisation of public housing maintenance contracts and the contracting out and privatisation of our bus networks. Those jobs should be back in public hands so the Public Service Association and other unions that are negotiating wages and conditions for the public sector workers of this State can do so in a collective manner, which is in the best interests of workers.

Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (15:02): In reply: The member for Miranda seems to think public servants are nothing more than black holes. She cares only about money and the bottom line. The New South Wales Labor Government is a responsible government. We will not only show fiscal responsibility but also make sure that public sector workers get the wages and good conditions they deserve—and which they have been denied for the past 12 years. We can do both. We can walk and chew gum. The member for Miranda also thinks to pay for increased wages and conditions, public services should be cut. Again, I say we can walk and chew gum; we are a party that believes in public services, not privatisation. Opposition members, who were

members of the former Government, continue to say they do not believe the wages cap should be abolished. They referred to examples from my electorate.

All of my promises and commitments have commenced, but I will tell the House one story of my experience as a newly elected member. I had to tell the Heathcote High School community that the former education Minister and former member for Heathcote, less than two weeks out from the election, had promised them a fully funded school hall. But it was not fully funded in the budget. They were telling more porkies—the Opposition is good at that. Talking about porkies reminds me of pork-barrelling. That hurt my community big time. It will always stay with me that the former Government made an unfunded promise that will not be delivered because the Liberals and The Nationals are now in opposition.

Ms Eleni Petinos: You deliver.

Ms MARYANNE STUART: Leave it to me.

Ms Eleni Petinos: You will not do it.

Ms MARYANNE STUART: The marginal member for Miranda was not even in the Chamber last week when we were talking about essential workers. In fact, the whole Opposition went missing. Thankfully, we heard some good sense from the member for Liverpool, who is a good friend. Last week she reminded me that the Opposition benches were empty and that there was no respect for our important frontline workers.

Ms Eleni Petinos: Point of order—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua): The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Heathcote will resume her seat so that I may hear the point of order.

Ms Eleni Petinos: My point of order relates to relevance. Madam Temporary Speaker, I ask that you direct the member for Heathcote to return to the leave of the amended motion.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua): The member for Heathcote is replying to the debate. She will continue.

Ms MARYANNE STUART: And listen. The member for Davidson said that his parents were essential workers, yet he would not pay New South Wales public servants any more than 2.5 per cent. That was the ceiling. The former Government kept depressing, suppressing and pushing down public sectors workers for 12 long years. Then the member talked about Victorian wages policy. Someone should remind him that he is in New South Wales. We care about our essential workers in this State every day of the week. The member spoke about the unions and the number of meetings that Labor members are having. We are proud that we work with unions. We are proud that we look after the workers in this State and every other New South Wales resident. It was like being flogged with a wet lettuce. Opposition members are entitled and believe they are born to rule.

The member for Campbelltown concluded his speech with fearmongering and fake news from the Opposition, reminding us that those opposite sold public assets. I thank the member for Newtown for her good speech. She spoke about the dark days of the Liberal-Nationals Government—12 years when workers were underpaid and we lost workers such as nurses and teachers to stress and strain. We look forward to working with public sector workers and their unions. They deserve better every day of the week. They deserve fairer and better wages and conditions into the future, which are being delivered by the Minns Government. [*Time expired.*]

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua): The member for Heathcote has moved a motion, to which the member for Miranda has moved an amendment. The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes32
Noes53
Majority.....21

AYES

Anderson, K
Ayyad, T
Clancy, J
Cooke, S
Coure, M
Cross, M
Crouch, A (teller)
Griffin, J

Kean, M
Kemp, M
Lane, J
Layzell, D
Marshall, A
Perrottet, D
Petinos, E
Preston, R

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

AYES

Henskens, A
Hodges, M
James, T

Provest, G
Roberts, A
Saunders, D

Williamson, R
Wilson, F

NOES

Aitchison, J
Atalla, E
Bali, S
Barr, C
Butler, L
Butler, R
Car, P
Catley, Y
Chanthivong, A
Cotsis, S
Crakanthorp, T
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
McDermott, H
McGirr, J
McKeown, K
Mehan, D

Minns, C
O'Neill, M
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

PAIRS

Speakman, M
Thompson, T

Park, R
Wilkinson, K

Amendment negatived.

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

Motion agreed to.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (15:17): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges that today farmers from the Tamworth electorate have gathered at Parliament House in Canberra to express their outrage at several renewable energy developments located in the Tamworth electorate.
- (2) Recognises the impacts renewable energy projects are having on rural communities in the Tamworth electorate.
- (3) Calls on the Government to work with regional communities to put a stop to the pain and angst many of these developments are causing. This issue is of critical importance to farmers and landholders in the Tamworth electorate, who have been left incredibly frustrated and angry by how renewable energy developments have been imposed upon them. Land use conflict and planning issues relating to renewable energy continue to plague rural and regional New South Wales. My colleagues will speak of their concerns in their electorates shortly. But within the Tamworth electorate are deep concern, division and distress about the impacts these developments are having on lives and livelihoods. That is why we saw the protests at Parliament House and in Canberra, by farmers from the Tamworth electorate, who travelled at their own expense because they feel like they are being ignored. The Tamworth electorate is facing the two-pronged issue of high-voltage transmission lines and a wave of renewable energy development proposals across the region but particularly near existing transmission infrastructure. It might be of interest to members in the New South Wales Parliament that the Tamworth electorate is predominantly outside the renewable energy zone, with just parts of the north-eastern part of the electorate included in the zone. Despite that, the electorate is awash with renewable energy proposals, whether they be wind farms, solar farms or transmission lines.

There is more to unpack in relation to those projects, like community consultation. But even before that the question needs to be asked: Is this the right project for this location? The lure of the landscape is not only attractive to developers but also a significant part of why people live there. Conveniently, those projects are being positioned close to transmission lines for ease of connection to the grid. The planning department needs to put that right at the top of its consideration when such projects are being floated. The planning process is upside down

when it comes to renewable energy projects in regional New South Wales. If the land is covered in solar panels, high-voltage transmission towers and lines or wind farms, then it is a significant problem for the people who live there. The planning system needs to take that into account and, quite simply, there are locations in my area that are just not appropriate.

Mr David Harris: It is like the Central Coast.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: I take the interjection from the member for Wyong, and Minister for the Central Coast, who said that he has the same concerns himself. Just because there are open spaces does not mean the Government, or anyone else, can take them away. Primarily it used to be mining versus agriculture; now it is renewables versus agriculture. The Tamworth electorate is not in a renewable energy zone, but that does not matter. The helter-skelter rush to make money from renewable energy projects completely disregards whether the site is in a renewable energy zone. The renewable energy zones have a purpose: to make it easier to build renewable projects. But it seems everywhere is else up for grabs, with little or no checks or balances.

Many in my area want to be clean and green and leave the world a better place. Our farmers are our best conservationists and could show the environmental activists a thing or two about protecting the land for the future. So you can imagine the anger and confusion that our local farmers feel when they are faced with the proposition of a massive renewable energy project on their front doorstep, with very poor consultation about what is going to happen around them. In addition to the energy projects, my area is also right in the middle of the high-voltage transmission line corridor. Massive towers need to be constructed to carry the wires that carry the power.

The big problem is that the planned route goes right across people's private property and their farming businesses. That is causing great concern. EnergyCo is currently working with the community to address those concerns, but it is too late in some circumstances. The company has moved the route after consideration of community concerns but there is more to be done. The angst caused in my community is of significant concern to me, which is why I have been pushing for the transmission infrastructure to be shifted onto public land. A route on public land would help ease the significant angst the transmission infrastructure is causing and would quell the concerns of our farming families. We know that there is a route that follows historic travelling stock routes through State forests. The Government should be busy investigating that route and shifting the lines away from the productive land.

I am calling again on the Government to listen to our farmers and to act. It is not good enough to draw a line from A to B—the easiest route—commit to building infrastructure and then try to jam it onto farmers and convince the community that it is a good thing. It is only good for the Government. It is about treating people with respect. Once you get people offside, it is very difficult to get them back. Consultation should be right at the very start, not after the project has been announced. When you tell someone what is going to happen, they will generally push back. Do not tell people what you are going to do; it is a threat. The renewable energy rollout must not be reckless; it must be responsible. I will continue to work alongside our communities to ensure that happens.

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (15:24): I thank the member for Tamworth for the opportunity to address the issue. I move:

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

- (1) Acknowledges that in February a group of farmers from the Tamworth electorate gathered in Canberra and Sydney to express concern with several renewable energy developments.
- (2) Acknowledges that in February and March support for renewable developments was demonstrated in Newcastle and Wollongong, as well as by farmers eager to support their businesses with a drought-proof income stream.
- (3) Notes the bipartisan support for renewable energy zones as introduced by the Liberal-Nationals and their importance in addressing climate change and delivering affordable, reliable power.
- (4) Recognises the impacts some private developers are having on rural communities in the Tamworth electorate.
- (5) Restates the Government's commitment to continuing to work with regional communities to address issues and deliver benefits.

Again, I thank the member for giving me the opportunity to highlight some of the ways in which the Government is ensuring that our regional communities benefit from the renewable energy projects being delivered across the State. I also acknowledge the concerns in his electorate. The Government recognises that it is vital to have early and ongoing engagement with regional communities that will host the new electricity infrastructure that we need. We are committed to ensuring that the benefits of the renewable transition flows to those communities. The NSW Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap will attract over \$32 billion in regional investment into renewable energy zones [REZs].

The road map will deliver benefits to every household, school, hospital, business and farm across New South Wales by introducing more renewable energy into the grid and putting downward pressure on

electricity prices. At the same time, it will provide economic benefits to our regional communities hosting the new infrastructure. Those benefits include the Strategic Benefit Payments Scheme, which will deliver \$1.5 billion in estimated lease payments by 2042 to landholders hosting new infrastructure. Under the scheme, private landowners in New South Wales will receive annual payments for hosting infrastructure associated with the transmission projects critical to the energy transformation and the future of the energy grid. That infrastructure will also support around 6,300 construction jobs and 2,800 ongoing jobs by 2030, mostly in regional New South Wales.

The New South Wales Government will also deliver \$265 million to our regional communities via the Community and Employment benefit fund. The fund will support significant legacy community services and infrastructure projects such as improvements to mobile phone coverage, housing and worker accommodation projects, drought resilience projects and other projects or programs that will benefit the local community. Funding has been brought forward by the New South Wales Government so that early support will be in place at the time when communities experience the most disruption and change.

The first REZ community to receive the benefits is the Central-West Orana district, which will receive \$128 million over four years. Consultation with the community on what type of projects they would like funded is currently underway. That funding is in addition to other funds that may become available from the renewable energy industry through local benefit sharing schemes, strategic benefit payments to landowners, biodiversity offset payments and contributions councils may receive from renewable generation projects under voluntary planning arrangements. The energy transition offers an enormous opportunity for economic development and job creation in regional New South Wales. It can create transitional pathways for local workers as well as benefit the environment and local communities. On 4 February 2024, immediately prior to the events in Canberra and Sydney that the member for Tamworth mentioned, public demonstrations were held in Newcastle and Wollongong to support the responsible development of renewables in those regions.

The rally was organised and supported by a range of environmental organisations, business groups, unions and local government, including the Maritime Union of Australia, the CFMEU, the Electrical Trades Union, the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union, the New South Wales Teachers Federation, the National Tertiary Education Union, the United Workers Union, the Hunter Jobs Alliance, Business Hunter, the City of Newcastle and the Australian Conservation Foundation. Speakers at the rally highlighted the workforce opportunities in renewables—particularly in the transition of workers from the region's mining operations—opportunities to expand local skills and workforces through targeted education and training programs, and the potential to utilise local manufacturing and resources, such as steel manufactured at Port Kembla steelworks.

The renewable energy transition is undoubtedly a time of change, but it is also one of opportunity. Our regions have an important part to play to ensure that every home, school, hospital, farm and business across New South Wales has access to cheaper, cleaner and more reliable electricity. The Government is committed to ensuring that they share the benefits of that change. I thank Opposition members for their bipartisan support for renewable energy policy in this State. Working together to deliver on practical issues is acting in good faith for all of our communities. I finish by suggesting that we would like the member for Tamworth to sing us a song.

Mr Kevin Anderson: No.

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (15:30): I do not think we could handle the member for Tamworth singing today. I acknowledge the motion of the member for Tamworth and put forward my experience as the member for the Goulburn electorate. Many Goulburn locals joined a gathering at New South Wales Parliament and at Parliament House in Canberra to express their concerns about the impact that renewable energy projects are having on our rural communities.

There is no denying that Australia has a significant and urgent issue regarding energy. The issue is not our energy supply; nor is it our resources. We are very lucky to have an abundance of energy resources in this country. There is plenty to go around to power our lives, and of course those resources are a key contributor to our economic prosperity. There is no doubt the energy demand is increasing as our population grows. The critical issue that the Reckless Renewables rally raises is the impact on our rural communities of poorly planned renewable energy projects with no social licence.

Specifically, I speak today about some of the projects across my electorate of Goulburn. Our region was an early adopter of wind turbine technology, and many homes in the Goulburn electorate have invested in solar panels. Over the past five years the share of wind and solar across the New South Wales electricity generation mix has more than tripled. While many may see that as progress, the reality is that the national push for renewable energy is coming at a cost to our regional areas.

The electorate of Goulburn is now inundated with renewable energy projects and proposals. Goulburn has wind farms on the Gullen Range, on the Cullerin Range, in Gunning and a number in Crookwell. We have the Jupiter, Biala, Bango and Rye Park wind farms. A number of solar farms have been approved, as well as an enormous number of proposals. But with those projects comes a connection to the grid. The TransGrid HumeLink project goes across my electorate and beyond. It will see enormous towers situated across our agricultural lands, connecting kilometres of electric cables. The community has concerns around the impact that that will have, and they are calling for the cables to be underground. Parliamentary inquiries have discussed how much that may cost. There is certainly debate on that and it needs to be investigated further.

My region has also had to endure the further complication of waste-to-energy incinerators, greenwashed as "energy-producing projects" when in reality they are proposals to burn Sydney's rubbish in our country villages. Our councils and communities have prepared their strategic plans, which identify what their future looks like. They outline the community's vision for the region. The State significant energy projects pay no heed to those plans; they ignore locals' opinions and the sentiment of the community. They even ignore the Government's own plans around renewable energy zones, identifying capacity in lines and then offering landowners enormous amounts of money to hook up to them, without any real social licence. Corporate cowboys offer huge amounts of money but the projects are in the wrong places. The community does not agree with them. We need to make sure that communities are heard and that the plans that local councils have put together are acknowledged.

Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (15:35): I thank the member for Tamworth for the opportunity to highlight the benefits for regional communities that embrace renewable energy projects. The Government recognises that it is vital to invest in a range of renewable energy projects, and it is important that the benefits of renewable energy flow back to regional communities. Energy transition offers not only an enormous opportunity for economic development and job creation in regional New South Wales but also clean energy and assists households by significantly reducing or even eliminating electricity bills.

I live in the small South Coast town of Bawley Point. As members all know, four years ago we were hit by fires and lost power. It is imperative to have power in times of natural disaster, especially in my community, which does not have town water. When we lose power we also lose our water, so we have worked since then to have a community micro grid installed. It went live in December last year. It was a long process because our community were frightened of change. Change is scary for anybody, but the Government took the concerns on board and consulted.

The Government has committed to continue to consult with communities, and transferring to renewables has transformed people's lives in our community. It has created many new businesses on the South Coast, focused on solar. Our community no longer has blackouts when we have a mass influx of people. The system could not cope before, but we had not one blackout throughout the whole summer. We will be resilient in disasters, and the biggest benefit to residents is the dramatic reduction in their household bills. Pensioners who rely solely on their pensions have told me it has transformed their lives. Other communities up and down the coast come to me and ask, "How did your community do that?" People were scared because change is difficult. They relied on something for a long time, but the benefits are huge.

I urge rural communities to keep an open mind and embrace renewable energy. It creates the jobs of the future for our children and grandchildren. My son works for Essential Energy further down the South Coast, and his employers are putting him through additional courses so that he is a solar expert for the future. They have just put on additional apprentices because they know that the need for skilled high-voltage and solar electricians will be huge in the future. I thank Opposition members for their support for renewable energy in New South Wales, and I really look forward to working together so that all communities across regional New South Wales can benefit from renewable energy, just as my community on the South Coast has.

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence) (15:38): I support the motion from the member for Tamworth, who knows only too well the impacts that renewable energy projects have on regional areas across our great State. As a regional member—and there are many regional members present in the Chamber—I am not against renewable energy. In fact, renewables will continue to play a growing role in the energy mix in this nation over the short term and certainly over the long term. As members know, rural New South Wales is the powerhouse that provides food and fibre to this great State, to the nation and to the world.

Farmers keep food on our tables and clothes on our backs. But, throughout New South Wales, we are experiencing a great energy migration. Farmers are being asked to not only provide food and fibre but also keep the lights on as well. Not only in my electorate of Clarence, but right across the bush, there are significant land use conflicts due to the rapid and what seems at times to be the uncontrolled expansion of solar and wind energy.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua): Order! It being 3.40 p.m., debate is interrupted for the giving of community recognition statements. I set down resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a later time.

Community Recognition Statements

GRACE COSSINGTON SMITH

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (15:41): Grace Cossington Smith is probably the greatest Australian female artist. She is known for her iconic Sydney landscapes and cityscapes and was inspired by the European post-Impressionist movement. I had the great privilege of officially unveiling the Grace Cossington Smith Blue Plaque at her former home on Ku-ring-gai Avenue, Turramurra. I was joined by Anne Mills, the niece of Grace Cossington Smith; Megan Krimmer, the principal of Abbotsleigh; teachers and former students of Abbotsleigh, where Grace Cossington Smith went to school; and Heritage NSW representatives. It was an incredibly special morning spent reflecting on Grace's life and celebrating her contribution to art, creativity and community. This was the twenty-fifth Blue Plaque under the program that the Coalition established in New South Wales. It is a fantastic way to recognise the impact Grace has had on our community and the creative arts. Grace Cossington Smith has also been recognised in the Wahroonga electorate by having an art gallery at Abbotsleigh named after her. By continuing to recognise significant figures through the Blue Plaques program, we can ensure that the legacy of people like Grace Cossington Smith lives on.

CLAIRE RIDLEY

Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (15:42): I take this opportunity to recognise Claire Ridley, who was awarded the JM Wallace Memorial Youth Achievement Award at the recent Milton Show. Each year a Milton Show Young Woman of the Year is selected to represent our community and develop her personal and professional skills to improve rural New South Wales. Claire is a worthy recipient of the award due to her longstanding commitment to and history with the Milton Show, having been involved in various capacities since she was six years of age. In October 2023 Claire trekked the Kokoda Track and was nominated for an Australia Day award for her community engagement, leadership and mentoring skills. As vice-president and an active member of the student representative council at Ulladulla High School, Claire leads by example and is seen as a role model amongst her peers. Claire is a talented, community-minded young lady who is responsible, organised and easy to get along with. No matter what she does, she will be successful in the future. I congratulate Claire.

WALCHA ANTIQUE MACHINERY AND TRUCK SHOW

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (15:43): I recognise the wonderful achievements of the Walcha Antique Machinery and Truck Show committee for staging an event to celebrate vintage vehicles and machinery from across the region. Activities included a Walcha town street parade, tractor events, stalls, demonstrations and children's colouring competition, along with a performance by local talent Ash Barnett and her team of horses. I congratulate the committee members behind the event, including president Jack Carey, secretary Megan Tisdell, the greater Walcha community and sponsors. Special thanks go to ETE Services for lending machinery and Betts Transport and Brian Smith Timber Transport for supporting and contributing to the success of the event. I commend the large band of volunteers: Shane Carey, Jed Wittig, Frazer Wittig, Sharon Ron, Rick Nelson, Brad Keable, John Cross, Peta Carter, Lisa Noble, Chloe Carter, Lee Blake, Ces Casey. I also commend the various organisational supporters who gave their time and effort to make the event a success. I congratulate Walcha, and I cannot wait for next year's event.

JAMISON DUSTIN

Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (15:44): I recognise and acknowledge 17-year-old Jamison Dustin from Norwest Christian College for becoming Blacktown City's 2024 Youth Ambassador. The Youth Ambassador program is a scheme through which Blacktown City Council selects two young people to serve as representatives for a period of 12 months. During that time ambassadors represent the city at citizenship ceremonies, civic receptions and youth forums. Prospective ambassadors undergo an extensive and draining selection process that results in seven finalists. Jamison presented his perspective on youth engagement during a gala dinner, alongside other applicants. I am immensely proud that a young person from Riverstone has been selected for this prestigious role. Through his selection, Jamison will represent local youth both in his school and the broader Riverstone electorate. As he enters this new role, I encourage him to lead with integrity, courage, respect, compassion and resilience. I congratulate Jamison on this well-deserved achievement. I wish him all the best as he embraces this opportunity and continues to mould positive change and be the voice of young people in our community.

NSW SENIORS FESTIVAL

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (15:45): The 2024 NSW Seniors Festival has been a very important time on the Central Coast. As part of the NSW Seniors Festival, held this month, I was delighted to host an afternoon tea last week to celebrate the contribution of some of the truly wonderful seniors who were nominated for the 2024 awards. Seniors are invaluable to our region as volunteers, carers and role models. They help to make our community diverse, inspiring and active. The awards program is part of an exciting schedule of events across the State. By highlighting the continued efforts of seniors in helping our community thrive, we are continuing to challenge ageism and empower seniors to overcome social stigmas. The following 10 seniors were recognised for their contributions in the categories of Community Service, Health and Wellbeing, and Business and Environment. Congratulations to Yvette Norton, Peter Bailey, Liz Oldfield, Jan Consoli, Kim Petley, Robyn Warburton, Gillian Winchester, Nicholas Poulos, Jenny Hartich and Catharine Retter. I thank them for their ongoing service over many years for our community. Their contributions exemplify the strong community spirit that makes living on the Central Coast very special, and they are outstanding seniors.

MICHAEL FOULKES

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (15:46): Mr Michael Foulkes is a strong advocate for my local community and beyond. He is renowned for his friendly and approachable demeanour within the community, always ready to extend a helping hand to those in need. He was also recently nominated for the Fairfield Citizen of the Year award presented by Fairfield council at the Australia Day celebration. Michael has been with the Cabra-Vale Diggers Club for about 20 years, and 16 of those years as the general manager. He is guided by his strong passion for giving back and has been instrumental in the club's commitment to serving the community. One of Michael's noteworthy achievements is the club's sponsorship of the NSW Vietnamese Elderly Friendship Association, facilitating the launch of English and computer classes for local senior members. Through his initiative and leadership, we will see the Aboriginal flag and New Zealand flag fly alongside the Australian flag at the club's upcoming commemoration of Anzac Day this year. I recognise and thank Michael for all his wonderful work and contributions to my local community.

NORMA MEADLEY

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (15:47): I congratulate Norma Meadley, the deserving recipient of a 2024 NSW Seniors Local Achievement Award. For over 22 years Norma has made significant contributions to the Narromine community through the Narromine Local History Room. Devoting three days a week in a voluntary capacity, Norma tirelessly works to preserve the rich history and tapestry of Narromine and its surrounding districts. Renowned for her passion, commitment and meticulous research skills, Norma plays a vital role in ensuring the history and culture of the entire area is accurately documented and accessible to all. Her work in preserving the ongoing story of Narromine and surrounds ensures that the connectivity of the past with the present continues to evolve. Norma has a wealth of knowledge and is very generous with her time. Whether it is assisting people with information or supporting community groups and businesses to chronicle and preserve their own unique stories, she is always happy to assist and provide advice. Her unwavering dedication serves as a source of inspiration to the entire community, which will cherish her contributions for years to come. I congratulate Norma on this well-deserved recognition.

BLACKTOWN ELECTORATE HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE STUDENTS

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (15:48): I congratulate all of Blacktown's 2023 Higher School Certificate high achievers. This year the Blacktown electorate recorded 143 high achievers, a 30 per cent increase on 2022. Blacktown also recorded six State rankings and three all-rounders. Blacktown's high achievers come from Patrician Brothers' College; Blacktown Girls High School; Blacktown Boys High School; St Andrews Marayong; Nagle Catholic College; Mitchell High School; Evans High School; Tyndale Christian School; Doonside Technology High School, my alma mater; and Warakirri College. I have had the pleasure of attending many high achiever ceremonies to celebrate the achievements of the previous year's cohort with their families, staff and cheering current students. The ceremonies serve as an inspiration to the class of 2024 who are preparing for their HSC. They see that hard work can result in academic success. The class of 2023 has certainly set the bar high.

TRIBUTE TO JACKIE BRODIE

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (15:49): It is with great sadness that I pay tribute to Jackie Brodie, Murrumbidgee Local Health District Director of Aboriginal Health, who sadly passed away recently. In sharing the words to staff from the health district's chief executive officer, Jill Ludford, I extend my heartfelt condolences to Jackie's family, friends and colleagues who are grieving this profound loss. Jackie was widely known as an inspirational leader across many jurisdictions. The work she led with her team guided the organisation in new

directions, through truth-telling and a commitment to improving health outcomes for Aboriginal people. Jackie always focused on representing the interests of her communities while she worked for NSW Health, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, and the Indigenous Coordination Centre. Jackie had a strong work ethic and always had a helping hand for others. She spoke out strongly at the executive table to ensure her passion for improving health outcomes for all people moving forward. As Ms Ludford said, "Jackie's wisdom was profound, her passion strong, and her lovely smile remains with me today." Vale, Jackie. I thank her for all of the work she did to improve her community.

JULIE-ANN MIFSUD

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (15:50): I congratulate the 2024 Prospect Local Woman of the Year, Julie-Ann Mifsud. Julie-Ann is the esteemed coordinator of the Our Lady Queen of Peace [OLQP] Craft Market, Greystanes, and a deserving recipient of the award. An annual community highlight, the OLQP Craft Market connects people from all walks of life. Serving as the driving force behind the extravaganza for nine years, Julie-Ann goes above and beyond to celebrate abundant talent within the Prospect electorate. Coordinating vendors to sell handmade items, Julie-Ann has cultivated a supportive showcase to champion local artists and small businesses. Last year the market raised \$4,500 for HeartKids, an organisation advocating for childhood onset heart disease. Previously the market has supported important causes, including seeing eye dogs, diabetes management, motor neurone disease and local sporting organisations. Julie-Ann's efforts to facilitate the initiative are an exemplar of how our community cares for one another. A devoted member of the Greystanes community since childhood, Julie-Ann generously gives her time to the community that raised her. I thank Julie-Ann for her dedication to serving others.

NORTH RYDE COMMUNITY PRESCHOOL

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (15:51): I recently opened a new room at the North Ryde Community Preschool. The amazing organisation, established 40 years ago by local families, has a strong focus on community and supporting children with special needs. I remember visiting them with Councillor Shweta Deshpande when I was mayor, right at the start of the project. It is amazing to see that it is now finished. As with most things in Ryde, there is a chronic shortage of preschool places, and it is only getting worse. The new room really helps. It expands capacity from 51 to 76 students per day, or 150 children throughout the week. It also means support for 18 children with additional needs, up from six or seven previously. It has been a big team effort, with the City of Ryde working in partnership with the preschool's president, Anthony O'Neil, and his team, staff and supporters. As the local member of Parliament, I was enormously proud that the New South Wales Government also contributed \$200,000 for the project. It will help empower another generation of children to achieve the very best start in life and is a big part of why I love what I do.

OLIVIA KENNEDY

Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (15:52): It is fitting that just after celebrating St Patrick's Day 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 four soon captivated a young teen, and she set her sights on competing in England. She relocated to England at age 14 to further her training and compete in the European division. In 2020 Olivia battled through the COVID national border closures as the performing arts industry took a massive hit. During that period, she changed focus from competing and instead moved on to touring with an Irish dance show. Now aged 20, Olivia is living her dream, having toured England and Taiwan with *Lord of the Dance*. Olivia has returned home to tour Australia with *A Taste of Ireland*. I am particularly excited that, fresh from performing in all corners of the world, Olivia is back showcasing her talents in Penrith.

MANILLA PISTOL CLUB

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (15:53): I pay tribute to the Manilla Pistol Club and its members, who have been working hard to build an outstanding facility. The land that the club sits on was originally donated by the Maxwell family. Since that time, the club has been working to improve the onsite facilities to ensure that the club is accessible for all members. It is important that local sporting clubs continue to upgrade their facilities, because it increases interest and participation in the sport. The former Liberal-Nationals Government provided the Manilla sporting club with a \$14,500 grant. With that funding, the committee was able to greatly improve the facilities and build an outstanding club. I thank the club for its commitment to the sport and for the genuine community spirit that runs through the club.

UKIFEST

Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn) (15:54): Last weekend Darling Harbour was illuminated by the vibrant spirit of UkiFest, a celebration that not only showcased the rich tapestry of Ukrainian culture but also united us in solidarity and support. We witnessed an extraordinary gathering of stallholders offering a taste of Ukraine, with

delicious traditional foods, exquisite clothes and unique artisan items. The air resonated with the melodies of Ukrainian musicians and the rhythmic steps of Cossack and folk dancers, whose performances were both poignant and exhilarating. They were joined by folk dancing groups from other local ethnic communities, embodying a beautiful mosaic of cultural harmony. The festival was more than a cultural showcase; it was a resounding declaration of our support for the Ukrainian community, uplifting spirits and reinforcing our shared commitment to stand with Ukraine. Let us carry the message of unity and resilience forward, today and always.

BAYSIA CHINESE RESTAURANT

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne) (15:55): I recognise a beloved local institution in my community, Baysia Chinese Restaurant, which recently announced it will be closing. After more than four decades of serving Canada Bay Club members with delicious Chinese cuisine and warm hospitality, Mr Wing Lau, the restaurant's owner and a pillar of our local community, has announced his retirement. For over 40 years, Baysia, and Wing's before that, has been more than just a restaurant; it has been a place where families have gathered, friendships have been forged and countless memories have been made. Baysia has become synonymous with exceptional food and impeccable service. While that chapter at Canada Bay Club ends, the memories created within its walls will undoubtedly endure. I sincerely wish Mr Wing Lau, his children, Ken and Robyn, and his entire family and hardworking staff all the very best. I extend our community's heartfelt thanks for the joy and hospitality that Baysia has brought us for all these years.

ISLAMIC CHARITY PROJECTS ASSOCIATION

Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (15:56): Last week marked the beginning of the holy month of Ramadan, the most sacred period of the Islamic calendar. It is characterised by introspection, fasting, prayer and community. To commemorate the significant occasion, I had the pleasure of attending the Islamic Charity Projects Association's thirtieth annual Ramadan dinner last Friday. From humble beginnings in 1989, the ICPA has evolved into a leading community organisation, instrumental in building a more interconnected society. I thank the ICPA president, Haj Mohammad Mehio, Dr Sheikh Husam Qaraqirah, and all of the dedicated members for their commitment to supporting the Australian Muslim community and fostering harmony among diverse communities. Ramadan holds profound significance for many people in New South Wales and across the world. I wish all those who observe the period a Ramadan filled with blessings. Ramadan Mubarak to them all.

PITTWATER ELECTORATE ANZAC DAY COMMEMORATIONS

Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater) (15:57): 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 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 the 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 held throughout April by the Terrey Hills Progress Association, the Newport community, the Church Point community, Furlough House and various schools. From the Anzac Sunday marches, there are many commemorative services and opportunities in Pittwater to mark one of Australia's most important national days. I look forward to joining with my community at those events to remember and thank those who have served.

TONI QUIGLEY

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (15:58): Toni Quigley's key contributions to the Blue Mountains community services sector were through her leadership as the CEO of Springwood Neighbourhood Centre Co-operative for nearly 20 years, from 2003 until the end of 2022. During that time Toni offered candid and valuable support in voluntary roles as chair of the board of the Elizabeth Evatt Community Legal Centre and as a board member of Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre. Toni also provided necessary and dedicated assistance to the domestic violence advocacy service in Springwood as part of the Women's Legal Service. A fierce advocate for people in our community who are vulnerable or disadvantaged in any way, Toni worked tirelessly to develop and implement programs and services that supported and empowered people through the Springwood Neighbourhood Centre Co-operative. Toni Quigley's work is testament to her strong commitment to the principles of social justice. I honour the woman that Toni is, the formidable and committed CEO that she was and the monumental efforts she has made enhancing the life opportunities of people across our community. I applaud her inspiring and steadfast approach to life and wish her well in a relaxing retirement.

DEBBIE AND RYAN JEHN

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (15:59): I acknowledge Debbie and Ryan Jehn, who formed the Hornsby Wildcats Softball Club a decade ago, which is a testament to their desire to give back to our local sport and

community. Deb, with her background in softball and Ryan, an all-round sports enthusiast, combined their passions to create something special. They took a young Hornsby-based team to the North Rocks club in 2014 before they established the Hornsby Wildcats Softball Club. From the outset Debbie and Ryan were committed to creating more than just a softball club; they aimed to build a community. They envisaged a club with an excellent feel and culture where players of all ages and skill levels could come together to learn, grow and, most importantly, have fun. Over the past decade, Debbie and Ryan have dedicated themselves to the club by pouring their time, energy and resources into growing the Hornsby Wildcats. Because of the Jehns' hard work, the Wildcats have become known for their strong sense of camaraderie. Debbie and Ryan Jehn have created a thriving community at the Hornsby Wildcats. It is a place where lifelong friendships are formed, memories are made, and a love of softball is passed down from generation to generation.

Petitions

ROAD CRIMES

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li): The petition concerns increasing the maximum penalties for serious road crimes. I welcome guests of the member for Liverpool to the gallery: Ms Angelina Kauffman, Ms Anna Salazar, Michelle Willmer, Angela Younan, Andrew Dimovski, Melissa Dimovski and Alicia Dimovski. I note that media is authorised to take video of the petition debate.

The question is that the House take note of the petition.

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (16:02): Usually when I speak in this place, I say it is a pleasure. That is not the case this afternoon. It brings me no pleasure to present this petition to Parliament today because of the circumstances that deem it necessary. Alina Kauffman and Ernesto Salazar should be alive today. Alina should be joining our healthcare system as a registered nurse helping to save lives. Ernesto should be at school right now. He would have just started year 11 at Cecil Hills High School. Ernesto wanted to be a social worker helping some of our community's most vulnerable people. Instead, their lives were stolen in a tragic and callous incident just metres from their home in Heckenberg on 1 September last year.

Why were they taken? It was because of the actions of someone who should not have been on the road at all. Alina did what siblings across our community do. Indeed, it was something that I did as a young person. She offered to pick up Ernesto from his part-time job at Kmart. As they returned home, the car they were both travelling in was hit by someone allegedly travelling at 100 kilometres per hour in a 60 kilometres per hour zone. Adding insult to injury, the police allege that the driver and other occupants of the other vehicle left the scene without rendering assistance. They saw the carnage that they had caused, and their first instinct was to call on others to take them from the scene. They allegedly called on those people to assist with hiding their involvement.

Alina and Ernesto's mother, Angelina, who joins us in the gallery this afternoon, will never see her children grow up, embark on their careers, get married or have kids of their own. That is an unbearable weight that no parent should have to bear. Anyone who has experienced grief knows that it can be debilitating. It can be hard to find the means to go on and to find purpose. I imagine those who have lost a child feel that pain even more intensely. However, Angelina has not allowed grief to immobilise her. She and her incredible support network of family and friends have channelled grief into action. She wants justice for their children, and it is for that reason that we are here this afternoon debating the petition.

The petition before the House asks us to consider whether maximum penalties for such road offences exact justice for victims of serious road crimes. In the case of Alina and Ernesto, the alleged offender faces a maximum penalty of 14 years imprisonment. That is seven years less than the potential sentence that awaits those who tried to cover up the crime; they face a maximum sentence of 21 years. The current state of the law in relation to such offences is varied and is applied inconsistently. Recently the driver in an incident which killed five teenagers in Buxton was charged with five counts of aggravated dangerous driving occasioning death—the same charges as the driver in this instance. If the maximum sentence was applied across all the lives taken in that tragedy, he would have received a sentence of 70 years. Instead, he was sentenced to just 12 with a non-parole period of seven years. That is a sentence of 2.5 years imprisonment per life taken if the full sentence is applied, and just 16 months otherwise. It therefore begs the question of what is fair and just? What is the value of a life? What if remorse is not shown?

It is clear that change is needed. Angelina began this petition by asking for signatures at Liverpool railway station. Anyone who has tried to stop commuters in the morning rush knows how difficult it can be; however, Angelina's motivation did not waver. She turned up every morning and talked to anyone who would listen—and listen they did. The petition has collected over 20,000 signatures. It also caught the attention of journalists, community advocates and people from across the State who enabled Angelina and this petition to reach a broader audience. I acknowledge and thank Chris O'Keefe, Robert Ovadia, Michael Andjelkovic and many others in

bringing this issue to prominence and getting it the attention that it deserves, because it is clear that not only is change needed but also our community agrees and wants us to change things.

I was elected to this place by my community to not only celebrate and share the many good things that happen but also stand with my community to try to resolve the challenges and injustices that occur. That is at the heart of what is being sought by the many people who have signed this petition. Those who have joined us in the gallery today and the many members of this House would agree with me in saying that we need justice. We need justice for Alina, we need justice for Ernesto, and we need justice for the many people whose lives have been irrevocably changed by tragedy and the actions of others.

Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy) (16:07): I support the petition received by the House from the member for Liverpool. The petitioners are seeking for the New South Wales Government to consider increasing the maximum penalties for serious road crimes. The alleged offender in the hit-and-run was charged with aggravated dangerous driving occasioning death, which carries a maximum penalty of imprisonment for 14 years. On the evening of 1 September 2024, siblings Alina, aged 24, and Ernesto, aged 15, were tragically killed in a hit-and-run accident in Heckenberg, part of the Liverpool local government area. Alina was picking up her younger brother Ernesto from work when the crash occurred, 200 metres from their home.

As a former Liverpool City Council councillor, I had many constituents reach out about the need for speed cameras along our local roads. Simply put, we have had too many deaths, injuries and near misses on our local roads. It is sad that it took the death of two innocent people to spark this discussion. My condolences must go to Angelina Kauffman, who is in the gallery today. She is a brave soul. It was not a campaign that she wanted, nor is it one anyone would want. She has to bear a pain that no parent should ever have to endure. With the support of her community, soon after the incident a candlelight vigil was held at the crash scene, which attracted 150 people. With a groundswell of support, Angelina managed to get 20,359 signatures from local residents calling for change. Angelina spent day after day, week after week and month after month speaking to locals and requesting their support. It has culminated in today, when we debate the petition in this place.

The New South Wales Law Reform Commission is currently reviewing serious road offences. On 10 November 2022 the former Attorney General, now Leader of the Opposition, requested a report with the reference of the following: firstly, whether the existing provisions of the Crimes Act 1900 dealing with serious road and dangerous driving offences, in particular in part 3 division 6 concerning manslaughter, and accessorial liability provisions remain fit for purpose; secondly, whether the maximum sentences available for serious road crimes remain appropriate; thirdly, relevant sentencing principles in statute and common law for serious road crimes; fourthly, the experience and rights of victims of serious road crime and their families within the criminal justice system; and, fifthly, any other matter the commission considers relevant. All members in this place and the other place will eagerly await the tabling of the report in light of today's debate.

However, as we await the findings of the Law Reform Commission report, we must acknowledge the urgency of this matter. The tragedy that befell Alina and Ernesto should serve as a wake-up call for us all. It is not just about statistics or legal technicalities; it is about human lives, families shattered and communities torn apart. Increasing the maximum penalties for serious road crimes is not about vengeance; it is about deterrence and justice. It is about sending a clear message that reckless behaviour on our roads will not be tolerated. We owe it to Angelina, to the memory of Alina and Ernesto, and to every family who has lost a loved one to preventable road accidents to take action. I call on the New South Wales Government to heed the voice of Angelina, the 20,000-plus petition signatories and the rest of the community and listen to their heartfelt pleas. Let us honour the memory of Alina and Ernesto by turning their tragedy into meaningful change. Let us stand together and say enough is enough. Let us make our roads safer for all who use them.

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (16:11): I thank the member for Liverpool for sponsoring this petition. As the member for a neighbouring electorate, I say that my community feels a similar sense of grief and loss as hers. Next Monday will officially mark my 12 months in the job as the member for Leppington. In those 12 months I have had countless meetings, delivered plenty of speeches and got on with the job of delivering for my community. It has had its many ups and occasional downs, but nothing has been more difficult than the meeting I had with Angelina and Ayeanna, a mother and sister who have had their children and siblings snatched from them. I first met with them in October, not two months after the terrible tragedy. What can you say in that situation? No words can comfort them or soothe their loss.

The accident that took Alina and Ernesto is about three or four kilometres from my house. It is a five-minute drive on a road I have driven down plenty of times. I am a father of two kids—a 16-year-old daughter, who is learning to drive, and a 14-year-old son. Both are around the same age as Ernesto was. Only this week, my wife and I were chatting about how close our kids are and how my daughter, Nia, like any good big sister, looks out for her little brother, Evan. That is what Alina was doing on that tragic night when she went to pick up Ernesto

from his part-time job. As we know, they never came home. For any parent this is unthinkable; it was also avoidable.

This important petition has come about because of the determination of Angelina to ensure that no mother or parent needs to feel the immense grief that she has lived with each and every day since that tragic night. She has worked day and night to get signatures on this important petition. She has been ably assisted by friends and supporters across New South Wales. Among them are Michelle Willmer and the Dimovski family, who are in the gallery. I also thank other members of the community who assisted in getting this over the line, including Michael Andjelkovic, a constituent of mine who designed flyers and mobilised his extensive community networks to get the signatures required. That work was instrumental in getting us to where we are today. In the media, I thank in particular Chris O'Keefe and Robert Ovadia for covering the story and pushing the petition multiple times on both TV and radio. I also thank each and every one of the 20,000 or so signatories from across New South Wales. They recognise the need for change. Finally, I pay tribute to Angelina and Ayeanna. I am in awe of their continuing strength. None of this would have been possible without their strength and tenacity.

The Law Reform Commission is currently undertaking a review into road crime offences. That review is considering whether the existing serious road crime offences, and the law on accessorial liability, are fit for purpose; whether the maximum sentences and sentencing principles are appropriate and relevant; and, most importantly, the experience and rights of victims of serious road crimes and their families in the criminal justice system. The review was announced by the now Opposition leader in 2022 in his capacity Attorney General at the time. That means that we have bipartisan support on this issue, which is critically important. A consultation paper is currently out for feedback, and I encourage the community to have their say.

Angelina has been clear with her feedback. When someone is suspended from driving, commits dangerous driving occasioning death, fails to stop and assist, tries to cover up their involvement and shows little to no remorse, she wants the sentence to be life in jail. She also wants consideration of compulsory defensive driving courses, especially for young drivers, and uniform laws across all jurisdictions. The Parliament is currently considering additional powers relating to the use of social media in serious road crime, and I thank the Attorney General for his work on that. But there is more to be done. I eagerly await the handing down of the review, as I am sure many in this Chamber and the gallery do, and I remain committed to doing everything in my power to prevent tragedies like this one ever occurring again.

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (16:16): Beautiful souls—that is what Alina and Ernesto are remembered as being. With the indulgence of the House, I share a photograph of them. Alina was 24 years old and Ernesto was 15 years old when they were killed in a road collision in Heckenberg, in south-west Sydney. Their mother Angelina, sister Ayeanna and family are in the gallery. I am so sorry that they lost Alina and Ernesto. On behalf of my community, I offer my condolences for their loss. They would wish that the events of 1 September 2023 had never happened.

As members know, the matter is still before the courts. As members of Parliament we need to be mindful of the separation of powers, but we can talk about this very important petition. I thank the 20,359 people who signed the important petition for bringing the issue to the attention of this Parliament. The petitioners request that the New South Wales Government consider increasing the maximum penalties for serious road crimes. As a member of the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety, I have had the opportunity to meet with the New South Wales Road Trauma Support Group. I thank them for all their work, including advocating for the review of maximum penalties.

Before I discuss penalties, I say how concerned I am with the current road toll crisis. As members know, we have the safest cars in the world. We have the safest roads being built. We have greater driver education than ever before. But, sadly, the road toll continues to increase. *The Daily Telegraph* reported only today that the road toll has increased to a crisis point, with 100 more deaths in the past 12 months than in any previous year. All members of this House and everyone in the community need to come together to stop this crisis on our roads. Most important is to make sure that people who should not be on the roads are prevented from driving.

That brings me to the Law Reform Commission review of serious road crime offences, which, as the member for Leppington said, started in November 2022 under former Attorney General Mark Speakman. The terms of reference for the review were formulated and a very good consultation paper was released. Responses will be accepted until 5 April. I bring to the attention of the House and the community the matters set out in the consultation paper for consideration, which includes the question, "What is a maximum penalty?" The consultation paper states:

The maximum penalty for an offence is the highest penalty a court may impose for that offence.

...

Maximum penalties are set out in legislation.

...

Parliament can legislate to increase a maximum penalty if there are concerns that it is too lenient. Increases in the maximum penalty can reflect changing community standards about the appropriate sentence for that offence. When parliament increases a maximum penalty, courts generally interpret this to indicate that sentences for that offence should increase in line with parliament's intention.

The consultation paper outlines considerations when reviewing maximum penalties, including "Are the maximum penalties an effective deterrent?" They should be an effective deterrent because families of those who have died want to know that people who do the wrong thing will face the full brunt of the law. The second consideration is "Would an increase have any unintended consequences?" In relation to current penalties, manslaughter is 25 years imprisonment, aggravated dangerous driving occasioning death is 14 years imprisonment, and dangerous driving occasioning death is 10 years imprisonment.

The consultation paper discusses whether the penalties are in line with other Australian jurisdictions for similar offences. I note in South Australia the maximum penalty for a first offence is 15 years but life imprisonment for an aggravated or subsequent offence. The Australian Capital Territory has a maximum penalty of 14 years imprisonment. I look forward to the completion of the review. As the member for Leppington said, the review has full bipartisan support. It is fantastic having the Attorney General in the House today. I know that he, like me, will look forward to seeing that discussion paper to ensure that the petition being discussed today is heard loud and clear.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (16:21): I thank Angelina Kauffman as well as the Dimovski family for being with us in the gallery today. I thank the member for Liverpool and the more than 20,000 people who signed the petition for bringing this matter to the House for debate today. I know how hard it is to get a few thousand signatures for a petition, so I thank Angelina and everyone who signed because that has ensured this important issue is discussed today. In 10 years time, members will stand in this place and look back on this petition knowing that it will have saved lives. As the Parliamentary Secretary for Roads—assisting the Government in all our efforts to provide a safe road network for all—I take this tragic loss of life very personally. It is always heartbreaking when time and again I contribute to petition debates that regard the loss of innocent lives on our roads.

I acknowledge the pain and suffering of the families and the friends of Alina Kauffman and Ernesto Salazar, aged 24 and 15, who were killed on the evening of 1 September 2023 in Heckenberg by a disqualified driver. As a New South Wales MP for 13 years, I have seen way too much senseless loss of life on our roads. Cases like this make my blood boil. A person who was allegedly unlicensed was speeding and driving dangerously on the wrong side of the road. They collided with a car in which Alina and Ernesto were travelling. As a mother, I know this is the worst possible nightmare for any parent—having your precious children taken away in such senseless circumstances. In this case, Alina was simply being a fantastic big sister. She was picking up her brother from work. They were just 100 metres from home. They were doing nothing wrong. They are victims of this senseless crime. The same applies for the Dimovski family, who lost their beautiful son Bryson in a hit-and-run when he was 14.

We must do everything we can to deter such crimes and make our roads as safe as possible. We must send a message to reckless drivers that there are serious consequences attached to their actions. A strong signal must be sent to our communities that we are acting in this way. In this case, having a maximum penalty for concealing the crime and hindering the investigation of 21 years imprisonment is greater than the maximum sentence of 14 years for the driver. A review is clearly required. I support the petitioners and understand their frustrations regarding maximum penalties for serious road crimes. I am pleased to acknowledge that the Attorney General is with us in the Chamber and listening to this debate, accompanied by his Parliamentary Secretary. That sends a strong message. Make no mistake, I will do all I can to change our laws through appropriate legislation. We will not stop until these crimes match the time. I again thank the member for Liverpool for bringing this important debate to the House today. I look forward to hearing other members speak on this important issue.

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill) (16:25): By leave: I participate in debate on an extremely important petition that has been presented today to Parliament. I acknowledge in the gallery the presence of Angelina Kauffman, who has petitioned Parliament for harsher penalties for road crimes. I extend my deepest sympathy to her and her family for their loss. I also extend my deepest sympathy to every member of the gallery today who has lost a family member. I know there are members in the gallery today who are here to listen to today's petition. When a family member, particularly a child, is lost through tragedy, I know the loss affects every family member.

Before being elected as the member for Castle Hill, I served as a member of the NSW Police Force for about 10 years. Subsequently, I was admitted to practise as a solicitor and I worked as a solicitor for over 29 years. For about 10 years during my time as a solicitor I would give up my time—some weekends and some evenings—to provide lectures to traffic offenders as part of the Traffic Offender Intervention Program. The program is aimed

at changing the behaviour of those who commit traffic offences. I have also served on the Law Society's criminal law committee. I speak in debate on this important petition because I have a real concern that as a society we should do much more to make our roads safer for our road users. During the time that I provided lectures for the Traffic Offender Intervention Program, I often talked to the participants about the tragic consequences of traffic offending.

I will not go into the facts of the matter that have brought this petition to the Parliament today because I know they are before the court. But I mention one of the horrific cases that I often would talk to traffic offenders about as part of the program: *Police v Curkovic* [2008] NSW LC1. I mention the case because I believe that discussing the horrific consequences helps to change offenders' behaviour. The facts of that case were that a lorry driver was driving towards the intersection of Botany Road and McEvoy Street, Waterloo. The intersection was controlled by traffic lights. The driver of the lorry was intending to make a left-hand turn into Botany Road. The lights turned green and the driver commenced his turn. The walk sign for the pedestrian crossing was also turning green. I will now read from the facts as indicated by the chief magistrate at the time, who stated:

For all intents and purposes Somsri Phongsuphawech—

who was the mother of a child—

... was carrying her (three year old) daughter (Jessica) in her arms and the offender moved off in response to their respective green lights ...

The intended direction of travel by the offender required him to turn left around the corner of the intersection and across the area provided for traffic light controlled movement of pedestrians.

It is clear from the offender's plea ... that he failed to observe either that a green pedestrian walk sign had been activated putting him on notice that pedestrians may be in his immediate vicinity ...

The offender completed his left hand turn and ... struck both victims causing them to fall to the ground in front of the lorry and for it to pass over them. As a result of the impact Jessica—

who, as I said, was three years of age—

was killed and her mother suffered serious ... injuries.

When sentencing the offender, His Honour said:

There is no doubt that the effects of this offence on Jessica's parents, immediate and extended family have been, and will likely remain, catastrophic. In modern society we are conditioned to believe that the natural order of life means that children do not pass from this earth before their parents. When events intervene to disturb that equilibrium the ability of those directly and indirectly affected to cope with the unanticipated is correspondingly affected.

There are many cases where criminal offending has caused tragic consequences. I know the consequences for those in the gallery are tragic and I again offer my sympathies. As legislators, we must be mindful that maximum penalties are set to achieve a balance of sentencing principles. Those sentencing principles are various. There is often a desire by members of the press and members of the community to increase penalties when there are tragic consequences arising from criminal offending. As has been said today, the matter is being looked at by the Law Reform Commission. Submissions may be made by the public until 5 April. Like other members, I encourage the community to make submissions.

I will lastly say something about education for young drivers. In my time giving lectures in the traffic offender program, we gave them in person. That changed during COVID. I understand that those lectures are now given online. I feel that giving a lecture in person, particularly when talking about the tragic consequences, had a far more salutary effect on drivers. That was the impression I observed. I note that the Attorney General is in the Chamber. I thank the Attorney General and the Parliamentary Secretary for their interest in this matter. We need to do much more to educate young drivers so that we do not have these tragic consequences. In closing, I again thank the petitioners for bringing the petition before this House. I know that every member shares with them their loss, and I hope that this House, when we receive the report from the Law Reform Commission, can do something to make sure that that loss is not sustained by anyone else. I thank them very much for the petition.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (16:30): In response: I thank the member for Liverpool for bringing this petition to the House. I thank all the members who took part in the debate and all of those who signed the petition to bring it to our attention. I welcome all the guests in the gallery. It was lovely to meet them, though in sad circumstances, this afternoon. I join with my colleagues in expressing my sincere condolences to them for the loss of their loved ones, particularly Alina and Ernesto. This tragedy leaves us all with heavy hearts. I have been dealing with road trauma for most of my parliamentary career: when I became the Minister for Roads in 2008, as Minister for Police after that, and again now as Attorney General.

Our mission must be to make sure that fewer and fewer people suffer this pain. Of course, our ultimate goal is to make sure that no more motor vehicle crashes bring injury, death and tragedy on our roads. That is, and

must be, our mission. We are tempted on occasions like this to say that we understand the families' pain and sorrow. But, as a father, I do not. I can imagine it. I hope that I and others never have to go through what they go through; I cannot say that I understand it. But I do sympathise and imagine the darkness and devastation brought to them. Too many people's lives are lost on our roads. This year, as one of the members said earlier, the road toll is about 100 more than it should be at this time of the year. The people we lose are not statistics. They are sons, daughters, mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, husbands, friends and colleagues, and they leave a massive hole.

Currently, a range of criminal offences may apply in situations where the death of another person is caused by a driver. Penalties range from 10 years in prison to life imprisonment. Broadly speaking, the offences of murder or manslaughter may apply where the driver of a vehicle causes the death of another person. Those offences are contained in section 18 of the Crimes Act. The maximum penalty for murder is life imprisonment, and the maximum penalty for manslaughter is 25 years in prison. Despite those tough penalties, after the court case has concluded, many people, such as the petitioners, feel that justice has not been done. We hear that. I hear that. The Government is awaiting the findings and recommendations of the Law Reform Commission. I have met with people like Martha Jabour—Saint Martha—and the Road Trauma Support Group. I have promised to them, and I say it again, that I will give that report my most earnest consideration when it comes before me, and I will. I thank once again everyone who is responsible for bringing this important discussion to the House today.

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (16:33): In reply: I thank the speakers to this petition debate—the member for Holsworthy, the member for Leppington, the member for Shellharbour, the member for Davidson and the member for Castle Hill—for their contributions and their empathy, and for sharing in this place the pain and outrage of my community. I acknowledge and thank the Attorney General for his remarks and for his earnestness in recognising the seriousness and importance of this issue. I acknowledge that the Law Reform Commission is currently reviewing the system to try to bring some consistency to the sentencing regime for serious road crimes. I expect that every member of the House will get behind this petition and keep in mind the burden borne by those left behind—the family members and loved ones of the innocent victims of serious road crimes—and their right to justice, as all stakeholders work together to prevent further increase of needless loss of lives on our roads.

I place on the record my hope that the advocacy of the Kauffman family goes towards preserving the legacy of Alina and Ernesto and that any law change that improves our community and society is named in their honour. Their chance to do the things we often take for granted may have been stolen, but the lives they have touched and the impact they have already made since then is extraordinary. I extend my deepest condolences and thanks to the Dimovski family and all those in the gallery who care so deeply about this issue. They have made it their mission to ensure that change is enacted and that we experience justice in all facets of our system.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li): I thank the guests in the gallery who visited to listen to the debate, and I also offer my personal condolences.

Petition noted.

Community Recognition Statements

QUOTA LIVERPOOL

Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy) (16:36): On International Women's Day I had the pleasure of attending Quota Liverpool's sixteenth annual International Women's Day breakfast. Quota Liverpool, established in 1964, is a non-profit organisation that seeks to empower women, children and the deaf and hard of hearing. At the breakfast, we heard from guest speaker Clare Pearson, CEO of Little Wings since 2019. Little Wings is a not-for-profit group that provides aerial transport for seriously ill children in rural and regional New South Wales, Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory. She has such an inspiring and uplifting story of her journey as a psychologist and in other roles within the not-for-profit industry. I thank the Quota Liverpool team for organising the event and for the broader work it does in our community. I thank president Julie Percival, secretary Kerrie Oxlade and executive members Beryl Lucas and Zenny Piosik for everything they do to help the most vulnerable in our community.

JANIS WINN

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion) (16:37): Researching and writing the history of a region is an extraordinary act of generosity. Doing it five times over is beyond generous; it is remarkable. When I recently launched the fifth historical work published by Janis Winn, I could describe it only as a remarkable story told by a remarkable woman. Jan's latest book is titled *The Chronicles of Carrington, Tahlee and the Legacy of the Australian Agricultural Company 200 Years*. It tells the astonishing story of the Australian Agricultural Company establishing its first outpost in Port Stephens 200 years ago. Over three years Jan meticulously researched the

company's impact on the community, with many connections still existing today evidenced by the descendants who helped fill Tea Gardens Baptist Church at the launch. I congratulate Jan for her commitment to preserving the colonial history of Port Stephens, recording important connections and recollections, and providing a significant perspective on Port Stephens' colonial past. At 88 years of age, Jan is truly remarkable. By recording the legacy of the Australian Agricultural Company, she has created a lasting legacy of her own.

WAKEHURST ELECTORATE QUEEN'S SCOUT AWARD RECIPIENTS

Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (16:38): Today I commend Pippa McKee from the 1st Collaroy Plateau Scout Group, and Alexandra White, Hunter Jackson, and Samuel Hosemans from the 1st Allambie Heights Scout Group—four young Venturer Scouts who were recently awarded the prestigious Queen's Scout Award. This is the highest and most coveted award granted to Venturer Scouts aged between 14 and 17 across New South Wales. Each of those Scouts diligently worked towards this award by completing a variety of self-directed projects, developing outdoor skills in bushcraft, bushwalking and camping. Each of them planned and successfully completed a multi-day expedition, leading other young scouts, without direct adult supervision. What a phenomenal achievement for those kids. I am glad to see such dedicated young people so keenly interested in the beautiful bushland New South Wales has to offer. The skills they have gained in leadership and perseverance will most certainly serve them well in life. Well done!

LAURETTE ROSE

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (16:39): I acknowledge my constituent and a staunch advocate for our community, Laurette Rose, who has always been on the front foot on local issues. I have had the pleasure of knowing Laurette and her husband, Howard, since my election in 2015. They are both regular visitors to my office. Laurette has managed to achieve more than most with her positive attitude and fighting spirit for what she believes is right and beneficial for our community. Whether it is speeding vehicles, safety improvements at intersections that need to be made or maintenance of our medians and verges around town, Laurette is across it all. Continuing this commitment to the community, most recently she approached my office regarding the council's decision around the Long Jetty toilet replacement, which would result in the council removing heritage murals from the area. After much back and forth, Laurette gathered over 250 signatures and the council has now backed down. I am sure the House will join with me in congratulating Laurette on her work on behalf of our community.

TONY DEDDA

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (16:40): I congratulate Tony Dedda of Cronulla on being a finalist in the 2024 Cronulla Senior of the Year Awards. Tony gives his time as chair of Crossroads Prison Ministries, which mentors and encourages inmates around Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific. After retiring as a managing director, Tony was invited to bring his experience to the Crossroads board, where he served for 15 years, including six years as chair. Currently Crossroads has 500 inmates working with 380 mentors after working with 1,940 inmates in 2023. Tony says that hearing of the change in the lives of inmates has motivated him to continue to volunteer with the organisation. Pastor Julian Baalbergen of Shire Presbyterian church in Cronulla says that Tony seeks to encourage and equip people to communicate to thousands in prison and give them hope beyond the bars. Apart from Crossroads, Tony also volunteers as the treasurer of Shire Presbyterian church, where he looks after the finances and things like the church's properties and workers compensation.

PRAJNA BUDDHIST MONASTERY

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (16:41): The Buddha said, "May all beings have happy minds." It was with a happy mind that I began the new year with a visit to the Prajna Buddhist monastery in Razorback. On the invitation of the Venerable Ban Ruo Shi, the abbot of the monastery, I had the pleasure of joining hundreds of devotees, including many from my electorate. The event saw the unveiling of a six-metre-high statue of the Maitreya Buddha, making it the largest in the Southern Hemisphere. The statue was consecrated with a ceremony involving traditional Buddhist chants from Vietnamese, Chinese, Korean and Tibetan monks. The Maitreya Buddha is the prophesied Buddha, whose teachings will re-establish dharma at a future time. Situated at the front of the 130-acre site, the statue takes the form of the well-known Budai, or Laughing Buddha, which provides a warm welcoming entrance to visitors and passers-by alike. The monastery has plans for statues, a Buddhist retirement centre, a museum and a retreat. I look forward to future visits to the monastery and thank all involved for the wonderful event.

SYDNEY ROYAL AGSHOWS NSW YOUNG WOMAN COMPETITION

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (16:42): Since 1962 we have seen several young and inspiring women come forward to be part of a very special competition that embodies so much about what it means to live in our rural and regional communities. Originally known as the Sydney Royal Easter Show Miss Showgirl

competition, the event is all about showcasing the wonderful and inspiring work of the young women in our communities. It was renamed in 2022 to the Sydney Royal AgShows NSW Young Woman competition. This year has seen nine women from the Cootamundra electorate represent their areas in zones 6 and 7 finals: Emily Potter of Cootamundra, Zoe Cumming of Ganmain, Emily Buerckner of Arianah Park, Kasey Miller of Weethalle, Sophie Heinjus of Temora, Bridget Baker of Grenfell, Matilda Jones of Young, Jayda Stanton of West Wyalong and Olivia Hodgkin of Junee, who has made it all the way to the final round. Congratulations to all those fantastic young ladies and a very special good luck to Olivia. They all truly are an inspiration to others.

CODEBREAKERS PROJECT

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (16:43): Yesterday I had the immense privilege of hosting a group of young people from the Western Sydney Community Forum's Codebreakers project. The Codebreakers youth initiative engages young people from Western Sydney in conversations about race, identity and belonging on social media. The goal of the project is to inspire and empower young people to stand up and stand united against extremism, hate, violence and division, and champion community harmony. My thanks go to the inspiring group of young codebreakers who joined us for a tour of this place, including Paige Bagley, Angelica Ojinnaka, Vanessa Dunn, Maddy Haywood, along with staff Joshua Bird, Kobra Sayyadi, and videographer Diego Murillo. It was inspiring to hear their stories, and I was happy to take their questions on my experiences, on leadership, local issues and a range of other things. I look forward to seeing those promising young people succeed as our next generation of young leaders from Western Sydney.

WESTS RIDE TO FLY

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley) (16:44): The Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service's premier mountain bike event, Wests Ride to Fly, ran from 13 to 17 March 2024, with over 20 riders participating and raising funds for the service along the way. The mountain bike ride covered over 300 kilometres over the five-day event through the Mid North Coast national parks as well as road sections. They had a full support crew, including safety vehicles and bike trailers, a catering crew and a very experienced team of riders to guide and assist participants. Some of the nicest national parks were visited, including Jacks Ridge Mountain Bike Park and The Pub with No Beer at Taylors Arm. They encountered back roads, gravel and tarmac. On Friday 15 March, the ride included the annual King and Queen of the Mountain before finishing at Yarriabini National Park lookout. Riders stopped at the Macksville Public School along the way to share bike safety tips and talk to the school students about the good job that the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service does. The event finished on Sunday 17 March at the Kiwarra Mountain Bike Park south of Taree.

ANGELA VAN DYKE

Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (16:45): On International Women's Day Blacktown City Council announced Angela Van Dyke, CEO of North West Community Services in Riverstone, as the 2024 Woman of the Year in Blacktown City. As CEO of North West Community Services, Angela continues to advocate and implement new and creative ways to support those who often slip through the cracks in our community. Angela's visionary leadership and ability to recognise the unique needs of marginalised people has led to pioneering programs like Work Connect and Dollars For Dignity. The programs have continued to transform our community. Angela's unwavering commitment to women and young people in our diverse community has fostered a collaborative environment that has inspired future generations. Her leadership in her community champions transformational outcomes that take her beyond her role as CEO. Angela's work in disaster relief in her community has led to groundbreaking strategies that make a huge difference, providing vital support and resources for locals. Angela's dedication to women's self-sufficiency is a beacon of hope and inspiration for everyone. She is a fierce and compassionate leader whose efforts have led to transformative changes and lasting changes for our community.

CASTLE HILL HERITAGE PARK

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill) (16:46): The re-enactment of the Castle Hill Rebellion was held at the historic Castle Hill Heritage Park on 2 March 2024. The Castle Hill Rebellion began on 4 March 1804, when several hundred Irishmen, led by Philip Cunningham and William Johnston, planned to make their way to Parramatta and then to Sydney to seize a ship and to Ireland. The rebels never made it to Parramatta but turned north-west, eventually becoming involved in what is now known as the Battle of Vinegar Hill. The rebels were defeated by the red coats under the command of Major George Johnston. Fifteen convicts were killed back then, but none of the red coats were killed or injured. The historic Castle Hill Rebellion is of great significance to my local community as being the first convict uprising on Australian soil. I thank the heritage park committee for its hours and hours of work and for raising awareness of the historic significance of the rebellion. I recognise the involvement and efforts of the members of the heritage park committee, including Bob Allen, Jagmohan Dhaliwal, Elaine White, Pam Wilson and Marilyn Stoneham. Thank you to everyone involved.

WALTER ROBINSON

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (16:47): At the age of 19 Walter Robinson devoted his youth to enlisting in the Australian Army and serving in the Vietnam War to protect peace and freedom. After dedicating three years to the Royal Australian Engineers, Walter redirected his passion towards alternative paths, aiming to make more impact on communities in need. Through his role as a director and now the president of Cabra-Vale Diggers Club, Walter has made remarkable contributions to my community. More than \$1 million is donated to many local community organisations each year to help them help others, especially on projects that support closing intergenerational gaps in migrant communities while inspiring the young generation of migrant families to preserve and cherish their heritage. Walter has also been a brilliant emcee in significant commemoration services including Anzac Day, Victory in the Pacific Day and Remembrance Day. Walter embodies the true spirit of leadership, service and compassion. I extend my deepest gratitude for the positive impact that Walter has made and will continue to make in my local community.

BETH HOSKINS

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (16:48): I recognise Beth Hoskins, the Goulburn electorate Local Woman of the Year. Beth Hoskins is a remarkable woman who has served on the local health board since 2017, where her representation on the Goulburn Community Consultation Committee has been instrumental in shaping healthcare policies and initiatives. Beth also has a distinguished executive career in accountancy and business advisory services. She brings a wealth of expertise to her many volunteer roles, ensuring sound financial management and governance practices across various not-for-profit enterprises. Beth's longstanding commitment to and founding role in the Country Education Foundation of Goulburn and District reflects her deep-rooted passion for supporting educational opportunities for young people. Her volunteer work continues with her input into the development of the Country Universities Centre in Goulburn and Beyond the Orphanage, demonstrating her broad-ranging impact and her willingness to contribute to causes that uplift and empower others. Beth's exceptional leadership, professional expertise and unwavering dedication are truly deserving of the title.

GOSFORD ELECTORATE WELLBEING NURSES

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (16:49): I recognise all the wellbeing nurses in the Gosford electorate, who perform a vital role in our schools, particularly Michelle Remaili from Narara Valley High School, Jennifer Rugg from Gosford High School and Eliza Potter from Brisbane Water Secondary College Woy Woy Campus. I also give a special mention to the former wellbeing nurse at Brisbane Water Secondary College Melissa Tildesley for her exemplary service. I hear she was a real gift to the children and their families. Wellbeing nurses provide a critical link for students and families to services such as early intervention, assessments and health and social services referrals, providing a multifaceted approach to young people's wellbeing. Since the Wellbeing and Health In-reach Nurse Coordinator program started in 2018, more than 10,000 students across New South Wales have been supported by wellbeing nurses. I am delighted to see so many students being supported by the hardworking wellbeing nurses within our community. I thank all our wellbeing nurses for the beautiful job they do in supporting young people within our schools.

ARMENIAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE OF AUSTRALIA

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (16:50): On Wednesday 24 April 2024 I will attend the national Armenian genocide commemoration hosted by Armenian National Committee of Australia. The evening will bring together local, State and Federal representatives with members of the community to reflect on the loss of life and the impacts of the genocide that took place between 1915 and 1923. May we never forget. The New South Wales Parliament is the first Parliament in Australia to recognise the Armenian genocide. Many people within the Davidson electorate are descendants of those who lost their lives or survived the atrocities. I recognise the Armenian National Committee, led by executive director Michael Kolokossian, for its active engagement in telling the history of the Armenian people and overseeing the 109th commemoration.

GENELLE PETRUSZENKO

Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (16:51): Genelle Petruszenko, principal of Fairfield West Public School, is nothing short of extraordinary. Over the past 35 years Genelle has devoted herself to boosting educational outcomes for Western Sydney students and families. She is the very definition of a reformist educator. An example is the establishment of the school's community hub, providing support for culturally and linguistically diverse [CALD] parents and carers with spillover benefits for students. Genelle also focuses on a student-centred culture, ensuring that each student's individual needs are met. I have seen firsthand her work in bridging gaps for students with intellectual disabilities, from CALD backgrounds or with limited financial means. Genelle truly exemplifies leadership and passion. I thank Genelle for all the work that she has done. Our community is so lucky to have her.

MCRAE-MCMAHON PLACE

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (16:52): I acknowledge the opening of Uniting's McRae-McMahon Place, a new residential complex that provides 65 new homes to seniors in the heart of Leichhardt. It is the second seniors community Uniting has opened in Leichhardt in the past two years that includes environmentally friendly and affordable homes for those in need. The new building is named to honour the trailblazing Reverend Dorothy McRae-McMahon, a Uniting Church minister and social activist who lived our community's progressive values by campaigning for peace, against racism and for the rights of the LGBTQIA+ community. I was pleased to attend the official opening of McRae-McMahon Place in February. I thank Uniting for the invitation, and I look forward to seeing the new McRae-McMahon Place community grow as residents settle into their new homes.

KEITH THOMAS

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (16:53): I congratulate Keith Thomas, recipient of the James Sturgiss Exceptional Service Award at the annual Professional Teachers' Council awards. He was recognised for mentoring teachers and developing quality resources and educational events, along with his passion to increase the equity and accessibility of quality education for all students, especially those who are disadvantaged or from regional areas. Keith is on the executive at Cumberland High School, is president of the Legal Studies Association of NSW, is editor of the LSA journal *Legal Briefs* and is on the board of the Professional Teachers' Council. He has taught legal studies, economics, geography and junior history in four public high schools. He organised the top 20 legal studies high achievers event and the LSA regional lectures. Cooper, a former Cumberland High student currently studying law, summed it up best when he said, "I'm so happy for you, Mr Thomas. Just want to let you know how many people you've inspired, including me. I'm happy to have had you as my teacher. You've made me appreciate the law even more." I thank Keith for his profound impact on so many minds.

FIONA GERMAINE

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (16:54): I acknowledge Hawkesbury's 2024 Woman of the Year, Fiona Germaine. Fiona's career began with a double degree at the University of Technology Sydney in design textiles and international studies. She then studied marketing and communications at the University of Milan in Italy and modelled for fashion houses, including Versace, before starting her own fashion label. Beyond her incredible business background, Fiona has excelled in sport, having represented Australia in athletics in race walking. She also enjoys competitive showjumping. Fiona made a tree change to Hawkesbury in 2020, as bushfires and floods ravaged the area. Fiona then felt the need to support Hawkesbury residents who were isolated in remote areas by preparing fresh food hampers and essentials. Fiona's drive and determination continues as she advocates for future fire management and resource investment. She is also a founding member of the Bells Line of Road Business Council, aiming to boost tourism in the area. I congratulate Fiona. She is an inspiration to all women.

LISAROW OURIMBAH CRICKET CLUB

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (16:55): I am sure the entire House will join me in congratulating the Lisarow Ourimbah Cricket Club, and a special congratulations to the women's team on becoming first grade women's Central Coast Cricket premiers after defeating Northern Power Orange in the grand final on Saturday 9 March at Bill Sohler Park. It was a nailbiting match. Lisarow Ourimbah won the toss and elected to bat, with Aanya Siingh, Gunisha Gard and skipper Jade Burkinshaw all scoring in the twenties to set up a final score of 4/109. Northern Power went out for the chase and the match built to a nailbiting finish. Top scorer Rebecca Callan fought hard, finishing not out on 41 off 31 balls, with three fours and a six. On the last ball of the final over they needed three runs, but Emma Raychaudhuri was run out by Rachel Scarr to give Lisarow Ourimbah the win by one run. I congratulate Lisarow Ourimbah.

GREEK ORTHODOX PARISH OF SAINT STYLIANOS

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (16:56): I recently joined the incredibly dedicated parishioners of the Greek Orthodox Parish of Saint Stylianos to celebrate the centenary of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia. Saint Stylianos is at the heart of the Greek Orthodox community in the Sutherland shire and provides a welcoming environment for people to come together for religious services and social activities. There is no bigger social function than the annual fundraising dance held on 2 March at Doltone House, which this year featured Greek dancing performance groups, auction items and even a raffle for a car. I acknowledge the parish's hardworking executive committee members for organising an incredibly fun evening for the whole family. I recognise Father Constantine Varipatis and his wife, Eleni Varipatis, Yvonne Kalmorios, Martha Ventouris, Costa Nicolaou, George Gatziastras, George Timothy, Paul Parris, Kosta Kotrolas, Andrew Focas, Spiro Houlakis, Peter Kattos, Peter Tsoukarellis and George Nonas for their efforts. As we honour 100 years of

the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia, I thank the parish executive committee members for facilitating that joyous occasion and look forward to seeing the money raised make a difference in our local community.

ST GREGORY'S COLLEGE

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (16:57): I recently had the privilege of attending St Gregory's College for the opening of its new all-purpose building, the Gregorian Centre. I was joined by my colleague the member for Camden; the Mayor of Camden, Councillor Ashleigh Cagney; and Campbelltown City Councillor John Chew. The \$8 million project is a great outcome, and I am proud that the Government worked with the school to deliver the facility. It consists of a theatre, numerous band rooms and other small outreach rooms, as well as a cooking area and a whole raft of other things. It is a fantastic display of a government working with a local school to deliver a good outcome for the benefit of the people who matter most, and that is our students. I congratulate principal Matt Brennan and acknowledge Bishop Brian for being there, as well as all the old boys. It must be noted that when the project hit a bit of a hurdle, the old boys of the school stood up with their construction company and other organisations to get it across the line. Well done to St Greg's, and thanks for having me.

WINTER VINCENT

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (16:58): I recognise Winter Vincent, a 19-year-old from the Queenscliff Boardriders Club who this month competed and came second in the finals of the World Surf League Newcastle pro surfing competition. The place earned Winter a spot in the World Surf League Men's Challenger Series, where he will join another Manly local, George Pittar. The Challenger Series is the ultimate battleground for surfers to qualify for the elite 2025 Championship Tour. Manly and the northern beaches has produced several outstanding surfers over the years, and it is wonderful to see another surfer being recognised for his commitment to the sport. Good luck to Winter. I hope he makes it onto the pro circuit in the coming years. The entire Manly community is right behind him. Go Gumbies!

TRIBUTE TO MELISSA MARKHAM

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (16:59): Recently friends, family, Labor Party members and those associated through a lifelong commitment to rugby league gathered to farewell Melissa Markham. Melissa was not only the lifelong partner and soulmate of former member for Keira, and member for Wollongong, Colin Markham, but a highly respected member of the Illawarra community in her own right. Among other things, she served on the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District Board for many years. While she was always Colin's greatest champion, she also had a great love of rugby league, and the backdrop to the funeral service was a giant photo of a packed Wollongong stadium that reflected that commitment. Among those gathered to pay tribute to her were those to whom she had opened her home and supported as they pursued their rugby league and educational dreams. Like many others in the Labor Party, I enjoyed the support and advice offered by Melissa over many years. I recognise and thank her for her commitment to a better, fairer deal for working men and women and, in particular, for her unstinting support for advancing the needs of Indigenous Australians and our continuing journey to reconciliation. Melissa was the mother and mother-in-law of Wayne and Tanya, David, John and Maree, and the cherished grandma of Emily, Georgia Mikayla, Matilda, Harry and Darcie. She will be terribly missed.

ALBURY WODONGA YOUNG ACHIEVER AWARD RECIPIENTS

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (17:01): I recognise the 16 young achievers who were finalists for the 2024 Joss Young Achiever Award. The event took place at the Commercial Club Albury late last month. The Young Achiever Award celebrates the performances of young athletes between the ages of 16 to 21. Each year, individuals are selected from a variety of sporting backgrounds. This year's winner is Hope Chater, a kettlebell athlete. She will receive a financial scholarship from the major sponsor Joss Group. The finalists included Tyson Mutsch, Eli Mutsch, Josh Gould and Charlie Murphy for water polo; Alex Colgan for athletics sprinting; Jade Crook for basketball; Ethan Semple for touch footy; Isabella Stabbert for ultimate frisbee; Mia Lavis for netball; Drew Brndusic for rugby; Rylee Pontt and Hamish Morrison for hockey; Nate Palubiski for clay target shooting; Zarl Goldsworthy for AFLW; and Archie McDonald for European superbikes. The border region has always had a rich history in sport. May the awards celebrate the emerging talent of local sportspeople in our region. Well done!

STRATHFIELD LOCAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR

Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (17:02): On 7 March I had the pleasure of attending the NSW Women of the Year Awards ceremony at the International Convention and Exhibition Centre in Darling Harbour. This year the nominee for Local Woman of the Year from Strathfield was Elizabeth Wang. Elizabeth is the founder of Asian Australian Women Association Incorporated, an organisation that provides support to migrant women that has

helped many in our local community through assistance in domestic and family violence situations, navigating language barriers and mental health challenges and helping migrant women find meaningful employment. The calibre of the nominees for Local Woman of the Year in Strathfield this year reflected the level of commitment that women in the electorate have to their families and their community, with nominees including healthcare workers, public servants and an actress. I commend Elizabeth's work and the contribution of women across Strathfield to our community.

WAGGA WAGGA LOCAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (17:03): On International Women's Day I had the pleasure of presenting the Wagga Wagga Local Woman of the Year 2024 award to a very worthy recipient: long-serving community champion Lynne Graham. Mrs Graham recently retired after five years as manager of Carevan Wagga Wagga, a service that supports people experiencing food insecurity, homelessness, isolation, domestic violence or hardship. Carevan provides food, but to Mrs Graham it was also about helping those doing it tough to feel valued and connected. As a result, Carevan's clients not only got meals but also the human touch that we all need, regardless of our circumstances. Prior to leading Carevan, Mrs Graham was inspired by her faith in God to volunteer at a Baptist Church community kitchen, where she helped to prepare nourishing food for those at risk of going hungry. The Local Woman of the Year Award is the latest recognition for the former teacher, who was Wagga Wagga's Citizen of the Year in 2020. Humbled and honoured, she says her awards serve as a recognition of all volunteers who dedicate their time to helping those less fortunate. Mrs Graham is a shining example of compassion and dedication, and I thank her sincerely for her service.

LEN KEMP

Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (17:04): I acknowledge and thank Len Kemp, who has been helping students at Queanbeyan High School with maths for about five years. He has about 25 years in paid and volunteer positions as a mathematics assistant or tutor, working with both primary and secondary schools across the Australian Capital Territory and New South Wales. He has worked with students at the Woden School, Charles Conder Primary School, Jindabyne Central School, Cooma Christian School, Karabar High School and Queanbeyan High School. Queanbeyan High School head teacher Kerrie Jenkins says that he holds a diploma in cartography and civil engineering, a survey drafting certificate, and has a long working background, including army experience. When Len first started working at Queanbeyan High School, it was only for a couple of days per week. However, he has gradually increased that and now comes in nearly every day, only missing days when he and his wife have a special event or he has a medical appointment. I understand that Len is not well at the moment. I put on record the thanks of the community and the school for his great sacrifice and the work that he has done to help young people studying maths over many years.

NSW SENIORS LOCAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater) (17:05): I congratulate the 2024 NSW Seniors Local Achievement Award recipients from Pittwater: Helga Pike, Diana Newton and Gail Gosling. I thank Helga for her generosity in giving her time to care for and help others. Helga served as an in-water volunteer at Mona Vale Hospital therapy pool for over 20 years. She is also an active member of the local Bei Loon Dragon Boat Club. I thank Diana for her significant volunteer work across our community. Diana is the membership secretary for the Pittwater Motor Enthusiasts Association and has been appointed a life member of the club. Diana also volunteers at Lifeline and coordinates the Peninsula Ladies Walking group. I thank Gail for her years of service to the Mona Vale Hospital cafe, Newport Red Cross and Marcus Loane House in Warriewood. Gail currently runs the knitting group at Pittwater Village and assists Samaritan's Purse in constructing boxes of gifts and necessities for children overseas. I congratulate all award recipients and thank them for their service.

THE ENTRANCE CRICKET TEAM

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (17:06): I am sure the House will join me in congratulating The Entrance cricket team, which has taken out the Central Coast Cricket Men's First Grade Two Day competition after defeating Terrigal Matcham in the grand final on 15 to 17 March. On the Central Coast we always love it when The Entrance defeats Terrigal. The Entrance earned the grand final berth thanks to finishing on top of the points ladder after the preliminary final against Kincumber Avoca ended in a draw the previous week. Terrigal Matcham won the toss and elected to bowl at the Central Coast Regional Sporting Complex. The Entrance were bowled out in the ninety-sixth over for 245. That left Terrigal Matcham with a difficult but not impossible task; they had reached the 200s in six of their fixtures during the season. Unfortunately, in the sixtieth over Terrigal Matcham were bowled out for 117, and The Entrance were crowned the First Grade Premiers. Player of the match was Broc Hardy, well known on the Central Coast as a magnificent cricket player. He got 101 off 130,

with seven fours and two sixes, along with bowling figures of 3/28 off 14 with three maidens to end his stellar season.

TOTAL COLLEGE GRADUATION DAY AWARDS

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (17:07): Last week Tocal College held its 2024 graduation day. Tocal College is a centre of excellence within the NSW Department of Primary Industries located on the edge of the Maitland electorate. In fact, it is now in your electorate, Mr Temporary Speaker, but still one of the jewels of the Maitland local government area. I congratulate the 96 graduates who were recognised on the day, especially those who reside in Maitland. Thornton's Hannah Ireland received the dux gold medal for excellence in course for Certificate III in Agriculture. This included a medal of achievement in agricultural theory and in practice. I congratulate Hannah. I also congratulate Lily Webber from Aberglasslyn on a bronze medal of excellence in course, and Sara Caldwell on her Tocal Special Award. In Certificate III in Performance Horse, Maddison Goodchild of Maitland received a Tocal Special Award. In Certificate IV in Agriculture, congratulations go to Georgia Urquhart of Woodville, who received a Tocal Special Award, and to graduates Rachael Archinal of Ashtonfield and Marlon Collins of Thornton. The agricultural future of Maitland is in good hands.

Bills

ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (STRONGER REGULATION AND PENALTIES) 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

THE HON. GREGORY SMITH, SC

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove) (17:09): It is with great pleasure that I congratulate someone well known to this House, the Hon. Gregory Smith, SC, known as Greg to his friends, who was recently invested with a papal honour, the aptly named Order of St Gregory the Great. Greg received the order in its third class—that is, the rank of Knight Commander—for services to the Catholic Church and its community in New South Wales. As many in this place would know, Greg is a former Attorney General, Minister for Justice and member for Epping—all roles he served with distinction and in which he made a mark. I cannot help but feel this particular honour, including its name, is so very suitable for Greg Smith.

The order was founded in 1831 by another Greg, namely Pope Gregory XVI, during the first year of his pontificate and was named in honour of Pope Gregory I, St Gregory the Great, the sixty-fourth Bishop of Rome, who was known and is still revered for his intellectualism, his worldliness and his dedication to spreading the Christian message and for his conversions, the most famous of which was sending Augustine of Canterbury on a mission to convert the pagan Anglo-Saxons. It is worth noting that St Gregory the Great is the patron saint of music, which, given Greg's well-known singing skills that were occasionally showcased in this place, makes him all the more worthy of this named honour. As an aside, I am sure his rendering of his beloved *Danny Boy* got a workout at this past weekend's St Patrick's Day.

It is not only the name of the order, St Gregory, that is appropriate but also its motto, Pro Deo et Principe, which translates from Latin to "for God and Ruler". It is very fitting, as I am sure all members would agree, given that Greg has served not only his church and its community but also the law and the Crown with distinction and integrity over many decades. Greg has held firm to his beliefs, his convictions and his integrity for decades, often against the whims and the passing wonts of the day. That is why so many people, in his community and beyond, respect him. This chivalric honour is proof of that. It is more than fair to say that I was a close friend of Greg during his time serving in this House. I found him to be a wise and considered colleague. Humble and learned, and no mere political operative, he brought years of legal and public service to debates in this Chamber where laws are made. It was his sharp, seasoned and, most importantly, experienced legal mind that helped raise the intellectual level of debate and showcase that laws must be carefully considered to avoid unintended consequences.

By his words and convictions, Greg helped convey to many in this House the gravity of the privilege that parliamentarians enjoy in creating laws. I once again congratulate the Hon. Gregory Smith, SC, Knight Commander of the Pontifical Equestrian Order of St Gregory the Great, on this chivalric honour. I am sure that his beautiful and wonderful wife, Juli; his children, Benjamin, Nathaniel, Dominica, Jerome and Philomena; and

all of Greg's family and church community are rightly proud of Greg's achievement. On behalf of the House, I congratulate the Hon. Gregory Smith, SC, KC.

ART NORTH EXHIBITION

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (17:12): During my time as the member for Wahroonga, I have enjoyed attending the ART NORTH exhibition at the Grace Cossington Smith Gallery at Abbotsleigh. Each year, the gallery displays the outstanding HSC major artworks created by year 12 visual arts students from schools across the Ku-ring-gai and Hornsby district. It was my pleasure to again officially open the exhibition this year. Paintings, sculptures, drawings, photo media, printmaking and ceramics are just a few of the many types of media that the talented students use to make the artworks that go towards their final school marks. From Normanhurst Boys High School, Nathan Ann created a designed object titled *Proposal for Sejong Square, Museum of Korean Arts*. The cleverly designed object incorporated traditional culture and identity of modern cityscapes and architecture, reflecting Nathan's Korean heritage. Also from Normanhurst Boys High School, Namo Wongsiranon drew colourful pictures that explore the immersion of Namo's cultural identity in the Australian landscape.

From Abbotsleigh, Louise Barbour created a painting titled *Mother, it's not your shame to carry*. The beautiful painting draws upon Louise's family, particularly her mother, who, as a Russian woman, feels shame for the ongoing war with Ukraine. The painting drew upon the famous painting by Johannes Vermeer, *Girl with a Pearl Earring*. Another student from Abbotsleigh, Jeremia Kim, used the medium of printmaking to create the piece *Unravelling Sensory Worlds: Calming the Chaos*. The unique piece is described by Jeremia as illustrating sensory overload in an abstract means. It was Jeremia's way of envisioning the juxtaposing but simultaneous harmonious nature of sensory experiences. From Pymble Ladies' College, Kaitlyn Chan created a photo-media piece titled *Saturated Disclosures*. The image depicts both the traditional and modern aspects of Hong Kong through a camera lens. It was inspired by Susan Sontag's famous quote, "The painter constructs; the photographer discloses."

Also from Pymble Ladies' College, Ning Ning Jing drew an incredible picture titled *Conversations in Water Colour*. Ning Ning Jing describes the drawing as a celebration of the people in our lives who we learn from, laugh with and share stories with through genuine communication. Using postmodern mediums of photo rastering, digital media and printing to explore fungi, Jeremy Chee from Knox Grammar School created a printmaking artwork titled *Agaricus Bisporus*. The artwork depicts themes of process, decay, growth and regeneration. Also from Knox Grammar, Oliver Verheul made a collection of works using polymer clay and sculptural assemblage titled *Cogito Ergo Sum*. Oliver describes the figurative sculptures as a reflection of the elderly, the passing of time and the fragility of the human condition.

From Turrumurra High School, Orlando Douglas-Giles, with whom I had a long chat, created a photo-media artwork titled *Where did you go?*, which explores Orlando's relationship with Australia, drawing on our country's natural and built environment. Another student from Turrumurra High School, Nicole Novodon, created the piece *Amort Amorists - The Greek Myth of Selene and Endymion*. The painting was created using oil on canvas and draws upon Greek mythology for inspiration. From Barker College, Daniel Holmes used time-based form to create the artwork *Mapping Memories*. Drawing inspiration from childhood and nostalgia, Daniel created a piece reflecting his family and memories. Also from Barker College, Emma Maltman painted an artwork titled *Larapinta Trail*, which uses abstract techniques to portray the raw experience and feeling of immersion and freedom when hiking the Larapinta Trail in central Australia.

From Hornsby Girls High School, Christine Lee used ceramics to create her pieces titled *Can-opic Jars*. It is a play on words, as she used ceramics to make can-shaped art. The jars were creative and unique, representing modern consumer culture and mass consumption. From Loreto Normanhurst, *Colours of Solitude* were paintings created by Emily Markham. They depict how sad and lonely experiences can also be perceived as comforting and peaceful. Another student from Loreto Normanhurst, Abigail Wehrhahn, used printmaking, specifically techniques of intaglio print on paper and x-ray film, to create her piece titled *Those Who Are Ignorant of Her Strength*. She specifically focused on scoliosis, the curvature of the spine and how beauty and weakness, freedom and restriction, and fragility and strength can coexist.

Charlotte McMahon, from St Leo's Catholic College, drew a piece titled *Pandora's Code*, which Charlotte describes as exploring the depths of personal and collective fears that emerge from the Pandora's box of future innovations and the quest for "the ideal". I congratulate all of those students for their incredible works of art. I also thank their teachers, schools, parents and guardians for supporting them during the making of their beautiful pieces of art.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr David Layzell): Before I call the member for Blue Mountains, I acknowledge the very special guests in the gallery. I welcome members of the Solomon Islands Wantoks Association of NSW, an association formed by Australian citizens of Solomon Islands heritage, permanent

residents and temporary visa holders from the Solomon Islands. Members will be aware that the New South Wales Parliament is twinned with the National Parliament of Solomon Islands and the Autonomous Region of Bougainville. I wish the Solomon Islands all the best for its April elections.

ANDY MACQUEEN

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (17:19): I recently had the great honour of launching Andy Macqueen's book, *The Frenchman: Francis Barrallier, life & journeys 1773-1853*. I encourage people, in their spare time, to check out the book and the material that Andy has collected. A couple of weekends ago we gathered at the Burragorang lookout in Oakdale to hear Andy speak of his work and research and to celebrate his fantastic book. It was my great honour to launch the book and talk about Andy's work. A long time ago Andy, although he is a mountains man, was pursuing a career in water engineering and hydrology in the Northern Territory and Western Australia. As he puts it, he was called back to the Blue Mountains bush that he had come to love in his teens and university days, and he switched to a career in outdoor education.

Andy Macqueen has been active in conservation for 30 years, playing significant founding roles in the Friends of Blue Gum Forest, the Great Grose Weed Walk, Friends of the Colo and the Tasmanian Sea Spurge Remote Area Teams, or SPRATS, group. He has been on the National Parks and Wildlife Service's Blue Mountains regional advisory committee since 1996. He says that is too long, but he is a valued member of that committee. He has been involved extensively in research of remote Aboriginal cultural sites in the Wollemi. Andy is a lifelong member of the Springwood Bushwalking Club and a former president of Bushwalking NSW. He is a remarkable man.

Andy's interest in history stems from his love of the southern Blue Mountains—Gundungurra country—and his fascination with the journey of Francis Barrallier. He went from researching Barrallier's route to researching his whole life. In 1993 Andy published his first book, a biography of Barrallier. *The Frenchman: Francis Barrallier, life & journeys 1773-1853* is a major rehash of that book, and it has much new content and important new perspectives. Andy was then hooked on history, particularly bush history. He went on to research and write books on the Grose Valley and the Wollemi as well as numerous historical papers until finally he returned to Barrallier. *The Frenchman* is his sixth book. It is a major reworking of the 1993 book offering new perspectives. I acknowledge that Andy and his work is supported by his life partner, Liz, and many in the Blue Mountains Conservation Society.

Whilst this book embraces Barrallier's whole life, its emphasis is on the intriguing 1802 expedition to the southern Blue Mountains. The expedition was probably doomed to fail from the start owing to the area that was chosen for the attempt. However, it was an impressive effort, winding up in extremely rugged country not far from Kanangra Walls. Although Barrallier failed in his objective to cross the mountains, the expedition was significant in that, unlike most other early explorers, Barrallier engaged Aboriginal guides and assistance. Many Dharawal and Gundungurra people were encountered. It is a unique first-contact story. Barrallier also made important observations of flora and fauna. Aside from the area that is now inundated by Lake Burragorang, most of the country that Barrallier traversed is still as he and Gundungurra people saw it. In his book Andy has endeavoured to bring the Aboriginal people involved to life, more so than in any other account. They are not just names in some quaint tale. The book is a significant step forward in drawing together a number of cultural perspectives. It is a really important contribution to truth-telling.

I acknowledge this good man and the fact that he also talked about us celebrating the World Heritage area and the reserves which now protect the cultural and environmental heritage of the area some 222 years later. On that day when we gathered to celebrate Andy's book, we also celebrated the fact that the Warragamba Dam is now not to be raised and therefore will not flood that beautiful area of the Gundungurra. Andy is a renowned historian and a good man, and it is my honour to talk of him a little today.

BLAZE AID

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley) (17:24): Halo oloketa! As an ex-military man, I welcome to the gallery my friends who have been to the Solomon Islands on peacekeeping duty. I hope they have a great time in Australia and here in New South Wales. BlazeAid was established in 2009 by Kevin and Rhonda Butler after the Black Saturday bushfires. They had approximately three kilometres of fencing burn on their property, allowing hundreds of sheep to get out onto roads, causing a traffic hazard and impeding the immediate response of fire trucks and other emergency service vehicles. Repairing their fences was expected to have taken the Butlers around three to four months. However, Kevin put an advertisement in the local paper requesting assistance. He had a wonderful response from the local community, with around 25 volunteers coming to help. The fences were rebuilt within a week.

Many years later, Bob Abdu came along and did fencing work throughout Willawarrin. The community in Oxley has been hit hard by bushfires and floods over the past four seasons. But Bob and the team from BlazeAid came down to Willawarrin. Since November, when the fires started, they have been camping in the showground and providing camaraderie, companionship and support for farmers who have lost everything. At that time, I left the Parliament and went to help the community. Last month I went out on the ground with them and helped to fence a small section of a farmer's property. It was small in comparison to what they have done. It was wonderful to be there to see the difference they made to that farmer's life and to see the lift in the spirits and mental health of the people on the ground.

BlazeAid cannot do all the work. Its sister service, Rural Aid, has come to our area also. The Willawarrin area was listed in their proposals, and a few farmers registered their interest in being assisted. Rural Aid provides economic benefits, a gardening service and house repairs that may not otherwise be covered. They also do fencing work. The bushfires rushed through farmers' properties. Unfortunately, we lost a life in those November fires—Richard Mainey—which came on top of the fires in 2019-20. Rural Aid came to Richard's mum's property and did some work around the house which she may not have been able to get done without their assistance. I am forever thankful to the Rural Aid teams for coming to the Willawarrin area. They spent a week there. I was lucky enough to have dinner with them, and they told us about their excitement about each team going out to the different farms to help.

Last financial year Rural Aid provided \$3.5 million to better the lives of Australian farmers. That equates to about 4,000 large bales of hay, 105 water tank deliveries and 1,800 counselling sessions. Rural Aid provides not only physical aid but also mental and emotional assistance. It was really nice to see the support given to the Mainey family after Richard's life was taken too soon. He was only 56, and he passed away trying to protect his family property. Obviously, Richard's family needs assistance, as well as the other people whose lives Richard touched.

Bruce Lawler lives on the same road as Richard's family. Bruce lost his abode in the 2019-20 fires. I heard that Bruce needed a hand, so I gathered my friends and we built a shelter over his caravan, which had been donated by the good people here in Sydney. Unfortunately, as he was rebuilding his life, he lost his building, his clothes and his bulldozer—the only things precious to him—in the recent fires in November 2023. He has chosen to donate his time to BlazeAid to help other farmers. Clearly, the spirit of community lives in the Macleay Valley—and wider afield, I am sure. It is important to acknowledge that the Australian volunteering nature is what keeps us going in times of emergency. I thank BlazeAid and Rural Aid for coming to Willawarrin and my area and for everything they do for rural people in New South Wales and Australia.

MONARO ELECTORATE SHOWS

BUNGENDORE HIGH SCHOOL

Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (17:29): Tomorrow is the start of the Sydney Royal Easter Show. It also marks the end of our local show season in Monaro. I will come back to the Royal in a minute. This show season in the Monaro electorate involved the regular round of shows at Braidwood, Delegate, Dalgety, Cooma, Bombala, Nimmitabel and Queanbeyan. All those shows attract the locals, provide an important social occasion and allow many people to show off their produce. I thank all the show committees who put a lot of hard work into getting the country shows up and running. Many show committees have been doing that work for many decades. I was at the Bombala Show recently, and Di Ingram was given a life membership of the Bombala Show committee for her decades of work. I congratulate Di. This year's show was their 149th show, as best they understand it, which makes next year's show a very special one. It indicates the community's commitment to keeping the local agricultural shows running and, since COVID, making them bigger and better.

Particularly in smaller country towns, the shows are important as a social meeting point for people who perhaps do not get to talk to each other much. They are also important for highlighting the work of our farmers, through the produce and skills on display. The Cooma Show saw Emily Rowson crowned as the Cooma Young Woman of the Year. She has been given the honour of representing the region at the Sydney Royal Easter Show over the next week or so in the Young Woman of the Year competition. She follows hot on the heels of last year's Royal Easter Show winner, who also was the Cooma Young Woman of the Year. It is an important and special occasion to celebrate young women who have a strong commitment to their agricultural communities and shows.

The Royal, of course, is a massive occasion for many people who travel from country areas around New South Wales and also for people from the city who attend. It has traditionally been called the bush meeting the city. It is a great opportunity for people to see the work of our farmers and rural producers and maybe get an understanding of where their food comes from. It is important to support those communities. I have the pleasure of attending the Royal next Thursday. I am looking forward to seeing the many people from TAFE NSW, who

will show the work that TAFE does in agricultural and other sectors, including hospitality. It will be a special occasion. The fantastic Minister for Agriculture, Tara Moriarty, will also spend time at the show over the next week or so, highlighting the great work that agriculture does for New South Wales.

In the time I have left, I change subjects completely and talk about Bungendore High School. It has been a frustrating project for the community. The previous Government promised and announced a site to the community, without notice, which caused controversy. There was legal action, and a decision was handed down suggesting that the planning needed to be redone. I talk about it today because the Department of Education and I have recently put out information to the community about the next steps. The department is expected to resubmit a planning application by May for the Bungendore High School to be located on the proposed site. The planning department is likely to take at least four months to consider it, so the people of Bungendore will be waiting longer for the school. That is extremely disappointing and frustrating, but we have no choice but to go through that process.

I apologise to the people of Bungendore that they have sometimes held overly optimistic ideas of when the school might be delivered, given the problems it had. But I will get updates every couple of weeks to make sure that we get the project back on track. I recognise that it is a controversial site. I have sympathy for the people who did not like the site. However, we have no choice now but to go ahead and get a school in place, hopefully before we run out of room in the demountable school that has been built on the primary school lawn.

ALL-AUSTRALIA KARATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (17:34): I report on a couple of things that have happened in the Blacktown electorate. The first was slightly outside Blacktown: Peter Mylonas and the Kempo Genbu Ryu International Karate Organisation held its twenty-eighth Annual All-Australia Karate Championships in Sydney last weekend. It was great to see dignitaries there. Mr Sosui Yoshiji Soeno, who is of Samurai rank and tenth dan, flew in from Japan. He is the founder of the Shidokan karate and also, I understand, skilled in judo. Whilst he is 76 years of age, I am sure it would be totally unwise for me to challenge him with my limited judo. Dignitaries also included his wife, Iuliana Soeno, the managing director of the World Karate Association; Shingo Yokohama, former World Kickboxing Champion; and Mr Shuichi Tokuda, Consul-General of Japan in Sydney. They all visited Parliament on Tuesday. Robert Borsak, MLC, from the other place also went along to watch the tournament on the weekend. We saw many different karate styles in the competition. The championships are a fabulous way for people to come together, doing their katas and freestyle fighting.

On another important front, the Chris Minns Labor Government has been in government for 12 months. The New South Wales Labor industrial relations packages have had a profound impact on the Blacktown area. I congratulate Minister Sophie Cotsis on reforming the industrial relations landscape, having inherited the debacle of 12 years of the previous Liberal-Nationals Government. One of the first initiatives of the Labor Government that served our local residents well was the scrapping of the wages cap. Earlier today in the Chamber, the Liberals and Nationals sought reintroduction of the wages cap, which I thought was pretty brave of them. Getting rid of the wages cap instantly allowed additional wages for the many public servants who live in the Blacktown area. Many of them work in the education area, in which the education Minister introduced massive reforms with the teacher packages. Well-deserved wage increases make teachers the best paid in the nation.

The Minister also converted 10,000 teacher positions across the State from temporary contracts to full-time roles. That had a positive impact not only in Blacktown but also across Western Sydney. Classes were being combined or cancelled because there were not enough teachers. There were also a lot of temporary teachers who were trying to establish themselves but had no job security and were wondering when they would be full-time teachers. That had a negative impact on their ability to teach at their full potential. The conversion of all those teacher roles and the reduction of vacancies has played a great role across Western Sydney and, in particular, in Blacktown.

Reform packages have also gone through for paramedics, and their wage increases and classifications have played well. The Fire Brigade Employees Union is undertaking industrial action. Their first wage increase under the Labor Government was 4 per cent, compared with 12 years of the Liberal Government when it averaged at 2.25 per cent. I wish all parties the best in their good-faith negotiations. The Minister for Industrial Relations also tackled the scourge of silicosis, resulting in the ban of silica and a registry for silica workers to monitor their health. The establishment of the Respect at Work Council is another new initiative. The Minister has developed a range of other initiatives with SafeWork NSW, including legislation that will soon be introduced in this House to create industrial manslaughter charges.

REGIONAL MANUFACTURING

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (17:39): Australia was once known for its manufacturing. We made our own lawnmowers, clotheslines, cars, fridges and even aircraft. Some were home-grown industries while others were thanks to big overseas corporations investing here. In 1950 manufacturing employed around 25 per cent of the workforce of people and exports contributed as much as 25 per cent of the GDP. Some of the things manufactured were items of national pride, like the Holden and the Victa lawnmower. But things have changed in the past few decades.

Cheaper products from other countries flooded the market in the '60s and '70s, driving some industries out of business and driving others to set up overseas where wages and production costs were cheaper. The Australia Institute states that the decline of manufacturing in Australia is an exception to the experience of other industrialised countries, and manufactured goods account for over two-thirds of world merchandise trade. A country that cannot successfully export manufactures will be shut out of most trade. In recent years, we have lost some of our biggest manufacturing industries. The highest profile industry to take a hit was our car manufacturing industry. Ford, Toyota, and Mitsubishi have all gone, along with the General Motors Company, who ceased manufacture of the Holden in 2021, after having made some 7.7 million vehicles.

While manufacturing still contributes significantly to the economy, it has gone from a high of 25 per cent to around 5.7 per cent of the GDP. New South Wales was once one of Australia's industrial powerhouses, but it has long since slipped well behind the rest of the world. It has even slipped behind other States when it comes to manufacturing, particularly in regional areas. But there are some great opportunities available for expanding manufacturing, particularly in those regional areas. Victoria's Government is already seizing those opportunities. It has committed \$21 million to a Manufacturing and Industry Sovereignty Fund, "providing grants to support the development, expansion and retention of Victoria's strategic manufacturing capability." Their Future Industries Fund of over \$30 million includes initiatives to invest specifically in regional areas, establishing Regional Manufacturing Clusters.

Queensland is also investing in regional manufacturing hubs, spending \$30 million over three years to build up manufacturing in Cairns, Townsville and Rockhampton. It seems like a no-brainer. There are industries where New South Wales could take the lead—opportunities like manufacturing for renewable energy, given that we have many of the resources and a lot of the expertise for developing and building the technology. But, unfortunately, the current pathway to a return to Australian manufacturing within the renewable energy zones is unclear. Building a factory requires land and access to resources; planning for this sort of investment requires time and certainty. The lack of certainty prohibits small to medium enterprises from investing in or expanding their manufacturing businesses, which subsequently holds back industry. We feel it in places like Barwon, where land is cheaper and it has plenty of resources.

Manufacturing plants could be established in regional centres near resources. To back the business investment, all that is needed is improvements to road and rail infrastructure and perhaps some more housing for the workforce. There are also other industries that could set up manufacturing plants in the west. I have one local council, Coonamble, that is looking at setting up a factory to produce components for modular housing. This would help with the housing shortage, providing low-cost homes for construction while also bringing jobs and prosperity to Coonamble. There are plenty of ways we can give a boost to our existing regional manufacturers, such as making available cheap Crown land, building in Australian manufactured content quotas in major public good projects, and giving payroll tax concessions. Payroll tax concessions is the big one, and that can happen at a State level.

These incentives could be made available for new industries setting up in regional areas or ones that are making particular use of renewable and sustainable resources available in the regions. Bourke Abattoir is a good example. The facility specialises in goat meat but has benefited from some government concessions. The explosion in the goat population in recent times means that this is a virtually inexhaustible resource. Localised meat processing can be extended to other native sources of meat, like kangaroos or emus. This would help to control the numbers of these animals and provide employment for many Indigenous people, who are skilled in the management of native species. Native animals are eco-friendlier forms of livestock than are cows or sheep but are still a much underused resource.

One of the major handbrakes preventing us powering on to a manufacturing renaissance is biodiversity offsets. The cost of biodiversity offsets inflates any kind of development. But I have a solution to that. There have been vast tracts of land bought by the Government for national parks. This land is mostly sitting there doing nothing. But if we have a public good development—for example, a factory manufacturing some of the components for renewable energy plants—parts of those existing parks could be roped off—just lines on a map—as biodiversity offsets. A golden opportunity awaits. Invest in regional New South Wales. Move big factories out

west where there are resources for manufacturing—like minerals, livestock or produce. That will bring money and jobs to regional centres and will help to build up the population in regional New South Wales.

CITY OF RYDE

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (17:44): On Tuesday 19 March the City of Ryde elected a new mayor—Councillor Trenton Brown—following the retirement of Councillor Sarkis Yedelian, OAM. I take this opportunity to congratulate Mayor Brown, who was first elected to the City of Ryde council alongside me in 2017. He is someone of great integrity and will provide the strong leadership required to continue the long overdue reforms our team has progressed this term. Before I speak in detail of those reforms, I ask the New South Wales Parliament to join me in thanking former Mayor Yedelian for his exemplary service. Assuming the mayoralty in late 2022, Sarkis has continually served the City of Ryde as a councillor since 2004, first as an Independent. He later joined the Liberal Party in 2010. Prior to that time the party did not contest local elections. He has been a deputy mayor on multiple occasions between September 2007 and August 2009, and as my deputy from September 2021 to September 2022. He has also served as chair of numerous committees and advisory groups throughout the years.

Some of his proudest achievements include delivering major initiatives like the Shop Ryder bus service, and the development of the Top Ryde City Shopping Centre, which is now home to the very council that he serves. One of his first initiatives as a councillor was to provide free pensioner entry to the Ryde Aquatic Leisure Centre—a program that is still operational to this day. I often speak about the diversity of the Ryde Liberal council team, be it in terms of age, gender, professional background or cultural identity. Our achievements in the latter respect are built in large part on Sarkis's legacy. He was the first elected councillor in Australia of Armenian heritage and was recognised in 2009 with an Order of Australia for his services to local government and multicultural communities. Additionally, he is a long-term volunteer in the Ryde State Emergency Service and a reliable source of help and support to many local residents who have come to know him and his wife, Mary, during his time in public life.

I owe much of my political success to Sarkis. He could have easily dismissed the aspirations of a young up-and-comer like me in the local party but instead chose to encourage my involvement. Sarkis always promoted young members and remarked that there needed to be a fresh new generation coming through—and come through they did, including with the recent elevation of his successor, Trenton Brown. Trenton is a passionate and loyal Liberal, who follows in the footsteps of Ken Anderson—a relative on his wife Jeanie's side, who was a former Mayor of Ryde before serving his State in the Australian Senate. Trenton has already hit the ground running, articulating a clear priority for addressing the financial constraints that are placed upon our council following the discovery of a series of illegal financial transactions intended to partially fund the Ryde Civic Centre rebuild.

Only someone with strong governance and integrity experience will be able to resolve these issues, and I know Trenton possesses these skills in abundance. I look forward to working alongside him as we fight to protect jobs in the Macquarie Park innovation precinct, preserve green spaces and continue the expansion of sporting fields, parks and gardens—in particular, the TG Millner Field—for our community. As a team, we already have a proud track record of cutting rates and helping keep the cost of living in check. I am confident that Trenton will continue to provide the disciplined leadership required to continue that relief. In my role as the State MP, I am committed to the success of Ryde council. It is my view that the relationship between a mayor and its local State MP is the most important civic relationship for a community. I have seen it at its best, and I have seen it at its worst. For the sake of Ryde, I hope to see it at its best for many years to come.

At its best, we have achieved things like saving the Macquarie Hospital and North Ryde Common site from the State Government, laid kilometres of new roads and footpath, collaborated on education facilities, invested in cultural celebration, planted more trees than ever before and fundamentally professionalised the administration of the council. Some of those decisions were tough, and many are not yet complete. However, Trenton has been there from the start, and will bring the stability of strong corporate knowledge to his new role. I genuinely wish him well as the Mayor of Ryde and look forward to continuing to demonstrate collaboration at its best for the betterment of Ryde. I thank the House.

NSW STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE AWARDS

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (17:49): I was recently honoured to represent the Minister for Emergency Services at the NSW SES Central Hunter Cluster awards. That is appropriate as Maitland is the home of the SES, which was established in 1955 following our floods. It was an opportunity to congratulate volunteers and thank them for their outstanding service. On the night a total of 22 recipients, with a combined total of 360 years of service, were presented with 33 awards, medals and clasps. My region is no stranger to wild weather and severe storms. In fact, in the past three years there have been 3,700 incidents in Cessnock, Maitland and Dungog involving the Hunter capability brigades. That is over three

incidents a day. In recent years the SES has been there for the community through countless floods—some that made the record books—and it continues to serve us day in and day out, and often in the middle of the night.

In 2022 the SES took care of our community when a state of natural disaster was declared, ensuring our safety. It has not only taken care of our communities; many members have been deployed around the State. They supported our brothers and sisters in Orange when they faced their own major weather events. National Medal winners from the Maitland unit were Jamie Edmonds, Ben Gersbach and Christopher Wardle. National Medal clasps were awarded to Jodie Sherlock, Stephen Hart and John Martin. The NSW SES Commissioner's Certificate of Recognition for support during the March 2021 floods went to the Hunter Capability Unit. Its efforts at that time were, quite frankly, life saving for the Maitland community. I am so thankful to the unit. SES members' long service was also acknowledged on the night. To put the length of their service into perspective, I reflect on what was happening in our world in the year each member joined.

In 2014 Malaysian Airlines Flight 370 disappeared and a hailstorm in Brisbane caused \$1.1 billion worth of damage and injured 40 people. Robert Geering, Tracey Martin and Kathleen Shean joined the SES that year. This year they received the NSW SES 10-year long service award. In 2009 bitcoin was launched and the Black Saturday bushfires destroyed over 2,000 homes and, tragically, saw the loss of 173 lives. That year Jamie Edmonds and Christopher Wardle joined the SES. They were both acknowledged with the 15-year long service award. In 2004 Facebook was launched and, thankfully, Australia did not record a large natural disaster. But what did happen was Julie Briggs and Wessley Paton joined the SES. They were acknowledged with a 20-year long service award.

In 1999 Australia voted to remain a constitutional monarchy and a hailstorm in Sydney caused \$2.3 billion worth of damage and led to the loss of one life. It was also the year that Jodie Sherlock joined the SES. She received the 25-year long service award. In 1994 Nelson Mandela became Prime Minister of South Africa and bushfires over Christmas destroyed 225 homes and resulted in the loss of four lives. Graham Craig and Mark Elsley joined the SES that year, and this year they received the 30-year long service award. Few people will not think immediately of 1974 as the year when Cyclone Tracy destroyed Darwin, with the loss of 71 lives. It was also the year when William Drain joined the SES. He was awarded the 50-year long service medal. In 1969 man first walked on the moon. Bushfires in Victoria destroyed 230 homes and killed 23 people, and John Martin joined the SES. He was acknowledged with a 55-year long service award. What an outstanding contribution!

I am so impressed with this service to our community. When I think of those long years of service, at great risk to members' own lives, and the Christmas meals and times with family missed, I am so proud of all the members of the Cessnock, Dungog, Maitland City and Hunter Capability units of the SES. I thank them particularly for the amazing and incredible work they have done in our community just in the nine or so years that I have been the member for Maitland. Many members of the House will know that, some 10 days after I was elected to this place, we had major floods and Gillieston Heights became "Gillieston Island"—or "Gilligan's Island", as the locals called it. It happened again in 2022, and on both occasions the community came together with the help of the SES. The SES provided support in Oakhampton, Mount Dee, Millers Forest and Berry Park—all the low-lying areas in the Hunter region. Maitland is the home of the SES, and I thank every one of its members for the effort and hours they put in to save lives in our community.

SYDNEY ROYAL EASTER SHOW

Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (17:53): There are few better ways to understand the Australian way of life and get to know a community than to visit the annual agricultural show. It is the bedrock of any country community's pride. The Northern Tablelands has a proud and long agricultural show history. From Walcha, which recently hosted its 147th show, through to Moree, Glen Innes, Uralla, Armidale, Inverell, Wyallda, Bingara, Bundarra, Guyra, Ashford and the mighty Mungindi, all the communities look forward to the annual celebration of showing off the best of their produce and their skills. I have had the absolute pleasure of attending many of these shows in the lead-up to the Sydney Royal Easter Show, which starts tomorrow. Agricultural shows are the perfect way to highlight the strength and identity of a region. They are a window into the health, vibrancy and soul of a local community, through the showing of produce, arts, craft, music and food and, of course, seeing visitors from urban and rural areas attend, catch up and have some fun.

The Sydney Royal Easter Show is an opportunity for farmers across country New South Wales to come together in Sydney to celebrate all that is great about agriculture and share what they do with their city cousins. I very much look forward to attending the show on its first day—tomorrow—when, as I said, the best of the bush comes to the big smoke to show everyone what we do and what we are proud of. Whether you are planning to visit with family, your children or by yourself, I have no doubt you will enjoy another fantastic 12-day event. One of the events I most look forward to at the show is the National Young Auctioneers Competition, which will take place tomorrow, run by the Australian Livestock and Property Agents Association. It is a great way to open the show on the first day.

I am proud to say that the Northern Tablelands has a finalist in the National Young Auctioneers Competition, Justin Oakenfull from Elders Rural Services in Inverell. In the State final we will have Matt Campion, who works for Nutrien Ag Solutions in Dubbo, representing our region. He is from Pinkett, east of Glen Innes. I wish Justin and Matt all the best. I will be there, cheering them on. The sale of livestock through auction is a historic tradition and part of the rich history but also the economy of the Northern Tablelands. I also look forward to catching up with Grace Collins from Armidale, who is a finalist in the RAS Rural Achiever Award, and Katie Williams from Armidale, who is in the Sydney Royal AgShows NSW Young Woman competition final. It is the first time in a long time that Armidale has had a representative in the final. I wish Grace and Katie all the best. They are wonderful female ambassadors and upcoming leaders for not just the agricultural sector but also the broader Armidale and Northern Tablelands region.

Many locals from our region will be making the journey down to Sydney to volunteer in the many exhibits and halls. The inimitable Lyn Cregan will be manning the Northern District exhibit—which is always the champion exhibit—in the big Woolworths dome. She has been doing that for over six decades now and is an absolute trooper. We will also see Brian Winter from Glen Innes, who has been given life membership of the Glen Innes Show Society—the "Royal of the North". He will be helping with the northern exhibit, along with Lyn. Tara Toomey from Uralla will have her Seasons of New England stand, also in the Woolworths food dome. The Sydney Royal Easter Show will play host to some wonderful exhibitions. Visitors will be able to see fresh produce, livestock—horses, dairy cattle and sheep—and wool from our region. A number of our representatives will be competing in the numerous equine events in the main arena.

I congratulate all of the locals who will be coming down to Sydney to compete. I wish them all the best and encourage all members of the House, whether from the regions or from the city, to get out to the show and take in the best of what the bush has to offer, meet some new people and celebrate how wonderful agriculture is and how important our regional economies are to the success and growth of the whole State of New South Wales.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis): I thank the member for Northern Tablelands, and I look forward to the Sydney Royal Easter Show being in Parramatta. That is wonderful.

WESTINVEST PROGRAM

Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (17:58): Last year I informed this House about the previous Liberal Government's WestInvest program. The \$5 billion program sought to help Western Sydney recover post-COVID. It did not and it was, effectively, a farce. Fairfield and Canterbury-Bankstown, our two most disadvantaged areas, received an average allocation of \$262 per person compared with the average allocation of \$1,070 per person for every other participating local government area. In February this year the Audit Office of New South Wales released its report on the WestInvest program. It was not a pretty picture.

The Auditor-General found that the design of WestInvest lacked integrity. A total of \$1.1 billion went to projects that were rated as low or moderate merit, funding was given to ineligible or unsuitable projects, documentation relating to some funding decisions did not exist and there were gaps in quality assurance. We are not talking about pocket change. We are talking about a program worth billions of dollars. We work hard, pay our taxes and trust that the Government does the right thing for its people. Sadly, it did not happen here and it really hurts.

Western Sydney is a community that tries its best but it is struggling. People are broke, homeless, starving, and confronted by drug, alcohol and gaming addictions. They are waiting on health care and they are stressed. Government can and should make a real difference here. The rort that is WestInvest and the money squandered is a real let-down. The toxic political culture deserves to be called out. It needs to change. I say to the people of Western Sydney that I will do my best, just like my colleagues here, to fight to ensure that we spend your hard-earned money on projects that are in your best interest.

WOLLONDILLY ELECTORATE CANCER CARE SERVICES

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (18:01): Some might think that 20 years ago on 25 March when my life changed it was because I was told that I was elected to council for the first time, but it was not. On the same day, within the same hour, I was also told that I had adenocarcinoma, the doctors had no idea where the primary was, and the last person they saw with the same issue was riddled with cancer. Were they wrong? Not exactly. Although it had progressed through lymph nodes, we had a chance, and a plan to survive was developed. While it involved three surgeries and radiation, the basis of it revolved around months of chemotherapy.

Yes, I was bald and I felt very unwell, but what kept me going was the chemotherapy and radiation units that were close to home. I had a chance to be independent or have a family member attend without too much imposition because of the units' proximity to home. For any of you who have not visited such a unit, there are recliner chairs that patients sit in, sometimes for many hours, while drugs are administered intravenously. Many

people in my electorate and other electorates have the unfortunate need to attend those units. For those in my electorate, however, patients need to travel great distances to Liverpool or Bankstown. It takes considerable time. Patients often leave early in the morning and return home feeling—let's face it—just awful. You just want to be able to fall into bed as quickly as possible. That is why it is essential that these services are close to home.

Bankstown hospital and Bowral hospital have statistics that show what is needed in south-west Sydney and, I would argue, Bowral. At Bankstown there were 350 medical oncology cases diagnosed, 168 new radiation oncology cases diagnosed, 470 new haematology cancer cases diagnosed and 6,060 chemotherapy services administered. In comparison, the small Bowral and District Hospital, the expansion plans of which the last Government tore to shreds and replaced with an upgrade, has very similar statistics. There were 320 medical oncology cases diagnosed, 116 new radiation oncology cases diagnosed, 121 new haematology cancer cases diagnosed and 4,153 chemotherapy services administered.

On top of that, 354 patients travelled either to Liverpool or Campbelltown for consultation, and that number does not cover outpatient referrals or direct referrals to specialist services. While our treatment, diagnosed patients and outpatient care are the same as in Bankstown, we are overlooked in regard to the treatment those patients need. Our outdated clinical services plan, which desperately needs an update, shows there is a need for more beds and more services. The highlands have a growing and ageing population. That has created the need for a hospital expansion which has yet to be fulfilled.

We need additional services and, looking at the numbers, I believe we need to think of the future. The Shoalhaven Cancer Care Centre, completed 10 years ago in 2013, is a good comparative size to what I believe is needed in Bowral. It is a project that was built for the future. It has two bunkers for future-proofing radiation oncology, integrated multidisciplinary cancer care, linear accelerators, ambulatory care services with community outreach capability, teaching and research facilities, clinical offices and, most importantly, scope for future expansion as demand requires. We need those services today in Wollondilly for the growing population. Pearl Buck wrote in her novel *The Good Earth*:

Our society must make it right and possible for old people not to fear the young or be deserted by them, for the test of a civilization is the way that it cares for its helpless members.

Pearl is as right today as she was then. Our most helpless members can be our loved ones. To that end, I thank my family for not deserting me, and for caring for me, 20 years ago. I thank the nurses, doctors and clinicians who cared for me then and care for patients today. I also thank those who helped me get Herceptin on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme to raise the chances of survival for patients like me. I thank those who care and I hope through my words in this place and actions outside of it that I show that we can care a whole lot more.

DISABILITY ADVOCACY FUTURES PROGRAM

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (18:05): I am proud to talk about the important topic of disability advocacy in the Parliament of New South Wales. I thank the Minister for Disability Inclusion for her tireless work to ensure that people with disabilities are heard across this State. Today the Minister announced a fantastic \$28 million in funding to continue the Disability Advocacy Futures Program. That is super important for advocates across New South Wales. They are our team and we thank them. As people with disability, we increasingly seek to exercise our rights to participate equally within the community and advocacy is critical to ensure the promotion, protection and security of our rights. With the announcement, 1.4 million people with disability can continue to access State-funded services, with funding to the Disability Advocacy Futures Program continuing for another two years.

The Disability Advocacy Futures Program provides crucial advocacy for people with disabilities to ensure that we can access the services we need to reach our full potential, and that our voices are heard. It is an absolute honour to be the Parliamentary Secretary for Disability Inclusion. This is a fantastic announcement from the Minns Labor Government to support our commitment to people with disabilities in our State. It is important that our fantastic disability advocacy organisations across New South Wales have the surety so that good employees will stay. Now people with disabilities across the State can get access to our State government services. I say to our services that they are doing great work and we really appreciate them. Their wide cross-section of organisations empower people with disabilities at both the individual and the systemic level to ensure our needs are heard and understood. I wish I had time this evening to talk about each of the organisations that have received funding but unfortunately I have limited time.

As a person with a physical disability I have worked closely with the Physical Disability Council of NSW. I commend its work and its voice for equity and inclusion that ripples across New South Wales. As the first wheelchair user in the New South Wales Parliament I feel as if I wheel beside the members of the council, fighting for the rights of wheelchair users and people with mobility issues. I have done so in various shapes and forms since my accident in 1988 and will continue to work beside them whilst I am in this job and, I believe, long after my role in New South Wales Parliament. I commend them and thank them for their work. I also thank the fabulous

team at the Council for Intellectual Disability, especially those people with intellectual disabilities who are employed as experts and lived-experience advocates. Minister Washington and I enjoy meeting with them and are committed to working beside them to ensure that government websites and online services are easy to access, including through Easy Read, and to make sure that children with disabilities are supported in schools.

I appreciate that so many advocacy organisations now use the voices of people with lived experience as employees and advocates. Their voices are so important, as is their skill development as advocates and their role as leaders with disabilities in communities across New South Wales. I am honoured to work closely with the Disability Council NSW, which is staffed by experts with and without disability who regularly keep Minister Washington and I up to date with the issues of the day and challenge us to take particular paths to improve the lives of people with disabilities in our State.

I am also proud to be part of a government team that is committed to making our State inclusive and accessible for every single one of us. There is lots of work to do and the Minns Labor Government will continue to fight for us—for full inclusion for people with disability. I am so excited to work with Minister Washington to see people with disability empowered to live their dreams, free from the barriers of exclusion that we too often face. It is a big job and the role of advocates continues to evolve. I am up for the challenge and I know my colleagues on this side of the House are too. I look forward to working beside all our fabulous advocacy services in New South Wales into the future. I thank them so much for their great work.

WATER MANAGEMENT

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (18:10): I speak about the class system that exists in New South Wales right now. Make no mistake: We do have a class system, especially when it comes to the way the Federal Government treats the issue of water. City people are the upper class when it comes to water—they just turn on a tap and get the water they need. The Feds know that if they mess with water in the city, there will be rioting within days and the Government will lose the next election. But the Federal Government treats rural people as lower-class citizens. We do not count to them, and our water can be taken away from us based on a politician's whim.

In fact, the New South Wales Government owns significant amounts of water—over a thousand gigalitres, some of which was stolen from our rural communities. Unlike those upper-class city people, we do not just use water to wash ourselves and our cars. We supposedly lower-class rural people use our water to grow the food that the upper-class people in the cities like to eat—how generous are we? I make it clear to Federal Government members that rural people are not lower class, and if it keeps treating us like lower-class people then it will have a rural revolt on its hands.

Another deeply troubling thing is that the Federal Government treats some rural people a lot worse than others. The Federal Government is hell-bent on taking an additional 450 gigalitres from rural areas for so-called environmental flows. I have already spoken at length about how disastrous that plan is and how the water cannot ever be safely delivered without creating man-made floods, impacting farming businesses, businesses in general, schools and towns like Wagga Wagga. But let us put that to one side for now. Today I want to talk about where the water comes from. Here is the problem: The water recovery figures to date make it quite clear that some rural communities have been unfairly targeted by the Federal Government more than other rural communities. Even in rural communities, when it comes to water, some of us are treated as even lower class than others.

The fact is that the southern connected system in New South Wales has been disgracefully over-recovered. Too much water has been taken from the southern basin compared with the northern parts of New South Wales or Queensland. The Commonwealth recovery process is an unbalanced disgrace. According to the Federal Government's own figures, the southern basin zone has had 667.7 gigalitres recovered by the Commonwealth. That is a staggering amount. All up just 267.6 gigalitres has been recovered from the northern basin zone, compared with a staggering total of 1,615.6 gigalitres that has been recovered from the southern basin.

Why are the southern regions responsible for all of the water recovery, while the north is incredibly sluggish? How on earth can the Federal Government pretend that is fair and equitable? It simply is not fair, and that is another reason that the Feds cannot be trusted to run our rivers. They treat all rural people badly, and they treat some of us a lot worse than others. I call on the Premier to finally tell the Feds that we no longer trust them when it comes to water. The people of rural New South Wales must be protected.

RURAL AND REGIONAL RENEWABLE ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (18:14): It is a sad irony that as we build new ways to generate and transmit electrical power and light for our cities, regional and rural New South Wales is being left powerless and in the dark. I refer, of course, to the so-called consultation on renewable energy infrastructure—the solar factories, transmission lines and wind towers that are spreading across regional New South Wales. Instead of being informed and listened to, rural communities and people who are affected feel ignored and brushed off. They believe they

have been reduced to little more than bystanders as developers push ahead with plans for giant transmission towers and wires or new solar factories. As I have said before, one would think nobody lives in regional New South Wales. Even after waves of protest my electorate continues to be plagued by transmission lines, scarring their way through farmland or by productive paddocks turned into solar factories that communities do not want.

None of that is to say that renewable energy is not welcome. On the contrary, there is an urgent need to transition our energy base away from fossil fuels, and renewables offer a future with cleaner energy powered by nature. Done correctly, that will be a very good thing, but communities must be part of it. They must be listened to and have their views acted upon so that Australia can get the infrastructure it needs and landholders have a say in how those works affect their lives and livelihoods.

The anguish and distress could be seen when a group of angry and concerned landowners met at the village of Bookham this month to air their concerns about the HumeLink transmission lines that run through my electorate. It was encouraging to see so many people united with the same message. As a lone voice on this issue in 2020, I have seen it grow to become a matter of national concern. The Bookham meeting addressed a key issue on which so many have been ignored—the potential to underground the HumeLink transmission lines. Disappointingly, the Legislative Council standing committee investigating the feasibility of undergrounding the lines found:

... the current plan for constructing HumeLink as an overhead line is the correct approach, especially given the applicable regulatory environment and the lack of any action to date in progressing the undergrounding option.

That is very telling: The reason we do not have underground powerlines is that our regulatory system means we get overhead lines. In my view, that is because the system takes almost no account of the people who are having to put up with the overhead lines. How unfair and unnecessary when there is a viable option—undergrounding. The system needs to change radically. Thankfully, there is an opportunity. I speak of the far-reaching community engagement review by the Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner. The review acknowledges what I have been saying all along: The transition to renewables cannot succeed without community participation and effective engagement over a long and sustained period.

To achieve that, the review sets out recommendations around a number of themes. First, improve community engagement by motivating developers to achieve best practice and then only selecting reputable developers for new developments. That would involve a ratings scheme that assessed developers on their capacity to properly work with communities. Secondly, reduce and eliminate unnecessary anxiety-producing community engagement by selecting the best and most appropriate project sites from the start and avoiding inappropriate sites. Thirdly, reduce the need for prolonged, drawn-out community engagement by making sure the planning and environmental assessment processes are correct. Fourthly, reduce unresolved and lengthy complaints by ensuring best practice complaints handling, backed up by a new ombudsman in each State. That was recommended by the upper House committee. Fifthly, improve community understanding of the need for the transition and ensure appropriate governance is in place that involves representation from communities affected. Sixthly, improve the acceptance of the transition changes by identifying opportunities and real benefits for communities.

Those themes would form a road map to make sure that rural and regional communities are treated fairly when it comes to energy developments. It should have been done years ago, but it is not too late to find a better way forward. There is a pathway. Developers should take note. They should engage with and respect the community. Listen, learn and act; do not ignore feedback. The New South Wales Government should do all it can to implement the recommendations of the review as quickly as possible. It must ensure that the people of rural and regional New South Wales are not left powerless and in the dark.

DUBBO ELECTORATE SPORTING EVENTS

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (18:19): I take this opportunity to recognise and celebrate some of the major sporting events that have taken place in Dubbo over the past three months. These events not only showcase the talent and dedication of our local athletes, but also bring significant economic and social benefits to our region. In February this year, Dubbo Regional Council and Dubbo Touch Association hosted the NSW Touch Football Northern Conference Junior State Cup. The event was held in Dubbo for the first time in 2023 and, after an extremely successful tournament, Dubbo won the bid to host for the next three years. This year the event attracted an impressive 210 teams and nearly 11,000 visitors to the region, injecting around \$9 million into the local economy. The Dubbo teams performed exceptionally well over the three days. A number of them made it through to quarterfinals and semifinals, which was a great effort and a credit to the players and coaches. Well done to other teams from around the region, including Mudgee, which did exceptionally well.

Additionally, the inaugural Women's NSW Open Regional Qualifying Series took place at the Dubbo Golf Club from 10 to 12 March. The golf club hosted the Women's NSW Open in 2020, and last year hosted the Western Open Men's Regional Qualifier. The club does a fantastic job at ensuring that the greens and facilities

are at their absolute best, making them a natural selection for such events. Hosting such events is of huge benefit to the club and community. They provide a real opportunity to showcase the course, the club and the region. Local talent had the opportunity to shine at the qualifier, with Dubbo young gun Ella Murray finishing low amateur in just her third pro tournament. Eighteen-year-old Ella just missed out on being in the mix for one of two qualification spots for the State championship at the end of the month, but I do not think it will be too long before we can cheer her on at the Women's NSW Open.

This month has also seen Dubbo hosting the Bowls NSW State Championships, the pinnacle of the Bowls NSW calendar, where over 850 competitors take to the greens across 15 days of play. Held at Club Dubbo, Macquarie Club and North Dubbo RSL Sporties, the event features play in the singles, pairs, triple and fours disciplines. It is the first time the NSW Disability Championships has been held in conjunction with the NSW Open, creating a new chapter on inclusion in Australian sport. Typically run by Wheelchair Bowls, it is sensational to see Bowls NSW take it on. According to reports, numbers were up from previous years. The tournament has provided the opportunity for bowls lovers to see the best of the best in action, including Australian Disability Champion Jimmy Reynolds, and Dubbo's own Anthony Brown, the Club Dubbo bowls manager. They both did extremely well and made the finals in the Pairs.

It is important to note that events like these would not be possible without the incredible hard work of the many volunteers that make up the sporting clubs in our community. Their passion and dedication to their clubs, sport and community provide the opportunity for events like the Junior State Cup, golf and bowls tournaments and many more to take place, attracting people to our city and the region. Many of these events would also not take place without both the financial and in-kind support of other organisations and levels of government. I commend Dubbo Regional Council for its support of these events. The benefit extends far beyond the boundaries of the Dubbo local government area. As the member for Dubbo, I am really proud to see these events in my electorate. I acknowledge all the competitors, coaches, clubs and volunteers that contribute to showcasing regional New South Wales.

TRIBUTE TO MARGARET "MARGIE" SHEEDY, OAM

Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (18:23): I take this opportunity to pay tribute to Margaret "Margie" Sheedy of Ulladulla. Margie Sheedy was a well-known Ulladulla resident who, sadly, passed away on 3 March 2024. Everyone in Ulladulla knew Margie Sheedy. She was larger than life. Margie grew up in Sydney. In her early life she loved performing and she loved the South Sydney Rabbitohs. Before marrying and having a family, Margie worked as a performer on cruise ships. When Margie moved to the Ulladulla area with her family as a young adult, she felt that she could carry on with her theatrical, entertaining and fundraising work in the surrounding area.

According to her family, Margie loved Ulladulla and said that the best thing she ever did was to move the family from Sydney to the South Coast. Margie loved everything about the local area, and she took ownership of everything. It was her beach, her sea pool, her Marlin Hotel—the local pub—her harbour, her surf club and her Milton Ulladulla Entertainers. Margie once told me that she swam every day at "her beach" and "her sea pool". She lived across the road from Rennies Beach, and anyone who knows that beach knows that it is accessed by going down 200 steps. Then, of course, you have to get back up them. Margie said she did that rain, hail or shine, and that it kept her young.

When I asked Margie how she managed to do everything she did in a day, she told me it was because she had a wonderful husband who did everything for her. Ray was the love of her life. As she told me, Ray shopped, cleaned and cooked so Margie could go out into the community and spread her special Margie magic. She was the driving force and an original committee member of the Milton Ulladulla Entertainers. She took the role of costume designer, prop maker, foyer greeting queen and town ticket spruiker. Before any show, Margie would walk around all the shops and offices located in Ulladulla and Milton, dressed in one of her finest costumes, wearing one of her biggest hats and often carrying a basket of flowers, spruiking the latest show and encouraging people to attend. Running into Margie in full costume would light up your day and leave you smiling for the rest of the week.

Margie also had the most amazing garden. Whatever the time of year, Margie's garden had a theme: Easter, Christmas, footy season or in the theme of the latest theatre production. It was always a feast for the eyes. There were statues and props, bunting, Rabbitohs paraphernalia, lights and sparkles. Margie would also have a plant sale once a year to raise funds for her community groups. Everyone loved the joy that Margie's garden brought to the community. In recognition of all that she had done throughout her wonderful life, in January this year Margie Sheedy was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for service to the community of the Shoalhaven.

Margie and Ray's three children, Ann-Marie, Greg and Megan, had a wonderful mother and I thank them for sharing her with the wider community. Margie was an inspiration to everyone. She had a true gift of making

everyone she met feel special. I know Ray will miss Margie terribly. He should take strength from his family and the Milton Ulladulla community and know how much we all loved her. Margie had a quote that she always used: Paradise is made by the people that live in it. That showed just how much Margie loved her community and how much we all loved Margie in return. We were all better off for having known Margie, and we will all be poorer with her passing. Vale, Margie Sheedy.

PENRITH ELECTORATE SENIORS

Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (18:27): This year I celebrated the invaluable role of seniors in the Penrith community during the 2024 NSW Seniors Festival. The theme of "Reach Beyond" spoke to how today's seniors defy many preconceptions about ageing and remain active community members well into their eighties and nineties. It was a pleasure to support the Local Achievement Awards as we celebrated and acknowledged the invaluable work seniors do within the Penrith community. Those efforts span a plethora of fields, including business, environment and agriculture, health and wellbeing, lifelong learning and community service. Among those honoured was Betty Sutherland, who was recognised as the recipient of the Penrith Senior of the Year for 2024. Betty's journey is one of resilience, humility and boundless generosity. Her dedication to the member sub-branch of Penrith RSL Club for over 40 years is truly inspiring.

Despite being in her nineties, Betty is known to many for fundraising by selling raffle tickets in the RSL foyer. Betty has been president, secretary and committee member of the Women's Royal Australian Air Force and continues to march on behalf of the female division in the Sydney Anzac Day March. Since the 1980s, Betty has been a member of the Nepean Hospital Auxiliary, selling cakes and biscuits, and knitting to support the Nepean NICU and has helped raise over \$1 million in that time. Western Sydney University awarded Betty an honorary degree for knitting thousands of woollen skullcaps to assist premature babies with critical temperature regulation. Betty has dedicated many years to raising funds for Nepean Hospital and for returned servicemen and their families. Betty is a quiet achiever. Her contributions to our community are immeasurable, and it is with heartfelt gratitude that I was able to present her with this well-deserved recognition.

I thank everyone who was nominated for the Seniors Local Achievement Awards. Their dedication, perseverance and kindness inspire everyone and embody the spirit of this year's NSW Seniors Festival's theme of "Reach Beyond". I specifically acknowledge Jill Brown, Nicole Celeban, Neil Gallagher, Susan Gallagher, Kristine Gauci, Allan Jones, Ditte Kozak and Richard Power. I look forward to working with them in the future.

ENDOMETRIOSIS

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (18:30): March is Endometriosis Awareness Month, and it has seen the launch of News.com.au's "About Bloody Time" campaign, pushing for longer, Medicare-funded consultations for endometriosis diagnosis and treatment. Endometriosis is not just bad period pain. It is a condition where tissue that normally lines the uterus is found in abnormal sites around the body, including the bowel and bladder. Most often, it is found in the pelvis and can have a debilitating effect on quality of life, with symptoms including pelvic pain and infertility for women. Furthermore, it can take 6½ years on average for those living with endometriosis to be diagnosed, which can only be done through surgical intervention.

According to Endometriosis Australia, the condition affects about one in nine women across Australia. I commend Endometriosis Australia for its efforts in leading the charge nationally in raising awareness and understanding of endometriosis. I also recognise its lobbying efforts in relation to the National Action Plan for Endometriosis, which is aimed at improving patient and community understanding of the disease. I particularly acknowledge the efforts of director and co-founder, Donna Ciccia. Endometriosis Australia, in conjunction with Southern Cross University and the NICM Health Research Institute, conducted a national survey of 389 women with a confirmed diagnosis of endometriosis to examine the impact of workplace changes on the management of endometriosis, and the findings were quite troubling.

The report found that 70 per cent of women had taken unpaid time off work to manage their endometriosis symptoms. It also found that one in three were passed over for promotion, while one in six lost their jobs due to their endometriosis. It is estimated that the condition costs the Australian economy almost \$10 billion a year in productivity losses. News.com.au has also conducted an important survey. I take this opportunity to give editor Kerry Warren and her team a shout-out for their call to action on the issue. The survey of 1,700 endometriosis sufferers found that 54.5 per cent of respondents had mostly negative experiences when seeking medical treatment, while 17.3 per cent felt that they had not been taken seriously when asking for medical assistance for endometriosis. Of those women, more than half, or 52.2 per cent, had spent more than \$5,000 on their treatments, around 20 per cent had spent more than \$20,000 and 8.8 per cent had spent more than \$50,000, including 71 who had spent over \$100,000.

The survey also found that 83.4 per cent of respondents said that they had taken time off work due to endometriosis, with 57.1 per cent stating that they had not told their employer they suffer from the condition. The report highlighted something that many in this place are aware of—that the system is simply not set up to support women, hence my call today for the Federal Albanese Labor Government to take endometriosis seriously and update the Medicare Benefits Schedule item numbers relied upon by women with endometriosis, to ensure they have access to the care they need. Despite one in nine women having endometriosis, an initial gynaecologist appointment currently receives less than half the rebate of other specialist appointments, leaving women with two options: a short consult that hardly scratches the surface or huge out-of-pocket expenses on the patient. It is money that many simply do not have access to during the current cost-of-living crisis.

To put it in perspective, on average, a woman with endometriosis has eight of 14 different symptoms that can range across a number of organs and require significant history-taking, discussion and education. That is simply too much for just 15 minutes. The system, as it currently operates, means that a standard Medicare Benefits Schedule item number 104, used by a gynaecologist for an initial consult, sees a reimbursement of \$81.30. Meanwhile, a gastroenterologist using item number 132 would receive \$250.65, as item number 132 takes into account the amount of care and time required to treat patients holistically. The lack of compensation is creating a massive workforce shortage of women's health specialists. Respected pain physician and researcher Associate Professor Susan Evans stated:

We've got a massive workforce shortage in women's pain. Nobody is going into this area. One, because it's hard, but two, because you can't make a living.

Without action from the Federal Government, women will continue to be priced out of the system. The Albanese Labor Government must implement a new Medicare item number for longer consultations of 45 minutes or more, in line with what is paid to other specialists, including gastroenterologists, cardiologists and neurologists. That would allow gynaecologists to offer better care and attract more specialists to work in the field, lifting the standard of care nationwide. Our Medicare system is failing women and making it harder for them to get the care they need. It is "about bloody time" that the Federal Government did something about it.

AUBURN GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL

Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (18:35): The girls at Auburn Girls High School have again shown their versatility and spirit with the setting up of the Compost Club. The group includes 26 student participants, with several teachers and staff involved, including Sama Rahmati and Salha Maryam Mohamed Ilham, whom I was honoured to have show me around their wonderful gardens and compost facilities. It is always a pleasure to visit Auburn Girls High School, and it was great to be there to help launch their draft report on the impacts of the Compost Club. The Compost Club project took place in 2023 and 2024. The purpose was to measure and compare the efficiency and ease of use of six compost design types. The goal was to reduce and ultimately end food waste and associated waste costs at the school, preferably by the end of 2024.

The benefits of the project include savings on waste pick-up costs, benefits to children's mental and physical health, increased environment health and an enhanced academic experience. Growing food also encourages students to eat more vegetables, and gardening can lower students' cortisol levels and reduce stress, which helps improve their academic performance. More plants and trees, and an increase in growth and canopy rates on the school campus, can increase air quality, cool the school and reduce air-conditioning costs. The project also provided a valuable practical lesson on heat islands through practical examples such as measuring the heat of a road with a tree canopy shade against those without. For the information of the House, it was 26 degrees on a road with shade and 37 degrees on a road without—a difference of over 10 degrees.

Before the composting project, the food waste at the school resulted in an estimated 1,350 kilograms of carbon being emitted per garbage pick-up. After the composting trial, that number was nearly halved, to 757 kilograms per food waste pick-up. It is a tremendous difference that has resulted in \$5.09 in savings per student per year for waste pick-ups, or \$4 million if replicated for the 790,000 students across the New South Wales public school system. The main project drivers were teacher/librarian Linda Park, and sustainability advocate Michael Mobbs, who worked on the project weekly, educating students, upkeeping the garden and ensuring the progression of the project. Michael's composting creation, Cool Seats, was one of the composting options tested throughout the project.

Intern Sophia Elmlad, a university student from the United States, also jumped into the project and assisted with getting students involved and excited about composting by creating a bridging connection between staff and students. That included introducing the food waste calculator, drafting documents and assisting with data collection and explanations of the project requirements. More interns from the United States helped each Thursday to garden, coach students and create fact sheets and videos for the school library's website. I give a shout-out to Will, Hannah, Grace and all of our other friends from across the Pacific ditch who joined in. They helped prepare

the draft report on the project that Auburn Girls High School is releasing for the benefit of other schools to encourage a greater reduction in the waste produced New South Wales wide.

I thank Dominic Vartuli, who helped maintain gardens and supported the project by building a sensory garden for special needs students. But the heroes of the project were the Compost Club members—the main student group involved in the project's success. I thank them for putting their hands up and saying, "I will give it a go." The future leaders are those who step forward and take action today. The project would not have been possible without the funding received from the Sustainable Schools Grants program through Schools Infrastructure NSW and the Department of Education. This initiative exemplifies the innovative spirit of Auburn Girls High School, that consistently embraces fresh concepts and creates enhanced prospects for the local girls and young women. Great job everyone!

MANLY ADOLESCENT AND YOUNG ADULT HOSPICE

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (18:39): At a parliamentary friends event this week I bumped into an old colleague from before my time in this place. It had been a few years since I had seen Richard. I knew that he had previously lost a son to a genetic disease. I did not know that he is losing his other son to the same disease. He explained to me the difference between the experience that he and his family went through with the loss of their first son prior to the construction of the Adolescent and Young Adult Hospice [AYAH] in Manly and the experience that he, his young son and family are going through as we speak. In March of this year the hospice celebrated its first anniversary. It is a \$19.5 million facility that serves families and people from every electorate in the State. It is free for any young person in New South Wales to come and receive palliative care, support and therapy. It is not only for the person who has the terminal illness but also for their loved ones and family members. In many respects, it has been my North Star and the reason for continuing in my role.

It has been the result of great community work. Local philanthropist Kay Van Norton Poche and her husband, Greg, donated \$6 million to the \$19.5 million build, and it has also been a labour of love for many outstanding bureaucrats in NSW Health and Health Infrastructure. I acknowledge Deb Wilcox, Leisa Rathbone, Rebecca Wark, Troy Harvey, Hayley Bell, and my personal favourite, Emma Skulander, who is a constituent. She will be upset that I named her, but that is okay. The work that they have done to get the hospice off the ground and up and running has been nothing short of outstanding.

Fast-forward to today. The hospice is open and we have celebrated a year of operation. It has an amazing team of clinical nurses, managers and people doing all sorts of great work, including Laura Grant, who does the community fundraising and community engagement; Tayia Yates; Geoff Yates; Hayden the administrative officer; the kitchen team of chef Phil, Pradeep, Dave and Peng; nurses and clinical staff like Emma, the occupational therapist who facilitated the patient sensory room; art therapist, Anna; senior medical resident officer, Dr Fleur; clinical psychologist, Azhani; and the volunteer team, which continues to grow every month.

The other great thing is that community groups, businesses and organisations not only on the northern beaches but from around the State put their support into the hospice, including the local school Stella Maris College, with gift packs for patients and families; Ben and Jerry's ice cream in Manly, who bring birthday cakes for patients; my good friend Abby from Surfboard Souls Manly, who donated artwork made from recycled surfboards; Taronga Zoo, who hold meet and greets; the Knitters and Natters of Watermark, who make beautiful hand-knitted Christmas trees for the hospice and provide thoughtful gifts; AVA Party Hire; Bucketty's Brewing Co; White House Flowers; local musician Jamie Postle; and the list goes on. I thank the health professionals at the AYAH. There is good reason they were celebrated as the Allied Health Team of the Year in 2023. I finish with the words of a member from the volunteer team, who said:

We find our time at the AYAH very enriching. And have been welcomed into the lives of some amazing young adults, their incredible families and the very generous capable and giving staff. We never know what a volunteer shift will bring but always leave with fuller hearts. It's a special place and it's full of very special people.

For many of us, confronting death is challenging at the best of times, but we can only imagine the grief and challenges that going through that with a young adult or young person must bring with it. I say to members in this place, look at the hospice located in Manly. It has only been open a year. It has enjoyed having more than 50 people from across the State. It is something we should all encourage, support and celebrate. On behalf of people like Richard, I thank the team who make it run each and every day, as well as the bureaucrats and the team who got it up and running.

TAFE NSW

Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (18:44): I am a proud beneficiary of TAFE. I know firsthand how life-changing that institution can be for its students. The teachers at Loftus TAFE are equipping our State with the skills that we need every day. We know that four out of every 10 new jobs created in the next decade will need vocational qualifications. Employers across New South Wales are relying on TAFE NSW to equip learners

with in-demand skills using industry-standard equipment and technology, ensuring they graduate job ready. The staff at Loftus are providing the next generation of chefs with the hospitality and cooking expertise that they need for success at Embark Restaurant, while providing the Sutherland Shire community with world-class service and meals. They are training our next generation of massage therapists in the Sutherland Shire at the Alive Massage Therapy Clinic. They are getting our next generation of personal trainers fit for their dream jobs. With these programs and the many more that are run at the campus, the next generation of workers are getting the experience and knowledge they need right in their local community.

After I was elected last year, I visited the Loftus campus. I saw firsthand the amazing work that the staff were undertaking, but there were unresolved issues left from the former Government—now Opposition. The staff were being prevented from enrolling additional cohorts as they could not guarantee a classroom space free from maintenance issues. This problem had been ongoing for more than six months across more than six classrooms. Unfortunately, it is a story that is not unusual across our State. Our TAFE campuses were subject to 12 years of deliberate neglect by the previous Government. The result was crumbling classrooms, leaking roofs and ageing technology right across New South Wales. The Minns Labor Government is determined to fix that.

After I visited the Loftus campus, I contacted the Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education and explained the issue. TAFE NSW worked with the Loftus teaching team to conduct a thorough assessment of the situation and identified an appropriate solution. Projectors on campus were replaced during the term break, minimising disruption to classes. This upgrade will go a long way to addressing the ongoing classroom issues at the Loftus campus. Initiatives like that show how serious the Minns Labor Government is about rebuilding TAFE, treating it like the world-class learning institution it is.

It is a vision of TAFE that has led the Government to invest \$300 million into TAFE NSW through a repair program that will upgrade classrooms and campus infrastructure, deliver new teaching equipment and improve digital connectivity. We want to continue to allow TAFE NSW to expand learning opportunities in local communities, improve educational outcomes, and support the State's critical skills needs. The Government is giving TAFE campuses like Loftus what they need to do this. The Government is determined not to let the great experience that TAFE NSW offers to learners be diminished by facilities that should have been maintained properly by the previous Government. We are also determined not to let high fees stand in the way of learners acquiring the skills they need.

That is why the Minns Government partnered with the Federal Government last year to announce that 147,000 fee-free TAFE places would be made available in New South Wales over the next three years. Under that program students studying the Certificate III in Civil Construction could save up to \$2,100 in fees, those pursuing a Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care or a Certificate III in School Based Education Support could save up to \$1,600, and those looking to build a career pathway through a Certificate III in Individual Support could save up to \$1,450. The Minns Government has also signed a landmark five-year National Skills Agreement with the Commonwealth that places TAFE at the heart of the vocational sector and will deliver billions of dollars to build the skills and prosperity of New South Wales. TAFE NSW is giving people the skills they need to pursue their dreams and, simultaneously, giving incredible services back to the community. I am so proud of the work that the staff are doing in the heart of the Sutherland shire at the Loftus campus.

DAVIDSON ELECTORATE

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (18:49): I start with a quote from the Greek Stoic philosopher, Epictetus:

We have two ears and one mouth so that we can listen twice as much as we speak.

As members of the New South Wales Parliament, it is vital that we listen to our communities and embrace consultation. Since my election in March 2023, I have had the privilege of listening to hundreds of constituents in person and via email, letters and through reading petitions and surveys. In particular, I enjoy what I label my "constituent days", where I embrace 30-minute, back-to-back meetings in my electorate office. They are great days, and lots of listening and problem-solving takes place. After all, leadership is about solving problems. I invite any and all Davidson electorate constituents who would like to meet with me to reach out for a meeting. My door is always open to you. In fact, I hope during my years in Parliament I will have the opportunity to meet almost every single constituent in my community.

Davidson electorate constituents can look forward to receiving my March 2024 newsletter in their mailbox. It is an important read and full of information about the Return and Earn scheme, protection of our local tree canopy and, of course, the completed upgrades at Killara Railway Station. But, importantly, the newsletter also contains some very important calls to action. It includes links to a petition against Labor's snap planning changes; a petition advocating for a new hall at Davidson High School; a petition against Labor's \$249 million palliative care cuts; and a petition reversing Labor's \$9.8 million cuts to commuter parking at Lindfield Railway Station.

I encourage constituents to use the QR code, sign those petitions and seek the change we want to see in our community.

The newsletter also contains a survey. I ask constituents to select the five State issues most important to them from a list that includes: reducing the cost of living; planning and overdevelopment; creating a stronger economy and jobs; protecting the tree canopy and heritage; affordable housing and rents; roads and intersections; education, such as schools, early learning and TAFE; preventing bushfires; lowering energy costs; health and hospitals; fixing bus and train services; reducing carbon emissions; improving mental health services; preventing crime and domestic violence; supporting small business; supporting disability services and inclusion; upgrading green-space parks and sportsgrounds; and investing in the arts. This list has come about through the many conversations that I have had with members of the community. All of those issues are important, but I am giving people the opportunity to have their say on which ones impact them most.

I had the privilege of studying adaptive leadership under Professor Ron Heifetz. Professor Heifetz teaches that we must "listen to the songs beneath the words". He says, "Once you find out where people are coming from, you can connect with them and engage them with change". The New South Wales Labor Government has no interest in listening, connecting and engaging with communities about change—particularly those in the Davidson electorate. I point to two case studies. The first case is that zero consultation has taken place regarding the transport oriented development at Roseville, Lindfield, Killara and Gordon stations. The second case is that there has been zero consultation about the removal of \$9.8 million in funding for commuter parking at Lindfield.

How out of touch must the Government be to put a transport oriented development at Lindfield, which means an extra 4,400 dwellings in Lindfield alone, but then cut \$9.8 million for commuter parking at Lindfield? To make things even worse, Lindfield Public School is already at 110 per cent capacity, even with five demountable classrooms. The Labor Government should have drafted a discussion paper outlining the biggest challenges that we face as a community, because they are the challenges we all need to do our part to address. This would have included the topics of housing supply and affordability; housing development targets by council area; and the importance of vital infrastructure, including schools, transport, roads, sewage, parks, playgrounds and green space.

The Government should then have promoted the discussion paper for consultation, with a robust submission process, inviting participation by each council and, importantly, from all sides of politics. Finally, the Government should have proposed changes in line with the results of that consultation. There is no doubt that would have led to a bipartisan policy process with overall agreement but, equally important, the community would have been taken on the journey. It would have brought everyone together. Labor, please start listening.

SYDNEY AIRPORT WETLANDS

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (18:55): I address a serious matter of health and environmental concern for our community: the ongoing sewage discharges into the Sydney Airport Wetlands, which then flow into the Mill Stream and Botany Bay. The issue of sewage dumping into the Mill Stream is not a new one. Sydney was once dotted with local sewage overflows like the Mill Stream outlet, but over time they were upgraded to discharge sewage away from communities. They achieve this by using what is known as rising mains—that is to say, by pumping the sewage away instead of relying on gravity to feed it out via downhill pipes. Nearly four years ago, I found out that Sydney Water was seeking permission to discharge raw sewage into Mill Pond. Many residents wrote to me, up in arms, about this. In 2020, prior to formal consent being provided, three billion litres of raw sewage had been dumped into the Mill Pond.

Sydney Water was fined under \$300,000 for allowing this raw sewage—waste that included sanitary products, toilet paper and syringes—into Mill Pond, Botany Wetlands and then into Botany Bay. I fought on behalf of the residents to bring Sydney Water to a sensible solution for wastewater issues that did not involve polluting our local waterways. I personally met with the Managing Director of Sydney Water to urge them to address the issue. Despite my advocacy, Sydney Water decided that the status quo was good enough. Instead of ensuring that raw sewage dumping was dealt with appropriately, to my shock and disappointment, it was given a green light and became permissible. I said it four years ago and I say it again: The time has come for the Botany Bay community to get a fair deal from Sydney Water.

Since then, members of our community have complained about the impact that this has had on our historic wetlands, our bay and on public health. You can smell this raw sewage from surrounding suburbs, and even from Botany Public School. The discharge of sewage into the Sydney Airport Wetlands, and specifically the Mill Stream, is having a significant impact on the environment and aviation. It has been attracting birds. I have here some photos showing birds smashing into the front of airplanes as they take off from Sydney Airport. The community says that this is putting people at risk. Birds attracted to the sewage include high-risk species like

silver gulls and ibises. If anyone thinks having a few extra birds around is not a big deal, I am happy to table the photographs I have just shown.

In addition, the presence of sewage in our natural waterways poses a very serious risk to public health, as it can contaminate water sources and expose residents to harmful pathogens and pollutants. I raise this matter today because my residents deserve to know what they are swimming in. But more than that, they deserve to swim in safe, clean water in the first place. Fortunately, there is a viable option available. Rather than dumping overflow raw sewage into the Mill Stream, Sydney Water can invest in the construction of rising mains. This solution has been deemed by stakeholders, including Sydney Airport, to be feasible and constructible. It presents a tangible path forward to mitigate the risks posed by these sewage discharges. It is time for Sydney Water to prioritise solutions for our community that do not involve allowing the Mill Pond to remain a dumping ground for sewage. I have now nicknamed it the Poo Pond.

The SPEAKER: Before I call the next speaker, I note that the member for Oatley is joining us from behind the chair and he has with him a couple of celebrity visitors, being James and Sammy Coure and the one who carries all the load, his wife, Adla. It is lovely to meet them. Many a time I took the chair so that daddy could go home early and have dinner with the family.

ISRAEL-HAMAS CONFLICT

Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy) (18:59): As Australians, we all believe in a fair go. Regardless of a person's background, we believe that everyone should be treated with respect, equality and fairness. The notion of a fair go has contributed to the success of the multicultural society we live in today. Communities in New South Wales come from the four corners of the globe, and we come together as one. We live and work together in harmony and focus on what unites us, as opposed to what divides us. The electorate of Holsworthy is representative of the multicultural society that we live in. It is a harmony that we must protect and never take for granted.

In the spirit of a fair go and justice, I stood in this place in September last year and spoke about the alarming rates of antisemitism in Australian universities. I did so because it was the right thing to do. In the same way, I would condemn and call out Islamophobia and, for that matter, any form of hatred or discrimination against any group. An attack on one faith is an attack on all faiths. We need to call things out for what they are. Let us call a spade a spade. In the same spirit of a fair go and justice, I moved a motion in this place calling for a ceasefire in Gaza because, again, it is the right thing to do, as every innocent person deserves safety, security and a fair go.

A fair go also means lifting our mates up when they are down and telling our mates when they have gone too far. The past six months have been horrific. Hamas killed 1,200 Israelis and kidnapped hostages. In response, Israel has killed 31,000—and counting—Palestinians, both Christian and Muslim. People in my community are outraged and are asking, "How many innocent deaths are enough? When does the self-defence stop?" Not only are these innocent Gazans being killed, but they are also killed without any dignity. They are being humiliated, degraded and starved while the world watches. Women are giving birth with limited medical intervention, women are having C-sections without anaesthesia, and women no longer have access to sanitary items. The injuries and suffering of the Palestinian people are unfathomable. Nick Maynard, a doctor from Medical Aid for Palestinians said:

One child that I will never forget had burned so bad you could see her facial bones. We knew there was no chance of her surviving that, but there was no morphine to give her. So not only was she inevitably going to die, but she would die in agony. And what made it even worse was that there was nowhere for her to go and die. So she was just left on the floor of the emergency department to die.

The dehumanisation of Palestinians is barely a fair go for them. We are quick to condemn—and rightly so—anyone who says something antisemitic. However, when someone says something anti-Palestinian, it is not met with the same condemnation. That is far from a fair go. Mr Speaker, allow me to share with the House some words that have been said by Ministers in the Israeli Government, which must be called out and condemned.

In November 2023 heritage Minister Amichai Eliyahu said that "one way" to eradicate Hamas is to drop a nuclear bomb over Gaza. In March 2023 finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich said, "There is no such thing as a Palestinian people". In August 2023 national security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, who was previously convicted of racist incitement against Arabs and of backing a terrorist group, said:

My right, and my wife's and my children's right, to get around on the roads in Judea and Samaria is more important than the right to movement for Arabs.

In March 2024 Itamar Ben-Gvir also praised a sniper who shot and killed a 12-year-old Palestinian boy playing with fireworks by stating they "should receive a reward".

Those dangerous words seek to dehumanise Palestinians in both Gaza and the West Bank. Yet they have not been condemned. How can my community, many of whom have hopes for the Palestinian people, expect they

will get a fair go when this is the type of rhetoric that is being used by Ministers of the Israeli Government? A whole generation is being galvanised, here and abroad, into intolerance. The community want to see a two-state solution, where a free and safe Israel and free and safe Palestine live side by side. In our collective humanity, let us show up, stand up and speak up for all, including the human rights and dignity of the Palestinian people. We in this House should always stand for justice, because it is the right thing to do. The killing must stop, and we need eternal peace.

MULTICULTURALISM

Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (19:04): Throughout Riverstone lies a vibrant tapestry woven from the threads of multiculturalism. Today is Harmony Day, a significant occasion for our nation occurring on 21 March. It is a time to reflect on the way our nation is enriched by new migrants and to recognise the invaluable contributions they bring to our community and the profound impact they have had on our society. It is quite fitting that on Harmony Day, Lent is being observed by Catholics, Muslims are engaged in the holy month of Ramadan and Holi, the festival of colours, is being celebrated in the Indian diaspora. It is truly a time to appreciate the benefits of our multicultural society, one that is often globally hailed as the most successful and harmonious, perhaps because we are all migrants on this land except for those who can trace their ancestry back more than 236 years.

I sometimes wonder what Gadigal people of the Eora nation thought when they saw the first generation of new migrants arrive on tall ships into Botany Bay. Today first-generation immigrants, hailing from distant shores across the globe, choose to make Australia their home. They have not only embraced the Australian way of life but have also enriched it with their own unique cultural heritage. They have integrated into the fabric of our society, whilst retaining their respective practices and cultures but also picking up Aussie values of mateship, resilience and community spirit. It is a delicate balance of embracing Australian culture while preserving rich ethnic experiences and traditions.

In Riverstone, this duality is evident in the tireless efforts of first-generation migrants, who give back to the community in a myriad of ways. On weekends, they can be found dedicating their time to non-profit organisations, volunteering selflessly to support those in need and fostering a sense of unity among new residents. Whether it is organising food drives, providing language classes for newcomers or running cultural dance schools, these individuals are the backbone of our community, bridging cultural divides and fostering understanding. They are as dedicated to working within our community as the residents who have been living there for generations. Their contributions extend far beyond community service. They also enrich the cultural landscape of Riverstone, preserving their heritage through vibrant celebrations, festivals and cultural events. From traditional dance performances to culinary showcases, these gatherings serve as a testament to the richness and diversity of our community. I consider myself to be fortunate to be invited to many of those celebrations, and I am proud to say that I have forged many new friendships as a result.

However, it should also be acknowledged that not everyone has welcomed our new neighbours with open arms. Explosive population growth, largely made up of new migrants, has become a cause of concern for some of the residents who have lived in the area for many years before the development began. A lack of necessary infrastructure has acted as a focal point for racial division. Long-term residents have had their lives turned upside down by uncontrolled residential development and they often assign blame to our new neighbours. New residents, who have moved in expecting to see community facilities like parks and schools that they were promised by developers, are disappointed and confused by the lack of basic infrastructure to support their families. This social discord is a direct result of the failure of both State and local governments to adequately provide for the whole community.

We must look past the things that divide us and towards the things we have in common. Most of us have moved on from tolerance to acceptance. We must now progress towards embracing the opportunities that diversity offers. In essence, the value of multiculturalism lies in its ability to strengthen New South Wales society and our democracy. By embracing diversity and recognising the contributions of all members of our community, we can create a more resilient and inclusive society. New migrants bring with them a wealth of knowledge, experiences and traditions that enrich us, contributing to a more vibrant and dynamic community. Migrants actively participate in local sports clubs, not only as players but also as coaches, mentors and supporters. Through their involvement, they promote physical fitness and teamwork and foster a sense of belonging that transcends the cultural boundaries. In embracing both cultural roots and adopting Australian identity, migrants exemplify the true spirit of multiculturalism.

They remind us that diversity is not just a source of strength but also a cornerstone of our society. As we celebrate Harmony Day, I reaffirm my commitment to building an inclusive New South Wales, where every individual is valued and respected regardless of their background. I take the opportunity to recognise the contributions of first-generation migrants and the invaluable role that they play in shaping the vibrant tapestry of

our community, whether they arrived last week or 236 years ago. In doing so, we uphold the values that lie at the heart of our nation, strengthen the bonds that unite us as Australians and ensure that our inclusive and uniquely Australian brand of multiculturalism thrives for generations to come.

ASQUITH GOLF CLUB

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (19:09): Today I recognise Asquith Golf Club, one of the best golf clubs in New South Wales, which I am proud to be a patron of. The land that Asquith Golf Club is located on was previously part of Thomas Salmon's orchard, which was cleared and established in the 1860s. It was purchased from Mr Salmon in 1922 by a group of Sydney professionals under the name Ku-ring-gai Chase Golf Links Club Ltd with the specific intention of developing a golf course. However, the group's plans moved very slowly. Prior to a golf course being established, part of the land was used as a greyhound training track. That was located on the current second fairway. In 1938 the Asquith Golf Links, a syndicate of three gentlemen, purchased the land and from there the plans for the course accelerated.

Asquith Golf Club was officially opened by Hornsby Shire Council president Charles Somerville on 18 June 1938, initially as a nine-hole, par 35 course. The original clubhouse, built soon after the course was officially opened, was in the south-western corner of Royston Parade. It was described as a log-cabin-style building that opened for use in early 1939. To meet the needs of the growing membership, the original clubhouse was extended five times over the years. When the new and current clubhouse was completed in Lord Street in 1970, the old clubhouse housed a kindergarten for many years until it was sold to the Jehovah's Witnesses church in 1988.

In 1947 Hornsby council purchased a strip of land on the western side of the golf course for £1,000 in order to extend Royston Parade to link with Belmont Parade and Ku-ring-gai Chase Road in Mount Colah. The new road was a crucial alternative to the Pacific Highway, which by that time was already exceeding capacity. When the link was constructed in 1953, it was originally known as Golf Links Road. In April 1956 Asquith District Golf Club Ltd bought the freehold land from the syndicate and started to implement plans for the club's long-term future. In the late 1950s, the club resolved to expand the course to 18 holes. That decision was made with the knowledge that the club would be responsible for relocating the eastern section of the course affected by the proposed building of the Wahroonga to Berowra section of the freeway that had been planned to be constructed through the area at some stage in the future.

The decision to expand the course at the time had a certain amount of risk involved but, had it not been taken when it was, it is likely that the club would never have become an 18-hole course. The course was expanded from nine holes over time as, gradually, new holes were completed. By the mid-1960s it was a full 18-hole golf course. The original 18-hole layout was in use for 21 years. When construction on the freeway finally commenced in 1986, it dissected the course and necessitated the complete reconfiguration of seven of the last nine holes. Costs were kept to a minimum through the use of club members' voluntary labour, reciprocal assistance from the F3 contractors, re-use of existing greens and materials, and obtaining over 100,000 cubic metres of fill.

Notwithstanding that, between 1985 and 1990 the club spent well in excess of \$800,000 on work and associated capital costs. That was a substantial investment but well worth it when considering the lasting legacy of the magnificent course that has been enjoyed by many golfers over the years. Today Asquith golf course is 5,494 metres long with a par 70 layout. In Asquith Golf Club's first 85 years, it has developed from its early beginnings as a vision shared by three gentlemen who injected their enthusiasm to provide a quality golfing opportunity to the northernmost suburbs of Sydney. Today, under the watchful eye of the club's general manager, the outstanding Matthew Furze, Asquith Golf Club is professionally managed but remains a friendly club. It boasts a challenging, well-maintained course with a strong competitive spirit and well-developed traditions.

I acknowledge the outstanding board, which make the exceptional club what it is. Club president David Morgan leads an active board and has a clear vision for the club's future. I acknowledge vice-president Dilys Geddes; captain Stephen Farr; vice-captain Ian Malcolm; treasurer Kim Batchelder; and board members Barry Morris, Craig Fretwell, Craig Munns and Ben McGiffin. Asquith Golf Club is ethnically diverse. It is not just a major sporting asset for the Hornsby district; it is also well integrated into the local community for its role as a family-friendly venue that can host a wide range of events. I also recognise the great work of Mick Barry and Geoff Youdale, who picked up the extensive work of Asquith Golf Club's first club historian, Rose Wilder. Mick and Geoff produced their first book on the club in 1998 and an impressive, updated version was published in 2013 as part of the club's seventy-fifth anniversary. I say a big thank you to the club's current historian, Tony Hill, for allowing me to crosscheck my information to ensure it is accurate. I congratulate all the members of Asquith Golf Club on the outstanding work they have done to make it the great club it is.

HOUSING COOPERATIVES

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (19:14): I was recently involved in launching an important research report at the Western Sydney University campus in Liverpool, *The Value of Housing Co-Operatives in Australia*. I have previously spoken in this House about the impact of the housing crisis in Liverpool and the many ways that my office assists community members with those issues. Australia's contemporary housing landscape is dominated by private home ownership, and private rental and social rental housing. However, another option exists alongside those forms and offers opportunities for residents to have a say over their housing without having to enter into potentially unworkable levels of debt. Alongside affordability, the option also offers long-term stable, safe, secure and dignified housing for a growing number of Australians.

A housing cooperative is run by members for members—a community of people who work together to meet their housing needs. Co-op members share activities in the management and running of their co-op, with opportunities for all members to participate in the co-op according to their capacity and ability. Housing cooperatives are defined by a "one member, one vote" principle. That means, as both tenants and members, residents have a say in how the organisation runs and how homes are maintained. It is fitting that one of New South Wales' first housing Ministers and a former Premier of our great State was actually a former member for Liverpool, Jim McGirr. However, I think that Jim McGirr's most significant achievement was establishing the Housing Commission of New South Wales in his capacity as the housing Minister. That, as many would know, became the most important State body dealing with the post World War II and post-Depression housing shortage.

We find ourselves in a similar situation today. Liverpool has the second highest number of public housing dwellings in New South Wales out of the 93 electorates. Three suburbs in the electorate—Busby, Ashcroft and Miller—have some of the highest rates of housing stress in Australia. The housing crisis is palpable. Some 80 per cent of the inquiries my office receives are related to housing and, as always, people's stories tear at your heart. But different contexts and challenges call for different solutions. In the words of Rahm Emanuel:

You never want a serious crisis to go to waste. And what I mean by that is an opportunity to do things that you think you could not do before.

The report details the important role that housing cooperatives play in offering choice in housing. It is an option that can provide dignity through a sense of ownership and empowerment. Cooperatives can help people settle down, grow as individuals, build careers, keep their kids in the same school and contribute to their neighbourhoods. They play a huge role in people building and experiencing community, which is often forgotten when we think and talk about housing.

One of my pet hates is the focus on dwellings when we talk about housing. That reduction of where we spend so much of our time and what can often determine the trajectory of our lives to bricks and mortar really bugs me. I am an occupational therapist before I am a politician and have spent most of my working life in the mental health and youth sectors, so the reported beneficial impacts of cooperative living on skill development, employment, education, a sense of stability and security, a sense of wellbeing and agency really stand out to me. I particularly appreciate that the report provides evidence for a different model of thriving and living. It is a model that places human connection, personal responsibility, equity and shared values at its heart. As a private rental tenant, the idea of unwittingly becoming drawn into the lives of my neighbours speaks to a busybody like me.

Liz Thomas of Common Equity Housing Limited mentioned the importance of training and resources in supporting the establishment of cooperatives. That speaks to the skill development and empowerment that can have a compounding beneficial impact for culturally and linguistically diverse members of our community. The type of arrangement that many may see as a cooperative can be widespread, even though it may not be formally labelled as a cooperative. Liz Thomas highlights cooperative housing as potentially providing the missing middle in our housing affordability crisis. I particularly thank Professor Louise Crabtree-Hayes of the Institute for Culture and Society, her whole team and the stakeholders who have contributed to bringing this research to life. I look forward to this body of work contributing to the public discourse and identified solutions to the current housing crisis.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne) (19:19): I take this opportunity to talk about the rising cost of living and housing affordability. It affects our entire State. When I am out and about in my local community, the cost of living is the number one issue that people talk to me about, including the cost of electricity bills, rising interest rates, jacked-up rents, skyrocketing grocery costs, ridiculous petrol prices and expensive medicines. Bills are out of control. Everything is going up. Household budgets are stretched to the limit. It is a crisis, and people are struggling. I ask the Government to support vital cost-of-living relief to help those who are doing it tough. Rising bills are affecting everyone in our community—the vulnerable, young people, seniors, pensioners, single parents and families.

I was recently contacted by Rian in Concord, who told me, "Cost of living is the biggest concern for my family." Sia from Rhodes similarly said that "cost of living and rent increases" are issues she would like to see me raise in this Parliament. I want my community to know that relieving cost-of-living pressures is front of mind for me as their representative. Like many communities across Sydney and New South Wales, the inner west is facing strong challenges when it comes to housing affordability. For people including the vulnerable, the availability of safe, affordable and well-maintained housing is low. People are being priced out of the inner west, whether they are buying or renting. More than one-third of residents in my community rent, and the waiting list for public and community housing continues to grow, with some people waiting more than 10 years from the time they first apply.

While we are in a cost-of-living crisis, the Government should look at providing greater support for renters. I remind the House that last year the Labor Government committed to ending no-grounds evictions, which the Opposition supports. It must go ahead as soon as possible. I was recently contacted by local resident Barbara, a 22-year-old student who is working and studying full-time. She said:

Major rent increases, broken bathroom fans, leaking kitchen sinks and broken fly screens are some of the multiple issues my peers face daily while renting. However, because of the Residential Tenancies Act that currently withstands, they shy away from confronting their landlords about these issues for fear of being seen as 'causing too much trouble' which has seen some tenants kicked out of their home.

Paula, a local mother in Concord West, recently wrote to me and said:

I am very concerned that no fault eviction is addressed.

We have two adult children - 27 and 23 - who have both needed to move back into the family home. My oldest child is studying social work and needs to do an unpaid placement, so has come home because she could not afford to live independently. My son works full time in retail but has been unable to find an affordable rental.

The rental situation in Sydney specifically and NSW more broadly is very difficult. The legislation desperately needs updating and I hope you will ensure that the governments proposed changes includes reforms to address no fault eviction.

I promise Paula that I will. I call on the Government to provide greater support to renters and greater support to reduce cost-of-living pressures.

WYONG RIVER SALVINIA WEED OUTBREAK

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) (19:23): I update my community on the salvinia breakout on the Wyong River. For members who do not know, salvinia is a free-floating weed that thrives particularly in warmer weather, forming dense mats of vegetation on water surfaces. It is a declared weed and was identified earlier this month on the Wyong River Weir near the Wyong Milk Factory. I am informed that it can start from the size of your thumbnail and doubles in size every 24 hours. So the weed is spreading at a very rapid rate. Central Coast Council is working with Crown Lands in the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure to support the removal of the weed from the Wyong River.

It is important that this happens for two reasons: first, the biodiversity of the waterway; and, secondly, the water quality. On an intermittent basis, water is withdrawn from the river to boost the Central Coast's water supply. So it is important that the weed is removed. The council acted as quickly as it could. One of the first difficulties was finding who is responsible. Many of our waterways are governed by multiple government departments, so that is not always easy to do. Council determined that Crown Lands is responsible for the riverbed. Crown Lands has taken responsibility and is happy to assist council in removing the weed. I am informed that in the past two days aquatic machinery has been put in place, just west of the Alison Road bridge, and they will start to remove the weed from the waterway. That will take four to six weeks, subject to any heavy rainfall in the meantime.

It is a big job. They have to manually remove the weed by putting the machinery into the water and extracting the weed. Another option that they will consider is the introduction of a weevil, which eats the weed. But the manual extraction is important. It is a big lesson for people. *Salvinia molesta* is native to South America. However, it is found across Australia. It is listed as a weed of national significance, and it must not be sold anywhere in New South Wales. It spreads by attaching to boats, trailers and vehicles or to animals such as waterbirds, turtles and cattle. Human activities, such as keeping the weed in fish ponds or aquariums and inappropriate disposal of it, can lead to outbreaks in our waterways. We ask people to be careful to ensure that, if they have been in an area that is infected by the weed, they wash down their equipment et cetera so that it does not get carried. I am not sure what to do about the turtles and waterbirds; they are harder to control. Certainly once the weed takes hold, it is difficult to remove.

Council is working hard on this issue. I spoke with Jamie Loader, CEO of Central Coast Council Water and Sewer. He is right on the job. I am also monitoring what is going on and talking to the local radio station to

keep them updated. It is good news that the manual removal has now started. Hopefully we can get it all out of the waterway, protect the biodiversity of the Wyong River and also protect our important water resource, because, particularly over winter and in times of high rainfall, we extract that water and put it into the Mardi Dam to protect us from drought through the summer months.

WENTWORTH PARK

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (19:28): I speak on an issue that is of great interest in my electorate of Balmain, and that is the future of Wentworth Park. It is so critical for our communities to have access to green open space. It is essential to our quality of life. Access to good quality green spaces provides huge benefits to health and wellbeing by offering places to relax and socialise, enabling increased physical activity and enhancing our connections to nature and wildlife. Unfortunately, access to green space, particularly in the inner city, is often hard to come by. Australia is one of the world's most urbanised countries, with close to 89 per cent of our population living in a concentrated selection of urban areas.

Within my electorate of Balmain, we have both Pyrmont and Ultimo—two of our country's most densely populated suburbs, with 14,000 people per square kilometre. For densely populated suburbs like Ultimo and Pyrmont, as well as surrounding suburbs like Glebe, access to public green space must be a priority. That is why my community welcomed the 2020 commitment from the former Government to end dog racing at the Wentworth Park Greyhounds track in 2027 when the licence expires. As part of the Pyrmont Peninsula Place Strategy, the park was to be returned to the community as publicly accessible green open space, with active consultation on the future of this important park. However, this much anticipated expansion of public green space has been thrown into uncertainty. During budget estimates in February, Minister Kamper admitted that the Government was reconsidering the future of the site, including the continuity of some form of racing. This is nothing short of a betrayal for our local community.

With our community continuing to grow, including the old fish market site and other developments that will bring hundreds, if not thousands, of new residents into the area, it is clear that we need to prioritise access to green open spaces more than ever, particularly in areas like ours in the inner city. The City of Sydney has already undertaken early consultation for the development of a master plan for Wentworth Park. The consultation revealed overwhelming public support for the removal of the greyhound track to create more open public parkland for the community. I do not want to see our community ignored. The use of our public land must be decided by the community, with the best interests of the community at heart, and not by the gambling and racing industries. If the Government decides to ignore overwhelming community sentiment and keep greyhound racing at Wentworth Park open beyond 2027, it will send a clear message that the Government values the greyhound industry and the gambling industry over and above the needs of community.

Let us take a closer look at the industry that the Labor Government is prioritising over our community. Six years ago the greyhound racing industry was close to being shut down due to extensive and well-documented animal cruelty. The industry should never have been given a second chance. The Greens have long been advocates for an end to cruel and exploitative greyhound racing. Despite years of evidence demonstrating how broken and beyond reform this industry is, the Government has tried to claim that the Wentworth Park track is one of the safest tracks in the State. However, this supposedly safe track has seen no shortage of animal cruelty and suffering. In the first two months of 2024 alone, two greyhounds were killed and another 99 injured at the Wentworth Park track. No track is truly safe for greyhounds, including Wentworth Park.

How many more innocent dogs will lose their lives or suffer catastrophic injuries, not only between now and 2027 but beyond, if this track is allowed to remain open? This cruel gambling-fuelled industry is beyond reform and it does not have the social licence to continue operating. Our community and people across New South Wales have made it abundantly clear that they want this track closed and they want the land returned to public use. Despite the serious animal welfare concerns and overwhelming community opposition to the industry, the Government has propped up the cruel operations at Wentworth Park by pouring over \$30 million in public money into track upgrades. This is not an appropriate use of public money.

It is both inappropriate and unnecessary for this money to be funnelled into this cruel industry. Public money should instead be spent on commencing the formal closure of the track and revitalising the parkland in line with the wishes of the community and the commitments of the former Government to end dog racing at this site in 2027. My community had high hopes for a New South Wales Labor Government after 12 years under the Coalition. The potential loss of future public open green space is bitterly disappointing. Our community does not support cruel greyhound racing and wants to see Wentworth Park returned to public hands. I urge the Government to get the priorities right and commit to returning Wentworth Park to the community.

NOWRUZ

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (19:33): I wish a very happy Nowruz to all the Afghan, Iranian, Kurdish, Iraqi, North Indian and Pakistani Australians and other communities who celebrate this very special occasion. Nowruz is celebrated on the day of the astronomical vernal equinox, which usually takes place on 21 March—today—and has become a significant occasion in the Granville electorate with so many migrants and refugees from Afghanistan and Iran making Merrylands, Granville, Guildford and Holroyd their home. Nowruz marks the Persian New Year and is a celebration of the Northern Hemisphere spring. Nowruz is a combination of two words: "now", meaning "new", and "ruz" or "roz", meaning "day", which together mean the new day or first day of the new Persian year. It symbolises rebirth and the affirmation of life in harmony with nature. It brings colour and celebration to about 300 million people worldwide, including in New South Wales. It has a rich history that dates back over 3,000 years as a Zoroastrian tradition that has evolved into a secular tradition which today is celebrated by Muslims, Christians and Jews alike.

Interestingly, in the time of the Persian Empire, which was roughly 559-331 BCE, the rulers of all of the subject countries were summoned at Nowruz to bring gifts and pay homage to the king at Persepolis, the ruins of which remain in the Iranian city of Shiraz. In this way, the kings could show the ancestors that they were prospering—something that remains an important aspect of the holiday. An important tradition practised during this time is the gathering around the Nowruz table—which is decorated with objects that symbolise purity, brightness, livelihood and wealth—to enjoy a special meal with loved ones. Usually there are seven objects and each begins with "S" in Farsi. These include water, candles, dishes of green sprouts—or sabzeh—as well as the *Koran* or other holy book, and a bowl containing goldfish.

Fruit-based desserts like haft mewa—the seven-fruit cocktail—and samanak or saman are the special traditional desserts for celebrating this wonderful day. Afghan people call it samanak whilst Iranians call it saman, and there is no simple English translation. However, it is the special dessert treasured at Nowruz time. It is cooked once a year and involves a special ceremony and lots of effort—10 to 15 days are required to prepare it! The main ingredient is top quality wheat that is watered daily. Once the wheat has grown sufficiently to produce thick white roots and, above them, green blades, the Afghan people gather around the tray with the wheat. Everyone makes a wish in their hearts and starts to cut the green blades with scissors. If the number of blades a person cuts is odd, it is believed that his or her wish will come true during that year. Other common traditions include house cleaning, visiting friends and family, and large community picnics to welcome spring. The Afghan and Iranian families in my area also often celebrate Nowruz with their relatives overseas via Zoom or WhatsApp.

This year Cumberland council and the local Afghan and Persian communities will be celebrating Nowruz on Saturday night in Merrylands, and I am thrilled that the New South Wales Government is also funding this wonderful event. Last year council celebrated Nowruz for the first time, and it was a huge success, with hundreds of people gathering to celebrate in Granville. I am hoping this year will be even bigger and better. I invite everyone to join us and enjoy the best most delicious food in Sydney: mantu, Qabeli palaw, borani banjan, meat skewers, fluffy Afghan bread, saffron ice cream—the list goes on.

Our community has the largest concentration of Afghan and Persian businesses in the Merrylands CBD and it is a great opportunity to promote this unique and wonderful cultural asset to the wider Australian community. Of course, in celebrating that, we cannot overlook why Afghan and Iranian people have sought asylum in Australia over the last four decades, and the continuing struggles of their friends and relatives in Afghanistan and Iran. For the Afghan community, the last three years since the Taliban regained control of Afghanistan have been really challenging. Many are still trying to bring relatives to safety in Australia. The economy has collapsed and people are struggling. Women and girls have been excluded from universities, schools, sport, many workplaces and much of public life.

In addition, of the three to four million Afghan refugees in Pakistan, 1.7 million are facing expulsion—even those who were born in camps in Pakistan. This is particularly frightening for those who fled the Taliban and face persecution if they return to Afghanistan. I hope the new year and new spring bring to life hope and good fortune for all those who are celebrating Nowruz, especially those who are trying to bring their families to safety. I hope that, despite those concerns, they can come together and enjoy Nowruz and the sense of optimism it brings. May they be blessed with happiness, success and good health. Nowruz Mubarak!

JUNEE CORRECTIONAL CENTRE

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (19:38): In November last year I stood in this place and foreshadowed what I believed would be the disastrous consequences of the Government's takeover of operations at the Junee Correctional Centre, currently undertaken by GEO Group. It now seems that my fears are coming to pass. Just four short months ago I warned the Minister of the implications of this ill-considered shock decision, and indeed it is already proving to be the wrong decision for the people of Junee and the surrounding communities.

After countless invitations from me, it took the Minister two months to travel to Junee for what was his first visit to the town and the facility.

At my request, he agreed to meet with members of the community to hear firsthand how their local organisations and charity groups have benefited from GEO Group's generosity. People like Jacqueline Stevens and Darren Corbett from the Junee Community Centre, Kerry Phelan from the Illabo Gasworks Motorsport group and the Junee Men's Shed, and Martin Holmes from the Junee Jokers Bowling Club. During the meeting the Minister heard directly, for the first time, from these local people about how local schoolchildren have benefited from the more than \$77,000 in scholarships GEO has provided in the last five years; how community organisations have benefited from more than \$172,000 in sponsorships and donations from GEO Group in the last five years; and how the general amenity of the town is maintained thanks to work by the inmates, taking pressure off local volunteers.

The Minister learnt that, should the financial and in-kind support currently provided by GEO Group evaporate when it hands over the reins in 12 months, the social implications are immense, threatening the very fabric that keeps this community together. And yet during budget estimates hearings, when asked what will happen to the investments GEO is making, this was the response from the Secretary of the Department of Communities and Justice:

Those types of donations or financial contributions will not continue under Corrective Services, and there's only one way of saying that: that is that they won't continue.

There we have it. There is no way to gild that lily. The investment in this community will simply evaporate. During that first and only meeting with the community, the Minister was also told about how GEO Group uses local small businesses to supply the centre: the butchery, the bakery and the supermarket, for example. In fact, the annual spending by GEO alone on goods and services in the town was around \$7½ million. When asked during budget estimates whether this would continue, there was this blunt response from the acting commissioner of Corrective Services NSW, "Corrective Services procure on a statewide basis, as you might expect." Translation: Unless the local small businesses can beat the big guys in a competitive tender for goods and services and be willing and able to supply correctional facilities in other areas of New South Wales, they have Buckley's chance of retaining the correctional centre in Junee as a customer.

During the Minister's one and only visit to Junee, he was made aware of concerns about staffing and the future classification of the centre. A large number of employees have been working for GEO for a considerable period, some close to 20 years, but I now have concerns about staff tenure at this centre. It has come to my attention that a number of correctional officers, who are understandably concerned about their future job security following the Government's shocking decision, have left the centre. These experienced staff members are crucial to keeping communities safe and supporting inmates. Every departure leaves a void at the centre, at a highly critical time. The ramifications of this are vast, beginning with the strain on social services and local police resources, which are already stretched to the absolute limit. From the outset, the one thing I have asked of the Minister is to guarantee that no member of this small community will be left worse off by the decision to change operations. We are now 12 months until the transition will be complete and it is looking much like this guarantee is well beyond the Minister's reach.

DOMESTIC MANUFACTURING

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (19:43): As the member for Prospect, I recognise the great potential of domestic manufacturing and procurement in Western Sydney and across New South Wales. Prospect contains the largest manufacturing area in the Southern Hemisphere. From our much-loved Aussie Tim Tams at Arnott's to critical dialysis equipment at Fresenius Medical Care and even zero-emission buses at Aluminium Revolutionary Chassis Company [ARCC], local manufacturing is booming in Prospect. Domestic, locally sourced manufacturing is the answer to sustainable economic growth for New South Wales. The Minns Labor Government recognises this. We are committed to transforming our State's procurement frameworks to promote local industries, accelerate economic growth, support regional development and ensure that jobs remain onshore. With the Hon. Courtney Houssos, Minister for Domestic Manufacturing and Government Procurement, the Minns Labor Government is making responsible investments in domestic manufacturing to return opportunities to the people of New South Wales, unlike the previous Liberal Government's obsession with privatisation, outsourcing and offshore manufacturing.

Our economy must have a sovereign manufacturing component at its core. We know that for every one job in manufacturing a further three and a half are created in the supply chain and we want those jobs to be in New South Wales. By committing to domestic manufacturing, we help to grow innovative businesses like ARCC. Leading from Western Sydney, ARCC manufactured Australia's first hydrogen fuel cell electric bus. This bus transported passengers across the Central Coast in the New South Wales zero emission bus trial, driving 16 hours

across some 515 kilometres of road on just 32 kilograms of hydrogen. A diesel bus would consume 170 litres of diesel. I acknowledge Managing Director Peter Murley, Marketing and Quality System Manager Samuel Yeo and the whole ARCC team for creating sustainable solutions for our future.

For over 158 years, Arnott's Biscuits has pioneered sustainable, innovative practices to lead the Australian food and manufacturing sector. Arnott's has made Western Sydney the beating heart of its operations, with both the group's largest biscuit manufacturing site and its new automated distribution centre. Leveraging robotics and automation, these sites accommodate 60 per cent of the national inventory. I acknowledge CEO George Zoghbi, Chief Supply Officer Nigel Harrison, Director of Procurement and Logistics Tom Vicars and the whole Arnott's team for investing in employment opportunities for generations of families, including mine. Fresenius Medical Care is a leading provider of products and services to support people experiencing chronic kidney failure. Located in Smithfield, it strives to research and produce innovative products and technologies to offer patients the best possible quality of life. I acknowledge General Manager John Amiradaki and the dedicated team for pioneering innovative solutions for the medical industry and our local community.

As Australasia's largest producer of energy from waste, ResourceCo re-manufactures commercial and industrial construction waste, which would become landfill, into recycled products. Based in Wetherill Park, ResourceCo processes dry waste to recover products like metal, timber, textiles and asphalt into process-engineered fuels, offering alternative, high-yield energy sources to reduce emissions. ResourceCo has repurposed some 60 million tonnes of waste, saving 60 million tonnes of CO2 emissions in the process. I acknowledge CEO Tyson Sara, Development Director Sam Marshall and Wetherill Park General Manager Sandaran Govender for their commitment to sustainable solutions in Western Sydney.

It was great to welcome the Hon. Courtney Houssos and TAFE Minister Steve Whan to the Wetherill Park Manufacturing Centre of Excellence recently. This great TAFE with great technology and great training is producing the future tradespeople who will lead our manufacturing sector. Spending procurement dollars on locally manufactured goods means that the New South Wales economy can enjoy the multiplier effects of those investments. It also protects our communities from unreasonable cost increases from offshore manufacturers and ensures that, when supply is struggling to meet demand, we can prioritise the people of New South Wales. I commend the local industry.

HAMBLEDON COTTAGE

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (19:48): This year marks the bicentenary of Hambledon Cottage, which is on Dharug land. It is an important part of the Parramatta story and the Australian story. Hambledon Cottage is a colonial Georgian building listed on the State Heritage Register, built of sandstone brick, with a vaulted ceiling and a verandah enclosed by French doors. Today Hambledon Cottage sits within small grounds filled with heritage-listed trees, some nearly 200 years old. The grounds around Hambledon were not always so small.

The cottage was originally part of the Elizabeth Farm estate, built by John Macarthur, whose portrait hangs in the cottage. Macarthur received a 100-acre land grant of "some of the best ground that has been discovered". He was an entrepreneur, politician, architect and pioneer of European settlement in Australia. He was full of vision, but also had many flaws. He pioneered the wool industry in Australia. He was part of the infamous Rum Corps, and at one stage had almost complete control of the finances and administration of both the military and civil sections of the colony, and he relentlessly persecuted Governors who would defy him.

Elizabeth Farm and Macarthur and Hambledon cottages were established after neighbouring Experiment Farm, the site of the first land grant in Australia, made in 1790 by Governor Phillip to the former convict James Ruse. Aptly titled, it was the first farm in the Parramatta region, established as a test run to demonstrate that Rose Hill—as Parramatta was then named—was self-sufficient. Thanks to the efforts of campaigners over many years, the properties are all listed on the New South Wales State Heritage Register. They were all built along Clay Cliff Creek and are all incredibly significant to Australia's European farming history. Thanks to the State Government, the City of Parramatta and the National Trust, the properties are open to the public, providing a powerful insight into the past.

As the National Trust has said, to have those three historic homesteads conserved within Harris Park is a rare and precious feat. However, over many years the curtilage, sightlines and physical link between the three properties has been excised with the growth of Harris Park. That was made even worse when a pharmaceutical plant was built at 2a Gregory Place late last century. While we should be focusing on the 200th birthday celebrations of Hambledon Cottage, a dark cloud looms over the future of the heritage precinct, which today also boasts the striking Our Lady of Lebanon Co-Cathedral.

There is a proposed development at 2a Gregory Place on the site where the dilapidated pharmaceutical building now stands, behind Hambledon Cottage and partially in front of Experiment Farm reserve. The 2a Gregory Place site sits at the midpoint of what the National Trust describes as "three of the most significant historic houses in Australia", and they are right to state that the proposal will have an overwhelmingly negative impact on both the cottage setting and the surrounding cultural landscape. The City of Parramatta has objected to the development, highlighting serious flood risks, traffic management issues, bulk and scale, as well as the impacts on the neighbouring heritage sites.

There are no quick fixes for this. We need affordable housing and greater housing choice across our city. However, careful design and planning are also required to meet those needs in the right places, informed by community views—sustainable, appropriate development. My community should be celebrating the bicentenary of Hambledon Cottage; instead, we are fearful of what the future will bring for that very important precinct. I pay tribute to the Parramatta and District Historical Society volunteer guides who bring the stories of the place to life and have worked tirelessly over decades to preserve and promote its importance to our Australian story. Happy birthday, Hambledon Cottage, and may we all carefully consider the text for the next chapters of its story.

E-BIKE SAFETY

Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater) (19:53): I address a matter of increasing concern within Pittwater. The unchecked proliferation of e-bikes within Pittwater and across New South Wales has created significant challenges. To quote an old friend, former Manly, Warringah and Northern Beaches councillor Pat Daley, e-bikes are a challenge that has become bigger than *Ben Hur*. They present issues that need to be addressed. We are seeing a surge in people of all ages, but particularly younger people, buying and using e-bikes. The use of non-car based and active travel should be encouraged, as its benefits are immeasurable. It gets cars off the road and fumes out of the air, and it promotes a healthy lifestyle. However, the opportunity to avail ourselves of those benefits is being missed in some ways. In large swathes of Pittwater, we too often see young people riding around on e-bikes designed for rural properties, with maximum speeds of 60 kilometres per hour. In simple terms, the maximum legal speed for an e-bike or pedal-assist bike is 25 kilometres per hour, so those mini motorbikes pose safety risks, especially given the further matters I will refer to.

We see young people riding at high speeds, without helmets and with multiple young people on the one bike. We see e-bike riders speeding on footpaths, typically with the elderly or parents with young children in the firing line. Earlier this year three young girls were involved in an accident. One of the girls, who was reported not to be wearing a helmet, was treated for possible head and spinal injuries. She was taken to the Sydney Children's Hospital in Randwick. Every day I receive more reports of accidents and near misses involving e-bikes. An additional challenge is that e-bikes do not benefit from third-party personal injury insurance in the same way as drivers of cars or riders of motorbikes. That means every accident involving an e-bike puts individuals' and their families' livelihoods at risk, not only because of the devastating impact of injury on the rider but also because of the legal liability for the injury of another.

Issues such as this are always a challenge: balancing the freedom of the individual with the freedom of others. No-one likes a nanny state, and rules must be proportionate to the relative risk of harm associated with a given activity. In this case, the regulation of e-bikes has not kept pace with the associated risks. The safety issues need to be addressed, and that will happen through better regulation and enforcement. In January I wrote to the Government to urge it to provide New South Wales police with greater resources for enforcement, to fund a public education campaign and to consider how it can better regulate the space. In respect of enforcement, police do not seem to be given the support they need. From 1 July 2023 until March in Pittwater, only 39 infringement notices were issued for failure to wear a helmet and only seven fines were issued to those over the age of 16 for riding on footpaths. No infringement notices were issued for riders who carried more passengers than were meant to be on a bike. Zero fines were issued for exceeding the speed limit and zero fines were issued for negligent riding.

It is a tough space to enforce the law and the figures are not representative of the infringements being committed. Notwithstanding that, it is clear that the Government needs to provide more support to our police. Council rangers should be empowered to issue bike-related infringement notices. Regarding regulation, the Government needs to consider an insurance scheme for certain kinds of e-bikes. It needs to consider whether it is appropriate for kids as young as six to ride e-bikes or mini motorbikes. Should there be a minimum age to purchase, own or ride an e-bike? Should riders receive some educational resources regarding rules? Should the Federal Government do more to prevent the importing of e-bikes whose speed limiters can be readily removed or tampered with? Should there be penalties, or greater penalties, for manufacturers and distributors who are in breach of the rules? What should be the extent of education campaigns for parents and children, and through schools, to help communities grapple with the challenge?

I am not prescribing an answer to those questions and, indeed, some of the answers cause the instinctive libertarian within me to squirm. But it is important that the Government engages on the issue, and does so now.

I know the Government is mindful of that and I continue to urge it to be ever mindful. We do not have time to waste; we cannot wait until a child dies or ends up in a wheelchair. E-bikes have tremendous capacity to transform our communities for the better, but we need to carefully but quickly consider how we ensure that they are a net positive and not a net negative.

CAMDEN SHOW

Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (19:58): No-one from the Camden area can ever forget the image of a Ferris wheel half covered in floodwaters. After a few years break, and after I was unable to attend last year because it fell on the same weekend as the election, last weekend I attended the 138th Camden Show. Over 15 and 16 March, a brand-new record of 46,000 people attended Camden Show. Assisted by 450 volunteers, on Friday we entertained 4,825 school students, who were able to attend due to free school-organised excursions. The pavilion had 3,200 entries, including needle craft, quilting, flower arranging, sugar art, cooking, honey, jams and preserves, art and photography. I happily share with the House that I purchased one of the pieces of art—an artwork that came second—that depicts a beautiful scene near the Camden Show site. I bought it to display in my Parliamentary office. There were 500 entries in the poultry section of the Camden Show. For the first time in 80 years the poultry shed has been completely refurbished. It is looking absolutely beautiful and smelling the best it has in a very long time.

On Saturday an afternoon tea was held at the Edward Macarthur-Onslow Pavilion, known to locals as Ted's Shed, and awards were handed out to recognise some incredible achievements. For example, Hugh Southwell, a past president of the Camden Show Society, was awarded a life membership. Gavin Moore, a councillor from the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW, awarded John Grauver the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW Agricultural Shows Award. Camden Show Society President David Dunbier presented the Excellence in Agriculture and Rural Business Award to Gavin Moore and Hayley Mahoney. We were also excited to have Group 5 president Michael Brennan present David Baker with an award of appreciation for his support and mentorship of young people in agriculture. I add my personal congratulations to David; I used to work with him at Macarthur Anglican School.

It is important to dwell on what show societies do for our towns. Not only do they bring in tourism, but they also draw the support of rural locals and neighbours. Many people from Wollondilly came to Camden to enjoy the show—and to show what they can do. It gives city people access to a country show that is a fair bit cheaper than the Sydney Royal Easter Show and that can be covered in a single day. People are able to come out and enjoy the traditions and customs of the country while staying in Sydney. I loved the incubation of small local businesses in the Style Pavilion. Representatives from the Camden Show Society told me that they went out and found businesses that were small and local that they could support for those two days. They gave them the opportunity to show what they can provide to the greater society. I found that very exciting.

I spoke to one of those business owners, and she said that she had made more money over the two days of the Camden Show than she had up until that point in her business. The shows also offer the opportunity to showcase and provide information about local community groups. There were community group stalls and emergency services stalls. Children were able to go from a Rural Fire Service fire truck to a police motorbike and then on to a CareFlight helicopter. That caused a lot of excitement. There were a lot of overexcited children, especially at 4.00 p.m. on the Friday. What I really love about the Camden Show is that it is an opportunity for us to come together as a town to celebrate our history and what makes us Camden. I thank the Camden Show Society for its incredible help.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr): I thank the member and recognise her passion for the Camden Show. We had many conversations in the weeks leading up to the show about how exciting it was.

TAMWORTH ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (20:03): I speak on an issue that is important to the Tamworth electorate and that will significantly impact businesses and families in my area. Over the past 12 years, the former New South Wales Government invested strongly in infrastructure within the Tamworth electorate. I was proud to be part of a government that funded the public infrastructure that created jobs and put food on the table of local families for more than a decade. Over the past 12 years the Tamworth electorate has transformed, as we have seen incredible investment in our roads, as well as new police stations, new fire stations, upgraded schools, new health facilities, incredible infrastructure that allowed for new development, rail infrastructure, and population growth. These are the projects that have contributed to the local economy for more than a decade. They are the projects that were the seed for an incredible amount of private investment, with businesses and developers seeing a strong future in Tamworth.

Private development always follows public development, and in the Tamworth electorate there is a lot of confidence thanks to the Coalition Government's attention to the area. More than 16 per cent of the Tamworth workforce is employed in the manufacturing and construction sectors. That means that when development is happening locally, there is food on the table for local families and local businesses thrive. The immediate future for those families and businesses is bright. Our region has transformative projects like the Gunnedah Hospital, the new Tamworth Mental Health Unit, the Goonoo Goonoo Road upgrade, the Port Stephens Cutting and more that will continue under this Government. I commend the Government for continuing the investment that we have been working on for so long.

I am looking forward to the future and to seeing what is next for our region, but I am deeply concerned that the current Government is not planning for the future in regional New South Wales. I am deeply concerned that there are no plans for further infrastructure development in my region. I know that when construction slows, when the work dries up, there will be thousands of families in the Tamworth electorate who will struggle to make a living. I know that when the construction slows, the growth and economic development of our region will slow. We need a government that has its eye on the future—and that has its eye on building our future. For that to happen, the Government needs to start planning now.

I have been calling on this Government to commit to a new school for Tamworth, so that our kids have a place to go once the expansive housing developments in Moore Creek are complete. That is a population of more than 10,000 people living in an area that will be without a school, the nearest being five kilometres away—a school in Oxley Vale that is already bursting at the seams. I am pushing for this new school for two reasons. Firstly, it is so necessary for the many families who are choosing Moore Creek as a place to live. Secondly, we know that public investment in infrastructure has much wider benefits than buildings themselves. We know that infrastructure equals jobs. We know that infrastructure means putting food on the tables of local tradies. We know that investment in infrastructure has a multiplier effect of encouraging private investment in the area, attracting new people to the region and growing the population base.

I call on this Government to get out of Macquarie Street. Visit the regions and see the future we are trying to create for our people in regional New South Wales—and, more particularly, the Tamworth electorate. I am not going to stop fighting, and the Government should know that. Our kids and our community deserve better, and I expect this Government to act.

HAMMONDCARE BRAESIDE HOSPITAL

Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (20:07): Volunteers play a crucial role in society. Tonight I highlight the dedicated team of volunteers behind HammondCare's Braeside Hospital. Located in Prairiewood, Braeside Hospital provides specialised health and community services, including rehabilitation, palliative care and older people's mental health support for individuals in Fairfield and across greater south-western Sydney. In fostering social connections, we nurture both mental and physical wellbeing. There are established links between social connections, lower rates of anxiety and depression, and higher self-esteem. That is essential for rehabilitation, palliative care and elderly patients, and that is why the work of the Braeside volunteers is so vital.

Braeside volunteers generously give up their time to not only support the hospital but improve quality of life by helping people feel less isolated. Today I share a glimpse into their contributions. Alicia Harlow, John Harlow and Peter Trpkoski manage the Braeside Kiosk, channelling profits to the volunteer-led Happy Hour Trolley. Volunteers like Anna Froio, Madhu Mudaliar, Usha Prasad and Sinilia Radivojevic visit each room, offering treats and beverages to patients and their families. Madhu also oversees the volunteer library. Anil Mudaliar, Jyothsna Babu, Rebekah Derevnina, and Shudkirti Sharma help with administrative tasks in the hospital. Denis Price assists the pastoral care provider with the Hump Day Coffee Cart, benefiting HammondCare's international projects and lending a hand at special events.

Angela Chio, Hoang Nguyen and Nancy De Guzman tend to the hospital gardens, and Robert Santilli assists in property maintenance, enriching the Braeside community. Finally, Maureen Farrugia provides companionship through social visits to patients who need it most. Each individual fulfils an important role, collectively fostering a stronger, more interconnected community. They help create a space of emotional comfort for patients and their families. I extend my deepest gratitude to those volunteers and all who support Braeside Hospital. They truly make a difference in the lives of many in our community. For that, I thank them.

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (20:10): For some people, 21 March is Harmony Day. For others around the world, including those of us in The Greens, today is the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. It is a day not of celebration but of deep reckoning with the systemic racism that still pervades all aspects of our society. For those who do not know, the United Nations declared the first International Day for the

Elimination of Racial Discrimination on 21 March 1966—six years to the day after police opened fire on peaceful anti-segregation protestors in Sharpeville, South Africa. Every year since on 21 March, we honour the 69 people who were killed and the 180 who were injured for peacefully taking action to oppose horrifically racist laws that sought to divide and oppress people on the basis of race.

Their courage, and the inexcusably violent response by South African police, should never be forgotten. Shamefully, that is exactly what the Howard Government sought to do in 1999 when it replaced commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination with the celebration of Harmony Day. In 2019 the Morrison Government expanded it to Harmony Week. Australia is the only country in the world where, on 21 March every year, instead of commemorating the Sharpeville massacre and committing to ending the deeply entrenched racism that caused it, we host a multicultural morning tea or bring a plate of food to pat each other on the back for having solved racism, and then we call it a day for another year.

Children in our public schools are encouraged to come to school on 21 March wearing orange or cultural dress in honour of Harmony Day. Most kids, wanting to be like other kids, wear orange because they do not want to stand out. The focus on orange actually erases the idea of difference. On Harmony Day, we all wear one colour. It is not lost on The Greens that, rather than encouraging the celebration of difference, it turns children into one homogenous mass of orange—the colour of Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party, no less. To be clear, The Greens absolutely support celebrating the diversity that makes our communities stronger. The spaces in which we live, work and play are made more vibrant and richer as a result of drawing on people's backgrounds, cultures, histories and perspectives. But we can, and should, celebrate diversity any other day of the year, and it should not stop us from addressing the racist foundations of our society or the racial injustice that still divides and harms communities today.

Race is not a dirty word. Talking about race should not be avoided. Racism will not go away just because we do not mention the word. No matter how much we talk about social cohesion, unless we face the reality of racial inequality and systemic racial injustice and discrimination, we will never achieve it. We live on unceded Aboriginal land, which was stolen from First Nations people. Since then, governments of all stripes have passed laws perpetuating violence and discrimination towards First Nations people. The recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody have not been implemented. Indigenous children are, shamefully, 10 times more likely to be removed from their families than other children. Meanwhile, migrants continue to be demonised as the cause for everything from the housing crisis to wage stagnation. People seeking asylum and those who are not white are still being surveilled, profiled and criminalised in offshore detention, in policing and even in this Parliament. The fear of the other continues.

None of those issues can be resolved by simply donning orange T-shirts and ribbons or by sharing a meal of traditional dishes from different cultures. Contrary to what some would say, racism is not just a symptom of ignorance. The deeply rooted systemic forms of racism I have outlined do not end simply because someone becomes aware that someone exists or decides to practice tolerance. Dismantling the inherently racist structures that underpin our society requires us all to grapple with uncomfortable truths and with our own privilege, and to reject the false sense of security that a racist, white supremacist status quo has to offer. It requires us to refocus our efforts on genuine anti-racist thought, not hollow self-congratulations. I am proud to hold the anti-racism portfolio for The Greens, and I echo the calls of my Federal Greens colleague and anti-racism spokesperson, Mehreen Faruqi, to change the name from Harmony Week to Anti-Racist Week. Harmony cannot come without a genuine reckoning with the racist violence that underpins so much of our history. From Gadigal to Gaza, The Greens are committed to being part of the anti-racist movement here and around the world.

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (20:15): I too recognise that today is the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. I am well aware of where it came from. What happened in South Africa at that time should not be forgotten. I thank the member for Newtown.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (20:15): International Women's Day [IWD] on Friday 8 March was an opportunity to come together and recognise the achievements of women and the incredible talent, skills, strength, passion and heart that women bring to the world. Across my electorate, women, and some men, gathered at breakfast, lunch and dinner events. In Murwillumbah, the Northern Rivers Community Foundation hosted a breakfast at the Tweed Regional Gallery around the theme of this year's International Women's Day, "Invest in women. Accelerate progress." In Nimbin there was a comedy and cabaret dinner and, in Lismore, there was an IWD festival hosted by the Northern Rivers Women and Children's Services. There was a full program of speakers, a debate and everything from Indigenous weaving to circus, yoga, Egyptian dancing and a singing workshop.

My region knows how to celebrate women. Unfortunately I could not make it to every event. I spoke at a breakfast organised by local enterprise Mountain Blue, which was held for their women staff to honour and recognise them. I also gave the keynote speech about women in leadership at a lunch organised by the Northern Rivers Community Gateway. At the same time that lunch was on, I had been invited to speak to Burmese women at Chiang Mai University via Zoom. Thanaka is a paste made from ground bark that people put on their faces in Myanmar and other countries, and I paid tribute to my close friend and colleague Dr Khin Mar Mar Kyi, who is Burmese and Australian.

It is appropriate that workplaces mark International Women's Day, because the day started as a proposal to the International Conference of Working Women in Copenhagen in 1910 when there were not a lot for women to celebrate in the workforce. International Women's Day began as a protest movement for women's rights. Looking at the latest report on the gender pay gap, it is clear that there is still work to be done. Women continue to fight for equality in the workforce and to be recognised for the value of their work and achievements. I pay tribute to the women in my region involved in the enormous community effort during the 2022 flood disaster and ever since.

A University of Newcastle study found that the community-based response to the Northern Rivers floods was spontaneous and sophisticated in its mobilisation, and it was predominantly run by women. A lot of men did the rescue. Women did a lot of the response afterwards and continue to do so. The report's co-author, Professor Margaret Alston, OAM, said that, historically, women bear the burden of labour and the health impacts of disasters. The university calls it "responsive leadership". The researchers are calling for a disaster fund to acknowledge the huge personal and financial losses of doing that type of work.

There is also the fight for women to be safe at home and at work. The appalling rates of domestic and other violence towards women show that women in Australia are not free from it. One in four women experience domestic violence, and one in five experience sexual violence from the age of 15. I have spoken in this place many times about domestic violence and how governments at all levels have a duty to ensure security and safety. According to statistics, in Australia one woman is murdered by an intimate partner every 15 days. That is a crisis. As a society, we are failing them. We have to do better.

It is important to remember the "international" in International Women's Day. It is a day to stand in solidarity with our sisters living under regimes where their rights are being stripped away, and to stand up for those women living in war zones, where rape and the threat of rape are weapons of war. They face these horrors on a daily basis. We who have a voice need to stand up for our sisters who are being silenced in oppressive regimes, in war zones and in domestic violence situations. We must use our voices to speak for them and take action at every opportunity. The Zonta Club of Northern Rivers Inc. held an International Women's Day breakfast and my longtime friend and comrade Carmel Cook attended on my behalf. Jacqueline Alinaitwe from NORWACS spoke at the event and left the group with the inspiring words of an African proverb: When sleeping women wake, mountains move. It is time to move some mountains.

WINSTON HILLS ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Winston Hills) (20:20): Tonight I speak about infrastructure investment across the Winston Hills electorate, which started many years ago under the former Coalition Government and I am hopeful that it will continue. Schools, hospitals, roads and public spaces across the Winston Hills electorate have been developed thanks to record investment in the area over the past six to eight years, and I am hopeful there will be more in the future. I am pleased that many local schools have been upgraded or are currently undergoing upgrades. Pendle Hill High School received a \$36 million upgrade that delivered 14 new learning spaces including two multimedia rooms, an upgrade to the old library into four flexible learning spaces in block E, a new library and lecture theatre, and new staff and administration areas. These upgrades have been well received by the community. They were recently completed in the past two weeks.

Glenwood High School received a large upgrade which included a new three-storey building with 47 learning spaces, a new single-storey performing arts centre and refurbishments to blocks A, E and J. It is great to see how local students are benefiting from such a terrific investment by the former Government. I look forward to holding the new Government to account on its promise to fast track upgrades to Darcy Road Public School. Upgrades to Northmead Public School and Northmead Creative and Performing Arts High School were also promised during the election campaign. These upgrades will make a great difference in our local community, and I am willing to work with the Government to achieve them in a timely manner.

The former Coalition Government's legacy of infrastructure also included record investment in our State's healthcare system. One of the largest projects carried out was upgrades to Westmead Hospital and the Children's Hospital at Westmead. Over \$1.1 billion was delivered for a new acute services building to increase the integration between both hospitals in the health precinct. The upgrades also included new operating theatres, surgical suites

and state-of-the-art pharmacy and imaging services. Upgrades to the Children's Hospital at Westmead included a new emergency department and kids research institute. These upgrades across the health precinct have made Westmead the largest health precinct in New South Wales. I look forward to the progression of further upgrades that are underway. This includes a new multistorey car park, the refurbishing of eight operating theatres and a dermatology unit for Westmead Hospital.

Major roads around the Winston Hills electorate are also in the process of being upgraded, including major changes to Prospect Highway, jointly funded by the Federal Government. It was great to see the Minister for Roads and the member for Prospect visit the Toongabbie Bridge earlier this month. I look forward to seeing how traffic congestion can be eased around the Toongabbie Bridge and what funding the Government can provide to the local councils to assist in achieving this objective. These upgrades will save families in the Winston Hills electorate a significant amount of time when travelling in and out of the electorate. The Government has made several commitments across the Winston Hills electorate, including a \$2.5 million plan to upgrade Caloola Road Reserve in Constitution Hill. I note that this land has been a Sydney Water compound for many years. It houses a large water storage tank. I am interested to see how these upgrades can improve the amenity of this public space for local residents in Constitution Hill, Wentworthville and the surrounding communities.

I am excited to see the upgrades being carried out across the Winston Hills community as part of the previous Government's WestInvest scheme. This includes upgrades to many of the parks in our community such as Max Ruddock Reserve in Winston Hills, Sue Savage Reserve in Toongabbie and Ashley Brown Reserve in Lalor Park. These upgrades will play a significant role in the development of local sporting organisations and help them to grow in the future. I have received great support for these projects from families in the area. They look forward to the upgrades improving their lives and our community. One of the larger WestInvest projects includes upgrades to the Blacktown Leisure Centre in Blacktown. These upgrades include a masterplan to redevelop the swimming pools into a large facility for community use. I note that these upgrades will also benefit constituents of the neighbouring electorates of Blacktown and Prospect.

The Blacktown Leisure Centre attracts people and schools from across Western Sydney for everyday exercise, sporting carnivals and gym sessions. The communities in Kings Langley, Lalor Park and Seven Hills are certainly looking forward to what these upgrades will bring. They are excited to have new facilities. The previous Government delivered fantastic infrastructure for the Winston Hills electorate including new public transport networks, upgrades to our local schools and improvements to our local health facilities. These upgrades have been very well received among residents in the electorate. I promise the constituents of Winston Hills that I will hold the new Government to account on its promises of delivering new infrastructure.

LEPPINGTON ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (20:25): I have spoken in this House many times about the issues my electorate faces due to the years of neglect under the previous Coalition State and Federal governments. While approving and overseeing the expansion of urban sprawl into areas like Austral, Denham Court and Leppington, they failed to ensure that these new suburbs have access to adequate services and infrastructure. The former Liberal-Nationals Government was happy to collect an expanding stamp duty and contributions take, but it was not so keen on ensuring expanding services. The delivery of schools, public transport and roads, open space and health services was neglected, but this Government is getting on with the job of fixing that.

I have been vocal in previous years about significant delays in the delivery of waste and potable water to my electorate and the flow-on effects it has on local businesses and residents. Subdivisions in Austral have pump-out sewerage systems that, despite the refusal of council, were later approved by the Land and Environment Court. Gough Whitlam expanded sewerage to the suburb some 50 years ago and, in some ways, it feels like we have gone back in time to when subdivisions had no access to sewerage systems.

Sadly, decent mobile phone services are also lacking. This was brought to my attention recently by an anonymous Facebook post on a local community group page. It read, "Can we do something about the reception in Austral? I experienced domestic violence last night. I needed to call police and it wouldn't ring, which is beyond a joke. I need help and can't even ask for it, due to zero reception." I am still in the process of establishing whether this call was to the emergency 000 number, which should have worked regardless of network coverage. I urge anyone who is experiencing a domestic, family or sexual violence emergency to dial 000.

According to the NSW Digital Connectivity Index, the suburbs in my electorate have a lower connectivity score than the New South Wales average. The index indicates the ability of a user to utilise digital services by measuring access, affordability and demographics. The score is essentially a measure of the quality and effectiveness of digital connectivity in a selected area. It indicates the capability of a location to support various digital activities, such as remote work, online learning or mobile internet usage. For eight suburbs in my electorate, the average connectivity score is 38.3; the State connectivity average is 55. Some suburbs are in the low twenties

and parts of one suburb scored as low as 18. This is classified as a "Poor" rating, which the index describes as "highly unlikely to be able to meaningfully conduct digital activities such as working from home, video conferencing, gaming and online streaming."

The number of homes with landlines has dropped over the past 10 years and will continue to drop as mobile services become omnipresent. The ubiquitous mobile is for many the sole means of making a phone call, not just for a regular chat but for work, health and emergencies. It is a reasonable and fundamental expectation of those moving into rapidly growing suburbs like the ones in my electorate that their mobile phone carrier is able to provide adequate, reliable and consistent mobile phone service in their homes.

I note that the Federal Government has introduced a grants program to provide funding to improve mobile connectivity in bushfire priority areas. The Peri-Urban Mobile Program seeks to connect the fringes of our city. I have written to the Minister and mobile providers seeking answers on this specific issue and a general update on the rollout of mobile services in my urban fringe. Suburbs on the fringe of Sydney are not asking for special treatment. They are asking for what everyone else gets and takes for granted: a toilet that flushes in the metro sewerage system; access to public schools and local parks; a functioning public transport system; and that in an emergency, where their own or a family member's life is at risk, they can pick up the phone and get through to emergency services.

PORT STEPHENS INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY BREAKFAST

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion) (20:30): Many events in Port Stephens hold a place in my heart but the annual Port Stephens International Women's Day Breakfast is particularly meaningful. This special event that I co-host each year with my good friend the Federal member for Paterson, Meryl Swanson, started its humble beginnings many years ago at the Hunter Region Botanic Gardens. It outgrew that beautiful location and we needed to expand, so now we host our event at the incredible Murrook Culture Centre in Williamstown. We have worked hard to see it expand to include over 250 attendees, who join us to celebrate local women's achievements and meet the leaders of the future.

This year was our sixth International Women's Day breakfast, and every year it has been made possible through the same sponsors—Tomago Aluminium, Hunter Water and Newcastle Airport—who have been with us from the start. Through their generous support we can keep costs low so more women can attend, and more proceeds can be returned to the event's beneficiaries. From the outset and every year since, all proceeds of the event go to much-loved local services who support local women when they need it most—the Port Stephens Family and Neighbourhood Services, the Yacaaba Centre and women's programs at Murrook.

Once again, this year's event was an empowering, uplifting celebration of local women in our community. We opened with a moving welcome to country by Auntie Lorraine Lilley, a Worimi Elder. That was followed by something very special—our national anthem sung in Gathang, the local language of the Worimi, and then sung again in English by local songstress Maddie Lilley. Maddie is an impressive young Worimi woman who was part of our school leaders panel at last year's International Women's Day event. At the breakfast we introduced Jackie Bower as the recipient of the 2024 Port Stephens Local Woman of the Year Award for her countless hours volunteering with the Tea Gardens Hawks Nest Surf Life Saving Club. Jackie joins an impressive list of Port Stephens Local Women of the Year, with past winners including Mel Turner, Dr Sarah Bayley, Sue Pollock, Taurie Lalor, Coral Kearins and Leah Anderson.

When Meryl and I first hatched the plan to host an International Women's Day event together, our plan was simple—to put a spotlight on women leaders of the future. From the very beginning, our plan paid off, with our panel of female student leaders from local Port Stephens schools being a consistent highlight. Once again, this year's panel of female student leaders was a powerful example of the strength and optimism of our next generation. The format we established from the outset sees our student leaders answering questions from Meryl and me about leadership, their plans for the future and who inspires them. As always, their answers were thoughtful. Scarlett from Tomaree High School said that the Matildas soccer team "demonstrated how women can and should be leaders, and how great people aren't afraid to make mistakes or take risks".

Ellie and Abby from Irrawang High school shared their concerns for gender equality and the low female representation in STEM-based careers. Ellie said, "I am working towards a STEM-based career and I hope to use my career as a pathway to advocate for women in STEM and I have aspirations to address gender inequalities in STEM-based careers so that my children will one day see that there is no gap between men and women." Abby said, "I want to pursue a career as a climate scientist. I am committed to creating a more inclusive and sustainable world. Women remain significantly underrepresented in STEM fields and I am committed to changing this statistic." How good is that?

I congratulate and thank this year's school leadership panel: Abby Keeley and Ellie Winter-Wilbow from Irrawang High School, Kate Vine and Dylan Whitehall from Hunter River High School, Emily Gambrell and Natalie Pethybridge from St Philip's Christian College, Jayda Kelly and Lilly Fletcher from Medowie Christian School, and Scarlett Lack and Caitlin Maddocks from Tomaree High School. They were absolute champions. Everyone was blown away by them. From top to bottom and inside out, our International Women's Day event showcases local women—from the beautiful table centrepieces created by Bella Kate Luxury Picnics, the massive International Women's Day sign by the Sign Fairy, and the food supplied by the female chef and event manager at Murrook to the market stalls outside made up entirely of small businesses run by local women. That is in addition to our amazing school leaders panel, the welcome to country and national anthem, and our Local Woman of the Year.

I thank everyone who joined us this year, including many men. Yes, men come to our event too. It is important that they do, because making equality a reality is the responsibility of us all. My final thanks go to my amazing electorate office team, and Meryl's team, who go over and above to put on this special event each year, which is well beyond the job description of any electorate office staff member. When I first put up my hand to represent our local community, every local representative was a man—from council to the New South Wales Parliament to the Federal Parliament—and that had always been the case. Our International Women's Day event is not about excluding anyone; it is about making sure that women can see other women in leadership so that our leaders of the future know what is possible.

TERRIGAL SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (20:35): I congratulate all the Central Coast surf lifesaving clubs and their members that competed in the 2024 NSW Surf Life Saving Championships, which wrapped up over the weekend. The event showcased the amazing athletic ability of our surf lifesaving club members, and there were many thrilling races in the midst of some fierce competition. The medal tally for the Central Coast was very impressive, with 86 gold medals, 109 silver medals and 123 bronze medals. Amidst the celebrations of our surf lifesaving achievements, I take this opportunity to shine a spotlight on the Terrigal Surf Life Saving Club.

This Easter the Terrigal Surf Life Saving Club will once again host the Terrigal Ocean Swim Classic, an event that has become a beloved tradition for locals and visitors alike. This year's edition promises to be more fun than ever, with the inclusion of a team event offering a wonderful, inclusive experience for participants of all ages and abilities. Furthermore, I am proud to highlight the club's partnership with the Cancer Council, which added a meaningful dimension to the event through the introduction of the Daffodil Dip in 2023. This inspiring initiative not only brings the community together but also serves as a beacon of hope for those battling cancer. By swimming out to the "Goldie" buoy and raising funds for Cancer Council NSW Central Coast, participants make a tangible difference in the lives of local cancer patients. I will be donning a daffodil cap and taking part in the swim.

In addition to its invaluable contributions to community events, the Terrigal Surf Life Saving Club plays a vital role in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of beachgoers. The dedication and hard work of volunteers like Kim Petley, who was recently honoured for his outstanding service at the Terrigal Seniors Local Achievement Awards, epitomise the selfless spirit that defines our surf lifesaving clubs. Their unwavering commitment to the safety of our shores deserves our utmost respect and support. Despite the club's indispensable role in our community, I am deeply concerned about the challenges it faces in retaining funding for essential renovations.

Like many other volunteer organisations, the Terrigal Surf Life Saving Club relies on Government grants to maintain its facilities and continue its lifesaving operations. The club applied for and received much-needed funding under the 2022-23 Surf Club Facility Program to upgrade the clubhouse. Sadly, like the Copacabana Surf Life Saving Club I spoke about recently, that fund is now under threat. That, coupled with the uncertainty surrounding future funding rounds, threatens the club's ability to retain the facilities and resources necessary to thrive. We hope that the Office of Sport will work productively with both the Terrigal Surf Life Saving Club and the Copacabana Surf Life Saving Club. In addition, I will make representations to the Minister for Sport, because we cannot afford volunteer organisations like our fantastic surf lifesaving clubs to lose funding from this Government. That would be to the detriment of the safety of people using our beaches every single day and all year round, no matter what the weather, season or conditions.

Over 1.2 million people visit our beaches, including Terrigal Beach, which is one of the most popular on the Central Coast. It is imperative that our surf clubs secure the necessary funding for up-to-date facilities and resources to ensure that they can continue to protect our community and the visitors to our region who enjoy our beautiful beaches. On the Central Coast we have the most incredible surf lifesaving club facilities. We have 15 surf lifesaving clubs in the region, seven of which are in my electorate. They range from Killcare in the south to Wamberal in the north. More than 8,000 volunteer surf lifesavers contribute almost 100,000 volunteer hours every season to help keep our beaches safe, from one end of the region to the other. These volunteers give their time, energy and professionalism to make sure that our beaches are kept safe.

I always want to be able to attend the Central Coast Surf Life Saving Awards of Excellence held in Mingara every year where we get to see the cream of the crop—although they are all local heroes in my opinion because they do a wonderful job keeping so many people safe. In many cases these people do not live on the Central Coast. While we have some of the most beautiful beaches in New South Wales, they are also some of the most dangerous. It is important that swimmers remain safe and that our surf lifesavers are given the facilities and resources to ensure our beaches are kept safe for visitors and locals alike. Sadly, some of the most recent drownings have been local people who succumbed to the "It's okay. I know my way around. I've lived here all my life" attitude. The message needs to be really clear: To stay safe on our beaches, everyone must swim between the red and yellow flags where they will always be safe. Again, I thank our lifesavers and encourage them to keep up the great work. I look forward to always continuing to work with Surf Life Saving Central Coast and the Terrigal Surf Life Saving Club.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr): If members will indulge me for a minute, will the member for Terrigal explain what a Goldie is?

Mr Adam Crouch: Goldie is a buoy that is 200 metres out from the shore. It is a 400-metre round swim that I have to do—so it has been nice knowing you.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr): We should take this opportunity tonight to learn things. We have time for it.

LIVERPOOL ELECTORATE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY EVENTS

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (20:41): Every year, March is designated Women's History Month. International Women's Day on 8 March is a highlight. This year's theme for the month is Women Who Advocate for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. The theme recognises women throughout the country who understand that, for a positive future, we need to eliminate bias and discrimination entirely from our lives and institutions. For me, this month has been marked by many visits to schools, community groups and cultural events in Liverpool to celebrate and mark this important occasion. These events have been opportunities to connect with women and girls in my community, share stories and hear about the issues of interest and concern to them.

By far the most interesting conversations have been those that have highlighted the many women—the giants—on whose shoulders we stand and progress from. Recently I attended a school leadership event at Bonnyrigg High School. For the first time ever, the student leadership team of Bonnyrigg High School is entirely made up of young women. They were elected by their peers within the student body. For International Women's Day, that group of inspiring young women took it upon themselves to organise a leadership training and engagement event with young student leaders from approximately five feeder primary schools in the region. Local leaders shared their insights and experience, and their journeys, including Federal member for Fowler, Dai Le, the acting principal of the school and me. The visitors shared their stories about the women who have inspired their journeys and who have enabled them to take the steps they need to take.

Another event in my local community, which was incredibly fulfilling and inspiring to be part of, was held by Liverpool Neighbourhood Connections. The organisation brought together women from across our community and ensured that it was a family friendly event, so that no woman was excluded, and shared the history of International Women's Day and the reasons it is still relevant and important today. Finally, just last week the Liverpool Women's Health Centre also held an event to mark International Women's Day. I take particular note of the centre as it approaches its fiftieth anniversary of providing services for women in our community.

The Liverpool Women's Health Centre is the second women's health centre to open in New South Wales after the Marrickville centre and has consistently provided services since 1975. Importantly, it was the first women's service to employ Aboriginal women, which was a milestone considering that Indigenous people were only given the right to vote in Australia in 1962. In the lead-up to its fiftieth anniversary, I have been in discussions with the Liverpool Women's Health Centre to ensure that we bring to light the history of this incredible place, its various achievements and how it has improved the lives of women in our community over the past 50 years and will, hopefully, continue to do so in the coming years. We must not forget the feminist collective that began the Liverpool Women's Health Centre, ably led by Kay Ferrington in the mid-1970s. Women like Kay are role models for people like me who stand on their shoulders as we strive to make our communities better places.

Speaking of role models, I will share a little bit about one of mine. My family comes from a small region on the border of the States of Kerala and Karnataka. It is a region famous for growing coffee, for being the place where a river originates and for producing very fierce women. In that place, a girl of humble origins named Muthamma was born in 1924. Although she lost her father at the age of nine, her mother was determined that her children would be educated. Muthamma excelled in her studies and in 1949 became the first woman in post-independence India to sit for the Civil Services Examination, which she topped to enter the Indian Foreign

Service. She later fought a lot of prejudice, sued the Indian Government and became the first woman to become an ambassador for India to Hungary in 1970. Women like her cause us to reflect on their achievements and drive us to greater heights in the future.

KIAMA ELECTORATE COMMUNITY GROUPS

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (20:46): As a local MP, I love working hard and getting results for my local community. One of the things I most enjoy is fighting hard for small grants that make a real difference for community and sporting groups. Those groups are the essence and flavour of our local community. With help to secure government funds, they can spend more time focusing on what they love rather than selling those dreaded raffle tickets. A number of community groups in my electorate applied for New South Wales Government grants. Tonight I raise their requests in this place and make clear my support for them.

I acknowledge Kylie Knight of Bomaderry Community Inc., who has applied for funding to upgrade the Bomaderry Dog Bowl. An all-weather shade structure and a second smaller fenced enclosure with water, signage and shelter will enhance the existing facility and improve user safety. My dog, Oscar, loves the Bomo Dog Bowl and I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge Kylie for her work to date on this and other local Bomaderry community projects. I acknowledge Judy and Graeme Sweeney of the Berry Riding Club, who are seeking funding to purchase a tractor with a front-end loader. Graeme and Judy have worked so hard to build up this club and I know this investment is much needed. I strongly support it.

I acknowledge Jason Shepherd and the wonderful team at the Kangaroo Valley Men's Shed. Kangaroo Valley is a community very close to my heart and I strongly support the Men's Shed movement. Jason and the team are still working on a permanent home, but this grant will help the shed buy important equipment that it needs. I remember seeing members of the Men's Shed at the Kangaroo Valley Show last year. They were collecting signatures to support a permanent home. They have worked incredibly hard. I acknowledge Reuben Rattray and the Kiama Men's Shed, who are also seeking funding for new equipment. I know the team at the Men's Shed incredibly well, and with Kiama having an above average aging population, the Kiama Men's Shed has provided an important outlet for local men. The shed also helps out locals who need repairs and has a range of other passion projects.

In the north of my electorate, Bob De La Hunty and his team at the Historical Aircraft Restoration Society [HARS] are seeking funding to paint the floor of their hangar. HARS is an incredible organisation with hundreds of volunteers who attract aviation enthusiasts and av-geeks from all over the world to see their incredible displays. I acknowledge the HARS volunteers and their recent contribution to the Airshows Downunder Shellharbour—an event that would not have come off without their efforts. I am proud to support the team at the Kiama Cricket Club who are seeking funding to extend their storage shed to enable the secure and weatherproof storage of club equipment. I acknowledge the great work of the club's executive and particularly its secretary, Mark Burgess. I look forward to joining with the club in applying pressure to governments at all levels for major investments in the Quarry sports complex. It is a great location, but the ground's facilities are well overdue for an overhaul.

I acknowledge the Kiama Surf Lifesaving Club, including Sonja McMillan and all the volunteers who make it tick. The club houses some absolutely downright local champions, and I am proud to advocate for the grant request for new furniture for the club. I tell the House that I will stand with the surf lifesaving club in its quest for a redevelopment of the clubhouse, which will provide the club with the modern facilities it needs to safeguard its future. I look forward to joining the clubbies and locals at one of their sippers events in the future. To this end I acknowledge bartender Astin Lee, who is a cardiac surgeon in his spare time, and I acknowledge Clay Comber and others involved in putting on those events.

The Berry Show Society has been serving our local community for well over a century. I acknowledge its president, John Miller; its secretary, Catherine Mason; and its wonderful group of committee members. The society is seeking a grant to upgrade office equipment, pavilion stands and drinks fridges. I could not think of a better use of grant funds than that. I acknowledge Rob Russell and his team at the Shoalhaven Heads Golf Club, who have applied for funds to improve their clubhouse. I encourage those members who have not experienced the Heads course to do so. This club has worked hard to give its members and visitors a great golfing experience, and I look forward to continuing to fight hard and deliver funding for it, as I have over many years of being the local member. I acknowledge India Glyde and the Cambewarra Public School Parents and Citizens Association, who are seeking funding for water fountains. I have received correspondence from the P&C, and I know that we need to do much more at Cambewarra Public School, and I will continue to fight hard for it.

Each and every one of these grants is an example of things I am fighting for and working hard for. Over the years I have been proud to have delivered billions of dollars of investments in my local community. But I think that some of the most satisfying grants are to those smaller community groups. I can see two great local members

in front of me, the member for Cessnock and the member for Lismore. I see the member for Lake Macquarie and the member for Oatley too.

Mr Nathan Hagarty: Hey, you forgot me!

Mr GARETH WARD: You're too new. I don't know how good you are yet.

Mr Nathan Hagarty: I'm really good.

Mr GARETH WARD: We will work you out. You're doing all right. I know that all these members love fighting hard for their local communities, as do I. These are some of the grants I am supporting. I hope that the New South Wales Government does as well.

RIVERWOOD REZONING PROPOSAL

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (20:51): I inform the House of the current status of the revised Riverwood rezoning proposal. As many of my constituents know, I am incredibly passionate about our local infrastructure. Since being elected in 2011 I have fought hard each and every day to ensure that my community receives its fair share. That is why, upon reviewing the draft Riverwood housing proposal in 2022, I was shocked to see that there would be a lack of infrastructure to accompany the almost 4,000 new dwellings that were being proposed by the Land and Housing Corporation. Despite these thousands of new residents who would be moving into the local area, the traffic and transport assessment was average at best. The infrastructure proposed was simply not good enough. Belmore Road is already an incredibly busy arterial thoroughfare, and I know firsthand that locals would not want to sit for an hour and a half in traffic just to enter or leave their own suburb.

I quickly got to work to ensure that the Land and Housing Corporation was made fully aware of my community's concerns. I started a grassroots community petition, which received over 750 signatures, calling on the Land and Housing Corporation to reconsider the inappropriate development in Riverwood. Before the last election, my community and I fought hard. Thanks to the strong advocacy from local residents in Riverwood and surrounding suburbs such as Lugarno, Peakhurst, Narwee and Beverly Hills, we were successful in having the Land and Housing Corporation go back to the drawing board. The community made clear that the department needed to come up with a new plan that would suit our community's needs and not impact on the available infrastructure.

Earlier this month a revised proposal for the Riverwood housing estate was announced, and I am glad to say that common sense and community advocacy prevailed. The new proposal was that, instead of the proposed 3,900 new homes, approximately 420 new homes will be delivered, of which 50 per cent will be social and affordable housing and the rest will be private dwellings. I was pleased to see that Homes NSW listened to our community campaign and respected local residents' wishes. In its reasoning for the revised plans, Homes NSW said:

The previous delivery program of 25-30 years was considered too large to properly assess the adequate and proportional provision of community infrastructure requirements for an additional 3,900 homes.

This is what my community had been highlighting for so long, and we are now seeing sensible plans that will guarantee the delivery of supporting infrastructure via State and local contributions, which I will continue to fight for to ensure that it eventuates. My local community deserves only the best roads, public transport, high-quality school infrastructure, local parks and sporting infrastructure if it is to cope with this new Government's broader housing push. I do not doubt that we need to do all we can to support housing supply and particularly boost supply for social and affordable housing. But we cannot have thousands of new residents move in without upgrades to essential infrastructure. It is not fair to current residents or to anyone wanting to call the St George area home in the future. For years my community has been calling for this kind of commonsense approach to planning, where increases in population must be matched with further investments into our schools, hospitals, parks and roads.

We know that challenges will still be associated with this proposal moving forward, and we know that it will not be all smooth sailing. We know this because the current New South Wales Government does not care for communities' views when it comes to broader planning reforms. Instead, its "get out of the way" approach is demonstrated by its proposed State environmental planning policies, a lazy and one-size-fits-all approach. This would allow our town centres to be inappropriately rezoned, overriding local planning controls and leading to more traffic and congestion, and the potential loss of heritage value in our communities. It seems as if this Government is not interested in developing a proper infrastructure plan to support sensible development. We need to ensure that development in our local area is well informed and sustainable in the future. That is why I remain committed to championing my community's needs and wishes.

LIVERPOOL CITY COUNCIL STAFFING

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (20:56): I speak about grave concerns with the management of Liverpool City Council under CEO John Ajaka. The separation of elected politicians from the public service is a fundamental principle of the Westminster system and our democracy. The politicians make the decisions, and the public servants enact those decisions and give advice without fear or favour. The system works only when everyone performs their role clearly and with impartiality. That is why I am concerned about a succession of media reports calling into question the political independence of the senior staff at Liverpool Council. Late last year *The Australian* reported on the shocking revelations that no fewer than seven senior staff members on the Liverpool council's payroll have Liberal affiliations: former Liberal members of Parliament, councillors, staffers and local factional heavyweights, including the CEO John Ajaka.

Mr Ajaka is a former Liberal President of the Legislative Council. Soon after he left the other place in 2021, he was employed as the CEO of Liverpool City Council, on an estimated annual salary of over \$500,000. Ajaka's former parliamentary colleague Shayne Mallard too has been given safe harbour with Liverpool City Council. Initially employed as a senior adviser to the CEO, Mallard has now been appointed as the director of city futures, another job that attracts a six-figure salary. Further, former Liberal Liverpool councillor Tony Hadchiti has been employed in a senior role as the coordinator of the fast-developing area of Austral.

A former staffer of Mr Ajaka, Haris Strangas, works in a senior governmental advisory role. He is the president of the Miranda and Cook Young Liberals and a Liberal councillor on Sutherland Shire Council. Despite Strangas being in this government advisory role, the Liverpool council recently resolved to spend \$100,000 of ratepayers' money to employ an external consultant to lobby the State Government for more infrastructure. As I said in media reports at the time, the CEO and the council have no interest in advocating for Austral and would rather palm their jobs off to an overpaid lobbyist. That said, given Strangas's title as a government adviser, what is Strangas's actual job? Further, three senior communications staff members are former staff of the New South Wales Liberal Party and Liberal Ministers.

While that pattern of hiring is cause for concern, it is compounded by reports of what some have called a council within a council. Councillors outside of that exclusive inner sanctum have reported to me that they are the last to know about major announcements, briefings and other critical information that is important to their statutory obligations as councillors. Further, they are cropped out of photos and left out of important media opportunities. I am sure it comes as no surprise to most that the clique is composed of Liberal and conservative councillors. That just does not pass the pub test. *The Australian* has reported that an investigation was recently commenced by the Office of Local Government [OLG] into the concerning allegations about staff at Liverpool council, and I eagerly await the findings of that probe.

Disturbingly, that is not the end of the story. In recent weeks it has come to light that Mr Ajaka was present at the Liberal preselection for former Prime Minister Scott Morrison's electorate of Cook. That rules out any plausible deniability that Mr Ajaka is involved in the inner workings of the local Liberal Party. He has long been and clearly continues to be a faceless man of the Liberal Party. There is nothing necessarily wrong with that, but it is clearly inappropriate and unacceptable that such a person should also be the CEO of a local council. I look forward to the results of the OLG investigation, but I am concerned that what has been reported in the media is just the tip of the iceberg. I encourage all those with knowledge of wrongdoing at Liverpool council to speak up. It is only through the disinfectant of transparency that those issues can be resolved for the good of the people of Liverpool.

TRANSPORT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (21:00): I raise the issue of the Transport Oriented Development [TOD] Program and its significant effect on my electorate of Lake Macquarie. I have spoken on a number of occasions about the housing crisis affecting the State and the need to increase housing supply, in particular affordable housing and housing for essential workers. Earlier this week, along with a number of my crossbench colleagues and union representatives, I called for the establishment of a Legislative Assembly select committee on essential worker housing. I look forward to it being established.

I have always been an advocate for increased housing close to transport hubs—it just makes sense. It reduces road congestion and subsequent carbon emissions. It improves community members' health and wellbeing, and strengthens local economies and communities. I support well-planned reform to deliver additional housing around transport and community hubs. I will not speak tonight about the eight priority precincts included in part one of the Transport Oriented Development Program; I will leave that for members who represent the electorates in which the accelerated precincts are located. I do note that the Government has announced a \$520 million investment for community infrastructure such as critical road upgrades, active transport links and good quality public open spaces for those eight priority precincts. Those investments are essential to allow

infrastructure to be delivered to support the additional growth that will follow the State-led rezoning in those precincts.

My concern is about the three communities with rail stations in my electorate that have been included in the 31 stations identified in part two of the Transport Oriented Development Program and that will be affected by the amendments to planning controls. The potential for significant population growth in Lake Macquarie has been evident to me for many years. There are obvious reasons for that growth, including the natural beauty and amenity of the area. It is unsurprising to me that Booragul, Morisset and Teralba stations have all been identified for new planning controls. Morisset, in particular, was previously identified within the *Hunter Regional Plan 2041* as a regionally significant growth area and has already experienced significant growth in recent years.

According to Australian Bureau of Statistics census data, the suburbs within postal area 2284, which includes Booragul and Teralba, experienced a 20 per cent increase in population and a 15 per cent increase in the number of households between 2016 and 2021. That growth trajectory has continued. The Government has stated that the State environmental planning policy [SEPP] changes that will apply to the 31 identified stations will create capacity for an additional 138,000 new homes over the next 15 years. That suggests an average of 4,451 new homes per identified station—or, in the case of Lake Macquarie, over 13,000 new homes within the Morisset, Booragul and Teralba Transport Oriented Development precincts alone. I acknowledge that some of the 31 precincts will attract a higher level of development than others, but it is clear that it is expected that the SEPP changes will lead to significant increases in the number of homes and the population in Lake Macquarie.

While I appreciate the announcement of \$520 million in funding for community infrastructure in the accelerated precincts identified in the TOD Program, additional community infrastructure commitments are also needed in the 31 precincts identified in part two of the program. My community has already experienced significant growth without sufficient infrastructure in place to support it. I have talked about that many times in this House. Significant road projects have been funded yet remain in the planning stage, almost no public health services are located within the electorate and there is a lack of sporting and other community facilities.

While I am assured that planning is occurring on a number of infrastructure projects, the community is not seeing that planning or any progress. Other infrastructure and service needs also have not received commitments but are badly needed. They include commuter car parks around train stations, including Morisset, along with much-needed health services. While I support well-planned development around transport hubs, the cart cannot continue to come before the horse. Part of well-planned development means well-planned neighbourhoods, with amenity, services and facilities to support communities in those precincts. At the moment we are lacking the planning and funding for infrastructure, services and community amenity around the three announced precincts in Lake Macquarie that fall within the 31 stage two precincts.

The SEPP changes and new planning controls are proposed to come into effect from next month. While developments will take time to go through planning processes and development contributions will be made to support local infrastructure, State commitments to health services, roads, schools, police and other emergency service resources also need to be made to support the projected population growth. I call on the Government to ensure that long-overdue infrastructure is delivered as part of any further intensification of development in those three centres.

TENTERFIELD AUTUMN FESTIVAL

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (21:05): Tenterfield is again hosting its relatively new autumn festival, which is quickly becoming one of the great go-to festivals—so named because the beauty of Tenterfield in autumn is magnificent. The colours are rich and stunning. Driving into Tenterfield from the east as I do, and going through the villages of Mummulgum, Mallanganee, Tabulam and Drake—all in the Lismore electorate and along Bruxner Highway, rising up and over the Great Dividing Range—I am always struck by the brilliant tree-lined entry into Tenterfield. I never tire of seeing it in autumn. It is just absolutely magnificent. First-time visitors all comment on it; they are quite stunned by it. The Tenterfield Autumn Festival runs from Friday 29 March to Monday 1 April, over the Easter weekend, of course respecting Good Friday.

Eat Street is a signature event at the Autumn Festival. It is in the calendar on Saturday 30th and it showcases good food and good wine—some, of course, from local vineyards, which are getting better each year. It is high and has a cool climate, which is very conducive to the industry. Just over the border is Stanthorpe, which is in Queensland, but in Tenterfield everyone is part of the border community. People relate as border community members and move backward and forward, so it does not feel like visiting Stanthorpe is going into Queensland. People traverse it as a border community. On Saturday there is an array of events for all ages from 5.00 p.m. to 9.00 p.m. It is a gold coin entry, so it is not expensive. People can take the kids and family, and there is a lot of fun for kids. My grandson always comes to Tenterfield with me and just loves it. He calls me Janelle, because

everyone calls me Janelle as we travel around. He always says, "Janelle, why can't we live in Tenterfield?" He is always happy to go to Tenterfield.

The culture of the Tenterfield community is absolutely welcoming. When the community runs events, no matter what it is—whether it is Australia Day or another significant event—everyone is welcome. It is just delightful. My grandson is always there with me at events. He gets recognised, because he stands up with me when I speak. It is just one of those wonderful communities. The mayor of Tenterfield, Councillor Bronwyn Petrie, has been at the Parliament tonight, meeting with the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads. I have been on duty for nearly three hours now, so I could not go to that meeting. I do know what it is about, and I am backing her in.

The Autumn Festival started a couple of years ago and it is just starting to grow. The whole community is behind it, and they do a lot of the fundraising themselves. Once I managed to get a \$10,000 grant for them, which helped. I acknowledge that the grant came from the then Minister for Regional New South Wales, the member for Bathurst. That was in the early stages and it helped the festival along. For those who are planning to be around Tenterfield at Easter and want to do something beyond just taking a break, I suggest visiting for the Autumn Festival. I will be staying there and having fun. I always experience some cognitive dissonance at that time. Bluesfest will be on, and I might go there on the Saturday; I also have the Autumn Festival in Tenterfield. Usually Tenterfield wins out. I do love Bluesfest, but a lot of people go there, and I can get there another day. [*The Temporary Speaker (Mr Clayton Barr) left the chair pursuant to resolution at 21:11 on Thursday 21 March 2024.*]

Friday 22 March 2024

Continuation of sitting of Thursday 21 March 2024.

[*The bells having been rung, the House resumed at 06:48 with the Speaker (The Hon. Gregory Michael Piper) in the chair.*]

Bills

BAIL AND CRIMES AMENDMENT BILL 2024

Returned

The SPEAKER: I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the bill without amendment.

CONVERSION PRACTICES BAN BILL 2024

Returned

The SPEAKER: I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the bill without amendment. I call the Attorney General to make a brief statement.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (06:49): Mr Speaker, with your indulgence and that of the House, it has been a marathon sitting—a mammoth sitting. I thank members of both Houses, particularly the members of the other place, for the respectful way in which this debate has been conducted. There are too many people to thank, but they know who they are. History is made, and our friends in the LGBTQ+ community deserve that history. I thank the House.

The SPEAKER (06:50): I thank the Attorney General, his staff and everybody who has participated in this process. In accordance with the earlier resolution, the House now stands adjourned.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to resolution, at 06:50 until
Tuesday 7 May 2024 at 12:00.**

Written Community Recognition Statements

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

NORWEST SUNRISE ROTARY, MENTAL HEALTH COMMUNITY CONNECT

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)—I am pleased to report that on Sunday 3 March 2024 Norwest Sunrise Rotary held the inaugural Mental Health Connect at the Harvey Lowe Pavilion, Castle Hill. Mental Health Community Connect is a new initiative which provides the opportunity for the community gain valuable information and understanding as to mental health and wellbeing. I give thanks to the contributors to the event including: Rieky Heyden from Psychic Pathways; Joshua Wall from Norwest Sunrise Rotary Member; Wellbeing

and Health; Melanie Chee Aromatherapy; John Kirkland from The Fathering Project; Kate and Stephanie Mayers from RUOK; Jessica Marshall from Lifeline Macarthur; Juanita Rodrigues from Positive Vibes; Nick Webb from Real Therapy Solutions Robert Bredin from Omni Men's Group and Azita Abdollahian from The Project of You. It was great to see so many members of our community hearing from some wonderful and inspiring guest speakers. I look forward next years Mental Health Community Connect. Thank you to Norwest Sunrise Rotary on your initiative to bring our community Mental Health Community Connect.

FLYNN MCMANUS, ALYSSA AOUN AND ZACHERY DANCKERT

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)—I recognise the important community involvement of Lions Clubs through the Youth of the Year Program. On Sunday, 17 March 2024 I attended the Lions Youth of the Year Program, Area B Finals. The finals involved a competition from the overall winners from three clubs. Alyssa Aoun was the finalist from Crestwood Lions, Flynn McManus was the finalist from Kellyville Lions and Zachery Danckert was the finalist from Castle Hill Lions. The finals involved each finalist being interviewed by a panel of judges as well as the finalist answered impromptu questions on current affairs topics and the presentation of a five-minute prepared speech. The competition was extremely close and as one of the judges said "the decision 'was a line ball' decision. I thank the judging panel, Dr Hamish Carver, Sarah Stevens, and David Bourne for the dedication to the judging of the competition. Alyssa Aoun was declared the winner of the public speaking element of the program. Flynn McManus was declared the overall winner for the Area B Finals. Flynn will now compete at the NSW State Final held on 27 April 2024. We wish Flynn well at the State Finals.

JOHN MITCHELL LIFE MEMBER

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—Many of us have now come to know that there are more men's sheds in Australia than there are McDonald's, and that is all thanks to local community members like Mr. John Mitchell from West Wyalong for putting up their hands to bring to life these fantastic assets to their communities. Mr John Mitchell recently handed over the reins of President of the West Wyalong Men's Shed to Mr Ross Cattle. John didn't step away without receiving the first West Wyalong Men's Shed Life Membership. From humble beginnings, the Railway Road, West Wyalong Men's Shed now has 30 members. They are known within the Bland Shire for their restoration of old furniture, metal fabrications, vintage machinery, and general woodwork skills. John has created, over many years, a safe and friendly environment where men from his community can unite and work on meaningful projects, and through this, he has been able to enhance the overall well-being and health of his other members. I congratulate John on this prestigious award and thank him for his initiative and proactiveness in the creation and inception of the West Wyalong Men's Shed.

VINEYARDS OF THE YEAR

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate two foundation Hilltops Wineries being announced as finalists in this year's prestigious Vineyard of the Year Awards. This year, Barwang Wines and Freeman Wines were both named in the Young Gun Vineyard of the year category as finalists. The combined holding of the two vineyards represents approximately 50% of the Hilltops region vineyards, however the two operations operate in very different varietal spaces. Barwang is renowned for its classic varieties of cabernet, shiraz, and chardonnay, while Freeman Wines concentrates on growing classic Italian Grape varieties, including prosecco, pinot grigio, and fiano, along with some very rare dual varieties such as rondinella and corvina, grapes that are rarely seen grown outside of Italy. The Vice President of the Hilltops Wines was quoted "These Hills grow top-class grain and lamb, fruit orchards, and cherries, but it's the local viticultural heritage that really excites us". This is a wonderful achievement to have not one, but two local vignerons in the finals for a national competition. This achievement is rare and needs to be congratulated. Well done to both vineyards, and to the Hilltops Wine Industry.

ROBERT'S PARALYMPICS VICTORY

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—At just 18 months old, Temora resident Robert Jordan was diagnosed with poliomyelitis. However, this has not stopped him from achieving his goals. Robert has always been interested in sports and would give anything a go, from basketball to fencing. His passion for sport and determination to succeed, allowed Robert to compete in the Seoul and Barcelona Paralympics, representing Australia in fencing. Robert then decided to try something new: lawn bowls, a sport that was introduced to him by his parents. From the moment he rolled into the Temora Bowling Club, Robert has been welcomed and supported, which has helped him develop his skills on the greens. Robert has recently returned from New Zealand, where he competed at the National Bowls Championships. He came home with six wins out of nine games, a mix of pairs and singles. With 42 entries, Robert was one of three athletes competing in a wheelchair: a fantastic effort for this 71-year-old. Congratulations, Robert, on following your dreams and never giving up. I know you are waiting to see if you make the National team later this year, and I wish you all the best.

BOWRAL COMBINED PROBUS CLUB INCORPORATED

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)—Following on from my visit to the Bowral Combined Probus Club Incorporated late last year as a guest speaker, I am pleased today to host the Probus group on a visit to Parliament house. Friendships and connections within the community are vital at any age, and Probus groups enhance the health and wellbeing of many by providing a place to engage in social interactions and stay active, both mentally and physically. The Bowral Combined Probus Club organises regular outings and site visits, social meeting ups and excursions, often organising transport to ensure that mobility and accessibility to a car or private transport is not a barrier to anyone wanting to participate. Probus is open to anyone who is retired or semi-retired, and offers the connections and engagement that are often missed once people leave the workforce. Meeting at the Mittagong RSL on the second Friday of each month the Bowral Combined Probus Club incorporated plays a vibrant and vital role in the Southern Highlands community.

WOLLONDILLY WINNERS AT ROTARY MACARTHUR FIRST RESPONDERS AWARDS

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)—The annual Rotary Macarthur First Responders Awards recognise the achievements of first responders and the vital work that they do for the community. I am pleased to add my congratulations to two Wollondilly residents who were awarded on the night. Annette Collins, a member of the State Emergency Service (SES) Wollondilly Unit, was named SES Member of the year and Volunteer First Responder of the Year. Mervyn Lawrence of the NSW Rural Fire Service was awarded RFS Member of the Year. Not only a chance to celebrate the great achievements of so many paid and volunteer first responders, who are living Rotary's motto "service above self", the night was also a chance to share the stories behind the people and the events that have shaped them on their journeys. Thank you to all first responders for what you do, Wollondilly is a safer place thanks to you.

INAUGURAL INDIGENOUS PLAYGROUP AT TAHMOOR

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)—Leann Dykes, Aboriginal Community Cultural Engagement Worker at Community Links Wellbeing, is among the 4.8% of Wollondilly residents that identify as Aboriginal, including Tharawal and Gundungurra. Leann, a Garingbal woman who grew up in Wollondilly, works extensively in the local primary and high schools running a culture Aboriginal program. Through this work Leann identified that there was a lack of programs for young people, especially in the years before they start school, and set out to form a playgroup for aboriginal children in the area. With persistence and hard work Leann gained funding from South32 and launched the Wollondilly Cultural Playgroup on Thursday 7th March. Run weekly through the school term, the playgroup offers cultural activities, using resources and artefacts to allow the children and their carers to connect with their cultural heritage. The play-based learning program is designed to enhance the cognitive, emotional and social development of the attendees, and strengthen their aboriginal identity from a young age. Incorporating traditional language into activities, the playfulness and joy of the songs and games underscore the important work that the program is doing in preserving and enhancing knowledge of the local indigenous culture.

TAMEKA KENNEDY

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)—From local gigs to the big stage touring Australia, Bathurst singer Tameka Kennedy has made a big break in her music career. The singer-songwriter and guitarist well known throughout the Central West for her mesmerising voice and raw musical talent will be touring regional and rural parts of Australia as the opening act for none other than country music royalty Troy Cassa-Daley. This will be some of Tameka's biggest shows playing to the largest crowds yet. Tameka's country music career was sling-shotted forward by a scholarship to the Country Music Association of Australia Academy of Country Music. Tameka is no stranger to touring having played guitar for Ashleigh Dallas and Catherine Britt, and has performed at major country music festivals such as NQ Rock'N'Country Festival and Tamworth's Country Music Festival. Having only begun music when she was 14, Tameka sure has made a mighty impression on the Australian country music scene and the local community continuing her tutoring of other aspiring musicians at Bathurst Academy of Music. Her dedication to the craft and genuine hard work is all paying off with the opportunities coming Tameka's way. Congratulations Tameka!

OATLANDS CRASH VICTIM MEMORIAL UNVEILING

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping)—Few can forget the horrific tragedy that befell four young children on their walk to buy ice cream on an Oatlands footpath in February 2020. The children passed away after being hit by a driver under the influence of drugs and alcohol. The grief of the parents was immeasurable and was shared by much of the local Epping community and the nation. Four years on, Danny and Leila Abdallah and Bridget Sakr have become ambassadors for hope and forgiveness. The annual I4give Day, founded by the Abdallah's and Bridget Sakr's Heartfelt Charity are the fruits of these parents' will for greater and positive change in the community. I had the privilege of being one among many at the unveiling of a special memorial in Oatlands

in honour of the children. Passer-byes can now pause and reflect at the sight of these four small sandstone plinths with portraits of each child upon them. Danny and Leila have forgiven the driver and have called upon others to do similar in their daily lives. Whilst the events of that day cannot be undone, the memory of those children and the inspiration of their parents is eternal.

TONY BALTHASAR ACHIEVEMENT AWARD – 1ST EAST ROSEVILLE SCOUTS

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)—On Thursday 4th April 2024, I look forward to commemorating the conclusion of the Tony Balthasar Achievement Award with 1st East Roseville Scouts. The Tony Balthasar Achievement Award was established by Dick Smith in 1985 to commemorate the memory of Tony Balthasar, who was the Rover Adviser at 1st East Roseville Scouts during the 1960's. The award continues Tony's legacy by providing adventurous opportunities to Rovers that Tony championed for during his time in Scouts. Over the 38-year period to its final awardee in 2021 a total of 27 Rovers have benefited from the opportunities the award provides. I recognise, Dick Smith for his continued support of the scouting movement from his days as a member of 1st East Roseville Scouts, Peter 'Rusty' Allen for his dedication to the East Roseville scouting community and North Sydney Region Scouts for ensuring all Rovers have the opportunity to participate. In our Davidson electorate community, we are incredibly lucky to have community groups like 1st East Roseville Scouts that provide amazing opportunities for our children and young adults. I am honoured to represent them in the Parliament of NSW.

RABBI LEWIN 20 YEARS OF SERVICE TO NORTH SHORE SYNAGOGUE

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)—In March 2024, Rabbi Paul Lewin will celebrate 20 years of service to the North Shore Synagogue in Lindfield. I proudly recognise him and his public service in the Parliament of NSW. Originally from South Africa, Rabbi Lewin came to Australia in 1997 to inspire Jewish Students. It was here where he met his wife Talya. In 2004 he was appointed to the important role of Senior Rabbi, and since then has been consistently commended by the community for his efforts in fostering an inclusive and welcoming environment at the synagogue. I can personally attest to his warm, generous and positive spirit. I have immensely enjoyed his friendship over Shabbat Dinner with Talya and his wonderful family of seven children. Rabbi Lewin also serves the community at Masada College in St Ives. He teaches students from pre-school to high school, including the Higher School Certificate course of Studies of Religion. I am proud to represent a community that has a vibrant Jewish community led by Rabbi Lewin. Mazal Tov on your 20 years of service to our community Rabbi Lewin. Thank you for all that you do!

HONOURABLE PATRICIA FORSYTHE, AM

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)—On 22 March 2024, I look forward to attending the investiture of the Honourable Patricia Forsythe AM as the eighth Chancellor of the University of Newcastle. I have known Patricia for over 20 years, and first met her when she was a member of the other place, the Legislative Council. Serving from 1991 to 2006, she held several portfolios, including Education. Upon retirement from Parliament, Patricia served as the Executive Director of the Sydney Business Chamber from 2006 to 2019; and patriotically as Australian High Commissioner to New Zealand from 2019 to 2022. In this role, she exercised leadership, in particular in the aftermath of the eruption of Whakaari/White Island. On Australia Day 2019, Patricia became a Member of the Order of Australia (AM), awarded for significant service to business, and to the people and the Parliament of NSW. The University of Newcastle was always a part of Patricia's life. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts and a Diploma of Education; and in more recent times was a member of the Advisory Board of the Law and Business Faculty. I thank Patricia for her ongoing public service and her ongoing mentorship.

PORT HACKING PUTTERS

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)—I congratulate crews and officials on a successful Putt Putt Regatta on Port Hacking last month. The 2024 regatta of the 'Port Hacking Putters' was the ninth annual running in the modern era of the event which started in 2016. More than 30 classic wooden and historic local vessels made for a colourful Sunday morning on the water. The category prizes went to King John (best dressed), Ke Ola Maika'i (best putter), Vasco Da Gamma (pride of the port), Knot Dreaming (Commodore's call), Shifty (ship shape) and Atria (heritage). The Commander's commendation was awarded to Clancy for logging on to the Marine Rescue NSW smartphone app, which offers a range of safety features to boaters including that their expected return time is being monitored. Port Hacking Putters Commodore Brad Whittaker said "it's a fun day and colourful event but importantly it highlights the valuable contribution of the volunteers from the local Marine Rescue NSW unit and the need to be safe when on our waterways." I congratulate Brad and his wife Fiona Bell-Whittaker who spearheaded the annual event, along with this year's volunteer regatta team from the Marine Rescue NSW Botany-Port Hacking unit led by Steven Clifford.

TRIBUTE TO GARY BEAUMONT

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)—I pay tribute to the life and legacy of Kenthurst local, Gary Beaumont, who passed away recently. Gary's served the local communities of Kenthurst and Annangrove throughout his life. It was in about 1978 that Gary commenced publishing the Kenthurst and Community News and with his wife Gail they have jointly published the community newspaper for over forty-six years. The newspaper is invaluable to the community and to many community groups including the Kenthurst Rotary Clubs. In about 1990 Gary had the idea to fundraise to purchase a community bus. Though fundraising activities, the Kenthurst and Annangrove Community Bus was purchased. The availability of the community bus has been important to the community for over thirty years. Gary additionally has been an active and valuable member of the Hills Community Church for the last forty-six years, a Youth Work and Boys Brigade Leader and an afterhours Lifeline Telephone Counsellor. I take time to recognise Gary's long commitment to the service of our local community. Gary is survived by his wife Gail, his children Andrew and Sheree and two grandchildren. Vale Gary Beaumont.

THE RESIDENTS AND STAFF OF BERNARD CHAN

Mr JASON LI (Strathfield)—Along with Sally Sitou the Federal Member for Reid, and Mayor John Faker, I had the privilege of visiting the Bernard Chan Nursing Home in Burwood on 20 February to celebrate Lunar New Year with residents, family and staff. We were fortunate to witness performances by residents and received a tour of the facilities. The residents and staff at Bernard Chan, run by the Australian Nursing Home Foundation, are truly special. It is inspiring to see the elderly of our community dance, volunteer, create art and live life to the full. Bernard Chan and places like it are meeting a growing need. One in six Australians are aged 65 and over, with 37% born overseas and almost a fifth speaking a language other than English at home. It was also uplifting to observe the staff carry out their roles with care and professionalism, and to see improvements in individualised support including in the So Wai Centre, one of the first dementia care centres in NSW catering for culturally diverse communities. We recognise the resilient residents of Bernard Chan, and the devoted staff who support them.

BIRTHDAY MESSAGE- JASPER MAQUILING

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)—I ask the House to join me in wishing Jasper Maquiling a happy 34th birthday and note the following message for Hansard: "Happy 34th Birthday Jasper. More Blessing to come and good health." It truly is a wonderful thing to celebrate a birthday in a community like Ryde, and I am humbled to be able to play a small role in making Jasper's day that little bit extra special. As you reflect on your birthday, I hope the memories are filled with love, laughter, and cherished moments that you will take on your journey in the future. Wishing you continued happiness and prosperity in the years ahead. Happy birthday Jasper!

BIRTHDAY MESSAGE- EN LOU

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)—I ask the House to join me in wishing En Lou a happy 48th Birthday! Her husband, Jason, asked me to deliver the following message in the Parliament: "To my dear wife En, special wishes for your special day in the Year of the Dragon. Thank you for taking care of Jaime and myself, despite working full time. May good health and wealth follow you wherever you go - Happy Birthday!" It truly is a wonderful thing to celebrate a birthday with the love and support of those closest to you, and I am humbled to be able to play a small role in making En's day that little bit extra special. May your birthday be filled with love, laughter, and cherished moments, particularly in this auspicious year of the dragon. Wishing you continued happiness and prosperity in the years ahead. Happy birthday En!

CITIZENSHIP CONGRATULATIONS

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)—The great tapestry of Ryde is now brighter, bolder, and richer thanks to the contributions of our newest citizens, who officially became Australians on 07/03/2024. I ask the House to join me in thanking the following individuals for choosing Ryde: Edmund Lim, Yiqing Lin, Yi-wei Lin, Kung-ming Liu, Ariane Liu, Wenwu Liu, Abirami Madhavan, Morteza Mohammadi, Sandra Mayne, Amelia Mayne, Emma Minai, Katrina Moles, Daryl Moles, Fatumah Nassuuna, Puneet Nayyar, Wing Ng, Mina Nikfarjam, Wahid Nikzad, Shane O'Connell, June Padayhag, Heami Park, Lizzet Camacho, Kishopong Peethong, Shyan-shuenn Peng, Nagachandran Posina, Karim Pourhamzavi, Hongliang Qiu, Laura Pinto, Theepa Rageendrathas, Ankita Verma Rawat, Hector Llamas, Brendon Rice, Seung-in Roh, Harish Samineni, Saurabh Barmecha, Mark Sharman, Jianshi Shen, Ching-han Shen, Yu Sheng, Abishek Shrestha, Julian Mahecha, Maro Sidharta, Charlotte Smith, Pinida Tata, Mark Taylor, Rahul Ujjanwal, Rannie Villegas, Katelyn Walker, Zhen Wang, Mark Welsh, Clair Wilson, Yun Woo, Yen-hui Wu, Xiao Xu, Chanda Yape, Serena Yoon, Rachael Zekanovic, Tim Zhang, Lily Zheng, and Yipeng Zhou. Congratulations and good luck!

AWARDS PRESENTATION NIGHT BY THE TABLE TENNIS GROUP 2023

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)—Attending the Awards Presentation Night and End of Year 2023 Christmas Celebrations organised by the Table Tennis Group at Cabra-Vale Diggers Club in Cabramatta was truly delightful. The evening was filled with joy, camaraderie, and a celebration of the achievements within the table tennis community. It was a fantastic opportunity to connect with fellow enthusiasts and acknowledge the dedication and accomplishments of individuals. The event showcased the passion for table tennis, creating a vibrant atmosphere of shared interests and mutual appreciation. I extend my gratitude to the organizers for putting together such a memorable occasion. These gatherings not only foster a sense of community but also highlight the importance of recognizing and applauding the efforts of those contributing to the shared love for table tennis. I congratulate Mr Van Viet Nguyen the President of this Table Tennis Group at Cabra-Vale Diggers Club and the Committee Member Mr Thanh Dan Huynh for the kind invitation and congratulate them on organising this successful event.

SPECIAL CHILDREN SERVICES CENTRE 2024 CHINESE LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)—I thoroughly enjoyed the Chinese Lunar New Year celebrations in Cabramatta, extending my gratitude to the Special Children Services Centre for their thoughtful invitation and commendable efforts in providing crucial support to children and their families. The event not only allowed for a joyous commemoration of the Lunar New Year but also highlighted the invaluable work of the Special Children Services Centre, emphasizing their dedication to fostering a positive impact on the lives of children and their families. It was a truly heartening experience to witness the community coming together in celebration and acknowledgment of the Centre's significant contributions. During the recent transitional event, Ms Floris Lam completed her term as President. The vibrant celebration saw the introduction of the new President. The festivities were further heightened by a spectacular lion dancing performance, captivating the audience with its lively and traditional choreography. The atmosphere was filled with the rhythmic beats of music, creating an energetic ambiance that perfectly complemented the joyous occasion. I thank Ms Floris Lam for the kind invitation and congratulate her for all her wonderful work in my local community.

THE NSW INDO-CHINA CHINESE LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS 2024

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)—It was my honour to represent the Premier of NSW, the Hon Chris Minns, and the Minister for Multiculturalism, the Hon Steve Kamper, at the joyous Lunar New Year Celebrations held at the Iron Chef Chinese Seafood Restaurant in Cabramatta. I express my sincere gratitude to the NSW Indo-China Chinese Association for extending such a gracious invitation, providing an opportunity to partake in the vibrant festivities. The event was a delightful showcase of cultural richness and community spirit, bringing together guests and individuals from diverse backgrounds to celebrate the Lunar New Year. The festivities at the Iron Chef Chinese Seafood Restaurant created a warm and inclusive atmosphere, reflecting the unity and diversity that defines my local community. The NSW Indo-China Chinese Association's thoughtful invitation allowed me to witness firsthand the positive impact of multicultural celebrations, fostering connections and understanding among the community members who participated. I thank Mr Henry Wu President of the NSW Indo-China Chinese Association for the kind invitation and congratulate him for organising this successful event.

SCHOOL LEADERS 2024 - LAKE ILLAWARRA SOUTH PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I would like to congratulate Noe Spinks, Ella Cowie, Dylan Westra and Maya Brankovic for being elected as school leaders for 2024 at Lake Illawarra South Public School. Being appointed a leader at your school is an honour for any student and worthy of recognition. You all have a very important job within the school and will act as mentors for younger students, advocate for student issues and represent your school at functions and events. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate you all on this achievement and wish you all the best in this leadership role.

SCHOOL LEADERS 2024 - LAKE ILLAWARRA HIGH SCHOOL

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I would like to congratulate Lilli Anger, Jaida Carrasco and Paige Parker for being elected as school leaders for 2024 at Lake Illawarra High School. Being appointed a leader at your school is an honour for any student and worthy of recognition. You all have a very important job within the school and will act as mentors for younger students, advocate for student issues and represent your school at functions and events. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate you all on this achievement and wish you all the best in this leadership role.

SCHOOL LEADERS 2024 - FLINDERS PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I would like to congratulate Ava T, Kaleb G, Eva G, Sam B, Deion E, Tijah B and Penny R for being elected as school leaders for 2024 at Flinders Public School. Being appointed a leader at your school is an honour for any student and worthy of recognition. You all have a very

important job within the school and will act as mentors for younger students, advocate for student issues and represent your school at functions and events. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate you all on this achievement and wish you all the best in this leadership role.

LISMORE WOMEN'S HEALTH AND RESOURCE CENTRE EXPANDING

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—The Lismore Women's Health & Resource Centre is a safe place run for women by women providing confidential, friendly health and well-being assistance for women in the greater Lismore area. I was proud to announce a long-overdue \$1,780,500 boost over the next five years to the Northern Rivers Women and Children's Services Incorporated (NORWACS), the charity which runs the health centre and an outreach service. NORWACS Chief Executive Officer Kelly Banister says she, her Board Chair Jane Gold and Operations Manager Jacqueline Alinaitwe are delighted with the first increase in funding to the sector since 1986. "Conservatively, this funding means that NORWACS will be able to increase the services we offer by 50 per cent, reaching many more women," Ms Banister says. They'll have more hours for counselling staff, social workers, health promotion staff, and their women's health nurse clinic will be more frequent and expand from primarily educational and referral services to screening and pathology. NORWACS plans to significantly increase its capacity to deliver therapeutic group workshops to the women in our community who need this support. They intend to also run pop-up women's health centre in places like Murwillumbah and Kyogle.

NEW CURATOR FOR LISMORE REGIONAL GALLERY

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I would like to welcome the newly appointed curator of the Lismore Regional Gallery, Ineke Dane. Ineke is an award-winning curator with a background in contemporary art theory, environmental and indigenous law, policy and journalism. Her previous curatorial roles include the Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art and Kaldor Public Arts Projects and Ineke has curated numerous independent exhibitions in regional galleries. Ineke spent her childhood in the Northern Rivers region and has since lived and worked in cities across Australia and, Africa and Europe – a career that has taken her to Kenya, Tanzania, England, Canada, Italy and Germany. In Berlin she worked with the Wuppertal Institute for Climate, Environment and Energy and as arts editor for ExBerliner Magazine. Ineke is interested in how creativity can be a conduit to new ways of understanding the human condition and entangling with the world around us. Since the 2022 floods The Lismore Regional Gallery has been operating out of a pop-up space and the Gallery building restoration is now underway. It is wonderful to have Ineke bring her energy and leadership to the Gallery at this critical time, ahead of the planned reopening later this year.

RAIL TRAIL ANNIVERSARY

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—This month marks the first anniversary of the Tweed section of the Northern Rivers Rail Trail, which starts at the historic Murwillumbah Railway Station and passes through a string of villages, finishing at Crabbes Creek. More than 140,000 people have used the 24 km trail, making it one of the most popular attractions in the region. I congratulate the members of the Northern Rivers Rail Trail Association who had the vision to preserve the 130km of disused rail corridor between Murwillumbah and Casino, and made it happen. Highlights of the Rail Trail's first year include: Winner Best Regional Project in NSW by the Australian Institute of Project Management; Winner in the Conservation – Landscape category National Trust Heritage Awards; 4.8-star rating on Google from more than 300 reviews; The appointment of 3 new business tenants at Murwillumbah Railway Station. Richmond Valley Council will officially open the second section of the NRRT, from Casino to Bentley, later this month with the first stage of the Lismore section, from Eltham to Bentley, expected to open later this year. When completed, the Rail Trail will eventually be 132 km in length, traversing from Casino through Lismore, Byron and on to Tweed.

MURRAY BORDER NASHOS

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to acknowledge the Murray Border Nashos, and president Graham Garvie, for their dedication to preserve the memory of those young men who were called up for compulsory military service between 1951 to 1972. On Nashos Memorial Day a ceremony was held at the Nashos Memorial Garden in Albury. The idea of an annual ceremony was introduced by the Menzies Government, as a tribute to the 287,000 young men who left their jobs and families to serve their country. It was a privilege to be part of such a meaningful commemoration, the laying of a wreath honouring those who served and sacrificed for their country, made a fitting tribute. I also express my gratitude to the local young cadets, they are our future in our community and are learning the values of duty and honour. I continue to be deeply moved by the spirit of service, of remembrance and gratitude that permeates our community and which sends us forward with courage.

MARK AND DEB DAVIS – THESE ALBURY RESTAURATEURS LOVED DIN DINS SO MUCH THEY SNAPPED IT UP

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to congratulate Mark and Deb Davis the owners of Level One Wine Bar for their commitment to keeping the pulse of Albury beating strong by purchasing their second venue Din Dins. In a time when regional businesses face economic challenges, Mark and Deb are expanding functions and retaining skilled chefs and staff. It is their contribution that is noteworthy, not just to our palates, but also to the livelihoods of those who live on the Border and call Albury home. Their businesses are providing valuable employment opportunities, with nine chefs working across both venues under executive chef Mathew King, and three new apprentice chefs who have recently qualified. It is no surprise that they have found success since moving to Albury, given Deb's experience and background in events and corporate catering, and Mark's leadership in establishing Australian Wine Agencies, which represents 40 wineries Australia-wide and imported wines. To the Davis Duo, Deb and Mark, I extend my best wishes as they pursue gastronomic excellence and training for our community.

TRUST IN CHARITY

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I extend my recognition to the Albury Wodonga Regional Cancer Centre for their remarkable achievement in raising a record annual total of \$1.7 million through fundraising efforts. This signifies a milestone in pursuit of an ambitious goal to see that no patient will need to travel from Albury-Wodonga to Melbourne for cancer treatment. I acknowledge the Phegan family, Jo Owen and SS&A Club Albury Chief Executive Gerard Darmody, whose dedication is a shared vision for easing challenges faced by families with children battling cancer. I am delighted to welcome Mrs Owen as the Border's paediatric cancer care-coordinator, a role made possible through the generous contributions of the Phegan Family and SS&A Club. Looking ahead, AWRCC remain committed to embracing advancements in technology, including the prospect of future robotics surgery, to further enhance patient care and treatment outcomes. I commend major donors the Phegan family for their generous donations of \$50,000 and the Albury SS&A Club for their steadfast support of \$60,000 annually. Well done and thank you to all involved for your tireless efforts and generosity.

JUDITH GARGOSKY

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)—Congratulations to Judith Gargosky, who have been nominated in the 2024 Maitland Local Woman of the Year Awards. Judith began volunteering as a firefighter with the Country Fire Authority South Morang Fire Brigade in 1995, working in CFA Headquarters during the fire season. During her second stint in the RAAF, Judith began a Bachelor of Nursing in 2008 upon return from Middle East deployment. She worked as an assistant-in-nursing on weekends for hands on experience as she continued full-time service. Unfortunately, midway through her degree in 2011, she was struck down with an autoimmune illness, Lupus and PTSD and was unable to complete her degree. Judith then undertook training as a Compensation Advocate Level 1 volunteer with East Maitland RSL sub-branch. She provides assistance to current and retired veterans and war widows in numerous areas including claims and records and also visits Maitland Private Hospital, to help any veterans that are in hospital and want assistance. In February 2023 Judith was elected Honorary Secretary for East Maitland RSL sub-branch. Thank you Judith for your dedication to the community of Maitland.

EMILY BIATCH

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)—Congratulations to Emily Biatch who was nominated in the 2024 Maitland Local Woman of the Year Awards. Emily began her professional life as a teacher, educating children and connecting with families. During Emily's own journey into parenthood, she learnt firsthand some of the challenges that are thrown upon parents. Emily's eldest child received a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and intellectual impairment at the age of 3. This motivated Emily to complete a research degrees in Autism Education to help others. As the Founder and Director of Mummel Road, Emily now professionally supports families to understand their child and improve their quality of life. Mummel Road offers a range of free resources including facts about autism, a podcast series, and a blog. Emily also strives to offer practical and easy-to-access support for families in regional areas. Over the past 5 years, Emily has volunteered her time alongside the team at the Earth Market, Maitland creating a welcoming place for individuals on the autism spectrum to develop new skills. Thank you, Emily, for your dedication to the community of Maitland.

LYNNE WARNER

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)—Congratulations to Lynne Warner who was nominated in the 2024 Maitland Local Woman of the Year Awards. Lynne has spent 20 years as a Social Worker in Geriatrics and Rehabilitation, 10 Years as the Dementia Advisor, 4 years as a

Dementia Educator within Nursing Homes, Pharmacies, Service Clubs and Service providers and 4 years as Dementia Advisor. Lynne established a swim group and a gym group for people living with dementia. During COVID Lynne pivoted and created another group to support and educate the dementia community. Although retired Lynne gives her time on a voluntary basis to support those living with dementia and their carers as they battle the dementia assistance landscape. Lynne feels privileged to be on this journey with them, from the devastating shock of a dementia diagnosis, to the extra care required at home and then the wrench to full time care in a nursing home. Thank you, Lynne, for your dedication to the community of Maitland.

2024 NSW SENIORS LOCAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)—I congratulate St Clair locals Ian Baistow and Ian Pike for each being awarded the prestigious 2024 NSW Seniors Local Achievement Award! Mr Baistow's award is in recognition of his commitment as a Foundation Member of Cecil's Place, the precursor to the St Clair & District Men's Shed and for his services as Treasurer and a Committee Member of the Shed's Building Committee, overseeing the construction and fit-out of the new Men's Shed. Mr Pike, a Committee Member of the St Clair & District Men's Shed since Incorporation, received his award in recognition of his service to the Men's Shed as a Committee Member of the Shed's Building Committee since 2016, also for his services as President and newly appointed Secretary of the Men's Shed. Their service has enriched the lives of members of the Men's Shed, as well as the countless organisations and community members who are supported by the work of the Men's Shed. I thank and commend Ian Baistow and Ian Pike for their service!

LIFE ED AUSTRALIA

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)—I thank and commend the charitable organisation Life Ed Australia and Healthy Harold for their commitment to the health of Australian children, including those in my own community of Badgerys Creek. I recently had the pleasure of meeting Healthy Harold in NSW Parliament House and speaking to him about the Life Ed program, which is a program that supports schools and teachers to deliver high quality health and wellbeing lessons to communities and young people. Life Ed Australia has supported the physical, social and emotional wellbeing of children and young Australians since 1979 and their support reaches over 700,000 children aged 3-13 in Australia every year. I thank and commend all involved with Life Ed Australia for empowering and educating students in my community and beyond with the skills and knowledge to make safe and healthy choices. I wish Life Ed Australia and Healthy Harold the best as they continue their important work.

HARMONY WEEK

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)—I wish all multicultural communities in Badgerys Creek a Happy Harmony Week! Our Badgerys Creek community is comprised of people from diverse backgrounds, cultures, faiths and ethnicities, whose contributions greatly enrich our society. We are an inclusive and welcoming community that is united in our shared values of faith, freedom, respect, democracy and love for our community and country. The theme for Harmony Week 2024 is 'Everyone Belongs' and is one that defines the unity of our community and society very well. This week is a time to reflect and celebrate our diversity and what better way than to attend the local Harmony Week events that are being held this weekend. I encourage all in the community to enjoy the festivities to commemorate the week and I thank all people and organisations who are contributing to the exciting events.

SANS SOUCI FOOTBALL CLUB AND HEARTBEAT OF FOOTBALL

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport)—On the 8th of this month Sans Souci Football Club hosted the Heartbeat of Football Foundation heart health check team at their home ground of Claydon Reserve at Sans Souci in my electorate of Rockdale. Heartbeat of Football do outstanding work offering nurse-led heart health checks to as many people as possible at local sporting events across our state, as well as offering CPR and Automated External Defibrillator confidence sessions, thereby growing a sport bystander network of people who can respond to emergency cardiac situations. Sans Souci Football Club took the occasion of a pre-season trial match to put on a BBQ and get as many people as possible to take up the free heart health checks on offer on the day. It was a pleasure to join the Mayors of Bayside and Georges River Councils to see so many people taking up this potentially life-saving free service, and I commend the Club and its hard-working volunteers for their outstanding efforts on the day.

ROCKDALE CITY SUNS FOOTBALL CLUB - ILINDEN SEASON LAUNCH

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport)—On Saturday the 3rd of February I had the great pleasure of attending the 2024 season launch of the Rockdale City Suns Football Club – Ilinden. Held at the

club's home at the Ilinden Sports Centre at Bicentennial Park in Rockdale, it was a wonderful opportunity to join Bayside Council Mayor Bill Saravinovski and Football St George Chair Irene Hatzipetros to meet nearly 600 players, volunteers and supporters of this outstanding community club in my electorate. Lead by a dynamic board under club president Dennis Loether, Rockdale City Suns and its associated junior club have grown into a local football powerhouse, with a full range of NSW National Premier League and St George Football Association competition teams. Although the current M6 Stage 1 motorway construction works in Bicentennial Park have impacted on some of their playing fields, the board and officials of the club have managed to maintain the club's momentum and they are positioned for a great future. I congratulate the club, its board, officials, volunteers, players, and supporters for their outstanding work and I look forward to seeing their success in the 2024 season.

BAYCARE GYMEA BAY

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)—I recognise the community spirit of volunteers from BAYCARE GyMEA Bay, who have come together to clean up the heritage-listed GyMEA Bay tidal baths and the surrounding reserve. GyMEA Bay Baths Reserve is an increasingly popular spot for fishing and the BAYCARE group was formed in December 2023 by a group of locals concerned about the increase in litter being left behind by visitors. The BAYCARE team is now doing around four rubbish collections in the area each week, regularly collecting litter like fishing line, plastic bait bags, coffee cups and plastic bottles, to ensure the reserve is tidy for everyone to enjoy and avoid rubbish polluting GyMEA Bay and impacting wildlife. Some of the volunteers have spent their own money to buying bags and equipment for the clean ups. I acknowledge the efforts of the group, particularly organiser Mat Hunt, Annette Evans, Danielle Whittoliz, Brad Peterson, Bodhi Bowman and Mandy Bowman.

GLEBE SOCIETY

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)—Today I bring to the attention of the House the Glebe Society and the important work they're doing to help advocate for sustainable development in our community. The Glebe Society and the dedicated members of their management committee including President Mr. Duncan Leys, and members Mark Stapleton, Mary-Beth Brinson, Jude Paul, Jane Gatwood, Louis Taborda, Allan Hogan, Angela Callinan, Glen Powell, Tim Hesketh and planning sub-committee members including Ian Stephenson have engaged in advocacy to ensure Glebe remains a wonderful place to live. The Society have consistently advocated for the provision of truly affordable housing, to ensure everyone can afford a place to call home. They've also worked hard to push for sustainable development underpinned by good planning principles that preserves local heritage, protects our tree canopy, and ensures adequate infrastructure is in place to support a growing population. I thank them for their dedicated advocacy.

CONSULATE-GENERAL OF JAPAN - EMPEROR'S 64TH BIRTHDAY

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—I was privileged to attend the reception hosted by the Consul General of Japan in Sydney, Mr Tokuda Shuichi, and Mrs Tokuda Mariko, celebrating the 64th Birthday of His Majesty Naruhito, Emperor of Japan, on Wednesday 28th February 2024, at the Consul-General's Residence. The Consulate-General of Japan, Sydney, has a very long history, first established as Consulate in 1897, and upgraded in 1901. This century-old diplomatic mission is a testament to the strength of the Japan Australia relationship, including strong security and economic ties built on the cultivation of mutual understanding and trust. The Consul-General conveyed the importance of infrastructure and development in Western Sydney, which has great potential for collaboration with Japan, and acknowledged the sister city (State) relationship between NSW and Tokyo. I look forward to continuing the good relationship with representatives of our Japanese-Australian community and helping to strengthen bonds between our nations. I wish Emperor Naruhito all the best and congratulate His Majesty on the celebration of his 64th birthday.

GREAT SYNAGOGUE - OPENING OF 2024 LAW TERM

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—I was privileged to attend the annual Service for the Opening of the Law Term, at The Great Synagogue on Wednesday 7th February 2024. This service at The Great Synagogue has been conducted for over 60 years, taking place in the presence of the Chief Justice of New South Wales, and members of the State and Federal Judiciary. It marks the beginning of the legal year and is the Jewish community's tribute to those who ensure we are governed by law, fairness and justice. This year's service was officiated by Chief Minister of The Great Synagogue, Rabbi Dr Benjamin Elton and Cantor, Rabbi Menachem Feldman, in the presence of NSW Chief Justice, the Honourable Andrew Bell. Addresses and verses were read by Attorney General, the Honourable Michael Daley, and President of the Court of Appeal, the Honourable Justice Julie Ward. Prayers for Australia, the Judiciary and Legal Profession were read by Law Society President, Brett McGrath, and the Honourable Ron Hoenig, Minister for Local Government. Thank you to Great Synagogue President, Mr David P. Lewis, Rabbi Elton and the congregation for hosting the Opening of the 2024 Law Term, supporting our legal community.

CAMBEWARRA PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises Cambewarra Public School. There are great initiatives happening at Cambewarra Public School as it heads towards the end of first term. The school recently hosted a meet and greet barbeque which was a terrific opportunity for caregivers and parents to meet teachers and school staff and to connect parents with other local Cambewarra families. It has also participated in the Shoalhaven District Swimming Carnival at Nowra Pool, hosted its stage 3 Wombaroo Camp, hosted a Star Wars dress up day to raise funds for a local student with cancer, an interactive performance by 5/6P who delivered a great lesson on how to display Cambewarra Public School values, Year 4 students have begun violin lessons and K-2 students who have been running laps of the playground in preparation for their upcoming cross country day at Cambewarra Public School. The school's aim is to provide quality education in a caring environment and provides sporting, cultural, enrichment and support programs to enable students to reach their potential. I also acknowledge Principal, Mr John Bond, Teacher Librarian Mrs Bennett, the teachers and office staff at Cambewarra Public School.

KIAMA BEACH TAG TOURNAMENT

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises the Kiama Beach Tag Tournament 2024 and the National Rugby League (NRL) for supporting sport and recreation in our region. Kendall's Beach which played host to the Kiama Beach Tag Tournament 2024. There was a record-breaking 1,200 players from 75 different teams competing, featuring a mix of NRL and NRLW stars. This is the third year the event has taken place. The teams battled it out across junior, open and mixed categories, with notable appearances by retired NRL legends Trent Merrin, Matt Cooper and Luke Patten. I acknowledge the Tournament Director Mr Keiron Duncan hailed the event's success and hinted at plans for next year's return. Keiron attributes this year's success to the unwavering support of the local community, with various groups and sporting teams joining forces to ensure the event's smooth execution. Endorsed by the NRL, the tournament stands as the sole full-day Beach Tag event in NSW, drawing praise for its widespread community support and inclusive spirit. With future growth on the horizon and NRL community involvement expected, anticipation is already growing for next year's competition.

2024 KIAMA JAZZ AND BLUES FESTIVAL

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises the 2024 Kiama Jazz and Blues Festival. Music enthusiasts from near and far gathered in Kiama the weekend of 8th-10th March 2024 for the annual Jazz and Blues Festival. The three-day event is known for its vibrant atmosphere and line-up of artists attracting visitors. I was delighted to see local artists performing live outside the Kiama Electorate Office and Saltwater Café next door in Terralong Street, Kiama. The festival is an annual community run festival that is set across Kiama and Gerringong. A diverse range of musical styles as talented musicians took to the stage to showcase their abilities. The streets of Kiama were abuzz with street performers at various other spots like Surf Beach, Bouquiniste, Fillmores and Burnetts on Barney. Throughout the weekend the festival continued to delight audiences with a packed schedule of performances and an array of delicious foods and beverages from local vendors, adding to the overall experience of the weekend. I acknowledge Festival Director Becky Guggisberg and thank her for her outstanding efforts, hard work and dedication into making the 2024 Kiama Jazz and Blues Festival a hit success!

BOMBALA SHOW: DI INGRAM AND SALLY-ANN THOMPSON

Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education)—Last weekend I had the privilege of being with Di Ingram at the opening of the Bombala show and congratulating her, along with the community, on the well-deserved award of life membership to the Bombala Exhibition Society. Di has served the society and the wider community for most of her life and seeing the reception from her family members and show-goers was a very special moment. I congratulate Di for her community spirit, and showing what her commitment to such a fantastic agricultural show has done for the area. I'd also like to give my condolences to family and friends of Sally-Ann Thompson, who recently passed away. Sally-Ann was, Sophie Campbell told us, an integral part of the show as the steward of the photography pavilion. Her passion saw many people become involved in photography, and the 2024 Bombala show was dedicated to her memory.

MELISSA PHILLIPS - WOMEN IN THE RFS

Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education)—I noted recently in the Monaro Post an article on Melissa Phillips. For the past 15 years, Melissa has worked as a psychologist in the Thredbo volunteer ski patrol, providing often critical support for the patrol's members. Ten years ago, Melissa decided to join the Monaro District Rural Fire Service, and since then has gone on to become one of a handful of women in senior roles. While Melissa says the work is challenging, she was raised knowing women can do

anything. As a result, she become one of the few women in the region qualified to drive fire trucks, been appointed to the role of deputy captain, and has recently trained as a peer support officer with the RFS. Since the Black Summer Bushfires and COVID-19, Melissa says: "The mental health workload has increased exponentially..." which is why we're so fortunate to have people such as Melissa in our communities filling these important roles. Melisa, her husband Steve, and all three of her children are members of the local RFS. I join the Post and the community in acknowledging those efforts.

WILL AND SHONA BROWN - MECHANICS IN BOMBALA

Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education)—Small communities like Bombala often have challenges keeping vital private services viable. That's why I was pleased to see recognition recently in the Monaro Post of the work Will and Shona Brown have been doing. For the last few years, Will and Shona Brown have been running a mobile mechanic service around the Bombala region, providing a unique service to the township. However, when they discovered the last remaining mechanic in Bombala would be closing its doors at the end of 2023, they decided to give it a go and fill the gap. Since February 5, the husband-and-wife duo has been operating the only mechanic service in the township. They've leased an existing shop from Mike Cottrell, who ran Cottrell Motors in town for 50 years, which meant the shop came with some useful equipment, but they have had to build up everything else themselves. I join the community in commending them on their efforts!

JUDY NADIN

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)—It is often said that Newcastle has the most artists per capita than anywhere else in NSW. Caricaturist Judy Nadin is one of those fantastic artists, and has just won the 2024 Bald Archy Prize, her third Bald Archy of her career. Her 2024 work 'Flippin' Kerfection' depicts sports legend and Matildas star, Sam Kerr, doing her iconic goal-celebrating backflip. Ms Nadin also won the 2010 Prize for her portrait 'Patti's Cake' of the late Bert Newton and the 2014 Prize for her artwork 'Wrecking Ball Ashes to Ashes' of cricketer, Mitchell Johnson. This year marks 30 years of the Baldy Archy Prize. It is known as Australia's top satirical art prize and the winner is chosen by Maude the Cockatoo. Ms Nadin is also an esteemed graphic designer, known for her local work with Newcastle Pride. Well done Judy! Your work never fails to make me smile.

SISTER CARMEL HANSON

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)—Congratulations to Sister Carmel Hanson, the Newcastle Local Woman of the Year, an inspirational advocate for housing and homelessness. Sister Carmel has devoted her life to helping those in need, having pursued careers in teaching, psychology, and law, all in the name of helping others. In 1991, Sister Carmel founded the House of Hospitality, as a safe shelter and an alcohol and drug free home for men coming out of alcohol and drug rehabilitation programs. The House of Hospitality has since opened its arms to other community members in need, such as women and children escaping domestic violence, asylum seekers, and women who have completed a detoxification program. Sister Carmel has been the coordinator of the house for the last 33 years, in which time she has provided shelter and support to thousands of people. Sister Carmel has been quietly helping and caring for our most vulnerable community members for decades and this recognition is long overdue.

FATHER NICOLAOS ZERVAS, OAM

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)—In recognition of his profound impact and dedicated service, Father Nicolaos Zervas has been awarded Newcastle Freeman of the Year. Since immigrating from Greece in 1955, he has been an unwavering pillar of the Greek Community of Newcastle, serving as a priest at St Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church for nearly five decades until his retirement in 2021. Father Zervas' commitment extends far beyond his pastoral duties; he established Greek afternoon schools across NSW, served on the Ethnic Community Council, and held various leadership roles in multicultural initiatives. His boundless compassion is demonstrated in his volunteer work, including decades helping at Meals on Wheels, working as a Greek interpreter at Lifeline, and running scripture programs at local schools. Father Zervas' membership in esteemed organisations like Hippocrates Aged Care and Newcastle Olympic Football Club further exemplifies his community spirit. In 1993, Father Zervas received a Medal of the Order of Australia for his community service and was honoured with the Local Achievement Award at the NSW Seniors Festival in 2019. Father Zervas' legacy of service and compassion serves as a beacon of inspiration for all. Congratulations.

CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills)—I would like to thank all the volunteers in my electorate of East Hills for rolling up their sleeves and participating in Clean Up Australia Day, which took place this year on Sunday, March 3. From humble beginnings, it started as a small community event over 30 years ago and has now

become the nation's largest community-based environmental event. I also thank Canterbury-Bankstown Mayor Bilal El-Hayek for leading the way and encouraging the community to get involved in this worthwhile cause. East Hills is surrounded by beautiful natural landscapes, including parks, wetlands and bushland. It is important that we keep these areas clean and tidy so future generations can continue to enjoy these areas. I commend Clean Up Australia for its continued efforts. Today, the charity's focus is twofold; on preventing rubbish entering our environment and waterways and removing what has already accumulated. Last year, local volunteers collected 80 kilograms of rubbish on Clean Up Australia Day which is a testament to my community's collective spirit. It really does take a team effort to keep Australia beautiful and I thank everyone who got their hands dirty to help clean up our community.

CANTERBURY BANKSTOWN LOCAL BUSINESS AWARDS PRESENTATION EVENING

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills)—Local businesses are the backbone of our community and play a vital role in connecting individuals throughout the electorate. They are the beating heart of our economy, create job opportunities and drive growth. Local businesses exemplify an entrepreneurial and innovative spirit, bringing unique products and services to our community. They foster a sense of belonging, creating vibrant neighbourhoods where people can connect and thrive. The Canterbury Bankstown Local Business Awards will recognise and support local businesses' hard work and achievements. The Local Business Awards also celebrate businesses' remarkable contributions to their communities. The Awards are widely recognised and respected, and businesses eagerly await the annual Gala Presentation Evening, as recognition as a finalist or winner is a huge opportunity that boosts a business's reputation. Nominations for the awards are open to the public, which reflects our electorate's culture of community support and engagement. I congratulate all nominated businesses and wish them the best of luck. I look forward to the upcoming awards ceremony, to be held on 4 June in Bankstown.

GEORGES RIVER GRAMMAR - OUTSTANDING HSC RESULTS

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills)—I would like to acknowledge the outstanding achievements of the Georges River Grammar class of 2023, who have celebrated remarkable success in the Higher School Certificate (HSC) examinations. With the school achieving its best HSC results in over a decade, ranking 98th in New South Wales, it is evident that the dedication and commitment of both students and staff have yielded exceptional outcomes. Under the leadership of Principal Ben Haeusler, the school has fostered a culture of academic excellence, where rigorous standards are coupled with genuine care and support for each student. This holistic approach has resulted in a significant improvement of over 100 places in the rankings. The exceptional achievements of two students who attained ATARs above 99, along with 26% of the cohort achieving ATARs above 90, reflect the collective efforts and determination of the entire school community. These outstanding results not only speak to the hard work and dedication of the students but also highlight the invaluable support provided by their parents, teachers, and peers. The Georges River Grammar community stands as a shining example of what can be achieved through collaborative effort and unwavering commitment to excellence.

AUSTRALIAN REPTILE PARK

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—I am delighted to commend the Australian Reptile Park for its remarkable achievement in winning the Major Tourist Attraction award at the esteemed 2023 Australian Tourism Awards. This historic win is a testament to the park's excellence, marking its first-time reception of such a prestigious accolade, following its prior success at the 2023 NSW Tourism Awards. The Australian Reptile Park has enjoyed great success over the past several years winning awards at both state and local level, however this gold award underscores their exceptional contributions to the tourism landscape, with the park standing out as one of only three NSW businesses honoured. Under the visionary leadership of Park Director Liz Gabriel, the team's dedication and passion for providing unforgettable family experiences are evident. Their commitment to wildlife conservation, alongside innovative initiatives like venom milking and conservation programs through Aussie Ark, highlights their well-deserved acclaim. This prestigious award not only commemorates past achievements but also reaffirms the park's dedication to excellence in wildlife tourism and conservation for generations to come. Let us extend our heartfelt congratulations to the entire team for their exemplary efforts and invaluable contributions to the Australian tourism industry.

SALLY BARTLEY

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—It is my absolute pleasure to extend heartfelt congratulations to playwright Sally Bartley, whose exceptional work "Walk a Mile" has been selected for performance at the inaugural Sage Age Short Play Competition in Sydney on March 24th. Amongst 164 entries, Sally's play stood out, earning her a well-deserved spot amongst the eight chosen playwrights. The Competition, conceived by Scene Theatre Sydney's artistic director, Carol Dance, is a ground-breaking initiative exclusively for seniors. This platform is aimed at encouraging older individuals to explore their creativity and engage with live theatre. "Walk a Mile" delves into the complexities of relationships and friendships, weaving a tale that promises to captivate

and resonate with audiences of all ages. Sally's ability to craft compelling narratives is a testament to her talent and dedication as a playwright. The stage will be graced by an all-star cast led by the renowned actor Sandy Gore, adding another layer of brilliance to Sally's already captivating narrative. Congratulations, Sally, on this well-deserved recognition and for the rich tapestry of stories you bring to the stage. Your contribution to the arts community as an actor, life member of the Wyong Drama Group and a playwright is commended.

CHINDERAH COMMUNITY HUB

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed)—With the end of February this year marking two years since the devastating 2022 Northern Rivers floods, I would like to pay tribute to the invaluable community contribution of Kay Redman, Sandy Gilbert and the entire team at the Chinderah Community Hub. The hub was created by the community in the aftermath of the floods, staffed by volunteers and continues to provide a vital service to residents of Chinderah and beyond with food, meals, connections to support services, and a listening ear. It was pleasing to see the recent announcement of a \$50,000 grant from the NSW Government to continue this important service that has recorded more than 7000 visits since it opened. Kay and Sandy have dedicated countless hours to the Hub, supporting flood victims, many of whom were left with nothing after the waters receded. Thank you Kay and Sandy for everything you have done, and everything you continue to do. The Tweed is a better place because of your contribution to our community.

PHIL CORNISH

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)—I would like to offer my congratulations to Mr Phil Cornish who has dedicated 40 years of service volunteering with the Volunteer Rescue Association, VRA NSW. In times of need, whether it be in the emergency or recovery phase, VRA can bring affiliated squads together to provide assistance to other services or to assist one of its own affiliates. Phil has been a big part of this over his time spent in the organisation. Phil has spent many years helping members as the captain of the squad. He has served in all roles both operational and non-operational in his time with the Volunteer Rescue Association and continues to serve as an on-road rescue operator. With over 40 years of lifelong experiences guiding him, Phil is also known for the support he offers to younger members, guiding and training them. Thank you, Phil, on behalf of our community, for all your time and efforts and continued dedicated service to the community, you are an asset to the squad and the entire Volunteer Rescue Association NSW.

MUZZA'S MILK BAR 10TH BIRTHDAY

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)—I would like to congratulate Muzza's Milk Bar in Evans Head on recently celebrating their 10th birthday. The shop was founded by Petria Powell in memory of her late husband Sergeant Murray Powell and is now run by her daughter Caroline Powell and has become a well-recognised landmark in the community. Sustaining a thriving business in a small town can be a challenge, even more so over recent years, but Muzza's has not only survived but thrived and grown. Caroline adapted the business to overcome the difficulties of covid by deciding to take deliveries to customers and sharing a bit of joy with families throughout the area. I was impressed to find out that Muzzas are their ice cream supplier's biggest customer, even out-selling Dreamworld and Australia Zoo. It is a testament to their popularity that they have achieved results like these, and I congratulate them on their hard work and resilience. I hear that Caroline has plans to expand and open another shop and possibly a warehouse for storage. I wish her all the best in her prospective endeavours and hope to hear of her successes in the near future.

GRAFTON PARKRUN

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)—I offer my congratulations to Grafton Parkrun on their 8th anniversary. Parkrun is run completely by volunteers. Every week, local runners and walkers, young and old, at all levels of fitness get together and enjoy this fun and friendly community event, thanks to the volunteers. Whether you want to challenge yourself to run a personal best, walk the dog, or to simply get the kids outside, you will get a friendly welcome at Grafton Parkrun. Grafton Parkrun started back in October 2015. On the 8th anniversary over two thousand participants had completed 22,689 runs covering a total distance of 113,445 km, including 3,840 new personal bests. Over three hundred and fifty individuals have volunteered almost three thousand times. Grafton parkrun brings many visitors to town, visitors who want to try parkrun somewhere different away from home. I've been told that the Grafton crew often hear from visitors how much they enjoy our local parkrun, how much of a lovely and friendly bunch of park runners they are, and how they love visiting our beautiful City. Congratulations Grafton Parkrun on being such great ambassadors for our local community and encouraging participants to get out and get active.

CRONULLA JUNIOR RUGBY LEAGUE LAUNCH

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—Footy is back with a bang and none bigger than Cronulla Junior Rugby League's incredible season launch on 16 March 2024. Established in 1964, the Cronulla district is now the

second largest in the State with over 5,000 players across 13 clubs including Aquinas Colts, Como Crocs, Joeys, Gynea Gorillas, Menai Roosters and Taren Point Titans in the Miranda electorate. Our little league enthusiasts couldn't have been happier that this year's event looked different – there were activities on Wanda beach, drills on the grass, a light breakfast at Wanda Surf Life Saving Club and the launch of NSW Rugby League Community Rugby League Competitions. It is little wonder that rugby league is synonymous with the fabric of our local community. None of this would be possible without the efforts of the dedicated team behind the Cronulla Junior Rugby League. I recognise the leadership of executive members John Mannah, Simone Osfield, Amanda Kayes, David Sheargold and Adam Wrightson, and the operational excellence of Chris Bannerman and Jenny McNamara. I commend the Cronulla Junior Rugby League for fostering a love of rugby league in our community which now has the highest rate of female participation in the state.

SHEREE BOURKE, OAM

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I congratulate Sheree Bourke of Bonnet Bay on being awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for her extensive service to education. Ms Bourke's educational journey has been quite unique. She is currently Deputy Principal at Tempe High School, has previously served as a Deputy Principal, teacher, former President of Tharawal Before and After School Care and been involved with the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW. Throughout her time in education, Ms Bourke has taken a particularly keen interest in agricultural education and has inspired many students along this path. With respect to her involvement in the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW, Ms Bourke was an establishing member of the Junior Agricultural Judge Coaching Program which aims to develop the agriculture and judging skills of young people aged 15-25. Additionally, she is the co-ordinator of the highly regarded School District Displays Competitions, a Committee Member on the Castle Hill and District Agricultural Society and has served a Grains Steward since 1988. I congratulate Ms Bourke for receiving the Medal of the Order of Australia and thank her for encouraging the next generation to pursue an interest in agriculture.

ADRIAN JACKSON, OAM

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I congratulate Adrian Jackson of Taren Point on being awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for his extensive service to the community, particularly through the church. Mr Jackson's work with the Anglican Church of Australia spans many years. Locally, Mr Jackson has served our community as the Treasurer of St Philip's Anglican Church in Caringbah for the past 18 years and as an active member of the Chapel Committee in Woollooware Shores Village in Taren Point. Outside the Sutherland Shire, Mr Jackson is a former Council Member of the Shoalhaven Anglican School and was the Administrative Officer at the Danebank Anglican School for Girls between 1997 and 2006, impacting the educational journey of many individuals. Christian values are at the heart of Mr Jackson's selfless service, as demonstrated through his work with the Katoke Trust for Overseas Aid. The Trust's vision is to provide high quality Christian Education at a minimal cost to the community of Katoke, the local district and Tanzania generally. Mr Jackson has been both a Trustee and the Honorary Treasurer since 2007. I commend Mr Jackson for these incredible achievements and thank him for his contribution to our community.

NATIONAL COLLEGE OF DANCE

Ms SONIA HORNERy (Wallsend)—Dedicated to artistic excellence, the leader in vocational dance training in the Hunter, the National College of Dance, is celebrating 50 years in 2024. NCD offers a highly creative environment for dancers of all ages and levels of experience to grow and flourish. It has been an inspiration to generations of local dancers, many progressing to well-known professional careers with national and international companies. Based on expert training, artistic collaboration and consistent live performance opportunities, students hone their skills and build their resumes for a career in dance. NCD offers casual classes for dancers as young as three years old, all the way through to adults and over 50s, as well as offering nationally-recognised full-time training programs incorporating styles such as ballet, contemporary and jazz. NCD is all about getting bodies moving, enjoying music, sharing stories, and becoming healthier and happier people, with new projects in the pipeline, often involving collaborations with other local groups and artists. Congratulations to co-owners and operators Vicki and Brett Morgan and to all current students and instructors, on the Golden Anniversary of NCD.

STEPHEN JOHN LAYBUTT (1977-2024)

Ms SONIA HORNERy (Wallsend)—Stephen's journey from domestic football leagues to the international stage displayed dedication, skill, perseverance and a commitment to excellence which saw him become a highly respected, well-loved player and person. A quiet, humble man, Stephen was a tough defender who played with his heart of gold on his sleeve - a hard man on the field, but a gentle giant off it. Born in Lithgow, he grew up in Wollongong and earned a scholarship at the AIS. His senior career included stints in Wollongong, Brisbane, Sydney, and for the Newcastle Jets. Overseas, he played in Japan, Norway, Belgium and the Netherlands. Stephen represented Australia at the 2000 Olympics, playing 14 games for the Olyroos and 15 for

the Socceroos, netting 15 career goals. Stephen's last professional football game was for the Jets in a 2-1 win against Central Coast in January 2008, as a ruptured achilles tendon ended his playing career at age 30. He wished he had played in a World Cup, but said that his was still a half-decent career. Later, Stephen unselfishly donated a kidney to a patient on dialysis. Well-played, Stephen.

JETTS WALLSEND FUNDRAISING TEAM

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—The Jetts Wallsend community together raised over \$5300 through a fundraising campaign including a bootcamp, competitions and other activities to help their valued member Kylie deal with illness. Kylie is now undertaking rounds of intense breast cancer treatment and hasn't been able to work due to the side-effects. With the demands of life starting to take a toll, the Jetts Wallsend team did their fundraising to help make other aspects of Kylie's life a little more stress-free. Kylie is a member who is quick to greet everyone, always happy to chat to people - someone willing to go the extra mile to assist others. She is now in a tough fight against aggressive breast cancer and her life has been upturned as she has begun chemotherapy, along with radiation and experimental therapies. The Jetts Wallsend fundraising donation helps to make Kylie's fight a little less stressful and to surround her with the support she's shown to so many others. In communities, the most beautiful gestures often arise from adversity, like the support and love that the Jetts Wallsend team has shown for one of their own.

AUSTRALIAN KOREAN ASSOCIATION OF SYDNEY - AUSTRALIA DAY CELEBRATIONS

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, it was my honour and privilege to join in on the Australia Day celebrations with our vibrant Korean community right here in New South Wales. Organised by the Australian Korean Association of Sydney & NSW Incorporated, I must say that it was a fantastic event with an incredible turnout. Australia Day is a time to recognise the diversity of our Nation's people and our multicultural, multifaith society – those who have come from all over the world to call this great place home. It's also a time to recognise the opportunities that Australia offers, whilst looking forward to building a better future together. I truly believe that this is what makes New South Wales the best State in all of Australia. I'd like to thank Ester Kim, President of the Australian Korean Association of Sydney & NSW Incorporated. The work you do alongside our multicultural communities in New South Wales is truly phenomenal. I look forward to continuing to work closely alongside the Australian Korean Association well into the future.

ROBBIE KMETONI

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, I rise to congratulate an incredibly talented local performer, Robbie Kmetoni. Robbie has recently been announced as one of the performers in the live dance show, Burn the Floor. As a part of the 25th anniversary Tour of the show, he will be joined by Human Nature's Phil Burton, as part of the 'Dare To Dream' 2024 Australian tour. The show will include some incredible Aussie rock classics by artists such as AC/DC, INXS, John Farnham and Keith Urban. Robbie was first picked up after he won the hit TV show, 'So You Think You Can Dance Australia' and ever since, has been fulfilling his dream of performing on some of the biggest stages around the country. The performing arts sector is truly such an important part of our community. Not only is it entertaining, but it also serves as a platform for talented locals like Robbie to showcase their skills. Congratulations to Robbie for this incredible achievement and I wish him all the best for a successful and memorable tour. I'm sure Robbie will go incredibly far over the next few years.

JENNIFER PARRY - DRESS FOR SUCCESS

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, I rise to thank and congratulate a local constituent, Jennifer Parry for all her efforts over the years, as well as her recent achievements. Despite being born blind, Jennifer has been an absolute inspiration within our community. Recently, Jennifer was made an ambassador for 'Dress for Success' – an organisation which initially helped her land her dream job. Dress for Success offers styling services as well as empowerment workshops, providing a confidence boost to women wishing to enter the workforce. The organisations latest campaign 'Empower Hour' will help a total of 750 women get back into the workforce, whilst also coinciding with International Women's Day. We know that there are many challenges associated with women entering the workforce, however organisations like Dress for Success are instrumental in removing barriers and combatting stigmas. I'd like to thank Jennifer for her advocacy work over the last few years. This work ensures that women receive the assistance they deserve and I could not be more proud of her efforts. I wish Jennifer every success in her future endeavours.

COMMUNITY AT 3 VOLUNTEERS

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—I take this opportunity to acknowledge the inspirational volunteers from Camden Haven Community at 3. Formerly known as 'Barbecue for the Needy' Camden Haven Community at 3 offers transitional and permanent accommodation, laundry, food relief, transportation, domestic and family care, health and general needs. On average, Community at 3 supports fifteen new clients each week,

ranging from young families, single men and women, pensioners, teenagers and middle aged employed and unemployed community members. I thank the extraordinary team for dedicating their time towards such a worthy cause. Volunteers include Anne Boyd, Antonia McGarry, Betty Andrews, Braizon Sargent, Carol Pratt, Connie Smith, Craig Kaul, David Allan, David Buchan, David Sanders, Donna Giles-Browne, Doug and Diane Pope, Dorothy Smart, Frank Khoo, Gail Goldberg, Garry Combey, Gerard Macinante, Jack and Pat Sim (Flamingo), Jane Chegwiddden, Jayne Vale, Jo Werner, John Pearson, June Relf, Kristine Witte, Les Meredith, Lesa Sutherland, Lyn Cole, Lyn Groves, Marj Cameron, Melissa Jursic, Pat Legge, Patricia Lakke, Richard Maybury, Robyn Kilgour, Robyn L'Huillier, Robyn McLaughlin, Ronda Bradford, Rosemary Allan, Sandra Hanlon, Stuart Lewis, Susan Romanoff, Suzanne Sanders, Terry Hudson, Tin Nu, Tom Witte, Trish Ross, Yvonne Little and Zillah Williams. Well done to you all!

HEART OF COURAGE

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—Today I acknowledge the next fundraising challenge coordinated by local renown cyclist Melinda Cockshutt, aimed at improving regional cancer outcomes. Reflecting on the funds raised over many years for cancer research, Mel is simply an inspiration to us all. Mel's current project focuses on the charity she co-founded, "Heart of Courage". A goal to raise \$100,000 for the Hastings Cancer Trust is already breaking records with \$65,000 generously donated by the community. Founded in 2023 by Melinda and Bec Hoschke, the Heart of Courage seeks to narrow the gap in cancer care and support in regional communities. From donations raised, 50 percent is invested into indigenous health and cancer imbalances, with a focus on making a difference in Closing the Gap. A range of fundraising activities have been undertaken with the latest the 1000 trees project where donations will enhance and restore natural environmental heritage. In partnership with Port Macquarie Landcare and Beach to Brother Trail Running Festival the community is encourage to donate \$20 to connect to country, connect to conversation and connect to cause. A leader and mentor in our community, I congratulate Melinda on her fundraising endeavours for people living with a cancer diagnosis.

PORT MACQUARIE MAKO'S - TOUCH FOOTBALL WORLD CUP

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—I rise to recognise the Port Macquarie Mako's Touch Association members who were recently selected to attend the 2024 Touch Football World Cup. I am pleased to advise the House that nine members from the Port Macquarie Mako's will represent Australia at the Touch Football World Cup, held in England from the 15th to 21st July 2024. Those selected include referees Greg Oaten and Emma Bleasdale, Warren Lorgier in the Men's 40's division, coach Peter Vincent in the Men's 50's, Anna Gleeson in the Women's 40's, Beau Montgomery in the Mixed Seniors, Nick Bale in the Mixed Seniors, Kobie Knight in the Women's 40's and Tahney Luck in the Women's 35's division. Acknowledged for their talents and athleticism at a special selection camp, the Port Macquarie Mako's will participate on the world stage to defend Australia's overall title as world champion nation. I single out Nick Bale who will make his debut in the Mixed Seniors for Australia. Nick has dreamed of this moment to compete with the Australian side since he was young. I congratulate our nine representatives and wish them well at the Touch Football World Cup.

BEKS BLOOMZ

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)—I rise today to recognise Beks Bloomz, located in Goulburn and established in 2010. Beks Bloomz provides a range of products including fresh flowers, artificial flowers, handmade products, Essential oils, and gift ideas, alongside workshops designed to suit all ages and occasions. Beks Bloomz owner Bek Gerstner is no stranger to attending and being the recipient of awards at the Australian Wedding Industry Awards. Beks Bloomz was chosen in the Top 5 Brides Choice Award in 2019, Canberra, Brides Choice Award Winner in 2020 and 2021, Canberra, second in the highly commended Wedding Industry Award in 2023, Canberra, Southern Tablelands and Snowy Mountains and Finalist Australian Wedding Awards 2023. This year, Ms Gerstner made it into the top two regional categories, travelling to the Gold Coast on the 10th January 2024 to attend the Australian Wedding Awards ceremony. This ceremony recognised businesses across forty-five categories in the wedding industry, and saw Beks Bloomz taking out the award of the Number One Wedding Florist 2023. Ms Gerstner was honoured to take out the award and will continue to celebrate and share her knowledge, talent, and skills through floral design classes. Congratulations Beks Bloomz.

PHILLIP LEIGHTON-DALY

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)—I rise today to recognise Phillip Leighton-Daly. Mr Leighton-Daly is a talented and remarkable individual who has been able to creatively utilise his life experiences, skills, and knowledge to achieve a range of significant accomplishments. Working as a teacher within the NSW Education Department for forty-five years, recipient of a number of Bronze Medallions for Life Saving, a twenty-five-year Austswim service certificate, member of the Sing Australia Choir and expert author of a number of published books. Mr Leighton-Daly's literary achievements have included two regional awards for his books, Kenmore Psychiatric Hospital - "Wednesday's Child" and "A Reflective History of the Goulburn District (The

Tides in the lives of Man)". I take this time to acknowledge and congratulate Mr Leighton-Daly on his significant contributions to education, Life Saving and his expansive literary prowess, which has earned respect and admiration from many of his peers and community members.

ROTARIANS - CLUB OF GOULBURN MULWAREE

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)—I rise today to recognise the team of Rotarians from the Club of Goulburn Mulwaree. A group of enthusiastic Rotarians set off to the village of Vatukarasa on the Coral Coast of Viti Levu, Fiji, where they worked diligently to renovate the local Community Hall. The project had its genesis in 2006 when a team from the Club of Goulburn Mulwaree (now amalgamated with the Club of Goulburn) renovated the church in the village. With the interruption of COVID and the amalgamation of the three Rotary Clubs in Goulburn it took some time to raise funds and assemble a team to do the work. The work consisted of replacing the interior fibro board ceiling as well as the exterior corrugated iron roof, which had rusted and leaked rainwater, with newer Colorbond roofing. The outside toilets were also replaced and plumbing fixed as well as the construction of a new doorway, outside steps and handrails and, finally painting the interior of the hall and toilets. I acknowledge all Rotarians and non-Rotarians who worked on this project and can only imagine the gratitude of the local community whose life activities centre around their Hall and Church.

REBECCA SMYTH

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—Speaker, I would like to congratulate Narromine's Rebecca Smyth on her selection in the NRL NSW Country Representative Team to play on the Gold Coast at the end of March. Rebecca will play an integral role in the Championships team, also being awarded the honour of Captaining the team. A dual sport athlete, Rebecca had a remarkable career in rugby union, captaining the ACT Brumbies and representing the Wallaroos at three Rugby World Cups, however, Rebecca made the decision to leave rugby union behind to dedicate more time to her family. Transitioning to a new sport, Rebecca joined the Narromine Jets League Tag side, embracing the challenge with enthusiasm and determination. Her leadership skills, experience and athleticism have made her a valuable asset to the team and the club. Rebecca was recently selected as part of the Western Rams NSW Country Championships Open team. Not only was she selected in the team but also lead and inspired her teammates in the role of Captain. As a Technological and Applied Studies/Personal Development Health and Physical Education Head Teacher at Narromine High School, Rebecca is an inspiration and role model proving what can be achieved with resilience and determination.

GLADYS WILLIAMS

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—Speaker, I would like to wish a very special Happy Birthday to Wellington woman Gladys Williams who has just celebrated her 105th Birthday! Born in 1919 at Bodangora, just outside Wellington, Gladys was delivered by her own grandmother, as were her six siblings- four sisters and two brothers. Celebrating the milestone, Gladys enjoyed a family celebration at Four Cats café in Wellington and a few days later she was joined by family and residents of Maranatha House who enjoyed a celebratory lunch and sung "Happy Birthday" to their cherished friend. When asked about her secret to a long life, Gladys did let out one tip, and that was that she enjoyed a glass of red after 5 o'clock on occasion! Turning 105 years old is a rare and extraordinary achievement that deserves recognition and celebration. It symbolises a lifetime filled with resilience, wisdom, and a legacy of love that will continue to inspire others for generations to come. Here's to you Gladys! Happy 105th birthday. May your days continue to be filled with love, laughter, and the company of cherished friends and family. You are a true treasure and an inspiration to all who know you!

ORANA SUPPORT SERVICES - IWD

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—Speaker, I would like to congratulate Orana Support Services on their International Women's Day event, bringing to Dubbo the formidable, Jelena Dokic as guest speaker. On 8 March 2024, 260 guests gathered at the Dubbo Rhino Lodge to celebrate International Women's Day and raise funds for the Orana Support Services Women's Refuge. Champion tennis player and commentator, Jelena Dokic, addressed the crowd with warmth and inspiration. A collaboration between Orana Support Services and local bookstore, the Book Connection, enhanced the overall experience for guests, allowing them to take home a piece of the evening and continue to be inspired by Jelena's words long after the event had ended. Renowned Aboriginal Artist, and stroke survivor, Lizzy Stageman, originally from Dubbo, also bravely shared her story with the crowd. The Orana Support Service Women's Refuge has been operating and supporting women in Dubbo for over 30 years. They provide support to people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. I thank Orana Support Service for the vital service they provide and continue to provide to our community and commend them on an event that acknowledged and celebrated courage, resilience, and grace.

ANA CUFRE

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—With the recent celebration of International Women's Day, I would like to acknowledge the contribution of women to our construction industry. I would particularly like to single out a leader, Ana Cufre, who runs a construction business next door to my office and is a tireless champion of women in the construction industry. Employing thousands of people, the construction industry plays such a critical role in the infrastructure and development of our state, much of which would be impossible without the contribution of women such as Ana. Ana is a passionate advocate for the promotion of opportunities for women in construction and to ensure they are well supported in their careers. I thank Ana for her work and advocacy. I wish her well in the industry and hope that her enterprise will be an inspiration to other women seeking careers in the construction industry.

WILLOUGHBY SENIORS FESTIVAL CELEBRATIONS

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—The month of March is all about celebrating our remarkable seniors and this year, the NSW Seniors Festival theme is 'Reach Beyond'. In Willoughby, the festival provides a wonderful opportunity for our older residents to come together, celebrate and connect. To celebrate our local seniors, Willoughby City Council will be running a variety of events and activities including the popular annual Variety Concert at the Zenith Theatre Chatswood, the 'Healthy Ageing' webinar by the eminent geriatrician Professor Susan Kurrle AO, a Sydney Harbour Cruise, plus many other activities including health talks, social lunches, bushwalks, musical concerts, exhibitions and open days. I welcome these festivities as a tangible way for our Willoughby community to offer its thanks to our seniors for all they have contributed to our families, workplaces and voluntary organisations, often at great sacrifice. I commend council and community for arranging and engaging in such a wonderful programme of events to bring our community together in gratitude to our seniors.

TONY PANG, OAM

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—I would like to honour a great servant of our multicultural communities, Tony Pang OAM, who was recently awarded a Lifetime Community Services Medal at the Premier's Harmony Dinner. Tony has devoted more than 20 years of voluntary work for the Chinese Australian Forum and CASS Care both of which have a strong following in the Willoughby community. As a community leader, Tony has developed close relationships with influential businesses and voluntary associations, together with all levels of government. Dedicated to nurturing our cultural diversity, Tony has forged close ties to the Korean, Japanese, Indian, Jewish, Greek, Italian, Vietnamese and Egyptian communities, many of which have a large presence in Willoughby. In addition to his community work, Tony had a long career in the public service where he was involved in the implementation of the 'Richmond Report' that paved the way for the introduction of community group homes for people living with a disability. For his dedication to our multicultural community and public service, Tony's award is richly deserved and I warmly congratulate him on this honour.

HUNDREDS GET THEIR CLOTHES OFF FOR BRAIN CANCER

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—Speaker, recently at Cobblers Beach in Mosman hundreds gathered for the annual Sydney Skinny which is the world's largest annual nude swim to raise money for the Charlie Teo Foundation. Despite the gloomy weather several hundred swimmers took to the water in nothing other than their birthday suits, with bodies of all shapes, sizes and colours. This is the 11th consecutive year Sydney Skinny has hosted the nude swim, with participants able to swim three hundred metres or for the confident locals they were able to tackle a nine hundred metre course. One hundred per cent of the proceeds will go directly to the Charlie Teo Foundation which has already donated \$10 million to brain cancer projects and research. Amazingly this year the Sydney Skinny raised over \$50,000 which is an incredible achievement. Congratulations to all those who took part in the Sydney Skinny.

GOROKAN HIGH SCHOOL

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast)—Gorokan High School is selected to showcase their artwork at the Gosford Regional Gallery spanning across the Community Gallery and Foyer Gallery spaces. A Central Vision Exhibition for 2024 will run from 2 March to 7 April, showcasing artworks from young artist across 15 selected Central Coast public secondary schools. The students have an opportunity to display their artwork in a professional gallery setting, with prizes awarded to a selection of artworks. This year there will be 78 artworks on display from students in years 7-12. A Central Vision exhibition has been running for over 20 years now and it is a mainstay of the program. Good luck to participating students of Gorokan High School.

BEACH YUM NUTRITION

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast)—I would like to welcome new business owners Lee and Ryan McBay who recently opened Beach Yum Nutrition at Norah Head. The local business opened their doors in November 2023, sharing their love of nutritious drinks including loaded teas, smoothies, pre + post workout and vegan options to the people on the Central Coast. Lee and Ryan's mission is to provide the community and beyond with a healthy alternative to fast food and energy drinks with delicious gourmet smoothies and clean energising loaded teas. Beach Yum smoothies are double blended on water and ice and are low calorie, low sugar, and high protein. The names of the loaded teas relate to the local area such as Lighthouse, Soldiers Sunrise, and JD's Reef to name a few. The local's favourites at the bar are The Soldiers Sunrise Energy Tea and Malteser Pleaser Smoothie. I wish Lee and Ryan all the best on their new journey.

SYDNEY SECONDARY COLLEGE AWARDS PRESENTATION DAY

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)—Today I bring to the attention of the House the wonderful students and staff of Sydney Secondary College whose three high-school campuses of Leichhardt, Balmain and Blackwattle Bay are within my electorate. There are many high-achieving students across the college and last month I had the pleasure of attending their Awards Presentation Day at the Darling Harbour International Convention Centre. It was great to see so many smiling faces with students acknowledged for their hard work and dedication to study, supported by friends, family and the entire school community. I particularly want to acknowledge Isabella Gianatti, Olivia Waters, Jensen Blum and Laura Hansen Corak-Phan who each received an Award for Achievement. I was pleased to present each of these students with a voucher for one of our fantastic local bookshops. With talented student like these across the three Sydney Secondary College campuses our future is in good hands.

ERIN LONGBOTTOM

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)—On behalf of the Sydney electorate, I'd like to put on record the outstanding contribution and community service of Erin Longbottom. As Nursing Unit Manager at St Vincent's Hospital Homeless Health Service, Erin works on the front line with the most vulnerable people in our community, providing essential health care for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Erin plays a key role within her multidisciplinary outreach team of clinical and non-clinical support staff, identifying and helping rough sleepers, many who have undiagnosed, untreated or chronic health conditions. Erin is passionate about social justice and person-centred care for all people. In recent years Erin has become a fierce advocate for people without permanent residency, no right to work and no access to government support, who make up 20 percent of rough sleepers in the Sydney electorate. Erin has played a key role in bringing health and community services together to call on the government for reform of non-resident homelessness, ensuring the stories of people with lived experience are heard by decision makers. I value Erin's knowledge, experience, insight, and advocacy, and thank her for her ongoing commitment to helping the most vulnerable in our community.

LESLEY BENTLEY

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)—On behalf of the Sydney Electorate I thank Lesley Bentley from the Pyrmont Public Transport Forum for her determination to improve the transport options for people who live, work, and visit Pyrmont. Lesley is a strong advocate for public transport and has channelled the community frustration at lack of options into an effective and organised campaign, which has included activating the community, facilitating forums, and meeting directly with Government Minister, senior transport officials, and the City of Sydney. Pyrmont's public transport options will improve, and when it does it will be thanks to Lesley's Leadership.

MARK'S AUTO REPAIRS UMINA

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)—I'd like to give a special mention to another local business who is looking after our community. Aaron Suckling has recently taken over Mark's Automotive in Fyfe Lane, Umina Beach and he already has the community talking about how kind and helpful he is. Aaron had big shoes to fill, with his father, Mark starting the business in 1988 and becoming our local, reliable mechanic. After Mark's passing, Aaron's Uncle David took over for the last 15 years, with both Aaron and David keeping up the excellent customer service tradition. I have heard reports from happy customers about how Aaron has clearly explained what work is required and how his prices are very reasonable. Aaron even does the extra touches that we love from a local community mechanic, including the small things like changing wiper blades. Aaron's customer service isn't just confined to the workshop, he recently helped a customer with the overwhelming and arduous task of purchasing a new car

after their car was irreparable. Thank you to Aaron and David for looking after our community and keeping good old small town customer service alive.

FULL CIRCLE BUTCHERY

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)—Today I would like to give a shout out to Michael and the team at Full Circle Butchery in East Gosford. Few of you may know, but there a handful of people in each of our communities with a hidden disability - extreme histamine sensitivity. These people often live quite isolating lifestyles, not being able to eat out and having to be very careful with the food they purchase and how they prepare it, otherwise they can end up in debilitating pain and bed ridden. I'm pleased to hear that the team over at Full Circle Butchery have got these people covered. They whole-heartedly support members of the community with these severe histamine sensitivities by sourcing fresh, organic meat that meets the specific medical requirements of each of their customers. The bit that sets Michael and team above the rest, is their endless compassion and kindness, listening to their customers' needs and going above and beyond to ensuring they feel safe and heard. Thank you to Michael and the friendly team at FCB East Gosford for looking after our community with a smile and sharing your delicious meal ideas.

WELLBEING NURSES

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)—I would like to recognise all the wellbeing nurses within the Gosford Electorate, who perform a vital role in our schools, in particular Michelle Remaili from Narara Valley High School, Jennifer Rugg from Gosford High School and Eliza Potter from Brisbane Water Secondary College, Woy Woy Campus. I would also like to give a special mention to the former Wellbeing Nurse at Brisbane Water Secondary College, Melissa Tildesley, for her exemplary service. I hear that she was a real gift to the children and their families. Wellbeing nurses provide a critical link for students and families to services such as early intervention, assessments and health and social services referrals, providing a multi-faceted approach to young people's wellbeing. Since the Wellbeing and Health In-reach Nurse Coordinator program was started in 2018, more than 10,000 students across NSW, have been supported by wellbeing nurses. I am delighted to see so many students being supported by the hardworking wellbeing nurses within our community. Thank you to all the wellbeing nurses for the beautiful job you do in supporting our young people within schools.

TRIBUTE TO MARTIN MCCALLUM

Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)—I pay tribute to the late Martin McCallum. Originally from England, Martin moved to Palm Beach in 2003. Martin was an active member of the Palm Beach community, serving on the Palm Beach and Whale Beach Association committee for a decade and on the Council's working group on Art, Culture and Heritage. Martin will be remembered for his significant contributions to the theatre, working as an actor, stage manager and producer. Over the years, Martin was involved in over 500 West End and Broadway productions. A business partner to British theatrical producer, Cameron Mackintosh, Martin was critical to the success of Cats, Les Misérables, The Phantom of the Opera and Miss Saigon. After his permanent move to Sydney, Martin became very involved with the Sydney Theatre Company, serving as a Board Member from 2005 to 2015, a member of the STC's Chair's Council and the inaugural Chair of the STC50 Building Committee. Through his work, service and mentorship, Martin leaves an incredible legacy that will continue to inspire theatre-lovers for generations to come. Our thoughts are with Martin's partner Gwynne Jones, his children and their families. Martin, you will be missed. Vale, Martin McCallum, 1950-1924.

WEST PITTWATER COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)—I acknowledge the West Pittwater Community Association (WPCA), for their advocacy on behalf of residents living of Elvina Bay, Little Lovett, Lovett Bay, McCarrs Creek and Morning Bay. Pittwater's Western Foreshore is beloved for its beautiful natural environment and peacefulness. However, living in these hard to access areas come with a unique set of challenges. The Association does a fantastic job bringing the residents of West Pittwater together, so they can speak with one united voice and express the needs of their community. I recently had the opportunity to attend the 2024 WPCA AGM, where there was excellent discussion of matters including the logistics of providing offshore residents charging stations for electric vehicles and boats, road improvements and protecting the local environment. I congratulate President, Michael Wiener, Secretary, Melinda Broughton, Treasurer, Martin Didsbury, Vice Presidents, Nicholas Cowdery and Karen Lambert, and the entire executive on their unanimous re-election, thank you for your continued service of this amazing corner of the world.

NORTHERN BEACHES CREATIVE LEISURE AND LEARNING - 100 YEARS

Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)—I acknowledge Northern Beaches Creative Leisure and Learning (NBCLL) and congratulate them on 100 years of facilitating creative leisure activities. Started in Surry Hills in 1924, the Children's Library and Craft Movement catered for children with after school activities, holiday

programs and travelling libraries, including on the Northern Beaches. From 1971, activities were developed on the Northern Beaches under Nan Bosler, catering to people of all ages from pre-schoolers to adults, and all abilities. Officially incorporated as Northern Beaches Creative Leisure and Learning in 1996, NBCLL has pioneered and coordinated countless playgroups, after-school cares, learning support groups, leisure activities for those with special needs and adult learning and leisure classes. Many initiatives started by NBCLL over the years remain highly successful and several now run independently. For 100 years, NBCLL has brought people together, helping empower individuals and combat social isolation. I thank Maureen Rutledge for her ongoing efforts coordinating NBCLL, and all who have volunteered with NBCLL, our community is better for your service.

A FOUNDATION FOR A BLOODY GREAT CAUSE

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)—This year on International Women's Day, I attended a breakfast organised by the Foundation for a Bloody Great Cause. Held at Aqua Luna in Drummoyne, the breakfast united our community to celebrate women and women's equality under the International Women's Day 2024 theme, #InspireInclusion. The Breakfast helped raise funds for The Haematology Clinical Research Unit at Concord Hospital. At the event, a cheque for \$200,000 was handed over to Dr Nicole Wong Doo and Dr Emma Verner from the Unit. It was my greatest pleasure to sit on a panel facilitated by respected journalist Monica Attard OAM with Dr Janlyn Falconer of Concord Haematology, Journalist Rafqa Touma and Federal Member Sally Sitou. It was an inspiring discussion that left all of us feeling empowered. I wish to take this opportunity to recognise Marie Piccin, Chair of the Foundation For a Bloody Great Cause and the Board for their tireless effort supporting the lifechanging work of the Research Unit at Concord Hospital. I recognise the dedicated volunteers of the Bloody Great Committee including Chair Susan MacGregor, Rosanna Campisi and Lara Meli who serve the Foundation so well. Congratulations to all.

CONCORD WEST PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)—I wish to recognise Concord West Public School for the fantastic achievement of placing second in the state for Primary School NAPLAN results in 2023. Concord West Public School students achieved a 2023 NAPLAN average of 613.8. Students at the school belong to a friendly, nurturing, and supportive environment that welcomes and celebrates all abilities and backgrounds. I am sure that this welcoming community has allowed students to achieve success. I would like to take this opportunity to recognise Ms Monica Marchiello, Principal of Concord West Public School for her leadership. I congratulate the hardworking and dedicated coordinators, teachers and support staff on this achievement. I am proud to have a local school like Concord West Public in our community, serving local families for many years, and developing bright young minds into the leaders of tomorrow. I would like to congratulate all students at Concord West Public School for their hard work. Keep it up!

LYNNE GRAHAM

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—Last week I had the pleasure of presenting the Wagga Wagga Local Woman of the Year 2024 award to a very worthy recipient in long-serving community champion Lynne Graham. Mrs Graham recently retired after five years as manager of Carevan Wagga, a service that supports people experiencing food insecurity, homelessness, isolation, domestic violence or hardship. Carevan provides food but to Mrs Graham, it was also about helping those doing it tough to feel valued and connected. As a result, Carevan's clients not only got meals but also the "human touch" that we all need, regardless of our circumstances. Prior to leading Carevan, Mrs Graham was inspired by her faith in God to volunteer at a Baptist Church community kitchen, where she helped to prepare nourishing food for those at risk of going hungry. The Woman of the Year Award is the latest recognition for the former teacher, who was Wagga's Citizen of the Year in 2020. Humbled and honoured, she says her awards serve as recognition of all volunteers who dedicate their time to helping those less fortunate. Mrs Graham is a shining example of compassion and dedication, and I thank her sincerely for her service.

MARIAM MOURAD AND VIOLET ROUMELIOTIS – APPOINTMENT TO FIRST NSW WOMEN'S ADVISORY COUNCIL

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)—I am pleased to acknowledge and congratulate Ms Mariam Mourad, Chief Executive Officer of Bankstown Women's Health Centre (BWHC) and Ms Violet Roumeliotis, Chief Executive Officer, Settlement Services International (SSI) who have been appointed to the first NSW Women's Advisory Council. Having two local women, from diverse backgrounds, with strong advocacy track records to serve on the Advisory Council is a great way to start the new year. The Women's Advisory Council is tasked with advancing gender equality by providing key advice to government on the priority areas of the NSW Women's Strategy 2023–2026. Mariam and Violet have extensive expertise across a range of critical areas including health, employment, migrant services, and domestic and family violence. A former

Bankstown Local Women of the Year, Mariam has transformed BWHC into a thriving community institution directly assisting local women and children. A former Telstra Australian Businesswoman of the Year, Violet leads the SSI, with offices in Bankstown, Ashfield, and Parramatta, has also shown the importance of having assistance provided for people who have come to Australia for a better life. Congratulations Mariam Mourad and Violet Roumeliotis!

ST CHARBEL'S COLLEGE CELEBRATED OZ TAG, VOLLEYBALL TEAM SUCCESS

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)—Congratulations to St Charbel's College in Punchbowl on their senior boys' Oz Tag and senior girls' volleyball teams successful wins in their grand finals. This win has shown our young people in our community to keep on pushing through and doing what they love and enjoy. I would like to acknowledge and thank St Charbels Sports Co-ordinator and PDHPE teacher, Robert Nakhla, for the hard work and dedication that he puts into helping the young students to achieve their goals. These young people have shown that working together as a team, encouraging and supporting each other can lead to great things. These young athletes have shown the rest of the Bankstown youth community to continue to continue to work hard to achieve their goals. No matter what you are experiencing, the key is to find something you love doing, work hard and have fun while doing it. Once again, congratulations, to both the Oz Tag team and the volleyball team on their successful wins and their commitment and dedication that they have put into the season. It has all paid off, well done to everyone!

REG CHARD 10TH 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 congratulate local resident, Mr Reg Chard on his 100th birthday. I also acknowledge, recognise, and thank Mr Chard for his service in the Australian military. Mr Chard is one of Canterbury Bankstown's last surviving WWII veterans. He is passionate about sharing his past experiences with school children and visitors at the Kokoda Memorial Track Walkway. He joined the army at age 18 and after the fall of Singapore, along with other soldiers were sent to Papua New Guinea to fight on the Kokoda Track. He has enjoyed a lengthy career working as an apprentice baker and later operating a blast furnace in an iron foundry. Reg, who was married to his late wife Betty for 66 years, celebrated with a party at the Kokoda Memorial Walkway, followed by a family gathering with his son, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. From serving in the war to serving in the community through sharing his stories, Mr Chard is truly a symbol of hard work and dedication. Thank you for your service and I thank you for your amazing work that you have done for the Bankstown community.

THERESA MITCHELL

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Today I recognise the extraordinary achievements of Theresa Mitchell, motivational speaker, life coach, podcaster, author, founder of Agape Outreach Inc and winner of the NSW Regional Woman of the Year. In 2009, finding she could no longer walk past people on the street, Theresa began handing out a small number of meals cooked in her own kitchen. Today Agape has more than 200 volunteers, provides over 800 meals a week, repurposes over 2 tonnes of rescued food, prepares food hampers for families, provides case management support, offers access to showers and laundry facilities and conducts group training in life skills to our some of our community's most vulnerable members. Resourcing for frontline services is already stretched, and Byron Bay has some of the highest rates of rough sleepers in NSW, exacerbated by the 2022 floods. This vital community funded organisation serves over 1000 people between Byron Bay in Northern NSW and Runaway Bay in Queensland. As we find ourselves in the midst of a climate and housing crisis, Theresa has created an amazing network of care, engagement and action. I give my heartfelt thanks to Theresa and the staff and volunteers of Agape Outreach Inc.

STUDENTS AGAINST PLACEMENT POVERTY

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Today I recognise the worthy campaign of Students Against Placement Poverty. This campaign was started by a grassroots collective of students who want to abolish unpaid placements. University students working towards a bachelor's degree in an array of fields will find that they are required to complete unpaid placements, sometimes up to 1200 hours' worth before they meet the requirements of their degree. Rising housing, utilities and food costs, combined with hugely indexed HECS fees means that students may leave their studies in debt and poverty, or exhausted from the imbalances of working and studying to cover basic living costs. While there is no denying the learning experiences provided by placements, this form of labour should be recognised, and at least minimum wages provided to those who are expected to complete these hours. The difficulties of working during a placement to continue to be able to cover living costs creates an unfair dichotomy. I applaud the work of these students, who actively seek to find solutions to the current system, one in which students striving for higher education may be forced to choose between their studies and the cost of living.

INDOOR CRICKET CENTRE SOD TURNING

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)—Speaker on the 27 of November I had the privilege of attending the sod turning for the Raby Indoor Cricket Centre. This new state of the art facility will be built at Raby Sports Complex, offering aspiring cricketers in my electorate a state of the art facility complimenting the existing world class sporting precinct. This \$4.86 million project will include six lanes and nets, and allow cricketers to train year-round, regardless of the weather. The Macarthur region is home to some of the best up-and-coming athletes in the nation. This project gives them more options, close to home. This project will be supplemented by the substantial investments the Government is making in sports and youth in my electorate, such as the upgrade of Eagle Vale High School to include a sports stream. I look forward to seeing the completion of this project and the fostering of our next generation of test cricket stars right at home.

WESTERN SYDNEY AIRPORT TOUR

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)—Recently, I was given the opportunity to tour Western Sydney Airport and receive an update on the progress the team is making on the terminal and runway. I have visited the site several times over the last five or so years and every time I visit I continue to be astounded at the pace of works being conducted by the fantastic team on the site. The Western Sydney Airport is a once-in-a-century piece of infrastructure. It will provide jobs close to home for people in my electorate and in South West Sydney more broadly. Even now, the Airport is providing jobs to construction workers across Western Sydney. Thank you to the fantastic team at the airport for your hospitality. I look forward to continuing to visit the site including opening day in 2026.
