



















# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Thursday 9 May 2024**

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

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

*[Notices of motions given.]*

## *Bills*

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

#### **Second Reading Speech**

**Debate resumed from 21 March 2024.**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (10:19):** Today I continue to speak about the ICAC and Other Independent Commissions Legislation Amendment (Independent Funding) Bill 2024. When Labor was elected in New South Wales, there was a feeling in the community that something might finally be done to address the political corruption that has caused so much damage to our State. It is important to remember that the previous New South Wales Government voted against an earlier bill. Then, shortly after, several of its MPs were forced to resign from Parliament with serious clouds hanging over them. I had hoped that the Minns Government would take a stand against corruption by voting in support of that bill. But sadly, the people of New South Wales are still waiting for the Minns Government to act on this important issue.

I understand why the people of New South Wales are frustrated. As most people struggle to cope with cost-of-living pressures, they do not want to see governments misusing taxpayers' money. People are also sick of seeing scandal after scandal. Let us remind ourselves of the various scandals that have plagued us over the years. We have had sports rorts, dodgy dams, dodgy Daryl, 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 seems to emerge almost every other day. The previous Liberal-Nationals Government regularly attacked our anti-corruption body, and the attacks did not just come from State politicians. Let us not forget that former Prime Minister Scott Morrison called ICAC a kangaroo court. Meanwhile, former Minister Stuart Ayres accused ICAC of being a waste of money.

Why did the Liberal and Nationals MPs hate ICAC so much? What were they afraid of? What else did they have to hide? The fact that certain corrupt 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 what the bill is designed to do. We need more oversight of Government—not less—because, as we know, when some politicians do not have anyone scrutinising them, they get up to no good. When there are no consequences, there is inevitably more crime. Eliminating corruption by having proper scrutiny over how taxpayers' money is spent is what separates First World democracies from Third World dictatorships. We must continue to protect our democracy, and the bill does that.

The former State Government's attack on ICAC was part of a broader campaign against scrutiny. The previous Government would fight scrutiny in all forms, whether they were attacking the likes of the ABC or formal oversight bodies like ICAC. Under the previous Government, our watchdogs were slowly being turned into lapdogs. That is because our watchdogs were so terrified of losing their funding that they had become unable to do their jobs properly. That is why funding must be independent. Make no mistake, a lack of funding has a serious impact on ICAC. Previously, I have reported numerous scandals to ICAC and the Ombudsman. For example, I provided clear evidence of councils misusing ratepayers' money and bureaucrats favouring certain groups and excluding others. But sadly, I received the same response time and again: "Yes," ICAC says, "That sounds bad, but we have decided not to investigate." These decisions not to pursue corruption are clearly funding related. Right now, ICAC says it is operating with a \$4 million funding shortfall due to Government cutbacks. No Government should be allowed to cut funding to a 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 their jobs. The bill 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 that by allowing the annual funding of those bodies to be allocated separately from other agencies and free from political interference. It is a no-brainer. That is why I call on every MP to support the bill.

There is no doubt that the bill has overwhelming support amongst members of the public. It was drafted on the basis of the four key recommendations that were made in the New South Wales ICAC special report. The bill gives effect to each of those four recommendations. Recommendation 1 proposes that the parliamentary oversight committee for ICAC, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission, the NSW Ombudsman and the NSW Electoral Commission make recommendations on funding priorities. That is a parliamentary committee, not Cabinet. That is crucial. Recommendation 2 proposes that the annual budgets for those oversight bodies include a set contingency fund to address unbudgeted financial demands. Recommendation 3 proposes that the oversight bodies be directly allocated their annual funding through appropriation legislation rather than the current system where funding is allocated politically. That change will ensure that those anti-corruption bodies are not subject to reductions in funding during the financial year. Recommendation 4, which is probably the most important recommendation, proposes that the New South Wales Government remove those oversight bodies from being run by the Premier's Department and the Cabinet Office.

The impact of the bill will see ICAC get several million dollars more in funding, which is exactly what is needed. It will give ICAC the strength to defend itself against political interference. Implementing the recommendations will allow our oversight bodies to do their jobs in a frank and fearless way. That is absolutely essential to any democracy. I therefore urge all members to support the bill.

**Debate adjourned.**

## **ELECTRICITY INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT AMENDMENT (RENEWABLE ENERGY SECTOR PLAN) BILL 2024**

### **First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Mr Roy Butler, read a first time and printed.**

### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (10:27):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I introduce the Electricity Infrastructure Investment Amendment (Renewable Energy Sector Plan) Bill 2024. The bill aims to ensure that New South Wales is as ready as possible for any transition to renewables and maximises economic benefits, accountability and fairness. It will do that by encouraging local manufacturers to invest in the six renewable energy zones and creating a statutory process for accountability and transparency in the Renewable Energy Sector Board's decision-making process. The former New South Wales Coalition Government's original legislation, the Electricity Infrastructure Investment Act, known as the EII Act, received assent in December 2020 through a funding agreement with the Liberal-Nationals Commonwealth Government. It agreed to six renewable energy zones, or REZs, and needed specific legislation to allow the efficient development of each of these zones.

The Labor Opposition at the time amended the legislation to include a consumer protection and local content provision through the establishment of a Renewable Energy Sector Board. The board consists of manufacturers of steel, aluminium and other similar materials; the metal fabrication industry; the Australian Workers' Union; the Electrical Trades Union; the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union; the Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union; employers in the electricity, manufacturing and construction sectors; persons involved in the planning, design, construction and operation of generation infrastructure; and New South Wales electricity customers, EnergyCo and other persons appointed by the Minister. This board and its varied membership are essential to the transition. A transition away from coal will most impact the intensive energy industries—manufacturing and construction—so having a seat at the table and input into how goods, services, employment and future opportunities will be rolled out is a great start to ensuring that these industries can guide transitions and ensure benefits.

The board is charged with preparing and providing the Minister for Energy with a plan for the New South Wales renewable energy sector and the manufacture and construction of infrastructure in the sector. The plan needs to satisfy certain criteria set by the regulator that protect the financial interests of New South Wales electricity customers and must be consistent with Australia's international trade obligations. While well-intentioned, the board's objectives need better instruction, rights of appeal and an extended focus on benefits to the wider New South Wales economy, particularly when assessing Australian content provisions. In hindsight, the board's objectives are poorly explained and lack urgency and time frames.

This bill will amend section 8 of the Electricity Infrastructure Investment Act, the plan for New South Wales' renewable sector, which requires the board to set out how to maximise the use of locally produced and supplied goods and services, maximise the employment of suitable qualified local workers, foster opportunities for apprentices and trainees, and other objectives prescribed by the regulations. These are all good things. However, section 8 (2) to (4) restricts the board's ability to accept submissions. A growing number of Australian manufacturers are frustrated that there is no statutory process for the renewable energy sector board to respond to requests for increases in Australian content. As the legislation stands, the board's plan can only be amended by the Minister, following the board being satisfied that it protects the financial interests of New South Wales electricity customers and is consistent with Australia's international trade obligations.

The bill will omit section 8 (2) to (4) and insert the requirement that the board give the Minister a draft plan for approval and make any amendments to the draft plan requested by the Minister. The board may amend the draft plan at any time, with the Minister's approval. However, the draft plan must be published on the department's website and invite submissions on the draft or proposed amendment for the standard 28 days. Not only does the board have to invite submissions but, before a draft plan or amended plan is approved by the Minister, the Minister must consider the submissions received and any recommendation of the regulator. Without criticising the board, the current process seems to operate by osmosis. There is no requirement for the board to respond to a request, no fixed time frames and certainly no transparency of decision-making. The consumer protection advocate's responsibility is ultimately the board's but through advice and actions from the regulator. This instruction to the regulator is limited to a simple statement providing consumer protection.

The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal has been appointed as a regulator under the Electricity Infrastructure Investment Act. In this role, the consumer trustee, the financial trustee, the infrastructure planner and the regulator are required to prepare an annual report on the exercise of functions under the Act. IPART is also responsible for undertaking performance audits on the entities delivering the Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap and recommending the Renewable Energy Sector Board's plan to the Minister to ensure that the financial interests of the New South Wales electricity consumers are protected and consistent with international trade obligations.

Subclause (4C) of schedule 1 to the bill requires the regulator to consider, when recommending the draft plan or proposed amendment to the Minister, whether the draft plan or proposed amendment is consistent with Australia's international trade obligations; the social and economic benefits of the draft plan or proposed amendment for the New South Wales community and economy; and whether the draft plan or proposed amendment protects the financial interests of New South Wales electricity customers. This will ensure that not only the electricity consumer but also the social and economic benefits to all of New South Wales are considered in any recommendation to the Minister. This amendment does not restrain IPART from expressing concerns over the quantum of a price increase and overruling proposals that would see large, unbalanced increases in consumer electricity prices. We want to make certain that New South Wales receives as many benefits as possible from a renewable transition. Legislation that considers the social and economic benefits for the New South Wales community and economy is the only way to do this.

I move now to proposed section 8A, which relates to requests to amend a draft plan or approved plan to increase the proportion of goods and services that must be locally produced and supplied. This is exciting. The building of infrastructure under the road map will drive demand for several things, including concrete, steel, copper and aluminium. Without a published hard number, such as 50 per cent of steel in wind towers—it currently sits at 10 per cent, which will not encourage investment—manufacturers will not have access to equity and debt. Grants are crucial, but they are a downstream consideration in the investment business case matrix. The current Renewable Energy Sector Board's plan outlines the major opportunities for the New South Wales renewable energy supply chain. With regard to solar factory infrastructure, it says:

... solar panels are imported and installed on supporting mounting and racking equipment that is predominantly imported. Local supply of supporting infrastructure would be quicker to market, more responsive to changes in project schedules and would reduce exposure to disruptions in global supply chains. Piling used in solar panel foundations is one immediate opportunity due to smaller lead times for local supply.

Supply chain inputs for steel products and components using locally milled steel for wind are only 10 per cent, but the State's steel-manufacturing capacity could provide much more. A barrier outlined in the board's current plan is that small and medium enterprises that want to participate in procurements for large projects find it challenging due to lack of scale, lack of specialised procurement expertise and inability to access project information. If this legislation is passed, it would mandate Australian content and give local manufacturers the certainty they need to invest. That, in turn, means employment opportunities and growth for regional and rural manufacturers.

Additionally, to safeguard the development of renewable energy zones, the Minister will need to assess whether Australian manufacturing capacity has increased to the point where the Australian content requirement can be achieved before each tender round. If the Minister is advised and forms the view that local manufacturers do not have the capacity to meet the local content requirements, the capacity can be reduced. This will be done round by round within the tender document. But the overall increased target will stay fixed. Local supply of infrastructure means a faster response to demand, local long-term jobs and a major boost to the New South Wales economy. Not only that, but Australian manufacturers have repeatedly called for measurable local content requirements in government contracts. The Federal Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Resources conducted an inquiry on developing advanced manufacturing in Australia in 2023. Of note is recommendation 3:

... the government should review federal procurement legislation and guidance. In order to enable decision makers to make more sophisticated assessments, revisions should emphasise the importance of local economic benefits in assessing value for money and outline methods for estimating those benefits. The guidance should introduce regular reporting by government agencies on the use of Australian suppliers. In partnership with the states and territories, the government should identify further steps it could take to increase locally manufactured content in renewable energy infrastructure and equipment installations, medical and health supplies, and other areas where governments are major customers.

The State needs to get behind this recommendation, and all levels of government should be driving local content procurement. Proposed section 8A (3) states that, within 60 working days of receiving the request, the board must publish its decision about the request and, if the board decides not to propose an amendment in accordance with the request, the reason for that decision. Proposed section 9 (5) makes a condition inconsistent with a specific target in the plan if there is a shortage of locally produced and supplied goods and services.

The Labor Government was elected in part on a platform of returning Australian manufacturing to New South Wales through a series of programs, including the mandating of Australian government projects. The Minister for Domestic Manufacturing and Government Procurement, the Hon. Courtney Houssos, said in a press release in February:

We want to see our precious government procurement dollars put to good use. Spending procurement dollars on locally manufactured goods means the NSW economy can enjoy the multiplier effects of those investments.

The NSW Government is committed to transforming the state's procurement framework and practices, but it will take time. Doing so can promote local industries, accelerate economic growth, promote regional development, and ensure jobs remain onshore.

We are committed to leveraging the power of government procurement to promote local jobs and foster our local manufacturing industry.

That is pretty well said. Here is the perfect opportunity for the Government to put its money where its mouth is. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

## **BAIL AMENDMENT (SERIOUS PERSONAL VIOLENCE AND ELECTRONIC MONITORING) BILL 2024**

### **First Reading**

**Bill introduced on motion by Mr Alister Henskens, read a first time and printed.**

### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (10:39):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

On Tuesday, on behalf of the Opposition, I sought urgency to introduce the Bail Amendment (Serious Personal Violence and Electronic Monitoring) Bill 2024 so that it could pass both Houses of Parliament by the end next week and become law in New South Wales. At the time I said that women's safety cannot be risked by more domestic violence offences occurring as this Parliament delays. Unfortunately the Government blocked that urgency, meaning that it is now impossible for changes to the Bail Act to pass both Houses of Parliament before it sits again in June and therefore delays the implementation of protections for women by at least a month.

I appreciate the non-Labor members who have agreed to give me priority today to introduce the bill and give my second reading speech. The day after I was blocked from introducing the bill, a woman in Alexandria is alleged to have been attacked outside her gym. A knife was thrust into her neck by a man alleged to have had a brief relationship with her. The accused man is a repeat domestic violence offender. Fortunately she was not killed, but the incident happened in breach of apprehended violence order [AVO] conditions that required that the alleged offender not approach the woman. The alleged offender is now in police custody. The Bail Act, which I seek to change through the bill, will come into action the minute that accused man is charged, which will

probably be today. The added protections that I seek to introduce to the safety of women through the bill will be able to operate if it becomes law in New South Wales. That is why this passage of reform is urgent.

Overnight there were reports that a man from Riverview was charged with several domestic violence offences, including allegations that he was tracking a woman's car and breaching an AVO. The police located two listening devices and GPS devices during the search of his property. The alleged offender was charged with several offences, including contravening an apprehended domestic violence order [ADVO], stalking and intimidating and possessing surveillance devices intended for unlawful use. The police allege that the man installed the tracking devices in the vehicle of the woman who was known to him. He was refused bail.

Unfortunately it is incumbent upon us, if we are to truly represent our communities, to properly reflect on those tragic cases and learn from them. If we do not, we are likely to repeat the mistakes of the past and will be unlikely to craft good laws. The death of Molly Ticehurst in Forbes just two weeks ago was tragic. The young woman and childcare worker was murdered where she was entitled to feel safe—in her own home—allegedly by a former partner, who was on bail. His bail conditions were meant to prevent him from being in the same town as her. Those bail conditions alone allegedly could not stop the tragedy. The police allege that Molly was murdered in Forbes as a result of the man breaching his bail conditions. At the moment there is no electronic monitoring of bail conditions. That needs to change. Only 15 days prior to Molly's alleged murder, bail was granted to the man charged with her murder. He was charged with three counts of sexual intercourse without consent, four counts of stalk-intimidation, two counts of property damage and one count of cruelty to an animal, being Molly's dog. I spoke about the death of Molly Ticehurst at some length in this Chamber on Tuesday so I will not repeat what I said.

The greater tragedy is that the three incidents that I have spoken about this morning are not isolated. According to Domestic Violence NSW our police officers attend a domestic and family violence call approximately every two minutes. In 2023, 64 women were killed by violence. Those are not just figures; they are mothers, daughters, sisters, aunts, friends and loved ones. Their tragedies urge us to take continual action to improve the status quo. The murder of Molly Ticehurst should galvanise this Parliament to act on domestic violence but act in a way that is proven and capable of effecting real reform. That is why I seek the support of members of Parliament for the bill. It is an appropriate response, not a knee-jerk reaction. It is a partial response because we know, sadly, that Molly's death is not an isolated incident but a symptom of an ongoing malaise within our society and the bill addresses only some of the drivers. We must continue to work to find a solution to the scourge of violence against women, but we must also do what is possible now.

I recognise that the Government has ordered two reviews into the death of Molly Ticehurst, which are due to be completed in some weeks time. Information gathering and reflection is important, but there are also concrete actions that we can take immediately that build on the work done by the previous Coalition Government in relation to electronic monitoring for parole introduced in 2016 and reviewed by the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research in May 2023. The Domestic Violence and Electronic Monitoring program was found to be a highly successful measure to reduce reoffending, breaches of parole conditions and breaches of ADVOs. Bail conditions are typically very similar to parole and ADVO conditions. They include conditions that the person shall not approach the victim or their home or place of work. The legislation builds on that earlier work in evaluation and makes a positive contribution to women's safety now.

Under the Domestic Violence Electronic Monitoring program, which the Opposition wants to extend to the grant of bail, a government-supervised system monitors if the person on parole moves to a place they are not allowed to under the conditions of parole. If they do, they are contacted and told to comply with the parole conditions. If they do not respond appropriately when monitored and do not rectify the breach, then the police and victims are informed. The victims can then enact their personal safety action plans. Because of the distances in regional and peri-urban areas and the lack of police per kilometre of area in those communities compared to cities, that measure will be a significant improvement over the current bail conditions. Currently nobody monitors whether there is compliance with the bail conditions and nobody notifies the victim when there is a breach of those conditions.

Too many women are being harmed under the current system. It is time to have a system that uses technology to monitor compliance with the bail conditions so victims can be warned when they are not being complied with. Electronic monitoring will not be a perfect solution, but it is important that we immediately implement into the system all the improvements that have been shown to work. There may be other improvements to the bail system that the Crown Advocate suggests as part of the two government reviews, but as a matter of reality it is very unlikely, given the positive evidence from the parole monitoring, that the Crown Advocate will argue against what the Opposition is proposing. We must not let the perfect be the enemy of the good by delaying what positive actions we can take now because more actions can be taken in the future.

I now turn to the detail of the bill. It makes three changes to the Bail Act that will immediately improve women's safety. It will also ensure the quickest possible implementation of those changes to help improve the protection of women. At the core of the bill is the introduction of electronic monitoring as a presumed bail condition for all serious personal violence offences that occur, or have occurred, in current or former domestic relationships where either the prosecutor has called for it as a condition of bail or has made an application that bail should be refused.

Those closest to the victims and to law enforcement need to be heard about their assessments of the risks of bail. We know that it is not enough for offenders to be told to simply stay away. We need the means to track compliance with the bail conditions. Monitoring is especially relevant to women's safety when offenders are breaching location conditions. Electronic monitoring will provide that ability. Sadly, recent events have taught us that without the backup of electronic monitoring, compliance with bail conditions is not measured and is unacceptably left up to the good behaviour and voluntary compliance of the perpetrator.

Schedule 1 [3] to the bill introduces new section 22D into the Bail Act. This imposes the presumption that bail can only be granted for a serious personal violence offence on the condition of electronic monitoring. This will apply when the alleged victim was or is in a domestic relationship with the accused, who must be above the age of 18 years. In addition, either the bail application must have been opposed by the prosecutor or the prosecutor has requested electronic monitoring as a condition of bail. In addition, it is clear that a bail authority can impose electronic monitoring for any other cases that fall outside of the presumption of monitoring because of new section 22D (3).

There are several answers to the ill-considered point raised by the Leader of the House and Minister for Local Government in this House on Tuesday that the proposed serious personal violence offence definition in schedule 1 [1] to the bill is too limited and does not include offences like strangulation. Firstly, the bill does not limit electronic monitoring to serious personal violence offences. It can apply to bail on any offence, as new section 22D (3) makes clear. It is only the presumption—like the current show cause presumption under section 16B of the Bail Act—that hinges on the definition of a serious personal violence offence. Secondly, the definition of a serious personal violence offence in this bill is exactly the same definition as in section 16B (3) of the Bail Act. That has been the definition in the Bail Act of this State for many years, which I would expect the Leader of the Government in this House to know.

The Opposition is flexible and open to considering Government amendments to expand the presumption in the bill to include offences beyond those included in the current definition of serious personal violence offence. The definition in the bill has been the law in this State for many years, but a change to the definition will not expand the cases where electronic monitoring is able to be ordered as a condition of bail. It will only expand the cases where there is a presumption of electronic monitoring as a condition of bail and where there are show cause cases. I repeat and emphasise that electronic monitoring can be ordered under new section 22D (3) with respect to any criminal offence—whether it be coercive control, strangulation or others—not just serious personal violence offences in a current or former domestic relationship. The definition of a domestic relationship under new section 22D (4) has the same meaning as under the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007. Section 5 of that Act provides:

- (1) For the purposes of this Act, a person has a domestic relationship with another person if the person—
  - (a) is or has been married to the other person, or
  - (b) is or has been a de facto partner of that other person, or
  - (c) has or has had an intimate personal relationship with the other person, whether or not the intimate relationship involves or has involved a relationship of a sexual nature, or
  - (d) is living or has lived in the same household as the other person, or
  - (e) is living or has lived as a long-term resident in the same residential facility as the other person ...
  - (f) has or has had a relationship involving his or her dependence on the ongoing paid or unpaid care of the other person ...
  - (g) is or has been a relative of the other person ...
- ...
- (2) Two persons also have a *domestic relationship* with each other for the purposes of this Act if they have both had a domestic relationship of a kind set out in subsection (1)(a), (b) or (c) with the same person.

**Note—**

A woman's ex-partner and current partner would therefore have a domestic relationship with each other for the purposes of this Act even if they had never met.

The bail system is an integral part of the justice system and an important practical recognition of the doctrine of innocent until proven guilty. It also balances the rights of the accused with the need to protect any alleged victims. This bill rebalances the scales of justice and importantly—and necessarily—recalibrates the balance between rights and protections in favour of protections. Presumptive electronic monitoring and, under new section 22D (3), the ability of a bail authority to impose it in other circumstances, achieves that protective rebalancing. If the accused has no intention of breaching bail conditions, the monitoring provides no infringement on their freedom of movement. But if they do intend to breach bail conditions, the police need to be able to intervene to protect the woman, and the victim needs to have good warning to put in place their personal safety action plan.

Electronic monitoring of offenders is not new ground. It operates successfully in other contexts. It is not a knee-jerk reaction; rather, it is a commonsense approach to protect women. Schedule 1 [4] to the bill makes amendments to ensure that the powers of the bail authority encompass the ability to require electronic monitoring as a condition of bail before the offender is released. This is a necessary ancillary amendment to section 29 (1) of the Bail Act to allow for the imposition of electronic monitors prior to release as a specified requirement identified in the decision of *R v Xi* [2015] NSWSC 1575 at [37].

The second major change is in schedule 1 [5] and [6] to the bill, which expand the existing provisions of section 40 of the Bail Act to allow for the decision of a court or authorised justice to grant bail to be stayed in circumstances where the bail conditions referred to in new section 22D (2) have not been imposed, and the prosecution immediately indicates to the court that an appeal by way of a detention application is to be made to the Supreme Court. This is an important provision because it continues to protect a victim, if electronic monitoring was sought but not ordered, until an appeal can be determined. While an urgent appeal is being heard, the offender will continue to be detained for up to three business days until the appellate process, if engaged, is urgently concluded.

The third major change is made by schedule 1 [7] to the bill. This item provides that important decisions in relation to bail for serious personal violence offences in domestic relationships can only be made by appropriately qualified judicial officers. That change will ensure that a registrar of the local court cannot hear a bail application for a serious personal violence offence. This is the job of magistrates. It is a simple change, but it is significant because, in effect, it allows only judicial officers to make a bail decision in the case of a serious personal violence offence. This is not to disparage the work of court registrars but rather locates responsibility for important judicial decisions regarding liberty and safety in the appropriate place.

A serious personal violence offence, as the term suggests, is not something to be taken lightly. In fact, the bill defines a serious personal violence offence as an offence that is punishable by imprisonment for a term of 14 years or more, or an offence that is similar to such an offence. As such, the possibility of danger to the alleged victim and to the community at large is real and needs to be considered carefully. It is a decision properly made by a judicial officer as part of their role in the administration of justice, and not an administrative or clerical matter to be decided by a registrar. I note that we do already have the audiovisual equipment in our courts that will allow magistrates to make these decisions remotely. The change should not present a resourcing issue for the operation of the courts.

Expansion of electronic monitoring in bail cases and the use of only magistrates for bail in certain circumstances will have some practical consequences, so a period to implement these changes is necessary. That has been accommodated by a delayed commencement of no more than six months. That is a clear message to the Government that it needs to organise the changes quickly. If Parliament passes this legislation quickly, the clock will start ticking. Delays in these circumstances can cost lives. As another domestic violence attack occurred yesterday, I reiterate my words on Tuesday that speed is of the essence for this Parliament to start electronic monitoring of bail conditions.

We are not claiming that the bill will end violence against women, or that it does anything to address the root causes of this issue, such as problems around alcohol and drug misuse, gambling, ready access to violent and misogynistic pornography and a host of other issues which feed into domestic violence. What the bill does do is enhance protection of those women who are already victims of these social ills—the women who have come to us for help, who are seeking justice and who need our protection from those persons that would threaten them.

This bill is a first step. It builds on proven technology, and it is a start we can make today to reduce the tragic outcomes of domestic violence. I urge this House to support the bill before more domestic violence charges become murder trials on the back of unenforceable bail conditions. When we announced this policy on Tuesday of last week, we said we are wanting to work in a collaborative manner to improve women's safety. We are open to any suggestions to improve the bill and we will work with the whole of the Parliament to improve women's safety. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

*Members***MEMBER FOR OXLEY****MEMBER FOR KEIRA**

**The SPEAKER:** I wish the member for Oxley all the best for his upcoming birthday. I am sure that is going to be a wonderful event. I also acknowledge that today is the birthday of the member for Keira, the Minister for Health. I wish the Minister a happy birthday.

*Visitors***VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I extend a very warm welcome to guests of the member for Bankstown. They are students from various schools in Bankstown who are here to participate in the member's "Bankstown's School Leaders visit NSW Parliament" event, including Al Noori Muslim School, Al Sadiq College, Bankstown Girls High School, Bankstown Senior College, Punchbowl Boys' High School, St Charbel's College, St Euphemia College and Wiley Park Girls High School. I also welcome to the Chamber guests of the member for Sydney: Linda Curtis, Fran See and David Cramer. They won a lunch with the member at a charity event. I also welcome guests of the member for Camden: Gary Hudson, Mark Donohue, Ken Morrell and others from the Camden Men's Bowling Club. I acknowledge a guest of the member for Barwon, Councillor Michael Boland of Broken Hill City Council. I also acknowledge guests of the member for Upper Hunter from the Singleton Country Women's Association. I welcome a guest of the member for Hornsby, Claudia Hadwen. In a last-minute inclusion, I welcome guests of the member for Gosford from Regional Youth Support Services.

*Question Time***DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE WORKERS**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (11:06):** My question is directed to the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. The national partnership agreement the Minister signed last June already specifies the allocation of 118 additional frontline domestic violence workers to particular regions—for example, 10 in Newcastle and Lake Macquarie and seven on the Central Coast. Why, then, has it taken so long to identify locations and roll out those frontline domestic violence workers?

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (11:07):** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question and his interest in the national partnership agreement. As I said yesterday, it goes without saying that the Government and the domestic violence specialist sector want those workers in place as quickly as possible. But the Government has worked in a steady way with the sector and with the Federal Government on how those additional workers will be put in place. The last thing we need is poor implementation of that particular part of the national partnership agreement. We do not want to reduce the impact of those roles; we want to maximise the impact of those additional workers.

The New South Wales Government has taken great care to ensure that it maximises the impact of those workers. Because the demand for the workers is high, the Government made a commitment to the sector to be transparent in the way that it went about procurement. To try to get the right balance between ensuring that positions were in place as quickly as possible and the Government's commitment to transparency, the procurement process to award the funding includes a mix of direct negotiation and select tender procurement. The department has undertaken a rigorous quantitative and qualitative analysis to determine the geographic and population allocation. That has included significant consultation with the domestic and family violence sector, including Domestic Violence NSW, No to Violence, ACON, People with Disability Australia, Yfoundations and Settlement Services International. The Aboriginal Women's Advisory Network was also consulted.

In allocating positions across the State, the Department of Communities and Justice [DCJ] has focused in on communities in need, wherever possible, within the parameters that have been set by the Commonwealth. In addition to the Commonwealth requirements, DCJ undertook a gap analysis to determine the existing support for demographic groups in each community, considered that against domestic and family violence assault rates, and undertook further analysis to ensure that the new workers would meet the specific demographic needs of the community that they would be working in. The Department of Communities and Justice has also considered where existing funding arrangements with frontline organisations might be leveraged to ensure that people in greatest need are supported. The department has been working closely with the sector to ensure that the services successful in the procurement process are ready to recruit and train their workers. DCJ was able to undertake further negotiations— [*Time expired.*]



**WESTERN SYDNEY SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (11:10):** 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 New South Wales Government is ensuring that students in our fastest growing suburbs have access to free, quality public education?

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (11:10):** I thank the member for Camden for asking that important question. She is the perfect member to be asking a question about schools in growing areas. I have no doubt that much of the reason that the hardworking member is in this place is because the communities around Camden said that they were sick of not being listened to about the need for public primary and high schools in south-west Sydney. Many members from north-west and south-west Sydney can tell a similar story.

The member for Camden has done a lot since she was elected, and I want to go into the details. Some of the worst impacted areas in terms of the previous Government not building schools where they are needed are Gregory Hills and Gledswood Hills in the member for Camden's electorate. The enrolment growth audit that this Government undertook showed that student growth in those areas had exploded by 145 per cent. That may sound like numbers or data on a page, but there are students in the member for Camden's electorate who have no choice but to go to overcrowded schools. Schools in Oran Park and Mount Annan are quite far from Gregory Hills and Gledswood Hills. Parents put their children, sometimes very small children, on a bus that takes them an hour to get to a public school. It is their right to have a public school in their community.

**Mrs Leslie Williams:** Why did you ignore it when you were in government last time?

**Ms PRUE CAR:** One of the members opposite asked why we did not build it when we were in government last time. Gregory Hills did not exist at that point.

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

**Ms PRUE CAR:** It was there, but there are now thousands of families there. Those families can now look forward to a new high school at Gregory Hills and Gledswood Hills. The Government is fast-tracking the new high school by two years so that the community can get what their children have deserved the whole time.

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

**Ms PRUE CAR:** The Government has delivered a major upgrade at Gledswood Hills. All across New South Wales, particularly north-west and south-west Sydney, the Government is investing in school infrastructure. [*Extension of time*]

The very vocal member for Hawkesbury might be interested to hear about Box Hill and Gables, where the Government will deliver a new school. The Liberals and Nationals misled that community and promised them a school. People moved there on that promise. They took out mortgages, moved there and built their homes. I note that the member for Hawkesbury has made a contribution to the debate about Box Hill and Gables recently. *The Daily Telegraph* asked the Liberal member why the former Government did not deliver the school over the past 12 years while Box Hill was exploding at the same time as Gregory Hills. Her response was, "Really good question. I don't have an all-in-one answer."

**Mr Warren Kirby:** Because you don't have an excuse.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** They do not have an excuse. The member for Riverstone said—

**Ms Eleni Petinos:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will come to order. The Minister will resume her seat. I will hear the point of order.

**Ms Eleni Petinos:** The Minister was talking about misleading the House. She might want to do her homework. Gregory Hills was created on 1 August 2008, when those opposite were in government.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Miranda is generally quite good at taking points of order. She knows the rules. However, this time she is completely out of order. I call the member for Miranda to order for the first time. The Minister has the call.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** That may be when the land was released. I am not going to go into it. I would love for the Opposition to ask a question about Gregory Hills and Gledswood Hills every day of the week, because that community knows how those opposite abandoned them. That is why the member for Camden is here. The member for Hawkesbury does not know why there was no school at Gables—which the Government is now building—

but I know why. The Opposition education spokesperson told us why when she recently accused the Government on radio of being a government that is too focused on Western Sydney. I look forward to going to the Hawkesbury, Winston Hills, Holsworthy and Badgerys Creek electorates and explaining to people that the members that represent them think that this Government is too focused on building schools in Western Sydney.

### DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (11:16):** My question is directed to the Attorney General. Yesterday another woman was allegedly the victim of a targeted serious domestic violence attack. Will the Government now urgently support the Opposition's Bail Amendment (Serious Personal Violence and Electronic Monitoring) Bill 2024 through both Houses to ensure that perpetrators are not back on our streets unmonitored while awaiting trial?

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (11:17):** Plenty has been said about the wave of domestic violence that we are experiencing not only in New South Wales but across the nation. The Premier, the Deputy Premier, the Minister for Women and I have said that no stone will be left unturned in looking at ways to address this scourge. There was a Cabinet meeting last Friday that was attended by four eminent people: Rosie Batty, Christine Robinson from Warringa Baiya, the royal commissioner from Victoria and the NSW Women's Safety Commissioner. They made it clear to Cabinet that there is no silver bullet for addressing this scourge. They urged us not to rush into kneejerk bail reform. They urged us not to rush into reform with respect to electronic monitoring. They said that there are instances where it does not work, it does not protect the woman and the woman in question does not feel safe. Therefore, the Government has resolved—and the Premier has made the point on a number of occasions—that the legislation it brings to the Parliament will be modelled, costed and consulted on, and will not be motivated by politics.

We will consult with the sector first, and it will form a part of a broader package in addition to the multimillion-dollar package that the Government has announced this week and that the Minister for Women, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault has done an excellent job of pointing out to the community. We will bring a bill to this place that will be more effective than the bill that the shadow Attorney General has brought to this place. I am disappointed, and I thought the member for Sydney put it eloquently the other day when he said that there were cries of bipartisanship, requests for bipartisanship and pledges of bipartisanship from the Leader of the Opposition and the shadow Attorney General and, before we were presented with a copy of the bill, they were doorknocking the crossbenchers. In other words, securing the numbers for the bill was more important than its contents. So they should not come holier-than-thou to the table and shout at me to get on with it.

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

### REGIONAL, RURAL AND REMOTE HEALTH WORKERS

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (11:21):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Health, and Minister for Regional Health. Will the Minister update the House on how the New South Wales Government is addressing the lack of health worker accommodation across regional, rural and remote New South Wales?

**Mr Paul Scully:** I thought you were going to sing him *Happy Birthday*. Sing him *Happy Birthday*, Janelle.

**Ms Janelle Saffin:** Happy birthday. I can't sing that well.

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (11:21):** My mum will be happy, thank you. I thank the member for Lismore for her question. Everyone in this place knows how hard she works for regional, rural and remote New South Wales, and has done so in varying capacities as a community leader for decades. The member is a particularly tireless advocate for women's health and women's health services in Lismore. I appreciate her support. Members will realise that prior to Labor coming to office a regional, rural and remote healthcare inquiry travelled around the State. It was a landmark inquiry that received over 800 submissions and dealt with evidence that was pretty hard to confront but that members from regional, rural and remote areas will know about.

One of the things it talked about was the struggle and the challenge of getting health workers in those areas. It is one thing to want to provide the services, but those services do not run on their own. Labor needed to look at ways to get healthcare workers into regional, rural and remote New South Wales. We have started that process. One of the things that came up in evidence time and time again was the need for appropriate quality housing. The Government is in the process of investing \$45 million to roll out housing right across New South Wales, and 51 units will be rolled out across far western New South Wales, southern New South Wales and Murrumbidgee. This morning the Premier, the Minister for Regional New South Wales, the member for Murray, the member for

Barwon and I spoke about what that investment means. Many in this place will know what it means. It will mean greater ability to deliver healthcare services because we will be able to attract more workers.

A big shortage we have at the moment—and that the Premier, the Minister for Housing and the planning Minister have made a focus of this Government—is housing. That is a crucial issue when it comes to delivering healthcare services in regional, rural and remote New South Wales, because we need the workforce. That is what the workforce says time and time again. We have listened. We understand the problem and we are now addressing the issue. It is not a silver bullet. I am not going to say, for one minute, that it will get all the issues in regional and rural health sorted. It will not, but it is an important part of the mix. This morning the member for Barwon spoke about what it will mean in that it will enable other people in that area to take up—*[Extension of time]*

It will enable other people in that area to take up other housing within the town, the village or the area. That is an important program that we will continue to lean into, because we have to. We have a responsibility to ensure that those living in regional, rural and remote New South Wales get the health care they need and deserve. It is going to take time. We are also on top of housing, rolling out 500 paramedics—the largest single focus on regional and rural paramedicine seen in this State. It is going not to the Illawarra, the Hunter or Sydney—in terms of Newcastle, Wollongong and Sydney—but to regional, rural and remote areas. The Government is also rolling out safe staffing and a program that will see one to three in our emergency departments—the biggest reform to the way in which we staff hospitals. That will have a big impact on the bush.

We are also rolling out the single employer model, essentially allowing a GP to move between a hospital and a GP practice and not lose their benefits. Hopefully, that will see an additional 80 GPs come to regional, rural and remote New South Wales. We are working closely with the Commonwealth Government on that. Of course, we are rolling out subsidies to people studying to be healthcare professionals to make sure that we have the pipeline. We are delivering the housing; we are rolling out the incentive schemes for the future workforce; we are making sure that the people who are studying paramedicine, nursing and midwifery are supported to create a pipeline; and we are delivering more paramedics. All the members who represent regional, rural and remote communities can rest assured that we have a lot to do in regional New South Wales in terms of health care, and we are determined to do it.

#### WOLLONDILLY ELECTORATE HOUSING INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (11:26):** My question is directed to the Minister for Health representing the Minister for Water—and I wish him a happy birthday. In this day and age, is the Minister content with homes being approved with no sewer connection in the expectation that it will be trucked out? The Appin Memorandum of Understanding announcement for sewer does not cover the 30,000 approved homes that are being built right now in Wilton. When will the Government deliver sewer to those homes so we can solve the housing crisis and ensure that my community is not left with a long-drop?

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (11:28):** That is a term I have not heard for a while. My mum and dad, who make up 50 per cent of the viewing audience, will also find that funny

**Mr Paul Scully:** My parents are the other 50 per cent.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** It is a ratings bonanza. I thank the member for Wollondilly for her question. From the outset, I emphasise that those issues come from planning approvals made many years ago—and I think the Opposition would take some responsibility in relation to that challenge. The Minister for Water in the other place, the planning Minister and others are working through what is a challenging issue. We know the legacy of south-west Sydney, which is often considered the dumping ground for new housing with no infrastructure support. We know that is not okay, and we are doing our best right now to fix it by taking pressure off that region. The proposal to fast-track the rezoning of that land was made against agency advice in the dying days of the last Government. Despite being advised that the area lacked infrastructure and had inadequate water and wastewater supply—as the member indicated in her question—the Opposition, then in government, did it anyway. We cannot fix that overnight; nor will we pretend to fix it overnight. We are deeply engaged with Sydney Water to accelerate capital works to prioritise the growth of housing in this area. Under the National Housing Accord, New South Wales has committed to deliver 377,000 new well-located homes between now and 2029.

As the New South Wales Government explores options to speed up the delivery of more homes, as the member for Wollondilly rightly said, it is essential we have vital infrastructure in place. It is important to note that any early infrastructure will be delivered at no additional cost to Sydney Water customers, or to the New South Wales Government. We are only in this situation after 12 years of wasted time and inaction on housing approvals and the building of key infrastructure to support housing growth. The infrastructure is part of the servicing arrangement for Walker Corporation's Appin development, which involves a partnership with coNEXA and

Sydney Water to provide water services. Previously released growth servicing plans indicate the Appin area would not be serviced before 2032. We know that infrastructure plans must incorporate sufficient analysis on community infrastructure upgrades. [*Extension of time*]

Let's be honest, as the Premier, the Treasurer, the Minister for Housing, and the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces have informed this House many times over the past 12 months, we are in a housing crisis. We need to build homes to acknowledge this crisis and do something about it. I reiterate that these are legacy issues from previous planning decisions made by the former Government that will not be fixed overnight. It is clear that the former Government put the cart before the horse and did not properly plan for the growth in housing, especially in the south-west, which is the region represented by the member for Wollondilly. The former Government rezoned housing without initiating the appropriate infrastructure. Clearly we need more homes to tackle the crisis that we know exists in our community, but poor planning and preparation have left us in our present position. The Government is doing what it can to fix this mess and it is starting from scratch.

Appin has now been identified by the New South Wales Government as a priority area for planning approvals for housing. The Appin precinct, North Appin and Gilead were State-assessed planning proposals led by the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure [DPHI] under the Rezoning Pathways Program. The Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure has consulted Sydney Water on its servicing capacity for proposed rezonings in this area. However, the long planning lead times involved and differences in Sydney Water and DPHI growth forecasts have contributed to the former Government's rezoning having occurred without supporting infrastructure being available within suitable timeframes. To service the Greater Macarthur region, Sydney Water is progressing plans for a new Upper Nepean wastewater treatment facility, which should be operational by 2032. The NSW Water Strategy recognises the need to better integrate land use planning and water management, which the Government is focused on improving.

#### DOMESTIC, FAMILY AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (11:32):** My question is directed to the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. Will the Minister please update the House on the community reaction to the New South Wales Government's commitment to address the rates of family, domestic and sexual violence across the State?

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (11:32):** Absolutely. First, I thank the member for Auburn for the question and for her passionate advocacy in this space. She gets just as angry as the rest of us do in relation to this issue.

**Ms Kate Washington:** If not angrier.

**Ms JODIE HARRISON:** If not angrier. Yesterday another woman was stabbed, allegedly by a former partner. Indeed this is a shocking incident, and my heart goes out to her. I wish her a very speedy recovery. My heart also goes out to her family and friends. It is another terrible incident which simply should not have happened. This is another incident that shows the status quo needs to change, because it is unacceptable. We know that women are exhausted, and they are tired of hearing about these incidents. We know that women feel unsafe, but it is important that they know there are services available to help them. A woman who is experiencing domestic violence should phone the domestic violence line on 1800 656 463, or 1800RESPECT, and if a woman is in immediate danger, she should phone 000.

The New South Wales Government is stepping up. On Monday the Premier announced \$230 million for an emergency package as a first phase or the initial step to the Government's response to domestic and family violence, but the Government is not doing this alone. It is doing this in partnership with stakeholders and with the voices of victim-survivors at the centre of its decision-making. For years they called on the Government to do more. This Government has listened. This Government has heard. For instance, they asked for an expansion of Staying Home Leaving Violence and this Government delivered, with \$48 million to expand Staying Home Leaving Violence right across the State so it is available in every single location in New South Wales.

The Government is putting prevention front and centre, which is what the sector has been calling for. That is what the sector wants. That is what the community needs. We in the Government are listening. For our emergency package, we consulted Full Stop Australia, Domestic Violence NSW, and No to Violence. In our special Cabinet meeting we heard from the Women's Safety Commissioner; Dr Hannah Tonkin; Christine Robinson of the Wirringa Baiya Aboriginal Women's Legal Centre; Marcia Neave, AO, the Commissioner of the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence; and, of course, Rosie Batty. [*Extension of time*]

Very shortly, New South Wales will have its first dedicated primary prevention strategy. For that, we consulted over 100 councils, non-government stakeholders and sector peak bodies such as Domestic Violence NSW. It was led by Our Watch, which is the nation's expert in primary prevention. We will continue to listen as we undertake longer term reform to prevent domestic, family and sexual violence. We have the sector's support. Indeed, the CEO of Domestic Violence NSW, Delia Donovan, has welcomed our \$230 million emergency package, calling it a "comprehensive announcement". She also said she was pleased with the "multifaceted approach" the Government has taken. No to Violence calls it a "positive step" to addressing domestic violence in the State, with additional funding going to important programs, such as the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Services, EQUIPS, and the \$5 million worth of research into perpetrators and effective interventions.

Full Stop's CEO, Karen Bevan, said there was "a lot to celebrate" in the package, including the expansion of Staying Home Leaving Violence and \$48 million to increase funding for specialist children's workers to be in more women's refuges across the State. We know this is the first phase and that it is the first important step that we have finally taken. We must do more. We have the Women's Safety Commissioner's strategic plan that was launched earlier this year and outlines actions and priorities to address domestic and family violence that will operate under the Government's domestic violence strategy. I will continue to listen to the many people who have experience and expertise in the sector. I welcome their feedback. I will work with all of my parliamentary and ministerial colleagues on this, because we want to solve this wicked problem.

**The SPEAKER:** I recognise in the Cooper Gallery guests of the member for Oxley, the Bellingen Shire Council deputy mayor, Ellie Tree, and deputy general manager Ashley Greenwood. It was lovely to meet you this morning.

### DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (11:38):** My question is directed to the Attorney General. In his answer today to the member for Wahroonga, he cast doubt on electronic monitoring. Why, then, did the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research [BOCSAR], having looked at almost a thousand cases, find that electronic monitoring was associated with a 33 per cent reduction in domestic violence reoffending—

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** He did not.

**The SPEAKER:** Government members will come to order. The member for Port Macquarie will recommence the question.

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS:** Why then did BOCSAR, looking at almost 1,000 cases, find that electronic monitoring was associated with a 33 per cent reduction in domestic violence reoffending by convicted offenders?

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order: Under Standing Order 128 it is permissible for the question to contain a statement of facts that are strictly necessary to render the question intelligible and can be authenticated. But the member for Port Macquarie cannot assert that the Attorney General said something in a previous answer that he did not. She can ask specifically for his view about ankle bracelets or what might have been said by someone else, but she cannot assert as a fact something she clearly cannot authenticate—because it is not in *Hansard*—and put to him that he made a statement that he did not make.

**The SPEAKER:** I uphold the point of order. The member for Port Macquarie will amend her question so that it is within the standing orders.

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS:** My question is directed to the Attorney General. Given the Attorney General's answer to the member for Wahroonga, why did BOCSAR, looking at almost 1,000 cases, find that electronic monitoring was associated with a 33 per cent reduction in domestic violence reoffending by convicted offenders?

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (11:40):** Notwithstanding that the question has been amended, I reject the premise of the original question upon which the amended question is founded. BOCSAR is the envy of Australia in terms of crime statistics; that is why we conceived it. BOCSAR has made conclusions and the member for Port Macquarie has accurately characterised those conclusions. I do not cavil with that at all. I am not in a position to do that. Nor am I going to engage in some polemics or dissertation about the value of electronic monitoring. It does have a value. Had the Opposition been listening and not making up their question time tactics on the run, as they so obviously are doing today, they would have heard what I said, which was that the Cabinet received advice not to rush into any proposals in relation to electronic monitoring because they should be carefully considered. That is what I said. They should listen.

## NATURAL DISASTERS

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (11:42):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Emergency Services. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is supporting flood-affected families and businesses in New South Wales?

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (11:42):** I thank the member for Penrith for her question. The member for Penrith knows all too well the impact of natural disasters, particularly in her region. I welcome young student leaders from the Bankstown electorate. It is great to see them here. We are being very well behaved today. I thank them for going to school this coming Saturday to make up all the lessons they are missing by being here today. I am sure their teachers will really appreciate that.

Given the tragic events of the past few weeks, it is easy to forget the deluge of rain and flooding events that occurred in early April. The SES responded to over 5,000 incidents and took over 9,000 calls for help in the space of a few days. Minister Scully and I wanted to set up the NSW Reconstruction Authority to make sure that we learnt from mistakes of the past. This time we responded very quickly. Within days, 13 emergency natural disaster declarations were made. The Reconstruction Authority then continued to work with other councils. We issued another 20 natural disaster declarations, bringing the total number of local government areas [LGAs] that were supported and able to access assistance straightaway to 33.

That assistance includes funding for LGAs towards the cost of clean-up and for the restoring of essential public assets. It is also to help people with their immediate needs, including emergency accommodation and any cash that they may require. There are also grants for low-income residents to replace lost household items, concessional interest rates to support primary producers, as well as freight subsidies to help farmers move their livestock and get grain and other things they may need. The Government will continue this support through a three-month recovery action plan delivered by the NSW Reconstruction Authority. I have said many times in this House, given what is happening with climate change, we know that we are going to have more and more severe natural disasters.

**Mr Paul Scully:** And more frequent.

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** We are still going through them on a regular basis, and the Minister has reminded me they are frequent. We cannot stop a natural disaster from occurring. We can work at being a lot better at reducing their impact and putting in as many preventative measures as we possibly can. Minister Scully and I have both spoken about the State Disaster Mitigation Plan. We know that we need to deliver support on the ground as soon as we can. Teams from the NSW Reconstruction Authority have been on the ground in the Illawarra—home of the mighty St George Illawarra Dragons—the Hawkesbury-Nepean area and the Blue Mountains. [*Extension of time*]

We are liaising with councils to resolve all of the issues. Recovery centres were set up in Windsor, Thirroul and Warrawong to host partners such as the Red Cross, mental health support and other local services. I am really proud to say that Service NSW was also on hand, front and centre, providing support and helping people to access assistance. The Government also lifted the waste levy in 26 LGAs so that people could dispose of flood-damaged waste at no cost to them.

I take a moment to especially thank the 10,000-plus volunteers of the SES and all the emergency service workers who helped out in April and at other times. I know all members in the House will join me in thanking them. To that end, I inform the House that we will be hosting an event next week at Parliament House as part of WOW Day to show appreciation to the SES. We hope that everyone can come. The SES played a critical role in the April weather event and in others. They are on the ground right now in the Central Coast, the Illawarra and around Sydney. In the past 24 hours they have responded to over 100 incidents of flooding, fallen trees and damage that has occurred as a result of the rain. Since 30 April there have been 1,700 incidents. They have not stopped. Currently they are at Tuggerah Lakes, working with the local community, to make sure that flood-affected roads are being monitored.

I must inform the House that the State is expecting more wet weather. Today is our ninth day of continuous rain. There will be more wet weather and more flooding. Again, I remind people: Please do not drive through flooded water, follow the instructions of the SES and download the Hazards Near Me app. This Sunday, the SES volunteers will be out there. Some of them are mothers who will be giving up their time on Mother's Day. That is a really special thing to acknowledge. I thank everybody who volunteers with or supports the SES, and I wish a happy Mother's Day to all of those who will be celebrating it.

**DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (11:47):** My question is directed to the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. CatholicCare Wilcannia-Forbes was told it cannot apply for funding under the National Partnership Agreement to hire more frontline domestic violence workers across the Central West and the western region. This is despite the Government, so far, only delivering five of the funded 118 additional frontline workers. Why is CatholicCare Wilcannia-Forbes not eligible for funding under the National Partnership Agreement?

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (11:48):** I am pleased that the member for Dubbo is referring to CatholicCare by its right name today rather than as "Centrecare", which is what he called it yesterday. It was a bit confusing. I have been explaining in this place for the past two days how the National Partnership Agreement is being rolled out in New South Wales, and I will continue to do so. Let's start. The Commonwealth approved the New South Wales allocation of workers in September 2023. We expect that those positions will be filled by this September, which fits with the timings allocated in the project plan. I will not give the information that I previously gave in today's question time because members already have that part of the complex answer. It is difficult to get through—

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** Why not CatholicCare Wilcannia-Forbes?

**Ms JODIE HARRISON:** Because I have already given that answer and I will not go into any more—

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

**The SPEAKER:** Members will come to order. The member for Dubbo rises on a point of order. I need to hear him.

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The Minister has not provided information specifically around CatholicCare Wilcannia-Forbes. We talked about it in the public interest debate yesterday. She still has not answered it in any way, shape or form. Why is that group not eligible? It wants to be eligible; it is not eligible.

**The SPEAKER:** I thank the member for Dubbo. I do not uphold the point of order at this stage. The member for Dubbo will resume his seat. The Minister has the call.

**Ms JODIE HARRISON:** I was referring to information in the previous question I answered, which adds to the answer I am about to give. The Department of Communities and Justice has been very carefully analysing demographics in local communities across New South Wales, and that includes in the local area of Forbes. With respect to Aboriginal positions, which this goes towards, evidence shows—and the Productivity Commission backs this up—that there are better outcomes for Aboriginal victims-survivors of domestic and family violence when services are delivered by Aboriginal-led organisations. We will work with communities to ensure that positions are filled in areas where there is most need. We have looked at the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research figures. We have heard the experiences of services in local areas, and we are applying the additional specialist workers in a sensible, well thought out, considered way. We have worked very hard. [*Extension of time*]

I have explained the way the formula works. I have explained the overlays of the complexities of communities. I do not know what more I can explain. I have no further information because members need to listen to the complexities of the issue. I have provided the answer. The specialist workers are an important part of providing—

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** Point of order: I am seeking clarification. There is a group in central and western New South Wales that does the work that needs to be done. It is not an Aboriginal-controlled organisation, but it deals with them. So why—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Dubbo has read the standing orders. He understands—

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** I just do not feel like there is any clarification of the exact—

**The SPEAKER:** I do not care how the member for Dubbo feels. That is not how to take a point of order.

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129.

**The SPEAKER:** I do not accept that. There is no point of order. The member for Dubbo will resume his seat. The Minister has the call.

**Ms JODIE HARRISON:** It is complex. Obviously, there are some complexities that cannot be understood by members opposite. A key thing is that domestic and family violence is largely about attitudes. Last

week I attended a candlelight vigil with the Attorney General. At that event, a local councillor came up to me and told me that the issue regarding domestic and family violence was the woman's fault. It was because the mums were not raising their boys the right way. Where did that councillor come from? He came from the political party on the other side.

### STATE BUDGET

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (11:54):** My question is addressed to the multi-talented Minister for Planning and Public Spaces in his capacity as representative of the Treasurer. Will the Minister update the House on the pressures facing the New South Wales budget?

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (11:54):** I thank the member for Blacktown for his question.

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

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** It is important in the lead-up to this budget that we consider the context and how we got to where we are. In the last few months of the last Parliament, the then Treasurer was out in his hard hat and high vis, running around on a last-minute spending spree. He had all the gear but no idea about budgetary management. As a result, we inherited the largest debt ever passed to an incoming government in New South Wales, as well as the largest deficit recorded in New South Wales history. Members opposite might not like hearing it, but the numbers do not lie.

Last year, the Government took a methodical approach to the budget. We found \$13 billion in savings, and that helped us keep our remaining two triple-A credit ratings after the previous Government lost one of them. On 12 March, though, the Commonwealth Grants Commission released its annual ruling on GST distribution. Our share fell to 87 cents in every dollar paid in GST by this State—a sudden fall that has never happened before. The commission decided that New South Wales and Queensland could go without so that Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania and the Territories could get more. Why? Because the Commission decided that New South Wales could look after itself. It thought that our coal royalties would remain high like they had been after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. It thinks that New South Wales residents can pay higher property taxes. It thinks that service delivery is cheaper in New South Wales.

One of the real kickers of the commission is that it thinks that Coffs Harbour is no longer "outer" regional New South Wales but that it is "inner" regional New South Wales. Even better, in the Illawarra—in the electorate of the member for Heathcote—it thinks that Stanwell Park, with its population of less than 2,000 people, has suddenly become a major city. A village of less than 2,000 people in the northern suburbs of the Illawarra has suddenly become a major city. But guess what? So has Kiama, according to the commission. Even the Federal Assistant Treasurer, Stephen Jones, agrees with us, telling the ABC Illawarra, "Any mug can see Kiama and Stanwell Park are not major cities." He went on to say that it was nuts to consider it that way. That decision has cut a whopping \$11.9 billion out of the New South Wales budget over the next four years. We will lose more revenue than we lost during COVID. In delivering the State budget last September, the Treasurer made it clear that a lot of external factors had to go right for the State to return to surplus. [*Extension of time*]

The commission's decision has made the near-term surplus virtually impossible in New South Wales. It makes it more likely, despite the hard work that the Government undertook in saving in the last budget, that we will lose the remaining triple-A credit ratings. The impact on the budget is nothing but bad. Every New South Wales family is affected. For those who are wondering what \$11.9 billion in lost revenue looks like and what it could pay for, it is the equivalent of losing 19,000 healthcare workers. It is enough to hire 19,000 teachers. It is enough to hire 16,000 police officers for four years. That \$11.9 billion is how much we spend on mental health, TAFE and the NSW Police Force combined every single year.

It is a reminder of the need for New South Wales to continue to carefully manage the State's finances, and that is the focus of the Government in the lead-up to this budget, because it is in the State's long-term economic interest. That means we will keep doing our bit to fight inflation, we will keep helping families restore their purchasing powers, we will fix essential services like schools and hospitals and we will make sure our balance sheet is ready to support New South Wales, just like we did last year, especially as the balance of economic risk veers from high inflation to low or no real economic growth. While we inherited large debt and large deficits from members opposite when we came to office a year ago and the recent grants commission has not made our budgetary task any easier, we will continue to prioritise the things that matter to families and communities because that is the basis for setting up our budgets.



### KNIFE CRIME

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (11:59):** My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. Yesterday another woman was allegedly the victim of a knife crime at the hands of a former partner, against whom she had an apprehended violence order. What is the Minister doing to strengthen the protections for women who have taken out AVOs against current and former partners?

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (12:00):** We have spoken a lot about the awful crimes that are occurring on our streets in this city, but can I say that the New South Wales police do extraordinary work under awful circumstances. I know that all of us in this place agree on that. We might not agree on a lot but we absolutely agree on that—and I know the member for Cootamundra does, for sure. But when it comes to domestic violence, they really are doing their fair share.

The New South Wales police have introduced the domestic and family violence reform project, and part of that is the domestic violence registry. The domestic violence registry is a unit set up at Parramatta that has at least 70 expert domestic violence police investigating high-risk offenders. As part of that, Operation Amaro goes out and does the operational work in relation to those high-risk offenders. It is an incredibly successful operation that the New South Wales police run, and we should be very proud of the work they do. They are removing those high-risk offenders from our streets and keeping women safe. In addition to that, we have also set up Empower You. It is an app where domestic violence victims can keep a record of incidents and events that happen to them.

**Mr Michael Daley:** It's a great app.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** It is a great app, thank you. The Attorney General just said it is a great app, and it is. It is an opportunity for women to keep that as evidence so when they do seek assistance from police, they have an evidence list of all the incidents that have occurred to them, including interactions when they have spoken to other people. It is a really good tool, and the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, and the sector that she represents, were intimately involved in putting it together. We worked on it collaboratively as a group and have come up with a really good tool. I hope that no-one comes into this place and says that the police are not doing enough when it comes to domestic violence.

**Mrs Leslie Williams:** No-one has—we would never say that.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** I am so pleased that the member for Port Macquarie said those opposite would never say that because the New South Wales police do not want to spend 60 per cent of their time going out to domestic violence related incidents. That is certainly not something they want to do. They are certainly doing their fair share, but we need everybody in the community to stand by women. If you hear something or if you see something, then say something.

### SYDENHAM TO BANKSTOWN RAIL LINE

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (12:03):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport. Will the Minister update the House on the public transport options that will be available to the community along the Sydenham to Bankstown corridor during the conversion of the rail line to a metro service later this year, and how train services will change in other parts of south-western Sydney?

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (12:03):** I thank the member for Fairfield, who is an absolute fighter for his community, particularly when it comes to public transport services. I also give a shout-out to the students in the gallery, who have one of the best local MPs here. We are lucky we pinched him out of their classroom some time ago. But this is about their community and the future of their train line, and I am really proud that our Government is meeting its commitment to convert that line to a metro service, which those communities were promised a long time ago.

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

**Ms JO HAYLEN:** Last week at Sydenham station we announced our plan to deliver public transport services for the passengers of Canterbury-Bankstown in the inner west during the T3 closure for conversion to metro. That final conversion of the T3 Sydenham to Bankstown line will take about 12 months, starting between July and October this year. I will not sugar-coat it: It will be a very disruptive and inconvenient time for passengers. Communities that rely on the T3 line will have a tough time, and many passengers' journey times will double. I want to be very clear up-front about that challenge. We want to make sure that passengers have the information they need and know that we have a plan to make sure people can get where they need to go during that tough 12 months.

Firstly, the Government will not shut the T3 Sydenham to Bankstown line until we have a high level of reliability on the new metro city service. That means there will be a train on platform 1 at Sydenham station available every four minutes in the peak. That is at the eastern end of the line. At the western end of the line, importantly, under our plan—not like the one those opposite were considering—there will continue to be trains from Bankstown. Those trains will be on the new T6 line connecting passengers to the rest of the Sydney Trains network, and there will be a direct train service from Liverpool to the city via Lidcombe and Regents Park—something I know that the member for Liverpool, the member for Fairfield and others are very pleased about.

We will be delivering as many alternative public transport options as possible, including high-frequency Southwest Link buses. Southwest Link is a dedicated bus service with three different routes, SW1, SW2 and SW3. It is not just a basic rail replacement bus service; there will be dedicated, frequent buses with multiple options to get people where they need to go. We need to make sure there is a mix of all stops and express services. SW1 will be our workhorse—every single station all the way along the line. *[Extension of time]*

SW2 will be a limited stops service—express to Belmore and then all stops through to Bankstown and return. SW3 is our limited stops express service—only to Campsie and Canterbury, because they are on a part of the line that has a lot of passengers. The Southwest Link will deliver frequent services from early in the morning to late at night. In the peak there will be a bus every two to four minutes, which is an important certainty for those communities. Our plan will include metro turn-up-and-go services from Sydenham, local buses to other train lines, light rail from Dulwich Hill, and solid walking and riding options along the corridor. We want to make sure that we are engaging with the Canterbury-Bankstown community to ensure they have the information they need. There will be dedicated bus marshals and transport teams out on the street making sure that passengers can plan their journeys.

We know this will be painful. But the end result will be worth it because by 2025 the people of Canterbury, Bankstown and the inner west will finally have the world-class metro service that they were promised. Today we moved one step closer to realising that important conversion by awarding the \$248 million contract to convert that 130-year-old rail line and upgrade 10 stations. Those final works will deliver the platform screen doors, the mechanical gap filler and all the essential components to deliver the metro service. Most importantly—and I know the students in the gallery will be interested in this—we will upgrade Bankstown train station. It will become a major transport interchange in Sydney's south-west. It will be a total transformation. It will include a new plaza between Appian Way and Restwell Street. It will make it easier for workers, students and passengers to move between trains, metro and buses. We can be really proud of it, and the people of south-west Sydney deserve that public transport service.

### MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (12:08):** My question is directed to the Premier. At the outset, I commend the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition for their leadership during the horrific stabbing events at Bondi. During that event, the Premier rightly referenced the impacts of mental health in the context of those events. Will the Government consider an independent inquiry into our mental health system and addressing any possible gaps? Will the Government work with the Commonwealth to address those gaps?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:09):** I will take the question on notice.

### REGIONAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (12:09):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is helping young people in the regions to prepare for the workforce after leaving school?

**Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (12:09):** I thank the member for Cessnock for his question and for his strong advocacy for TAFE in his area. I have noted his request for me to get him onto a TAFE campus that he was denied access to by those opposite previously.

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

**Mr STEVE WHAN:** I also acknowledge some other great advocates for TAFE in this building, and I encourage all members to attend the inaugural meeting of the Parliamentary Friends of TAFE at 12.45 p.m. today. I thank the member for Heathcote and the member for Tweed for being the co-conveners of that new organisation. I am really excited to have recently announced the extension of a couple of important programs for regional students to link with vocational training. One of those is the Educational Pathways Program, which will be extended to an additional 20 schools in regional New South Wales. That program provides additional resources to schools to support students to take up vocational opportunities as part of their schooling. That includes funding school-based apprenticeships, traineeship coordinators and head teachers in careers.

Over the past 12 months, the program has seen 1,700 students undertake school-based apprenticeships—a 129 per cent increase from February to October of 2023; more than 1,000 students re-engage in their education through support and mentoring initiatives; more than 7,800 students participate in test-and-try vocational courses with TAFE NSW; and 1,079 students secure nationally recognised pre-apprenticeship and pre-traineeship credentials. This is a really important program. I am pleased to say that some of the schools it has been extended to include Bega and Moruya high schools in the Bega electorate; Wilcannia, Brewarrina and Broken Hill high schools in Barwon; Chatham and Taree high schools in Myall Lakes; and Kempsey, Macksville and Melville high schools in Oxley. There are a number of others around the State as well.

I have seen some of the results from that program, and it really is an important program. I am pleased to say that it is currently delivering eight school-based apprenticeships at Cessnock High School and 22 at Kurri Kurri High School. We are extending that great program to other schools around New South Wales because of its success. I have also announced recently that the Regional Industry Education Partnerships program will be put on a much sounder footing by funding it for a full three-year program, with a \$26 million investment over the next three years.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** I seek additional information to give the Minister a chance to wish all mothers a very happy Mother's Day.

**The SPEAKER:** Good idea. I grant a two-minute extension.

**Mr STEVE WHAN:** I extend good wishes to all mothers on Mother's Day. Some of my colleagues have wished their own mothers well because they are watching. I am not confident my mum is watching. But if she is, happy Mother's Day. As I was saying, we have extended the Regional Industry Education Partnerships program for another three years. That is a terrific partnership program. I visited Madura Tea, in Tweed, recently and met some students from local schools who had been doing work placements with an ad agency and had created digital content and marketing for Madura Tea, which will be used by the company. Later this year 28 of those students are going to be doing traineeships with the company. That is a terrific outcome from that program.

Of course, fee-free TAFE is also really important for regional New South Wales. While I was visiting the Ballina electorate, I met a woman who is undertaking a nursing course. She used to live in the member for Lismore's electorate but, unfortunately, she had to spend the \$25,000 she had saved to do a nursing course in relocating because her home was destroyed in the floods. But she could do her nursing course because of the fee-free places made available by the Government. That is just a terrific story of how these things can help people to overcome disadvantage and undertake important vocational training that sets them on a path for their future careers.

As members would be aware, we have a big job to rebuild TAFE in New South Wales, particularly over the next few years. Those opposite left it in a very poor state. I know that many members of the National Party would agree with me that it lost contact with many rural communities. One of my strong focuses is to make sure that we put TAFE back at the heart of our regional communities and regional training. We will be working hard on that over the next few years.

### DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (12:15):** I ask the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault to withdraw her earlier comment. That comment was unprovoked, unwarranted and unfairly cast aspersions on the attitudes of Opposition members—including me as a mother of a son—in relation to domestic and family violence and the way in which we raise our children.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order: The member for Port Macquarie can either seek leave to make a personal explanation, which may or may not fit within the standing orders, or she can ask a specific question of the Minister. Under the standing orders she cannot do both at the same time. She can do one or the other.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Port Macquarie approached me about seeking leave to make a personal explanation or, with my indulgence, requesting the Minister to withdraw the final comment in her answer. I acceded to the request by the member for Port Macquarie because I believe it is sensible and in the best interests of the House. Therefore, I ask the Minister whether she is prepared to withdraw her last few words. I understand the offence the Minister took from the comment that she indicated was made to her. However, she perhaps attributed it to Opposition members more broadly, and I understand how that could be offensive to members who are appalled by what has been happening in the community and who share the community's grief. I ask the Minister to consider withdrawing her final words. It is her decision.

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (12:17):** I take note of the comments by the member

for Port Macquarie. I reiterate what I heard at the vigil. Perhaps members opposite took offence because they felt it was aimed at them. It certainly was not aimed at any person on the other side of the House. I simply outlined the fact that a statement was made to me at an event. If offence was taken, I withdraw the comment.

**The SPEAKER:** I thank the Minister. It is greatly appreciated.

#### *Documents*

### **OMBUDSMAN**

#### **Reports**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with the Ombudsman Act 1971, I announce receipt of the erratum to the Special Report of the NSW Ombudsman entitled *Revenue NSW - The lawfulness of its garnishee order process*, received on 8 May 2024. I order that the document be printed.

#### *Petitions*

### **PETITIONS RECEIVED**

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

#### **Batemans Bay Emergency Department**

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to not proceed with the proposed closure of the emergency department at the Batemans Bay District Hospital, received from **Mr Mark Speakman**.

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

#### *Bills*

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

#### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 8 February 2024.**

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields—Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Innovation, Science and Technology, Minister for Building, and Minister for Corrections) (12:20):** I speak on behalf of the Government in debate on the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Prohibiting No Grounds Eviction) Bill 2024. The Government will oppose the bill because it has its own commitment to introduce reasonable grounds to end a tenancy. The Government understands the impact that no-grounds terminations have on renters. The ability for an owner to end a lease without a reason creates uncertainty, instability and stress for renters, who can be asked to leave their home without ever knowing the reason.

The Government made the commitment to amend rental laws to end no-grounds terminations in New South Wales and that commitment still stands. However, it is important that the Government gets that critical change right. It supports increasing transparency and fairness in the owner-renter property relationship but any amendments to do so must be grounded in an understanding of the impacts that they could have on all parties involved. Owners and renters should not be pitted against each other. We need to find common ground. Given the tightness of the rental market, the increase in the number of people who are renting and how long they are renting for, the Government must do its due diligence to ensure that there are no unintended consequences for, or detriment caused to, renters—the very people the Government is trying to help—owners or the rental market when we remove no-grounds evictions.

The latest statistics on vacancy rates clearly show how tight the rental market is. The vacancy rate equilibrium is about 3 per cent, the point at which the pressure on the rental market is in a good space. However, the latest statistics show that the vacancy rate is about 1 per cent and even less than 1 per cent in higher demand areas. That is why, given the tightness of the rental market, we need to be careful that the removal of no-grounds eviction does not have unintended consequences for all stakeholders involved in the property market, whether renters or property owners, and for the way the market functions in general.

Some people have the impression that the change will be easy because it has been made elsewhere in Australia and overseas. However, the reality is that there is no one agreed model on how best to end no-grounds evictions. There is no nationally uniform or consistent approach regarding what constitutes a valid reason to end a lease. Given that there is no one agreed model, it means that a model cannot just be imported from another

jurisdiction because that jurisdiction may not have the same characteristics as the New South Wales market. The Government will take its time, in a considered way, to ensure that the reforms suit this market. New South Wales is different to other jurisdictions such as the Australian Capital Territory and Tasmania. A careful, considered and methodical approach will be this Government's way of ensuring that changes to no-grounds evictions are well-suited to the people of this State and do not have unintended consequences that hurt the very people we are trying to help.

In Queensland and Tasmania, coming to the natural end of a fixed-term agreement such as a one-year lease is a valid ground to end that lease. No further action is required. In Victoria, the end of a fixed term is a valid ground to end a lease but only for the renter's first term. A landlord needs a more specific reason at the end of any subsequent fixed-term lease. In the Australian Capital Territory and South Australia, any type of lease needs a specific reason to end it. Just stating that the full term of the agreement has passed is not sufficient. I note that the changes in South Australia are yet to commence so it is not yet known what the repercussions might be for a market that is much larger and more spread out than that of the Australian Capital Territory. The fact that there are so many different models reiterates to the Government that a solution that meets the characteristics of the New South Wales market, the biggest market in the country, is needed.

The Government has been observing what is happening in those jurisdictions that I have just mentioned and it will apply its own learnings and analysis to ensure that the reforms work for the New South Wales market. This State has its own unique market characteristics and its own specific challenges. It undoubtedly has the largest rental market and economy in the country. The Government's reforms therefore will be some of the biggest changes the rental market has seen in recent memory. It would be remiss of the Government to simply copy and paste another State's approach to New South Wales. It cannot be a lift-and-shift process. The Government needs to take into account the nuances of the market and be sensitive to any adverse or distortionary effects that the reforms may have.

The Government will not rush through a policy approach that is not suitable for the community or one that will be met with agitation for change as soon as it is introduced. If there is agitation for change the moment a reform is tabled then that reform does not meet the much broader goal of ensuring greater certainty, clarity and consistency for the market—for renters and property owners and the way the market functions as a whole. Therefore, bringing a policy reform that has broad acceptance from all stakeholders is the approach that the Government is taking.

The Government will take its time, in a careful and considered way, to compile a suite of rental reforms that it hopes will be accepted by owners and renters because that is what will give the long-term certainty and consistency that everyone needs and wants. The Government's consultation process last year showed that there are very different views about ending no-grounds evictions. The difference between the views of tenancy advocates and property owners is significant. The statistics show that, as was found out from the consultation period. Make no mistake: ending no-grounds terminations will be the most significant New South Wales rental policy change in decades.

It is an absolute change in the paradigm of how owners and renters interact in the property market. We are going to take the time needed to ensure we deliver a package that has longevity, provides broad certainty and balances the challenges of both renters and owners. The Government is working to engage with the people most impacted by the reforms—renters, owners and the industry at large—to understand their concerns about the impact of the changes and the form they should take. Last year we carried out an extensive consultation process, with record levels of interest and feedback, which reinforced the importance of making sure we get this right. We are considering that feedback and other feedback from engagements led by the NSW Rental Commissioner.

The Rental Commissioner has conducted 50 sessions of in-depth consultations, including round tables and one-on-one engagements, with more than 65 organisations, which further reinforced the existence of widespread interest in the reforms we want to make. We need to ensure that every organisation and advocate is heard. Everybody has an interest in making sure the reforms work for the whole market and for the New South Wales market in particular. Legislation should be not only well intentioned but also well informed and well thought out. We must understand its impact in real-world scenarios. Theory and ideals, whilst nice, must be implementable, practical, and must not have adverse consequences on how the market operates.

The Government continues to engage with the sector to refine its approach and, therefore, stands against this bill, not out of disregard for the concerns of renters but in pursuit of a more balanced and workable solution that is underpinned by extensive consultation. A reform package must stand the test of time and have broad acceptance from all stakeholders. I appreciate the intention of the member for Newtown and the bill, but I must point out some problems with the provisions contained in the proposed legislation. Firstly, the bill has a limited list of permissible reasons for ending a lease. The Government has been clear about its intention to draft fair, balanced legislation. The bill before the House does not meet that standard.

Unfortunately, the bill includes only a short list of additional reasons for termination to replace the existing no-grounds provisions. It does not include measures to support the operation of the changes, such as evidence requirements for terminations or offences for landlords or agents who give false or misleading information. As part of the Government's consultation on rental reforms, it has a proposed comprehensive list of reasons to end a lease for renters, owners and the industry to consider. Those reasons include the proposed sale of a property, or when the owner or a member of the owner's immediate family moves into the property. Those reasons do not form part of the bill before the House, suggesting the balance between renters and owners has not been met.

Further, the bill allows additional reasons to be prescribed by regulation. Additional reasons prescribed by the regulations would not be subjected to the level of parliamentary scrutiny and oversight that such significant reforms warrant. Members represent different communities across the State in metropolitan areas, suburban areas and regional New South Wales, so it is important to ensure we get it right when we make significant reforms to a central part of the New South Wales economy. We need to provide the opportunity for organisations across our respective communities to have a voice through their local members. Members can then state their opinions and advocate on their behalf in Parliament.

The bill requires a 90-day termination notice period for leases of six months or less. Unfortunately, that 90-day period is impractical as it is over half the length of a six-month lease. The bill is also missing some key protections. Consultation on proposed changes to end-of-tenancy laws highlighted that reforms should include a number of protective measures to prevent misuse of the new provisions and empower renters so that they benefit from the changes. One of those measures is the requirement to attach evidence to a termination notice to show that the termination is genuine. This benefits the tenant because it increases the accountability of an owner and benefits the owner by ensuring appropriate records are kept. That makes it less likely for a termination to be challenged, creating greater transparency, fairness and certainty for all involved.

The bill does not require any evidence to be provided to the renter as part of the termination process. It does not make it an offence to provide misleading or false information as part of the termination process. That is an offence in other jurisdictions that have made changes to no-grounds terminations, such as Queensland and Victoria. Instead, the bill requires the renter to challenge a termination in the Civil and Administrative Tribunal. I acknowledge that the bill's proposed re-letting restrictions are designed to protect tenants. However, it is possible that an owner's circumstances could change so that they can no longer proceed with the plans that led to the termination. In that case, an owner may wish to re-let the property before the restriction period ends. A mechanism to give an owner a defence in certain circumstances or to enable a landlord to seek exemption from the restriction is not included in the bill.

It does not appear that there has been broad consultation to inform the provisions in the bill, which has led to the issues with the proposed legislation I have just described. The Government has undertaken a comprehensive public consultation process as it looks to improve rental laws in New South Wales. It stands by its commitment to make our rental laws fairer and more transparent. This is a significant paradigm shift for how stakeholders, including tenants and property owners, interact in the property market. As I mentioned earlier, the Government had record-breaking engagement from renters, tenant advocates, owners and industry stakeholders. I thank them for their ongoing engagement and contributions to ensure that any proposed reform the Government brings to the Parliament is informed by all views and reflects a balanced and fair approach that engages all stakeholders and has broad acceptance across the sector. That approach will ensure that proposed reforms do not result in agitation for change the moment they are introduced to the House. Consultation and ongoing discussions with all stakeholders from all spectrums within the industry will inform the Government's rental legislation.

The Government is striving for a fair and practical approach that upholds the principles of transparency, fairness and responsibility, and expects to see this work progress further in the coming months. It has been clear on its intention to create a fairer, more modern rental market. It is committed to taking sensible, pragmatic action to implement its reforms. Those reforms will stand the test of time. The Government will ensure that all voices in the market—every single one of those stakeholders—have a legitimate voice in the reforms that it makes. Therefore, the Government opposes the bill.

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (12:39):** On behalf of the Opposition, I make some brief remarks on The Greens' Residential Tenancies Amendment (Prohibiting No Grounds Evictions) Bill 2023. I advise the House that the Opposition will not be supporting the bill. The Liberals and Nationals understand full well the deep frustration that renters and those looking for secure and affordable rental housing feel because of the Minns Labor Government and its inaction. We are in a rental and cost-of-living crisis. Millions of renters across the State are doing it tough. Rents are continuing to soar, yet we have seen little action from the Minns Labor Government. There has been little more than delays, indecision and lack of delivery. Over Labor's year in power, rents in Greater Sydney have increased by more than 13 per cent. The proportion of rental housing accessible to a median

income earner in New South Wales has fallen from 35 per cent in 2022-23 to 28 per cent in 2023-24. By contrast, the Liberal-Nationals Government achieved a record high of 48 per cent in 2020-21, not that long ago.

New South Wales renters have been sorely let down by a government that has so far failed to deliver the vast bulk of its rental reform commitments. Core election promises were made. I recall, among other things, the Premier himself putting it up on his social media no fewer than about four times. And yet, after a year in office, only one meagre commitment has been fulfilled: the appointment of a Rental Commissioner. Even that has been underfunded and under-resourced. It remains unclear exactly what authority or responsibility that Rental Commissioner has. From failing to end no-grounds evictions, failing to set up a portable rental bonds scheme and failing to improve rental price transparency, this is a government that is failing the renters of New South Wales. The Government needs to get on with delivering for and easing the pressure on our State's renters.

**Ms Donna Davis:** What did you do?

**Mr TIM JAMES:** A lot, and I'm coming to that—thank you.

**Ms Donna Davis:** That's why they're screaming for rental relief.

**Mr TIM JAMES:** Well, the data speaks for itself. Did you not listen to the point I just made? Look at the data. The numbers do not lie. There now exists broad agreement across this Parliament to prohibit no-grounds evictions for periodic leases. It was a commitment of all major parties at the 2023 election. Yet, to date, the Government has failed to introduce any legislation enacting that promise. The Government must imminently make a call and act. When it finally does arrive, the legislation must deliver for renters and owners without major unintended consequences for the rental market. We expect any reform to have been carefully considered to strike a balance in the rental market. In the bill currently before us, with respect, The Greens have not adequately found a balanced middle ground approach. We should not jump to enact a policy that would destabilise the rental market, discourage rental supply and make the situation and conditions even worse for renters. That is what this bill would do, and why the Opposition cannot and will not support it.

Briefly, the bill would amend the Residential Tenancies Act to prohibit the termination by a landlord of a residential lease agreement without grounds. Those provisions extend to both fixed and periodic tenancy agreements. The bill further prescribes grounds on which an agreement may be terminated, including that the landlord or associate intends to occupy the premises for at least 12 months; the landlord intends to renovate or repair the premises, rendering it uninhabitable for at least four weeks; the premises will be used or kept in a way that it cannot be used as a residence for at least six months; or any other ground prescribed by regulation. The bill increases from 30 days to 90 days the notice period that must be given for fixed-term agreements. The bill also makes it an offence for a landlord to fail to ensure a premise is used in accordance with the grounds on which a termination was made and enables the Civil and Administrative Tribunal to make certain orders in such circumstances.

The Liberals and Nationals support and understand the need to increase certainty for renters and increase the stability of housing for renters. There is certainly a need to increase fairness for renters in the eviction process as well as to prevent the unconscionable practice of retaliatory evictions after a legitimate complaint is made to an owner by a renter. Prohibiting no-grounds evictions for periodic leases is a more balanced and sensible approach, as seen in other jurisdictions. The Coalition also supports the increasing of the current 30-day notice period for termination of fixed-term tenancies to 45 days.

Renters should not have to live with the prospect of an unfair and impending eviction uprooting their lives. But we must adopt a considered approach that helps to provide renters with security and certainty, and balances the rights of a property owner to utilise their asset. Discouraging investment in property supply will only make a bad situation for renters worse. A fixed-term agreement provides transparency over the length of its term at the outset and allows its parties to plan around that. Requiring grounds for fixed terms undermines the meaning of a fixed term and discourages owners from offering the rental accommodation in the first place.

Fair Trading's recent rental consultation paper highlights the highly polarised views of stakeholders over a no-grounds eviction prohibition on fixed-term leases. Some 92 per cent of renters expressed support but only 16 per cent of owners and 8 per cent of agents expressed support. I thank the Tenants' Union of NSW, the Real Estate Institute of New South Wales, the Property Owners Association of NSW and other stakeholders for their continued engagement on this important area of rental reform. The Opposition acknowledges the pressing need for practical solutions to alleviate the affordability challenges confronting renters. The Coalition Government was a reforming government and implemented measures such as the restriction of rent increases in periodic leases to once every 12 months with a 60-day notice period—I am not sure whether Government members are even listening—providing renters with greater certainty over their rents, as well as banning the solicitation of rental bids.

Building on those reforms in government, the Coalition took a comprehensive rental reform plan to the past election, which included implementing a rental bond rollover scheme, abolishing no-grounds evictions for periodic leases, extending the notice period for termination from 30 to 45 days, safeguarding tenants' privacy, introducing three- and five-year standard agreements to encourage longer term leases, and better facilitating pet ownership in rental properties. The Government has done none of those things in more than a year. I thank the current Government for adopting much of our reform plan. Once again, we cannot support and do not support this Greens bill, owing to its lack of balance. But the Coalition calls on the Minns Labor Government to get on with the job of governing and delivering for the renters of New South Wales. We stand ready to support sensible, balanced action to prohibit no-grounds evictions and to deliver a package of broader rental reform.

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (12:46):** I contribute to debate on the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Prohibiting No Grounds Evictions) Bill 2023. The Government went to the 2023 election with a commitment to help some of the most vulnerable members of our constituencies: our renters. Today marks one year since my parliamentary colleagues and I were sworn into this place. In those 365 days, our Government has made some of the most significant changes to the rental market in decades. Acknowledging that renters are in a tight market, the Government is listening and implementing its commitments to make renting in New South Wales fairer and to provide more protection for renters.

It is an unfortunate truth that if you are a renter in New South Wales today, you are under stress. To start with, the Government has appointed the State's first Rental Commissioner, Trina Jones, to be a voice for renters. The Government is working towards the implementation of its election commitments to remove no-grounds evictions, make it easier for renters to have pets, to introduce new data protection requirements for real estate agents when they handle renters' personal information and to implement a portable bond scheme. The Government's reform agenda is twofold. It will implement significant rental reforms to improve renter rights and ease the pressure in the rental market while simultaneously introducing measures to increase housing supply.

I recently met with a Western Sydney tenants' advice and advocacy service known as WESTS, a program run through the Western Sydney Community Legal Centre and based just down the street from my Parramatta electorate office. While I met with them, I heard from scores of locals about their rental experiences. When I met with WESTS, I was shocked by some of the stories that it shared. While WESTS is doing the very best it can, many of the case studies it took me through mirrored each other in a depressingly repetitive way. In the Parramatta local government area, we have the third highest number of rental properties in the State and in my electorate of Parramatta the second highest percentage of renters in the State. Each of the stories that I was told were about people who are suffering.

To support those renters, our Government has already passed legislation to extend the ban on solicited rent bidding and lay the ground work to develop a portable bond scheme. Our Government's fundamental belief is that renters need good landlords and, in return, landlords need good renters. The Government is committed to ending no-grounds evictions as part of a comprehensive package of reforms developed in response to public consultation and stakeholder input. Our Government's recent public consultation on our *Improving NSW rental laws* paper sought feedback on a variety of rental reforms, including ending no-grounds evictions by requiring owners to have a good reason to end a lease. Over 400 submissions and 16,000 survey responses from industry, renter advocacy groups and members of the public were received. This shows the importance of these reforms to the people of New South Wales and provides the feedback that the Government and the Rental Commissioner need about renters' and owners' experiences in the rental market to then make an informed response, because our Government is determined to get our reforms right, including ending no-grounds evictions.

Released in July 2023, the paper asked for feedback on three specific issues to help inform the details on how to end no-grounds terminations: first, whether requiring a landlord to give a reason should apply just to periodic leases or also when a fixed-term lease is being ended; second, the list of prescribed reasons or grounds on which tenancies should be able to be ended; and, third, the evidence that a landlord must show to prove the reason is genuine. The paper also asked for feedback on five new reasons for ending a lease, in addition to the reasons already in the Residential Tenancies Act 2010. The proposed new reasons include that the properties being prepared for sale will go through reconstruction, repair or renovation that requires them to be vacant, will change their use—that is, possibly from a home to a shop or an office—or will be demolished. The final reason the Government sought feedback on was that the owner or an immediate family member will move into the property.

In other States and Territories the owner must provide some evidence to the renter when they end the tenancy for a particular reason. For example, in Victoria if a landlord wants to end the tenancy to make repairs to renovate, they must give evidence that their reason is genuine. This evidence could be a contract with a tradesperson or a building permit. I note that the bill proposed by the member for Newtown does not include evidence requirements. Requirements like evidence are meant to stop landlords from using a reason to end a lease that is not true. It is a strong safety net that has been left out of the bill before the House. Unsurprisingly, the



16,000 responses to the Government's Have Your Say survey on rental laws revealed that most renters are in favour of change, while most owners and real estate agents oppose reform. Of those, 57 per cent of respondents were renters and 34 per cent were owners. The survey was available in seven languages, ensuring that voices across our diverse communities were heard.

In addition to the extensive public consultation on the rental reforms, NSW Rental Commissioner Trina Jones also held in-depth round tables and one-on-one engagements with more than 60 organisations. One such organisation was WESTS. One of its case studies concerned a person residing in a property within the Parramatta electorate with her young family. They have a dual income, and yet they are facing the prospect of financial hardship in the current housing crisis. They were served a rent increase notice that asked for more than the median market rent for the area. Her partner immediately moved to negotiate the amount, given their history as tenants under the same agency and landlord, but this failed.

They then called WESTS, asking for assistance and guidance on how to pursue the matter with the tribunal. WESTS provided the necessary tools to make an application to the tribunal and on how to best argue their case with the evidence on hand, including listings and leases from applicable websites. The client chose to withdraw her application shortly after, having caught wind of her agency wishing to serve her with a no-grounds notice. Fearing that this would negatively impact her children, she chose to pay the new rent increase while simultaneously attempting to find more other affordable properties that were within her budget. Given that the cost of living has made Sydney unaffordable, the client thanked WESTS for all it did and is moving out of the metropolitan area. It is examples like this that will inform proposed changes to the Residential Tenancies Act, including the termination of a lease.

It is important that we make the market fairer. It is important to note that the Government has been clear about its intention to create a fairer, more modern rental market. There is no one agreed model across the States of Australia, and therefore we are committed to taking sensible, pragmatic action to implement our no-grounds reforms that are suited to New South Wales and do not have unintended consequences and hurt the very people, like the client of WESTS, whom we are aiming to assist. Thousands of people in rural, regional and metropolitan New South Wales need these reforms. We are committed to delivering these long-overdue improvements to rental laws, and our Government looks forward to bringing these and other supporting reforms to the New South Wales Parliament. I oppose the bill.

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (12:56):** I speak on behalf of my community, the electorate of Balmain, in debate on the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Prohibiting No Grounds Evictions) Bill 2023. I thank my Greens colleague the member for Newtown for introducing this important legislation. I support the bill, and I urge all members in this place to do the same. I am disappointed, as I am sure many others on the Government benches are, that we are not debating a Government bill to prohibit no-grounds evictions today. I am also disappointed that throughout its most recent 12 years in government, the Opposition did not see fit to introduce these reforms. Indeed, the Opposition had a chance to do it when it reviewed the Residential Tenancies Act in 2018 and brought amending legislation to the Parliament, but it failed to do so. That was despite the strong calls from renters at the time. Tenants' advocates and groups such as the Tenants' Union of NSW had been calling for such reforms for several decades before then—that is right, I said decades. The bill addresses an issue that is well and truly past due.

There were calls to bring in just cause evictions when the first renting laws in New South Wales were introduced by Labor in the 1980s, putting an end to some grossly unfair practices that were all too easy for landlords to get away with under common law leases. There were further calls to reform evictions without grounds when the current legislation was being drafted in 2010—again, under a Labor Government. That is why it was so good to see NSW Labor finally come to terms with this issue in 2017, when its then leader announced that it had changed its position and called for an end to unfair evictions. In media reports from the time, Luke Foley, who was then the member for Auburn and Leader of the New South Wales Labor Party, said:

This is a matter of basic fairness. I can't tolerate a situation where there are 750,000 kids in rental properties in NSW and some of them are being forced to move four, five, six or seven times and they never get a reason for it.

That was almost seven years and four NSW Labor leaders ago. Since then, to its credit, the Labor Party has held its nerve, maintaining its position to end unfair evictions and taking this policy to two State elections, including the election that it won in 2023 to form a minority Labor Government, with the support of the Independents and The Greens on the crossbench. Of course, after squandering several opportunities to deliver this reform while in government, it is a shame that the Coalition waited for the election that it would lose before staking its claim on this issue. But it was genuinely exciting to see the Liberal Party offer its support for ending unfair no-grounds evictions in the lead-up to the 2023 State election, making it an issue that now enjoys broad support across the Parliament.

Those promises, made by both the Government and the Opposition in the lead-up to the election, may well just have been idle words, rather than pledges of commitment to the wellbeing of tenants across New South Wales, because more than a year later we are still waiting for this change. More than a year has passed and the Government has failed to deliver on this promise, which it knows many members support, once again leaving it up to The Greens to take the lead. But I am pleased to say that we are in this place to do that, because we know that the alternative is to leave many renters vulnerable and exposed to unfair evictions without a good reason or, worse, with bad reasons that landlords can easily mask under the current legislation.

At the moment tenants in New South Wales can be unfairly evicted without any reason, receiving just 30 or 90 days notice, depending on whether they are on a fixed-term or continuing agreement. This practice has led to nearly 30,000 households being evicted without a reason each year. Then there is the additional cost to renters from the inevitable increased rent they will have to pay for the next property they move into, as well as the cost and hassle of moving. Imagine what that is like for the community. Kids at school are shifted around, sometimes having to move out of their community because their parents cannot find a place they can afford to rent in their communities. That unsettlement from being moved around from place to place is not the way we want our children and young people to grow up in this State and the practice creates a climate of instability and fear.

Tenants know that if they complain about a rent increase or ask for repairs to be carried out, they might receive an eviction notice instead. They also know that, despite the promise in the legislation that so-called retaliatory evictions are not allowed, those rules are incredibly easy for landlords to get around and that the practice is, in fact, widespread. There is no real way to challenge a no-grounds eviction, or even to address the reason, because once a landlord has decided to evict, they can always find a reason. That is what makes no-grounds evictions so unfair.

In my electorate of Balmain, where 41.5 per cent of the community rents, this issue really hits home. Every day I speak to renters in my electorate, many of whom have shared with me their stories of unfair treatment and no-grounds evictions. Almost everyone I have spoken to in the past few months has received a rent increase that exceeds inflation, with hikes of 25 per cent, 30 per cent or even 45 per cent hitting especially hard. Some have had to move because they can no longer meet the expense, while others have tried to negotiate. Negotiating with a landlord under our current renting laws does not always end well for tenants. Emma told me:

I lived in Petersham for 10 years with minimal maintenance. I paid \$620 for two bedrooms. I was asked to leave with 90 days' notice with no reason given - presumably the owner wanted to renovate. Trying to find a new place was very stressful as a single mum. I now pay \$720 a week. Most properties were overpriced and uninhabitable - mouldy, damp, and very small.

There are also situations where a landlord uses a no-grounds eviction as a bargaining tool. Sahand in Glebe told me:

We were issued with a no grounds eviction, after which we had to contact the agent and ask for a new agreement. We ended up signing a new agreement with a 15% rent increase. We were able to afford the increase but being issued with a no grounds eviction before even being able to negotiate a rent increase was incredibly stressful. We have two small children and need the stability of staying at the same address at least for a few years. No grounds evictions should not be allowed and rent increases should be capped (e.g. inflation +10% per year). This would allow tenants to plan financially for worst case scenarios. These laws need to be passed ASAP!

Asad, who also lives in Glebe, said:

We received a letter indicating that our lease would not be renewed. The landlord did not provide a reason. Upon inquiry, the rental agent indicated that they wanted to increase the rent. I responded that a rental increase was fine with us. The rent then increased from \$790 per week to \$1200 per week. This is an outrageous increase. First, the strategy of landlords to terminate rentals without a reason is not appropriate and a strange way to increase rent. Second, the rental increase of this extent is hard to imagine. The property/rental market is definitely broken.

Those are the words of people sharing their stories with me. It beggars belief that in 2024, in the midst of a housing crisis, rent can go from \$790 a week to \$1,200 a week, with absolutely no recourse for these tenants. Of course I speak to landlords too, and I thank every landlord in my electorate who has gone the extra mile to assist tenants by keeping their rents down. This also puts downward pressure on the market, so it is not just renters in investment properties who stand to benefit. But, sadly, for renters across New South Wales, these landlords are not the norm.

The Greens' Residential Tenancies Amendment (Prohibiting No Grounds Evictions) Bill 2023 offers a glimmer of hope for renters by removing the provisions that allow evictions without grounds and instead sets out clear and transparent reasons for ending a tenancy. Those grounds include situations where the landlord or a close family member intends to occupy the property for more than 12 months, where renovations or repairs are planned that would render the property uninhabitable for more than four weeks, where the premises will be used in a way that it cannot be used as a residence for at least six months, or other grounds prescribed by regulations set out by the Minister.

The bill is not about diminishing the rights of landlords; it is about upholding the rights and dignity of tenants, who deserve security, stability and respect in their homes. Over 40 per cent of people living in my electorate deserve respect. Passing the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Prohibiting No Grounds Evictions) Bill 2023 is a crucial first step towards a more just and equitable rental market that meets the needs of both landlords and tenants. But we cannot stop there. We must continue to push for further protections, including caps on rent increases, to help combat the astronomical rising cost of living for the one in three people who rent their home in New South Wales. In the meantime, I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (13:05):** I make a brief contribution to this important debate on the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Prohibiting No Grounds Evictions) Bill 2023. The Government has previously committed to implementing the biggest changes to the rental market in decades. I know my electorate of Penrith, where almost 34 per cent of the population are renters, will directly benefit. Before the last election, Labor was very open and transparent that, when elected, we would enact a reform agenda to implement significant rental reforms, improving renters' rights and easing the pressure in the rental market. The Government has already begun that work by introducing the rental fairness bill, which has closed existing loopholes and extended the ban on soliciting rental bids so that it applies to third-party platforms and owners, not just real estate agents.

The Government has also appointed the State's first NSW Rental Commissioner, Trina Jones, to be a voice for renters; empowered the Rental Commissioner to gather pricing data from agents, allowing them to advocate for renters and provide quality advice to government; and given the powers needed to get on with designing and implementing a portable bond scheme that will deliver significant financial relief to renters. These are already significant reforms, and the Government will deliver more in a sensible, pragmatic way, taking into consideration the significant feedback received. The Government acknowledges that renters are in a tight market. It has made public commitments to make renting in New South Wales fairer and provide more protection for renters.

The Government is committed to getting its reforms right, including to no-grounds evictions. However, in order to deliver effective reform, a bill needs to bring greater stability and trust to the rental market. That is why the Government has completed an exhaustive public consultation process through the *Improving NSW rental laws* paper, which sought feedback on numerous rental reforms, including ending no-grounds evictions by requiring owners to have a good reason to end a lease. Over 400 submissions and 16,000 survey responses from industry, renter advocacy groups and members of the public were received, demonstrating the importance of these reforms to the people of New South Wales. The feedback has informed the Government and the Rental Commissioner about renters' and owners' views and experiences in the rental market.

Importantly, in addition to the extensive public consultation on the rental reforms, the Rental Commissioner, Trina Jones, also held in-depth round tables and one-on-one engagements with more than 60 organisations and stakeholders, including renters, property providers, industry bodies, academics, legal services, advocates and animal welfare organisations. We cannot now ignore all that feedback without giving it due consideration. I know that those reforms are multifaceted. For example, no two States in Australia have adopted the same approach to addressing no-grounds evictions. Indeed, looking at what laws are in place in other countries, no one country has a silver bullet to address this issue either. There is no one agreed model out there. It is vital that our government do this once and get it right. It is appropriate to consider all the feedback received, and to look at these jurisdictions to ascertain what is working and what is not, to develop an approach that gets the balance right for New South Wales.

The Government will continue to work to fulfil its election commitment and work collaboratively with stakeholders to ensure there are no unintended consequences for renters, owners or the rental market when we remove no-grounds evictions. The Government has been very clear on its intention to create a fairer, more modern rental market. We are committed to taking sensible, pragmatic action to implement no-grounds reforms. We look forward to bringing those and other supporting rental reforms to the Parliament, but I cannot support the bill.

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (13:10):** I speak in support of the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Prohibiting No Grounds Evictions) Bill 2024. I congratulate my colleague the member for Newtown, who is The Greens housing spokesperson. We have been trying to get this bill over the line with successive governments since I was elected nine years ago. This Government seems to be tone-deaf to the hundreds of thousands of renters in our electorates. I note the fabulous package that was sent by the office of the member for Newtown to every member in this place. The information from the Australian Bureau of Statistics shows exactly what is happening in each member's electorate. Members would be wise to look at it. The idea that things can be done this slowly in a housing crisis beggars belief. This is not one of those things that we can plod along with, which seems to be what Labor is doing at a Federal and State level. In some situations that approach is wise; this is not one of those situations. It has been going on for too long.

The Labor Party, the Liberal Party and The Nationals have all committed to ending no-grounds evictions in some form, as have The Greens. In the lead-up to the State election everyone touted their commitment to this

but there has been absolutely no action. The crisis that renters in my electorate are in post the floods is unimaginable—and I know that is the case in many regional electorates. We have been talking about this for a very long time. It is not good enough for the Government to say it is not ready for this legislation because bills were introduced when Labor was in opposition. In October 2022 the member for Newtown introduced a bill that presented the then Coalition Government and the Labor Opposition an opportunity to finally act on advice from the Tenants' Union of NSW and other key organisations, like councils and community centres, to end no-grounds evictions for all tenants across the State. That would have made a difference to the current statistics that we see, but neither of the major parties was willing to seize the opportunity. Is it just that dogged attitude of not supporting something by The Greens? What is it? Because I do not believe any more information is needed.

Data from NSW Fair Trading reveals that across the State one tenant is evicted every 18 minutes. That is an outrageous statistic. The Tenants' Union of NSW eviction map shows that in 2023 landlords made over 13,000 eviction applications through the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. That paints a grim picture of the desperate and precarious situation of renters in this State. Tenancy laws in New South Wales allow tenants to be evicted for no reason—hence the term "no-grounds"—with 30 days notice at the end of their fixed-term lease, or with 90 days during a periodic, ongoing month-to-month lease. For years The Greens have stood with the Tenants' Union of NSW and its Make Renting Fair campaign, as well as community legal centres and housing justice activists, to advocate for these unfair no-grounds evictions to be outlawed. The Government has agreed with us, but it has taken too long.

During the last major review of New South Wales tenancy laws between 2016 and 2018 we urged the then Coalition Government to closely examine provisions relating to the termination of a lease and to end no-grounds evictions, but that was not acted upon. In 2017 then Minister for Innovation and Better Regulation, Matt Kean—who is in the Chamber—acknowledged that no-grounds evictions, retaliatory evictions, all these things, were undermining renters' rights in New South Wales. We were all in furious agreement, but no-one has done it.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** Order! The member for Prospect and the member for Hornsby will take their conversation outside the Chamber.

**Ms TAMARA SMITH:** In question time in November 2023 the member for Newtown asked the Minister responsible when renters could expect to finally see legislation to end no-grounds eviction. In his response he said, "This is one of the most difficult and contentious parts of rental reform." He seemingly has forgotten that it was an election promise that all parties made. We have continued to raise this with the Premier and the Minister, but we have no real details about the so-called barriers. When I listened to the Minister speak earlier today on the bill I was not persuaded at all. I think the Property Council of Australia and very vested interests are the voices that are being listened to; it is incredibly disappointing.

The member for Newtown gave a summary of the bill. I turn to my community where rental horrors are a daily occurrence. All members have similar stories in their electorates, but the scarcity of rental accommodation in the Northern Rivers is the worst I have ever seen, and its affordability is off the charts. People are asking for basic rights like having mould removed after the floods. For decades I have seen good renters kicked out because the Bluesfest or Splendour music festivals are coming up and landlords can get four times the rent. New people are then put in because hundreds of people are lining up. My cousin in Mullumbimby has a secondary dwelling and put it on the rental market not that long ago. There were 130 applicants for a tiny granny flat in Mullumbimby.

I was living in a converted garage when I was elected. I was a lifelong renter until I was elected. As a single mother I experienced what it is like to be told that I had to leave when my daughter was in the middle of her HSC. I could not find anywhere to live. It was near Christmas—a notoriously difficult time in my electorate to find rentals. We know from *The Sydney Morning Herald* today how much a rent freeze—which is what The Greens at State and Federal levels have pushed for—would have assisted renters in our cost-of-living crisis. Landlords are businesspeople, and they already have negative gearing and capital gains tax discounts. Let us be clear: If the Government thinks it is offending businesses, those businesspeople have tax perks. Freezing in a reasonable way would not have hurt them, but it would have assisted thousands of renters in capital cities. We know that \$3.8 billion over 12 months to March would have been saved if rents had been frozen. The member for Newtown and I have been saying for so long—and so have the majors—that no-grounds eviction is ground zero. People think we are there. They think that is already there, until they find out that those protections are not afforded to them in this State.

I thank the member for Newtown for her tireless advocacy in this space. I am pleased that the Government put out a discussion paper about short-term rental accommodation, particularly in the context of the Byron shire. It has taken a decade, but there is a 60-day cap. I am grateful for that. The Greens will be monitoring that closely. The member for Newtown and I both made submissions to that process, and we welcome those conversations about taxing short-term rental accommodation. We have pushed for a bed tax in Byron for a long time. It will not be called that, but we need something in high tourist areas such as the one I live in. The 60-day cap will go a long

way to addressing the problem. We cannot wait any longer; time is up. My community is struggling after the floods. Regardless of who they vote for, no-one in my community would be patiently listening to the dulcet tones saying that there is lots of time to get this right.

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (13:20):** I speak in debate on the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Prohibiting No Grounds Evictions) Bill 2023. We are in an era when the need for stable and affordable housing is more pressing than ever. The Government is committed to pioneering reforms that ensure fairness, dignity and protection for all renters in New South Wales. It recognises that many renters are faced with challenges in a tight market. High demand and limited availability have escalated prices, making it difficult for many to find suitable accommodation. That is why the Minns Labor Government is implementing its commitments to provide more protection for renters in New South Wales.

The Government's reform agenda will implement significant reforms to improve renters' rights and ease the pressure in the rental market, while simultaneously introducing measures to increase housing supply. To spearhead the changes, the Government has appointed the State's first Rental Commissioner, Trina Jones. With her expertise, the Government is implementing robust protections for renters and ensuring that the voices of tenants are heard and respected. The Government is taking historical strides by making it simpler for renters to have pets, recognising the importance of those family members; by introducing stringent data protection requirements to safeguard renters' personal information; by developing a portable bond scheme that will ease the burden when moving homes; and by moving to end no-grounds evictions to ensure that evictions are fair and justifiable. They are not promises; they are actions.

The Government has already extended the ban on solicited rent bidding and is learning from other jurisdictions to ensure that its approach to no-grounds evictions is balanced and thoughtful. When looking at changing legislation, it is sensible to understand what current provisions exist in the laws governing tenancies in New South Wales. The Residential Tenancies Act 2010 lists reasons for which a landlord can end a tenancy. That includes the renter breaching their agreement, not paying rent, causing serious damage or abandoning the property. Other reasons in the Act include if the property was sold and needs vacant possession if the landlord is suffering financial hardship.

The Act also includes an ability for the landlord to end the tenancy without needing a reason—a "no-grounds eviction". That is why the Government's *Improving NSW rental laws* consultation paper was released in July 2023. The paper asked for feedback on specific issues to help inform the details of how to end no-grounds terminations. The paper asked for feedback on five new reasons for ending a lease in addition to the reasons already included in the Act. The proposed new reasons included that the property is being prepared for sale; will go through reconstruction, repair or renovation that requires the property to be vacant; will change its use; or will be demolished. The final reason was that the owner or a member of their immediate family will move into the property.

The public consultation has been unprecedented, with over 4,000 submissions and 16,000 survey responses from industry, renter advocacy groups and members of the public providing feedback that is instrumental in shaping the path forward. The extensive input demonstrates the significance of the reforms to the people of New South Wales. I note that the bill introduced by the member for Newtown does not include evidence requirements to stop landlords from using a reason that is not true to end a lease. In other States and Territories the owner must provide evidence to the renter when they end the tenancy for a particular reason. That provides renters with a strong safety net that has been left out of the bill.

The changes are crucial in making the New South Wales rental market fairer, more stable and a genuine long-term housing option. Moving forward, the Government remains committed to a rental market that is not only modern but also equitable and responsive to the needs of all of its participants. The Government is determined to get its reforms right, including on no-grounds evictions. It will continue to work with stakeholders to ensure that when it removes no-grounds evictions, there is no unintended detriment to renters or owners in the rental market. While I commend the member for Newtown for bringing the bill to the House, I do not support the bill. The Government is committed to taking sensible, pragmatic action to implement its no-grounds evictions measures. It looks forward to bringing these and other supporting reforms to the New South Wales Parliament, reinforcing its resolve to ensure that every resident of New South Wales can find a place to call home—a home that is safe, affordable and right.

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Kellyville) (13:25):** I speak in debate on the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Prohibiting No Grounds Evictions) Bill 2023. I note that neither the Government nor the Opposition supports the bill, but I appreciate the bill before the House. It gives members the opportunity to discuss the greatest issue facing people not only in New South Wales but right across the country—that is, the lack of available rental properties and properties for sale. Put simply, there are not enough dwellings being produced for the market. One could say that I am stating the bleeding obvious, and I am, but if they dig a little deeper and look at some of the inherent

problems in being able to deliver homes to the market at the moment, they quickly see that there is an opportunity for the New South Wales Labor Government to be more proactive, rather than just spruiking the amount of new housing that it intends to provide across the Sydney metropolitan area. That will have its own problems down the track, but I will not go near that at the moment.

Anyone with a background in local government—and there are several in the Chamber—and anyone with a background in planning, like myself, knows full well that the very first of the homes and dwellings that the Government is proposing will not be delivered for another five years. That is a fact. It has to go through the rezoning process. Even though that can be sped up, it still has to go through a development application process. Someone will have to assess it. It will then ultimately need to be built. I guarantee that five years is the average time for that first home to be delivered to the market.

Hundreds of thousands of available blocks of land have been approved and, in some cases, serviced to their front door right across the New South Wales growth centres of both the north-west and south-west, in local government areas such as Parramatta, Blacktown, Penrith, Camden, Wollondilly and the Hills shire. Those areas have been providers to the people of New South Wales for many years now. Because of the cost of building a house on those approved blocks of land, which has increased dramatically over the past few years since the beginning of COVID, the margins for developers and home builders are so tight that they are not building those homes. That is a simple fact. I have said this before and I will say it again—and it will be politically biased but factual. In a situation where the costs are too high but one requires a product, the only way to stimulate more of that product onto the market is to lower the price, not increase it.

About 10 months ago the New South Wales Government put a new infrastructure charge on each new dwelling. It was somewhere between \$12,000 and \$20,000 per home. That is a direct cost straight to the home builder or the developer that will ultimately be passed on to the purchaser of the home. If that was not bad enough, the Government then allowed what is known as BASIX rating 7 to also be applied to every new dwelling. BASIX is an environmental rating that reduces the amount of energy used in homes. It has some credibility but, by virtue of that rating being imposed now, it will increase the cost of a new home by somewhere between \$40,000 and \$60,000. Those are not costs that I am pulling out of thin air. Those are costs that I have been advised of by builders and home owners who say it was too expensive to bring a house to the market one year ago, but there is now a \$60,000 to \$70,000 cost over and above what it was 12 months ago.

How does that allow home builders to bring product to the market? I say they cannot so they are sitting on their land. People might ask, "Why would they sit on their land?" It is because land prices continue to go up. So developers are taking a chill pill. They know that interest rates are playing into the problem as well. They will wait until interest rates start to fall before they seek to borrow funds to build those particular homes. Ultimately, they will catch up with each other but, at this point, if the Government wanted to stimulate the market it would lower the burden and lower the costs on developers and home builders to deliver some product. That is a fact.

I might not be believed when I say there are hundreds of thousands of blocks available already, so I refer to the Australian Bureau of Statistics. It looks at all development applications when they are presented to council and approved, and it can tell us that right now across New South Wales there are some 300,000 blocks, which I have spoken about. Because they are in growth centres and infill areas, many of those blocks have sewerage, water, electricity and every other service they need almost to the front door. Some developers may have to run headworks or sewerage pipes—that is normal—and maybe even build new roads. They have a responsibility to do that.

**Ms Jenny Leong:** Point of order: I have not heard the member for Kellyville mention renters, unfair evictions, no-grounds evictions, rental availability or anything to do with the reasonable grounds on which people can be evicted. I ask that he be brought back to the leave of the bill.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Otherwise, it's a good speech.

**Ms Jenny Leong:** Otherwise, we're loving it! We're loving the lecture in planning law from the member for Kellyville.

**Mr Michael Daley:** Apart from it being completely irrelevant, I was enjoying it.

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS:** Apart from not addressing the bill, it's a cracker.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** The member for Kellyville will return to the leave of the bill.

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS:** In my opening remarks, I spoke about the unavailability of rental product, and I then said that the reason was the failure of the New South Wales Labor Government to address the real problem of supply. If there is no supply, there are no available homes. If there are no available homes, there are certainly

no available rental properties and no opportunities for families to find a dwelling. I reiterate that this is a supply and demand issue. Whether people are purchasing or renting a home, when the market is stimulated, people move and find other accommodation. They leave behind accommodation that can be available to rent and, whether it is affordable, whether it goes back into the normal market or whether it is put up for sale, it stimulates the market. The market is cyclical, and it continues to move around when it is stimulated. We do not have that at the moment.

My strong advice to the New South Wales Government is to help developers and home builders produce by straightaway removing an infrastructure cost that was never on homes before and by removing the seven-star BASIX rating to reduce costs even further. That would reduce the cost of a home by \$60,000 to \$70,000 and go a long way towards helping developers meet their margins and bring some product to the market. It is pretty simple. But the New South Wales Labor Government does not want to address that; it would rather pretend it is bringing lots of homes to the market. But I promise that we will not see one of those homes delivered to the market for at least five years, although we have available land that is approved, serviced and waiting for hundreds of thousands of homes to be built across New South Wales. That is how we could address a lot of the problems.

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (13:35):** I make a brief contribution to debate on the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Prohibiting No Grounds Evictions) Bill 2023 introduced by the member for Newtown, and state from the outset that the Government will not support the bill. The bill proposes to amend sections 84 and 85 of the Residential Tenancies Act 2010, which currently give landlords the right to terminate a fixed-term or periodic agreement without grounds. While the intention of the bill is to make renting fairer and more protective for tenants, it is crucial to dissect those reforms and understand their implications fully. The Government's opposition lies in the abolition of no-grounds evictions. While that may seem like a noble endeavour, we must tread carefully to avoid unintended consequences. The current law as outlined in the Residential Tenancies Act allows landlords to terminate tenancies without providing a reason, commonly referred to as "no-grounds terminations". That provision, while contentious, serves as a safeguard for landlords in certain circumstances such as when a property needs to be sold or when they face financial hardship.

The bill seeks to abolish no-grounds evictions entirely. Such a blanket approach fails to consider the diverse needs and situations of both landlords and tenants. While renters undoubtedly deserve security and stability in their homes, landlords also require flexibility to manage their properties efficiently. I acknowledge the steps already taken by the Minns Government, which is moving to implement its election commitments to remove no-grounds evictions, make it easier for renters to have pets, introduce new data-protection requirements for real estate agents when they handle renters' personal information, and implement a portable bond scheme. The Government's reform agenda will implement significant rental reforms to improve renters' rights and ease the pressures in the rental market while simultaneously introducing measures to increase housing supply.

The Government has already passed legislation to extend the ban on solicited rent bidding and lay the groundwork to develop a portable bond scheme. The Government's fundamental belief is that renters need good owners, and owners need good renters. The Government opposes the bill because it has its own commitment to end no-grounds evictions. Moreover, the Minns Government has appointed the State's first Rental Commissioner, Trina Jones, to be a voice for renters. The NSW Rental Commissioner has conducted comprehensive engagements such as roundtable discussions and one-on-one sessions with over 60 organisations, including renters, property providers, industry bodies, academics, legal services, advocates and animal welfare groups.

The Government also has widely consulted and recently completed a public consultation on improving New South Wales rental laws that sought feedback on a variety of rental reforms. The public consultation on those reforms was record breaking. Over 400 submissions and 16,000 survey responses from industry, renter advocacy groups and members of the public were received. Renters strongly favoured requiring a reason for ending a fixed-term lease, as indicated by a 92 per cent response, whereas most owners, who were 16 per cent of respondents, and real estate agents, who were 8 per cent of respondents, expressed opposition. This disagreement underlines the complexity of the issue and the need for a more careful approach. This extensive feedback will serve as the foundation for proposed amendments to the Residential Tenancies Act, specifically concerning lease termination practices.

The lack of evidentiary requirements in the bill introduced by the member for Newtown raises concerns about its effectiveness in preventing abuse. In other jurisdictions, such as Victoria, landlords must provide evidence to justify terminating a tenancy for specific reasons, such as major repairs or renovations. That evidence-based approach serves as a crucial safeguard against unjustified evictions, which is clearly absent from the current bill. The commitment of the Minns Government to get these reforms right is commendable. Rushing into these proposed changes without thorough consideration of their outcomes could have adverse effects on both renters and landlords alike.

In conclusion, I reiterate that these proposed reforms, particularly the abolition of no-grounds evictions, raise significant concerns. We must strive for a balanced approach that protects the rights of both tenants and

landlords while fostering a fair and stable rental market. The Government was clear on its intention to create a fairer, more modern rental market. We are committed to taking sensible, pragmatic action to implement our no-grounds reforms. We look forward to bringing these and other supporting reforms to the New South Wales Parliament. Let us continue to engage in constructive dialogue and work towards solutions that benefit all stakeholders involved. I reiterate my opposition to the bill for the reasons I have outlined.

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (13:41):** At the outset of my contribution to debate on the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Prohibiting No Grounds Evictions) Bill 2023, I thank the member for Newtown for her consistent advocacy for renters and renters' rights. I also acknowledge the incredible work of the Tenants' Union—a group of people I had a lot of contact with during my time in the ministry. As someone who did once rent, I deeply appreciate the stresses that renters experience. Indeed, during my time in the ministry, I was the first social services Minister to ensure that there were no evictions of social housing tenants during COVID. It was a Liberal Government that took action to address those issues, and Labor Governments followed. During that period the member for Newtown was particularly active in advocating for tenants in her electorate, as well as for tenants throughout New South Wales.

The concerns I have with these amendments, as noble-minded as they may be, are simply the concerns expressed in a rather elongated manner by the member for Kellyville that relate to the impacts they may have on housing supply. Fiddling with the market can have consequences. It is like Isaac Newton's third law of motion: For every positive action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. The reality is that when we limit or dissuade people, it can have a perverse impact on the market. I doubt any member of the House would be surprised to hear me say that. I am being ideologically consistent in relation to these matters. The Greens are being ideologically consistent in relation to these matters. The class traitors opposite are not being ideologically consistent in the slightest. Labor members have come into the Chamber with prepared speeches written for them by the ministry, nobly well read. Their reforms are nothing but a pathetic mirage. Let me start with the Rental Commissioner.

**Mr Edmond Atalla:** At least we are not wasting oxygen.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** When it comes to oxygen wasted, Labor members are par excellence. Let me deal with the Rental Commissioner. I remember establishing the Aged and Disability Commission in this place. That had an Act, an oversight committee and independence, whereas the Rental Commissioner is at the whim of the Government, sitting under a department at the direction of the Minister. Anyone who thinks the Rental Commissioner will deliver one more right or one more benefit to renters is having a lend of themselves. This Government is pretending to care about renters by issuing newsletters and talking in electorates about how it is supporting renters' rights when it does not have a genuine proposal other than a social media tile and a press release that do not deliver any additional benefits for renters.

Supply is the issue. If this Labor Government were serious, it would follow the lead of other centre left governments such as Canada and New Zealand and would seek to prohibit residential property investment by foreign investors. I do not believe that people who come from overseas should be able to buy residential property that crowds out young people, particularly those who are trying to get into the unit market, and I want that to stop. I make it clear that we should be calling on the Federal Government to stop that. If the Government wants to make it easier for people, let us not crowd people out of the market. I want to put Australian interests and Australian renters first, not the interests of foreign overseas property tycoons. But we do not hear any of that from the Government in Canberra and we certainly do not see any courage from the New South Wales Government. Albeit I disagree with The Greens on many matters, at least The Greens have the courage of their convictions to present a decent proposal as opposed to the wispy talking points from members opposite, who are making it look like they have an agenda.

**Mr Stephen Bali:** Are you supporting it, or not?

**Mr Edmond Atalla:** Are you supporting The Greens? You are a hypocrite.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** All they want to do is say to the renters in our electorates, "We do care for you. We have a plan." The reality is that the Government has a hollow plan. The Rental Commissioner will be able to deliver nothing.

**Ms Anna Watson:** Are you voting with The Greens?

**Mr GARETH WARD:** Let me acknowledge some of the interjections. When will we see the Rental Commissioner before the Parliament to answer some questions? Why are they not independent? Why can the commissioner tell the Government what it does not want to hear? The reality is that Government members do not have the stomach for it, nor the decency and integrity to have a proper commissioner. It is a fake commission. Labor policies and plans are all fake.



**Ms Anna Watson:** Point of order: Whilst I do not really want to take a point of order against the member for Kiama—

**Mr GARETH WARD:** You love it.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** There is no point of order. The member for Kiama has the call.

**Ms Anna Watson:** Madam Temporary Speaker, can you please bring the member for Kiama back to the leave of the bill and what we are discussing?

**Mr GARETH WARD:** I am talking about renters, Madam Temporary Speaker. I know the member for Shellharbour lives rent free in my head.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** We are talking about renters.

**Ms Anna Watson:** We would like to know whether the member for Kiama is supporting The Greens bill.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** I have ruled on the point of order. The member for Shellharbour will resume her seat.

*[Interruption]*

The member for Shellharbour will leave the Chamber until after the luncheon adjournment. I made a ruling and the member did not listen.

*[Pursuant to standing order the member for Shellharbour left the Chamber at 13:47]*

**Mr GARETH WARD:** There is a fault eviction I can get behind, Madam Temporary Speaker. The reality is that this Government has no real plans. At least The Greens are putting forward solid policy. While I do not agree with this particular set of proposals, I commend The Greens for their advocacy. I look forward to when the Government comes forward with some decent plans. It all starts with supply. The data from NSW Land Registry Services shows the Government is not releasing enough land for development to keep up with its own housing targets. I intend to ask more questions in the House about the Government's plans because, while the Government talks a big game in relation to rentals, we do not hear the Government say very much about home ownership.

We know that this Labor Government is in bed with the trade union movement, particularly superannuation funds that love build-to-rent options. We never hear the Government talk about encouraging people to own their own homes. All I see is more regulation, which drives up the cost of owning that great Australian dream—be that an apartment or a home. We need some real leadership in this State on this issue, and that is certainly not coming from Labor.

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (13:48):** I join in debate on the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Prohibiting No Grounds Evictions) Bill 2023. I thank the member for Newtown for her strong, passionate and effective advocacy on tenancies and tenants' rights. Labor will introduce its own set of reforms with further detail and addressing some of the issues that this bill does not deal with. The Minister has indicated that, unfortunately, Labor will not be supporting this bill and will bring forward its own bill, with comprehensive measures. The member for Newtown articulated the issue well in her second reading speech:

... the rental crisis is hitting hard. We have all heard stories of young people evicted from their homes simply for asking for basic maintenance like mould removal, or of older people booted out of homes that they have lived in for years because their landlords want to sell, or of single mothers for whom a rent rise they cannot afford is a de facto eviction notice ...

Whilst many of us in this Chamber, especially those representing electorates across Western Sydney—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** It is now 1.50 p.m. The time for consideration of general business orders of the day (for bills) having lapsed, I set down resumption of the interrupted debate as an order of the day for a later time. I shall now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.30 p.m.

#### *Motions*

#### **RIVERSTONE ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (14:31):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Condemns the former Treasurer for making substantial funding decisions in the WestInvest program without documenting justifications.
- (2) Acknowledges pork-barrelling deprived the Riverstone electorate of crucial infrastructure funding, hindering its ability to manage its rapid population growth.

- (3) Commends the Government for keeping its commitment to bringing integrity and transparency back to the grants system in New South Wales.

The motion allows the House to reaffirm good principles of governance and accountability. It allows us to move past a dozen years of Coalition abuse of the public purse for its own political purposes. It allows us to reassert transparency and truthfulness with our communities when governments are granting money to the public for proper purposes. It is necessary for this House to make such a resolution because of the loss of public confidence in grants programs that was the hallmark of the past 12 years in government of those opposite.

Let us examine what went so wrong so we can reiterate what we must get right. The so-called WestInvest fund was a \$5 billion fund that the former Government and former Treasurer announced to the people of New South Wales in September 2021. It was purported to allow the Government to fund local organisations to build "new and improved facilities and local infrastructure to help communities hit hard by COVID-19". But the administration of the program was immediately called into question as the communities receiving the grants obviously lined up with electoral boundaries that the Coalition Government hoped to win at the forthcoming election. So great was the stench of this that it contributed to its loss at that election. The people of New South Wales voted for a fresh start from the Minns Labor Government, and that is what they have.

The new Labor Government immediately renamed and redirected a significant proportion of the remaining funding. We on this side also kept our pledge not to take allocated funds away from communities. Communities who had been promised grants did not deserve to be disappointed by having them taken away, despite the dubious basis on which the previous Government had granted them. But the people of New South Wales deserved an investigation, and that is what the independent Auditor-General provided. The Audit Office has handed down a verdict on the program. The Auditor-General examined in detail how the program was designed and administered. On 28 February this year the Auditor-General delivered that report. The Auditor-General's performance audit of WestInvest is a damning indictment of the former Government and the former Treasurer in particular. It details processes ignored, guidelines disregarded, advice overruled and political expediency triumphing over community need.

The outcome for many communities, including mine, was to be deprived of a fair go and their fair share. Despite being the area experiencing the greatest growth in New South Wales, out of \$2 billion, we got a splash pool. At budget estimates in November 2021, the member for Hornsby was asked about how WestInvest would be different. He told the people of New South Wales, "This will not be pork-barrelling. This will be governed by a transparent, accountable and value-for-money set of guidelines." But after \$2 billion was spent, the Auditor-General found:

Funding allocations through the New South Wales Government projects round did not follow the advice of the agencies that administered the program and were not aligned with the stated objectives of the WestInvest program.

It became clear that when the previous Government was deciding how to spend the \$2 billion, it was making it up as it went along. If not for the performance audit, no-one in New South Wales would have a clue how those opposite had bungled another grants program and turned it into another pork-barrelling exercise. How did a government in New South Wales get to that point? The Coalition is an uneasy marriage of convenience at the best of times. In the Liberal Party, apparently sophisticated city lawyers and bankers are always pretending to be embarrassed by the economic backwardness of their country cousins. In the National Party, meanwhile, rough and ready farmers are also pretending to be appalled at the agenda of privatisation and big business handouts that they nonetheless vote for every time. In truth, they have a lot in common, including the idea that public finances can be harnessed for political favouritism.

No-one typified this idea better than the former Deputy Premier and Minister for Regional New South Wales, and former member for Monaro, John "Call Me Pork" Barilaro. Brash and unabashed, Barra was always keen to show just how much pork he could get on his fork. No-one seemed to dislike him more than the former Treasurer and member for Hornsby. When he was the Treasurer at budget estimates in November 2021, he was far more prepared to read from his text messages with the former Deputy Premier than he was from his budget papers. The former Treasurer worked so hard to provide the people of New South Wales with a counter image. Everything Barilaro hated, he was for: the environment, climate change, koalas and electric cars. But though he was careful to keep his distance from Monaro's master of the handout, below the shining veneer of his silver skivvy, the actions of the member for Hornsby show he was every bit as keen to make every grant scheme a winner—not for the people of New South Wales, but for himself and the Coalition's electoral prospects.

The release of the Auditor-General's independent report reveals the true reality. The report raised serious questions about the program and the role of the former Treasurer, Matt Kean, and his office in choosing which projects were funded. I hope we hear a clear explanation from the former Treasurer in this debate that is stronger than his previous personal explanation that slandered the independent Audit Office. I note that he is not in the Chamber to defend himself. He owes the public and the communities of Western Sydney the facts about why he

was so involved in deciding which projects were funded and how much money was being spent in particular areas. We know that the culture of pork-barrelling infected this \$5 billion project. We also know that the previous Government was proud of its pork-barrelling efforts. That is why we must support the motion, condemn that behaviour, make amends to the communities who were betrayed—including my own at Riverstone—and resolve to do better for the people of New South Wales in the future.

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Winston Hills) (14:37):** On behalf of the Opposition I oppose the motion of the member for Riverstone, which criticises the WestInvest program. I feel sorry for the member for Riverstone. He obviously picked up the pro forma notice of motion some weeks ago, which was handed to him by the Whip's office. He has bounced in, bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, and delivered it without realising the devastation he is bringing on his own electorate. That has to be the case. Why would the member for Riverstone move a motion that does not support the transformational change that occurred in his electorate because of the WestInvest program?

The member for Riverstone was more than happy to announce on 13 March last year how great it was that \$100 million was going towards widening Richmond Road, without researching where that comes from. It comes from the WestInvest program, but it was carved up. I am sure the member for Hawkesbury and member for Kellyville will have a lot more to say about that. I address some of the substantial funding decisions that the member for Riverstone says were unjustified, and the projects that the member is condemning the former Treasurer for, which service his own area of Richmond.

The member for Riverstone is attempting to condemn the former Treasurer for delivering \$77 million for Blacktown City Council to expand and modernise the Blacktown Aquatic Centre. What a fantastic opportunity the aquatic centre will be for those in the local area. The upgrades include a heat refuge and swimming facilities for local families, schools and community groups to host events, but the member for Riverstone says that is not justified. What about \$19.5 million for Blacktown council for the First Nations community centre at Mount Druitt? It will provide an inviting open space for the local community to indulge in cultural activities, develop initiatives and foster a sense of belonging for future generations. I am sure the member for Riverstone would not want to take away the opportunity for the First Nations community of Western Sydney to have a place where they can get together and connect.

There is \$25.4 million for Blacktown City Council to deliver a PCYC community facility at Mount Druitt to support young people through education and training. That is for people in his own electorate of Riverstone to come across to. I am sure the member for Riverstone does not think that is justified. It is a fantastic initiative under WestInvest. What about upgrades to the Riverstone aquatic centre? What about the widening of Richmond Road to four lanes? What about the upgrade to the roads at Marsden Park? I am sure the member for Londonderry is in support of those. Those excellent projects will improve the quality of life for local residents and save them travel time on their daily commutes. What about \$700,000 for Blacktown council for local traffic programs, including 10 pedestrian crossings in Riverstone, Quakers Hill, Kellyville Ridge and The Ponds? Those safety initiatives are in the member for Riverstone's own area, but today the member says, "They're not justified; that's just pork-barrelling."

There are some fantastic things in WestInvest for the electorate of Winston Hills. I look forward to things like the upgrade of the Max Ruddock Reserve—transformational stuff that will change the canteen, the buildings, the sports facilities and the change facilities for women's sport. For the residents in Lalor Park—I am sure the member for Blacktown remembers when he had Lalor Park and how much we need there—the historic community hub will be upgraded through the WestInvest program. A modern facility will provide communal space for the coming together of all of the community, who are desperately in need of those spaces. What about the Ashley Brown Reserve, where the upgrades will refurbish and enhance the ageing sportsgrounds for the kids of Lalor Park?

As the local member, it has been an honour to engage with my community on those transformational projects. I am sure that if the member for Riverstone thought about it, he would also get on board and support his own community with those transformational projects. He knows that the Metro North West line is a fantastic piece of equipment for his area. He knows that the extension of that into the city is one of the greatest things that has happened to the local area. One thing we agree on in north-western Sydney is how that changed the way people live in the area—something delivered by the Coalition Government that I am sure changes the whole situation in north-western Sydney. I assume there is no suggestion that that was pork-barrelling.

Perhaps we will get to the point of pork-barrelling and have a look at a thing called the Local Small Commitments Allocation, which came from Labor HQ during the election campaign. What a fantastic example. Director of the Centre for Public Integrity Geoffrey Watson, whom I believe members opposite may know, said, "This is pork-barrelling, pure and simple. This is buying votes with public money." Let us have a look at the Local

Small Commitments Allocation for Riverstone, which the community candidate says has been "deprived of crucial infrastructure".

Let us look at the allocation from that fund of \$50,000 for the North West Community Services organisation. That fantastic organisation provides for vulnerable victims and family members. It provides emergency relief and programs for children, and they would benefit from a vehicle to improve their outreach service model. During the campaign, the candidate for Riverstone obviously went along to that organisation and offered them \$50,000 out of the bucket of \$400,000 before he was elected to this House. We can only assume that there was no pork-barrelling and no conflict of interest. We can only assume that was all above board, because we know full well who is involved with the organisation and who is involved with the member for Riverstone. If members opposite want to talk about pork-barrelling and integrity, they need to look to their own backyard beforehand.

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (14:44):** I support the motion and I note the contribution of my friend the member for Riverstone, whose community, like mine, missed out on funding for important infrastructure and other projects. As we just heard from the member for Winston Hills, people in Riverstone got some pedestrian crossings. They will pay tolls for 60 years on the M4 for a couple of pedestrian crossings, just so they do not die crossing the road. That is great value for money. They will be paying \$10 or \$15 a day in tolls on the M2 and the M4 just so they do not get squashed going to the corner shop.

The issue at hand is one of procedural fairness, good administration and accountability, upon which good government relies. The question my constituents in Cumberland council need an answer to is why they missed out. The answer should have come from former Treasurer Matt Kean. He and his office should have documented their decision-making as the decisions were being made. He should have documented why he was overriding agency advice. He should have documented why he was ignoring his Government's own guidelines. He should have documented why some projects were being funded and others meeting the same objective standards were rejected, but instead it has been left to the Auditor-General to provide answers.

The Auditor-General has done a thorough job, but the performance report does not tell my community why we missed out. It only tells us that the former Treasurer failed to live up to his own standards while he was failing our community too. I wrote support letters for a number of really worthwhile projects in my electorate, and I thought that some of them would get funded. I did not think they all would, if this was a proper, rigorous process, because there is so much demand and there were so many really good projects, but not a single one of them got support. Out of the council projects in my electorate, Guildford pool is being upgraded, but not out of the competitive round.

At the heart of the issue is a scheme where the previous Government privatised WestConnex, imposed a huge cost-of-living burden on Western Sydney for decades to come and then tried to buy its way to re-election using public money. The Auditor-General has now come out and said, in effect, that that is what happened. The fact that the program was created in such a short time, without the advice of the public service and with so much of the public's money, means that the Liberal Party owes the public answers as well. The Auditor-General said:

When comparing the proportion of funding received to the proportion of the eligible population in each LGA, there was also a significant imbalance.

The audited figures show that my local government area in Cumberland received less than 4½ per cent of the funding for almost 9 per cent of the eligible population. The question for the former Treasurer is why Parramatta received more than 15 per cent of statewide funding when it had less than 10 per cent of the statewide population. Why did Penrith receive 12½ per cent of funding when it represented barely 8 per cent of the population? Why did the Hawkesbury, with 2½ per cent of the population, receive 7½ per cent of the funding? The member for Hornsby knows why. Geoff Lee, Stuart Ayres and Robyn Preston know why, and the residents of Cumberland know why too. The Auditor-General said it plainly:

Parramatta, Hawkesbury and Penrith each received a considerably larger share of the available funding compared to their share of the eligible population.

They received that super share at the expense of others because it was Matt Kean's scheme to win the election. Ultimately, the scheme failed—it failed the former Treasurer, it failed the former Government and it failed to live up to community standards. Members opposite and their scheme failed my community, and now it has officially failed its performance audit. That is why I support the motion and call on the House to support it.

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Kellyville) (14:48):** It never ceases to amaze me. My mother used to use a great expression: People in glass houses should not throw stones. I think that is quite pertinent to commence this debate. I tend to say that people who have skeletons in their closet want to be careful that they are not still rattling around, lest they get found out. But the mover of the motion, the member for Riverstone, just does not know when to stop

digging. He has come down here today as the prime headkicker on behalf of the Labor Party but, sadly, whilst he was all hairy-chested and very bullish about getting into the Chamber—

**Mr Clayton Barr:** How do you know he is hairy-chested?

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS:** Well, I keep an eye on him. He did not check his own record and some of his own failings. But we should look at WestInvest, which was a great program. As a member of the former Liberal-Nationals Government, I can say that that \$5 billion for WestInvest came from the sale of a portion of WestConnex. The former Government promised to build WestConnex and sell it in tranches back to a private operator so that it could fund further infrastructure and invest money into the community, and that is exactly what it did. The Labor Party members opposed WestConnex at every turn. They opposed privatising it, and they could do that. But the one thing they did not oppose was receiving the funds from WestInvest back into their own communities. They did not mind getting hundreds of millions of dollars. The member for Riverstone's community received \$100 million for the upgrading of Richmond Road. Richmond Road now needs more work done. The former Government upgraded much of it, but I can say now that it is well over capacity and needs more money invested into it.

The good member for Winston Hills has already pointed out the other initiatives and funding that was afforded, such as for pools and community centres. The member for Winston Hills raised a particularly interesting issue about one the funding that was promised by all Labor members. Prior to the last election, the Labor Party invented what was known as the Local Small Commitments Allocation for Labor members to use. I understand that a significant proportion of this small commitment allocation went to the Riverstone Neighbourhood Centre. It was some \$50,000, which is not an insignificant amount. The centre does a great job. It has been providing community services, outreach programs and food parcels for many years. I know that because Riverstone borders my electorate.

The person who ran that community centre came to my electorate office prior to the election, asking me to fight for money for the centre. I said, "I have the electorate across the road. I sympathise with you. But, obviously, there will be funding opportunities. You need to go and speak to your own member of Parliament." Obviously, she caught up with the local Labor candidate, and he made a commitment to her of \$50,000 for the Riverstone Neighbourhood Centre. That person, Suzanne Lawrence, a great person whom I know well—I have known her family since I was a kid and went to school with some of them—is now the senior electorate officer of the member for Riverstone. [*Time expired.*]

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** I call the member for Kellyville to order for the first time. He will resume his seat. The member will be removed from the Chamber under Standing Order 249A if he does not do so.

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (14:53):** Mr Temporary Speaker—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** I call the member for Kellyville to order for the second time. If he interjects again he will be removed from the Chamber for the remainder of the debate on notices of motions (general notices). The Clerk will restart the clock. The member for Blue Mountains has the call.

**Ms TRISH DOYLE:** I contribute to debate on the motion because I too represent a community that, under the former Government, suffered from the politicisation of community grants. Sadly, WestInvest is only the latest—though, let us hope, the last—example of a Liberal-Nationals government announcing funding for community purposes, only for communities to discover that they miss out if they are not in Coalition electorates. After the bushfires that devastated communities across the Blue Mountains in 2019 and 2020, my constituents rightly expected that a helping hand would be extended by their State Government. Indeed, the Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Package seemed to fit the bill. But, unfortunately for us, John "Pork" Barilaro was the Minister deciding who got what.

Of the 24 bushfire recovery projects put forward by the Blue Mountains community, not a single one was funded. Of the \$177 million in the fund, not a cent flowed to our community. The programs our community needed and asked for included \$100,000 for a Blue Mountains business outreach officer to support local economic recovery, \$400,000 for a local link road strategy for bushfire-affected towns and \$75,000 for toilet renovations at the Mount Riverview RFS building. Those are just some of what was put forward. The projects were important to my community. People who had lost homes and whose businesses were suffering took the time to apply for that money, but their effort was ignored. The programs they needed went unfunded. Although we lost 80 per cent of the forest of Blue Mountains World Heritage-listed national parks, we asked only for just over \$5 million out of the \$177 million available statewide. We got nothing. As reported by Michael West Media at the time, in an article entitled "Bushfire Rorts: excess grants for sky-divers but no toilets for firefighters", I said:

This public money is meant to assist communities to recover from the most devastating bushfire season in living memory. The walls of flame and the economic impact that saw mainly small businesses go under don't give a damn about politics. These small businesses just need help. This shameless Government is hypocritical, and their pork-barrelling is unacceptable.

My electorate got nothing. That is why I support the motion moved by my colleague the member for Riverstone. It is why the former Government must be condemned. As members we must acknowledge the wrongs inflicted upon communities that were ignored by a government playing politics and uphold better standards in the future.

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (14:56):** I speak on this curious motion from the member for Riverstone. Clearly, the member is new to Riverstone and has failed to recognise the transformation of the electorate—

**Mr Warren Kirby:** I recognise it. I have lived there my whole life.

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON:** Can I have some silence when I speak? The member should show some respect. He has failed to recognise the transformation of the electorate through the unprecedented injection of infrastructure by the previous Liberal-Nationals Government. It is disappointing that the member for Riverstone and the Minns Labor Government undermined the previous Government's \$5 billion WestInvest funding for critical roads in his electorate and across Western Sydney. The previous Government recognised the importance of upgrading Richmond Road, which I have talked about in this place. It committed \$385 million to upgrade two sections of the road and make it more flood resilient and capable of handling its current high volume of traffic. Richmond Road is critical infrastructure for the Riverstone electorate. It goes to Londonderry and Hawkesbury. We all share in that interest.

The member for Riverstone acknowledges in his motion that the north-west of Sydney is experiencing rapid population growth, and then he becomes a cheerleader for slashing the funding for local roads. It was particularly disappointing that the Minns Government and the Federal Labor Government cancelled funding for the upgrade of Richmond Road earlier this year. I have said repeatedly in this place that Richmond Road is one of our busiest feeder roads in Hawkesbury and Riverstone. All the tradies go up and down that road to serve the community. It urgently needs widening to meet the exponentially growing volume of traffic. We now hear, from the Federal infrastructure Minister, that a favourable announcement is likely to be made in next week's Federal budget: restoring funding for the Richmond Road upgrades. I am crossing my fingers for that. I hope that the member for Riverstone has been advocating on behalf of the community for that.

The electorates of Western Sydney need advocates, not members who play politics on this. Why would the member for Riverstone reject funding on vital projects through WestInvest, such as \$19.5 million for a First Nations community centre, which my colleague the member for Winston Hills mentioned, or \$2.4 million for the PCYC centre? I went there and cheered for that. I am sure Blacktown City Council would appreciate \$77.2 million for a new aquatic centre. I would not dismiss \$700,000 for road safety improvements, including pedestrian crossings. I am scratching my head because on 13 March 2023, the member for Riverstone, who was a candidate then, stood with now Premier Minns, the candidate for Londonderry—now the Deputy Premier—and the Labor candidate for Hawkesbury and together they said, "It's not every day you get to announce \$500 million in local road infrastructure for your community. Richmond Road, Garfield Road East and Bandon Road—we've got you covered! We are going to provide all that funding for you." That was on 13 March 2023. Where are we up to now? It is the middle of May and there is not even a shovel in the ground. There is nothing happening there. It is crickets; I hear nothing.

On the award of the local small grants, what have we got there? I got a letter from the bureaucrats to tell me that the Hawkesbury Area Women and Kids Services Collective Women's Cottage was going to get a \$117,000 fit-out. I did not lobby for that. Was that a promise? I did not even know who the person was. I was not given the name of the person to contact. It was just a letter to say that they are getting it. Nobody approached me. That is the dodginess of the Local Small Commitments Allocation grants. It is disgraceful. The Government has made promises and it is pork-barrelling itself. The Government should not point its finger at the Opposition when it is the ultimate example of this.

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (15:00):** By leave: I was not going to make a contribution but after hearing some of the comments, I want to clarify a few things and get to the heart of what the motion is about. It is about a process and the way that that process was undertaken. People have made arguments about a range of things but we must keep in mind where the money came from. The money came from the privatisation of a road that was going to be tolled. It would have affected people primarily in the western suburbs of Sydney, who cannot afford to travel on those toll roads to have a decent life; instead, they experience two to 2½ hours of travel time per day. It took a Labor Government to put in a toll cap so people could have at least some respite. We must not forget where the money came from.

I love how the speakers who were members of the previous Government seemed to think that it was their money. It is not their money. It is the money for the people of New South Wales. If the previous Government had taken that idea on notice at the time then maybe the process would have been fairer. At heart, this really good motion is about processes and fairness. I have listened for many years, as have my colleagues, to members of the previous Government proudly proclaim how they were looking after particular areas. Indeed, there was a reference today to an allocation that the former Deputy Premier had made. I was sitting here when I heard that 97 per cent of the bushfire grant funding went to electorates that happened to be held by the Liberal Party and The Nationals, while the member for Blue Mountains, who nearly lost most of her villages, got nothing.

*[Opposition members interjected.]*

They like to interrupt because they do not want to hear the truth. Had it not been for the work of the Auditor-General, the people of New South Wales would never have even known about this situation. Labor expressed incredible concerns at the time but they were dismissed. The then Treasurer spoke in Parliament about budget estimates, but it has become clear that what he said was not necessarily what he did. I make it clear: This is not to be laid at the feet of the public service. Public servants are hard-working and incredible people. This decision was made, in many cases, purely on political grounds, which is something that the previous Government did far too often.

I, as member for Bankstown—previously member for Lakemba—and my colleague the member for Fairfield represent two of Sydney's most disadvantaged communities, both of which have incredible complexity. We should have received some of that WestInvest funding, which was meant to be given to communities that genuinely deserved it and needed help to get some of that critical infrastructure, but that did not happen. It did not happen because the decisions were political. It did not happen for the member for Auburn in the Cumberland area. Do not try to rewrite history. The fact is that decisions were made purely through a political process. That is the wrong way to do it.

**Dr DAVID SALIBA:** I seek leave to make a contribution.

**Leave not granted.**

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (15:04):** In reply: I thank the member for Winston Hills for highlighting the multiple projects that were funded by WestInvest that were not in the Riverstone electorate, proving the premise of the argument that I have put forward. I thank the member for Granville for pointing out the disparity between the spending in Hawkesbury and the spending on projects in Granville, underlining what was discovered by the Auditor-General. I thank the member for Kellyville for rewriting history yet again. As he said, I committed funding to the only social support organisation located in the Riverstone electorate after years of being starved by the previous Government; yet he failed to address a single word of the Auditor-General's report. I thank the member for Blue Mountains for highlighting the egregious examples of pork-barrelling that harmed her electorate in the wake of bushfires, reinforcing the attitude of the former Treasurer and the former Government towards directing funding where it was electorally expedient. I thank the member for Hawkesbury, who also highlighted spending in other electorates, choosing to attack me rather than the motion.

Every single speaker from the Opposition chose to attack me rather than the motion that was put forward. Not a single speaker spoke about the Auditor-General's report or what happened with the member for Hornsby, the former Treasurer. The member for Hornsby did not even defend himself. It is patronising and it is shameless. He failed to explain how he made the decisions. He failed to explain his report to the inquiry and how that was entirely different from the findings of the independent Auditor-General. He has no more credible explanations than the obvious one: that he and his former Government awarded grants to electorates that the Coalition wanted to win. In the case of Hawkesbury versus Cumberland, it was by a factor of six to one. Members of the previous Government simply have no excuse, and they are now trying to blame me for bringing the motion forward. As I said before, when the Opposition has no reasonable argument to defend what it did in government, it starts attacking the player. That is the oldest trick in the book. Page 11 of the Auditor-General's report states:

The funding advice from the WestInvest steering committee was not followed by the then Treasurer and the justifications for the funding allocation decisions were not documented. One-third of the projects that were allocated funding ... had been assessed by the WestInvest steering committee as having low or moderate merit.

It also stated:

Staff from NSW Treasury and the Premier's Department put considerable resources into preparing guidelines and assessing and providing advice ... but in most cases the advice was not followed by the then Treasurer. There was no documentation of reasons for the departures from steering committee advice.

This Government does not attack the player; it attacks the policies. This Government will bring back integrity and transparency into the grants system. Members of the former Government should hang their heads in shame at being so proud of finding every single barrel they could and lining it with pork.

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

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....45

Noes .....33

Majority.....12

#### AYES

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

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

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

#### NOES

Amon, R  
Anderson, K  
Ayyad, T  
Clancy, J  
Cooke, S  
Coure, M  
Crouch, A (teller)  
Dalton, H  
Davies, T  
Di Pasqua, S  
Donato, P

Henskens, A  
Hodges, M  
James, T  
Kean, M  
Kemp, M  
Lane, J  
Layzell, D  
Perrottet, D  
Petinos, E  
Preston, R  
Provest, G

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

#### PAIRS

Kaliyanda, C  
Minns, C  
Warren, G

Roberts, A  
Toole, P  
Cross, M

**Motion agreed to.**

#### PALLIATIVE CARE

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (15:14):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the former Government's \$743 million investment over a five-year period to boost palliative care and pain management, in addition to the \$300 million annual expenditure on palliative care.
- (2) Condemns the Government's 2023-24 State budget for cutting of \$250 million from palliative care.
- (3) Calls on the Government to review the expenditure and reinstate the former Government's funding for palliative care.

Yet again, I speak on the state of palliative care in New South Wales and in my Goulburn electorate community. Last year on 13 September I stood in this House to raise awareness of the crisis that the Goulburn electorate was facing for people who require palliative care and their families. I was deeply troubled by the decision of the current New South Wales Labor Government to slash a staggering \$250 million from palliative care funding in the 2023-24 State budget. I condemn that decision. I commend the former Government for its substantial commitment of \$743 million over five years to bolster palliative care and pain management services across New South Wales.



The commitment of \$300 million per year for palliative care recognised the critical need that New South Wales has for palliative care. It was an investment to support individuals and families facing the most challenging moments of their lives.

We are all aware that Australia has an ageing population. Goulburn constituents are aged primarily between 65 and 84. This significant percentage of the population are more likely to suffer from chronic disease and complex comorbidities, not discounting those in younger age groups who require palliative care. Those demographics emphasise the need for acute palliative care and end-of-life care services. The Government's drastic reduction in funding for palliative care jeopardises the quality of end-of-life care and support, particularly for the most vulnerable and desperately in need in our community. The implications of cutting funding for those services are far reaching.

We must acknowledge the introduction of the Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2022. Palliative care is not a luxury. Dignity in death is a fundamental human right. It is about providing comfort, dignity and compassion to individuals facing life-limiting illnesses, as well as their families. By depriving palliative care services of funding for these essential resources, the Government is failing in its duty and failing people who rely on these services during the ends of their lives. The New South Wales Labor Government must urgently review its expenditure priorities, particularly in the upcoming budget. It must take immediate action to reinstate the funding for palliative care. The health care that people receive during the last years, months and weeks of their lives helps to minimise the distress and grief associated with death and dying for individuals and their families, friends and carers.

Life-limiting illnesses can cause significant distress and suffering for patients and their families. Safe, high quality end-of-life care requires appropriately qualified, skilled and experienced health teams. During the well-discussed Voluntary Assisted Dying Act debate we heard from experts across the State about the impacts that palliative care services have on patients and families at the end-of-life stage. I have been contacted by many constituents in my electorate who advise me that palliative care beds at Goulburn Base Hospital are almost always unavailable. Patients are being treated in clinical settings on surgical wards, where staff do not have the resources or expertise to provide palliative care. Patients are often transferred to palliative care wards when they have only hours or, at best, days to live. Furthermore, families are pressured to remove their terminally ill and often bedridden relatives from the hospital and into home-based or nursing home care.

Those patients were once transferred to the Bourke Street Health Service for quality end-of-life care, where a qualified palliative care team provided for all their needs. It was a hub where all allied health professionals were available to provide a broad range of multidisciplinary services for a range of palliative care patients. The service also gave support to families by building trust and providing certainty that their loved ones were adequately diagnosed and treated for pain, as well as delivering non-clinical care such as emotional support, hope and dignity to patients.

There is an undeniable shortage of palliative care services within our local and regional health area. Families and carers have become the unqualified and out-of-depth carers for terminally ill family members. Sometimes carers are required to perform tasks for terminally ill family members which can disregard the individual's dignity and be very distressing and confronting for family members. That can impact upon the process of grief. It must be recognised that bereavement support is an essential component of palliative care service delivery, hence the need for palliative care services to be recognised and funded as a holistic service for patients and their families and significant others.

Our health system and the health district have forsaken our community by failing to provide adequate palliative care beds and services to our most vulnerable. Care of the dying is urgent care. There is an urgent need to provide patients and families with an option for end-of-life care in a hospital setting that not only manages all the associated aspects of dying, but also offers respectful and compassionate care that maintains a person's sense of self. We need to address those issues in the district immediately. I call on the Government to please look at this particular concern in my electorate. Let us be compassionate and make sure that we get it right. I call on the Government to help fund this important service. In closing, the House must remember that the true measure of a society is how it cares for its most vulnerable members. Restore funding for palliative care. Affirm the Government's commitment to compassion, dignity and humanity.

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (15:21):** I am pleased that the member for Goulburn has raised this issue, but let me set the record straight. Funding for palliative care this year is 6.8 per cent higher than 2022-23 and is set to increase again by 8 per cent next year. In the last financial year of the former Government, total funding for palliative care was \$338 million. This financial year under this Government, total funding for palliative care is \$361 million. That is \$23 million, or 6.8 per cent, more. That will increase again by close to \$30 million in 2024-25, which is 8 per cent more. In total, more than \$1.7 billion has been earmarked by this Government for palliative care over the next four years as part of the 2023-24 budget.

High-quality end-of-life care is a hallmark of any advanced healthcare system. I have stated previously that health care extends from before birth to the end of life. Palliative care is, and will continue to be, a key focus for this Government. The increased investment from the Government through the world-class end-of-life care program will boost palliative care capacity in our hospitals as well as in outpatient and community settings. It will improve access and support people's wishes to be cared for at home as long as possible if it is something they want and it is medically supported. It is about giving people greater choice over how they want to be cared for at the end of their lives.

At the end of my life I want to be warm, clean, pain free and surrounded by those who love me. Like many of us, I have the personal experience of parental loss. I remember 34 years ago when palliative care was a bottle of morphine, a kindly smile and sitting by the bed of your dying parent. Palliative care has made incredible progress over the years, which I have witnessed professionally in the complex care of many women and babies at the end of their lives. Every local health district has now received funds to boost their pain management services, which will enable those services to better support palliative care patients.

As part of this Government's commitment towards those vital services, funding for paediatric palliative care will increase by around 60 per cent over the next four years to approximately \$64 million. It will enhance the care and quality of life for some of the youngest patients in New South Wales. They are cared for by teams of fantastic and dedicated health professionals across the Sydney Children's Hospital Network, John Hunter Children's Hospital, the children's hospice Bear Cottage and the Manly Adolescent and Young Adult Hospice. Again, I have experienced this very specialised service to deal with the end of life of babies that we know before birth will be born to die soon after, as well as those babies who are born and unexpectedly develop a terminal illness. The coordinated service between metropolitan and rural specialists has allowed those babies to stay at home with their families until the end of their lives.

Our health professionals put the "care" into health care, and that is never more apparent than in palliative care. I acknowledge and thank all those who work in this sector for their service to patients and families. This Government's four-year investment of more than \$1.7 billion will employ extra palliative care staff, care nurses, allied health professionals, doctors and support staff. In fact, by 2026-27, we expect to have more than 570 additional full-time equivalent palliative care staff as a result of that investment. As of October 2023, more than 198 people comprising 126 full-time equivalent positions have been recruited to roles across the end-of-life, palliative care, paediatric and pain management services. They are based at public hospitals and facilities right across New South Wales, a number of which are in the process of being redeveloped.

The Government's investment in this space includes upgrades to enhance or establish dedicated palliative care units at five locations—Westmead, Nepean, Wyong, Orange and Tamworth—at a total cost of \$93 million. Extensive consultation is underway with health staff across these local health districts to finalise master plans for each of these units, with building works to begin later this year. With the accomplishment of a new inpatient palliative care ward at Nepean Hospital, all local health districts in New South Wales will now have a dedicated palliative care unit. The new level four Eurobodalla hospital, which will commence construction soon in my electorate, will also have dedicated palliative care beds.

This Government's enhancements to palliative care services will also extend beyond our hospitals into care and support provided in the community and in people's homes. All local health districts, speciality health networks and NSW Ambulance have received annualised funding enhancements for end-of-life and palliative care. They will all receive further funding in the 2024-25 financial year. Earlier this year, a new grants program worth up to \$4 million over four years was launched by NSW Health with the aim of increasing death literacy in the community, promoting knowledge and implementation of advanced care planning. It also extends palliative care beyond death, providing increased bereavement, grief and loss support for families and carers.

Applications are currently undergoing review by the appointed assessment panel. Awarded grants will be uploaded on the New South Wales grants and funding website following the execution of grant agreements. Several initiatives have also been developed or are underway to better support health professionals. NSW Health is partnering with primary health networks to improve the integration and coordination of GP services in palliative care. A Last Days of Life toolkit has been developed to provide practical information for general clinicians. The Agency for Clinical Innovation's blueprint for improvement provides resources to support health services to deliver the best possible end-of-life and palliative care, and the agency's End of Life and Palliative Care Network provides professional support and networking for clinicians. The Government's ongoing investment in palliative care services will ensure that people continue to have the greatest possible comfort and dignity in their final days.

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (15:28):** It is disappointing that a doctor has been sent to this Chamber to try to run cover for the most shameful and cruel cuts we will ever see. Does it get any worse than ripping funding from dying people? An amount of \$250 million has been shamefully ripped from the health budget—not just from any part of the health budget, but from one of the parts of the health budget that affects those most vulnerable:

those needing end-of-life care. Today the member for Bega, who has dedicated his life to helping people—and I acknowledge his outstanding service to the State in the medical profession—has read the talking points given to him that deny the reality that there will be \$250 million less for palliative care than there would have been under the Perrottet Government's end-of-life-care package. Those opposite can talk about the growth rate from the prior year, but it denies that the growth rate is not as big as it would have been had the Coalition been re-elected. That money has been ripped away from dying patients.

For a person living in the Goulburn area, or in any local health district across New South Wales, who needs palliative care services in the children's hospital network, less money will be available than there would have been had the Perrottet Government been re-elected. That is the reality of life under Labor. Those opposite cannot manage the State's finances and are giving away huge swathes of money to their mates in the union movement. They are slashing services to the most vulnerable people in the community. It is wrong and it is shameful. Even worse, those opposite come into the Chamber and deny it. They have spent time pretending that there were no cuts to palliative care.

**Mr David Harris:** Your budget wasn't worth the paper it was written on.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** The member for Wyong can throw barbs across the Chamber, but he has to tell his community that he voted in support of the cruel cuts for dying people. Because of the member for Wyong, dying people will have to suffer in pain, and he is sitting there laughing about it. It is no laughing matter.

**Mr Jihad Dib:** Point of order—

**Mr MATT KEAN:** It is wrong, it is shameful and it should be called out.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** The member for Hornsby will resume his seat.

**Mr Jihad Dib:** I know that the member for Hornsby is in full flight, telling his version of history. But he made a reference to Government members laughing about people suffering. Nobody is laughing about it. It is not the correct thing to say.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** There is no point of order. I ask the member for Hornsby to direct his remarks through the Chair and, ideally, not comment on those opposite and their behaviour. The member has the call.

**Mr MATT KEAN:** I put some facts on the record. Those opposite want facts on the record. I quote the Minister. The Minister for Health conceded that the growth in funding for palliative care has been cut. He said, "The profile in terms of growth in funding, yes, I understand that has changed." It has been changed to the tune of \$250 million. If people dying in pain cannot trust the health Minister to defend the funding for programs that they need at end of life, what hope do the rest of us have? What else will he abandon us for? What else will he be rolled on by the Treasurer of this State in his desperate bid to plug the massive black hole that he has created through his reckless spending on his union mates?

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (15:32):** While I thank the member for Goulburn for raising this issue in the House, I cannot help but notice the hypocrisy of not only the motion but also the words of the member for Hornsby. If he wants to put the facts on the table, I am someone who had a front-row seat to palliative care under the former Government. I witnessed people being left naked, cold, alone and in pain. That is what those opposite did. That is what palliative care looked like under the former Government. Members opposite should not bring motions like this to the House after 12 years in government. The discussion about palliative care is incredibly important. As the population ages, the palliative care sector will play an increasingly prominent part in the healthcare landscape.

By 2061 one-quarter of people living in New South Wales will be aged 65 or over, up 17 per cent from 2020. I note that the shadow Minister for Health, who came into the Chamber quite visceral and with guns blazing, has not stayed to listen to the debate. He says he cares deeply about this. The New South Wales Government is strengthening how the health system can better support people, carers and loved ones. The world-class End of Life Care Program for palliative care services is part of the equation. It will result in extra nurses, allied health professionals, doctors and support staff. It will result in more than 570 additional full-time equivalent staff in health facilities across the State by 2026-27. The additional health workers will play a vital role in the Government's efforts to boost the capacity of our palliative care services and improve the quality of those services for patients, including those with cancer and late-stage chronic and degenerative conditions such as heart failure, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's. It will improve their access to pain management, ensuring that their last days on earth are as comfortable as possible.

It will strengthen outpatient and community health services, ensuring that, where possible, people can remain at home close to their loved ones. Again, as someone who has felt this, it is incredibly important. For those

in remote or rural locations, the New South Wales Government's investment will strengthen access to virtual care services so that people, their loved ones and their carers are better able to consult with a medical professional without having to endure a long drive to a health facility, which can be several hundreds of kilometres away. Investment from the Government is funding initiatives such as the End of Life and Palliative Care Network and the virtual care team, which will enhance the delivery of end-of-life palliative care. That work will help to further integrate virtual care into clinical workflows.

All local health districts have received an increase in funding for their end-of-life and palliative care services as part of the New South Wales Government's more than \$1.7 billion investment over the next four years. That extra funding is highly tailored to the needs of the communities they serve. It is not a one-size-fits-all model. Each health district is devising its own local programs to meet its community's specific needs. For example, the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District has established a unique clinical psychologist role to deliver mental health support for palliative care patients in the community. The Hunter New England Local Health District, meanwhile, is deploying additional funding to employ more nursing, medical and allied health staff to better meet community and inpatient palliative care needs in nine locations across the district. That includes two full-time equivalent Aboriginal healthcare workers to support culturally safe palliative care for the district's sizeable Aboriginal population.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (15:36):** I thank the member for Goulburn for her contribution regarding palliative care cuts. I have seen firsthand the incredible work that our palliative care doctors and nurses do every day, especially on the Central Coast. Less than three months ago my wife passed away in the palliative care unit at Gosford Hospital. But it extends further than just palliative care units. My wife had palliative care support for almost five years. It is interesting to see the advancements in palliative care and how our understanding of palliative care changes. It goes to the crux of the issue. A lot of people hear the word "palliative care" and think that end of life is imminent. In a lot of cases, it is not. Jill was a perfect example of that. She benefited from an incredible palliative care support team on the Central Coast, which has amazing clinicians who I have spoken about in this place many times before. They are backed up by an outstanding local health district that provides palliative care to our community.

More than 75 per cent of people would prefer, if possible, to pass away at home. Sadly, that is not always the case. There are also instances where patients, such as my wife, have made the decision that they want their life to end in the palliative care unit. I was proud to be part of a government that invested \$743 million over five years to boost palliative care. That was a result of the outcome of the debate on the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill, which the Temporary Speaker had major involvement in. It was important because it boosted funding for palliative care services in all regions across New South Wales. The palliative care unit at Gosford Hospital has treated, on average, 400 patients a year since opening three years ago. It was three years ago last month that that unit opened. I was proud to be part of a government that delivered not only the infrastructure funding—the funding itself was quite low, at around \$400,000—but also the \$5 million in recurrent staff funding that ensured we have the best palliative care doctors and nurses available to provide support.

Let us look at those numbers. It is 400 patients per year so, in the three years that the unit has been operating, 1,200 patients have passed through there, including my wife. But it is the multiplier effect. It is the thousands of extra family members like me who benefit from the incredible level of care provided by those doctors and nurses every day while people make their life journeys. One thing we know about life is that it ends, and how we manage that end is what makes funding to palliative care vital. It is so vital that there should never be any reduction in funding. We can argue over the dollars and cents if we wish to, but the reality is that individuals and families bear the brunt of funding cuts. I strongly recommend that every member in this Chamber visit the A5 palliative care unit at Gosford Hospital and have a chat with the doctors and nurses who work there. I extend that invitation to the member for Gosford and the member for The Entrance. I believe they have not been there yet. After three years, there is an opportunity for them to go there and see the great work done every day.

**Ms Liesl Tesch:** I have been there several times. It's a wonderful facility.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** That's good, because you need to be there to see it. I extend that invitation to every member in this place, who should see how top-rate, best service palliative care is delivered across the Central Coast. They should also visit the Wyong unit, which will take the pressure off Gosford. Sadly, we have seen Wyong unnecessarily delayed but, at the end of the day, it has to be delivered for the 400-plus people who need to use those facilities every year. It is important that no funding is removed from palliative care in New South Wales, because every dollar impacts the people in our community whose lives are ending, as well as their families. The Government needs to look at its expenditure and reinstate the former Government's funding for palliative care.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** It being 3.40 p.m., the time for consideration of general business notices of motions or orders of the day (not being bills) having expired, I set down resumption of the interrupted debate as an order of the day for a later hour. The House will now proceed to Government business.

*Budget*

**BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPER 2023-2024**

**Debate resumed from 19 October 2023.**

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (15:41):** The discovery that more than 1,000 of our State's nurses were temporary and not funded beyond the 2024-25 financial year was just one of many budget surprises the new Labor Government faced following the March 2023 State election. In one of the more extraordinary exchanges to occur on the floor of this Parliament, the former Treasurer and current shadow Minister for Health interjected during question time on 23 August to inform the House that those were "COVID recovery nurses". That was the first time that fact had been publicly revealed. With that interjection, the former Treasurer confirmed that the former Liberal-Nationals Government was going to sack those 1,112 nurses at a time when the New South Wales health system remains under tremendous pressure. For my electorate of The Entrance, which is serviced by the Central Coast Local Health District, that would mean 57 fewer nurses within the year unless we could fund those positions.

Nobody believes that having fewer nurses will improve our public health system, but that is exactly the budget position we inherited from the Liberal Party and The Nationals. The failure of members opposite to fund our essential workers was just one line item of a \$7 billion black hole of unfunded programs that we uncovered when we came to government. It included a funding shortfall of \$700 million to cover the cost of children living in out-of-home care, no funding for a Cyber Security NSW office beyond 2024, no funding for the regional seniors travel card beyond 30 June 2024, and no funding for Active and Creative Kids or First Lap vouchers beyond 30 June 2024. The unfunded programs were part of \$27 billion of spending added to the budget in the last year of the former Government, with no real plan to pay for that spending, according to the briefings we received.

The challenge of funding services for the people of New South Wales was made much harder by the size of the State's debt—the largest debt ever handed from one government to another in the State's history. On the budget settings inherited by the Labor Government, debt was scheduled to rise to \$188 billion by 2026. That is roughly \$22,000 per person in the State. To put that in perspective, debt inherited by the former Government in 2011 was about \$22 billion. The interest alone on the debt was greater than the cost of funding the State's Police Force and greater than the cost of funding our TAFE system. The task then for the Treasurer and the Minister for Finance was to start the budget repair. [*Quorum called for.*]

[*The bells having been rung and a quorum having formed, business resumed.*]

Essential to budget repair was the comprehensive expenditure review undertaken by the Minister for Finance. There is no better person than the Minister for Finance to go line by line through the budget—methodically, carefully, quietly and deliberately identifying savings that can be redirected towards essential services and the things the people of New South Wales have said they need. This includes \$700 million saved by freezing the pay of members; reducing the numbers of the senior executive service; \$530 million saved by reducing consultants and labour hire; and \$111 million saved by amalgamating the Greater Sydney Commission Western Parkland City Authority into the planning department. That included a whole bunch of things that amounted to \$13 billion. The strategic infrastructure review resulted in another \$5 billion in savings, which were redirected to essential services and cost-of-living relief for New South Wales families. The Labor Government also made sure, as part of budget repair, that the people of this State received a fair share of the revenue from the State's resources, as they deserve. A new coal royalty rate was set at 2.6 per cent from 1 July this year to improve the State's budget position by more than \$2.7 billion over four years from 2024-25.

Millions had been squandered on the Transport Asset Holding Entity [TAHE]. The former Government tried to remove TAHE from the budget. TAHE cost the State money because of the failure of that transaction; it could not fund itself from its own revenue and had to be subsidised by the State. Instead of making the budget look better by tricks, this Government has restored that entity's budget position by investing in public transport. In doing so, the Government saved \$4.3 billion. The outcome of the Government's budget repair in 2023-24 will reduce the growth in debt by an estimated \$14.8 billion by 2025-26. By reducing debt, this Government will save taxpayers more than \$2 billion in interest payments, and those savings will be redirected to essential services. The overall budget result has been reducing debt growth by approximately 12 per cent.

Savings on interest payments amounting to \$3.6 billion can be redirected through the Essential Services Fund to support the people of New South Wales who are being impacted by increases in the cost of living. The fund has been set up to work in tandem with a new industrial relations system of mutual interest bargaining with

the State's public servants. By cancelling the wages cap, this Government has given public servants—those who deliver essential services requested by the people of the State—a new deal. The fund has been used to negotiate workplace changes in the public service, and that has resulted in higher wages. The budget allocated \$13 billion to hospital and health facilities, \$9.8 billion on schools and education facilities, and \$1.4 billion to support the appointment of more than 2,000 nurses and 500 new rural and regional paramedics. The allocations have resulted in huge support for the frontline delivery of services that could not be produced under the budget this Government inherited, until the Government undertook budget repair.

The budget allocated \$4 billion to natural disaster support and response programs in cooperation with the Australian Government. This Government found the money to retain nurses on the Central Coast and made the State's teachers the highest paid in the country. Hundreds of temporary teacher positions were changed to permanent positions. The Government is now rebalancing the education spend so that money is spent on school teaching rather than school managing. When I compare my electorate with my colleagues' Central Coast electorates, we really wanted to send a message to our colleagues in the ministry that we wanted delivery on election promises from the get-go. My electorate and electorates in the wider Central Coast area have seen the results. The Government will restart work on stage four of the Gosford bypass, which has been the missing link in road infrastructure. The project was unfunded by the former Government each year from 2016, but the project now has been allocated funding in the amount of \$40 million over the next four years, beginning with an allocation of \$1 million to restart planning and complete detailed designs for this next vital stage of the Pacific Highway upgrade on the Central Coast.

Farther north, in the Wyong electorate of my colleague David Harris, funds have been allocated to begin construction of the Pacific Highway upgrade through Wyong. For as many years as I can remember—since 2015, when I was elected to Parliament—no funds had been allocated for construction and the project had been allocated only small amounts. No funding was allocated to construct the upgrades. The project was repeatedly allocated small sums of money for continual planning and replanning, and we all knew that all that would happen in Wyong would be expansion of the existing roadway from two lanes to four lanes. The Central Coast Labor team promised local councils funding for footpath upgrades throughout the Central Coast area, and we were really pleased that the budget delivered the first \$2 million of a total of \$8 million over four years. As we know, 196 teaching and support staff appointments were made permanent. Energy bill relief was delivered to an estimated 12,000-plus residents in my electorate. Wage increases were given to an estimated 2,000-plus public servants in my electorate.

Through a budget allocation of \$5.7 million, the Central Coast Council received a share of the Regional Emergency Road Repair Fund. The Government introduced a more transparent approach to road funding for regional councils through the Regional and Local Roads Repair Program, which has provided clarity for councils throughout the State in relation to the pool of funds available and delivered a fair process for allocation of funding to those councils. Extra funding for women's health services amounts to \$34 million across the State. A large part of that funding was allocated to the Central Coast Community Women's Health Centre. Recently I opened a new facility that will enable the centre to expand services to the people of the Central Coast as an outcome of the funding allocated. The budget allocated \$23 million to complete installation of lifts at Tuggerah station. It also allocated \$7.9 million to pay for the installation of traffic lights at the Tumby Umbi intersection on the Central Coast Highway. That project was commenced by the former Government but has been completed by the current Government. The intersection is a key traffic congestion point on the Central Coast. I will be delighted to see the opening of the upgraded traffic controls.

In terms of how the budget has been received in Central Coast electorates, the main point is to compare current budget allocations with how previous budgets have been received. What we have not experienced on the Central Coast in relation to the current budget was community bewilderment. I remember that lifts were funded for Hawkesbury River station, whereas one of the largest stations on the Central Coast—certainly, the busiest station—at Tuggerah still was without lifts. People asked me why that happened. They said, "Why is the Government spending money there and not at Tuggerah, where there is greater need?" One of the key features of the current budget was the absence of bewilderment in Central Coast electorates.

In terms of how the budget was received more widely, shortly before the 2023 election, Treasury advised that because of sharp acceleration in spending by the previous Government, increases in debt levels had endangered the State's triple-A credit rating by two ratings agencies. The previous Government's last-minute spending spree piled more pressure onto those ratings in 2020, when S&P downgraded its New South Wales rating. Budget repair resulted in both Moody's and Fitch maintaining their triple-A credit ratings while S&P maintained its double-A plus credit rating. All credit is due to the Treasurer, the Minister for Finance, their staff and the public servants who support them being able to maintain credit ratings, which reduces as much as possible the interest costs demanded by bondholders and gives us more money to redirect towards providing services that the people of the State demand.

One of the big challenges to the State's finances came from the Commonwealth Grants Commission, which carves up GST revenue between the States and Territories. The Commonwealth Grants Commission's recent decision reduced this year's allocation of GST revenue to the State by approximately \$1.7 billion. Treasury estimates that if that is extended and there is no improvement in allocations to the State from the Commonwealth Grants Commission over the next four years, the amount lost will increase to \$11.9 billion.

Compare those amounts with the money we saved through our hard work searching for savings in the budget. Taking \$2 billion out in one year, taking \$12 billion out over four years, makes our job an awful lot harder. The Treasurer has said that it will make achieving a budget surplus this year, which is what we had expected to do, harder. It will put more pressure on the State's credit rating. But we will continue to work methodically and carefully to do all we can to deliver for the people of New South Wales. This budget was a Labor budget. It has delivered for the people of my electorate and for the people of New South Wales. I commend the budget to the House.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** It being 4.00 p.m., debate is interrupted for the petitions take-note debate. I set down resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a later time.

### *Petitions*

#### **STUDENT TRANSPORT CONCESSIONS**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** The House will consider the electronic petition signed by 20,000 or more persons, listed on the business paper and lodged by the member for Newtown, regarding making transport concessions available to all students in New South Wales. I am aware there are strongly held views on this matter. It is very important that they be discussed; we like democracy. But I ask that guests in the gallery refrain from clapping or distracting the debate in any way. You are more than welcome. We really enjoy having visitors. I just let you know that in advance.

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

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:01):** On behalf of The Greens, I present this petition to the House and thank the 21,061 residents of New South Wales who have raised their voices in support of making travel concessions available to all students in New South Wales. The discrimination that currently exists in this State when it comes to travel concessions can no longer be ignored by this Labor Government, particularly given that it has among its ranks ex-student leaders who would have petitioned for travel concession fairness when they were at university—including the Minister for Transport, the Minister for Housing and the Treasurer. Many Government Ministers supported the idea of travel concessions for international students for years when they were student leaders.

Transport concessions are more important than ever for people who are studying. The costs of transport, housing, food and daily essentials are at an astronomical level, with many students facing a crisis. Students are facing cost-of-living stressors that are higher and bigger than ever. I acknowledge that it is no easy feat to get a petition to a debate in this Chamber. Visitors in the gallery will note that those opposite me do not want to listen to what I have to say because they are feeling very uncomfortable about the fact that they know the right and just thing to do is to deliver transport concessions for international students. When they were the opposition, they said they loved the idea. When they were in student politics, they loved it. But now that they are in government and can finally make decisions, they say, "It might cost a little bit too much". Let us look at the costs and what is available.

The contribution that international students and part-time students make to the New South Wales economy is significant. International students and part-time students pay tax, they pay GST and they pay astronomical student fees. We know that part-time students, even if they are citizens of this country, are often not in a position to be able to study full-time because of financial pressures, caring responsibilities or disability. Why should those students be discriminated against? I use the word "discrimination" very carefully. In 2006 I was a student politician and president of the Sydney University Postgraduate Representative Association. The association went to the New South Wales Administrative Decisions Tribunal to challenge the State Government's discriminatory policy on travel concessions for international students. The tribunal held that "the long-standing policy of not providing full-fee-paying overseas university students with concessional travel on public transport services contravenes the Anti-Discrimination Act". It is discrimination.

What did the then Labor Government do? It did not get rid of the discrimination in the Transport Administration Act. Instead, it carved out from the Transport Administration Act the requirement to comply with the Anti-Discrimination Act. It exempted the Transport Administration Act from the operation of the Anti-Discrimination Act so that it could continue to deny international students access to travel concessions. More and more students are forced to reduce their study because of part-time workloads. We must recognise that it is

not just international students but also part-time students who need to pick up an extra shift in their retail or hospitality job, or who have caring responsibilities, who are facing financial pressures. It is not just the students who are in the Chamber today who are calling for this change; 21,061 residents of New South Wales supported this petition.

I note that the Minister for Transport is in the Chamber. I appreciate her being here for this take-note debate. She knows that it is not only the students who are calling for travel concession fairness; the NSW Vice-Chancellors' Committee wrote to the Minister in support of part-time student and international student travel concessions. Universities across New South Wales and their student organisations support this change. In fact, only a few years ago the transport Minister, who was also a University of Sydney student president at one point in time, made a private member's statement in this Chamber during which she said that the current model of transport concessions is "outdated and unfair". She called for a system of public transport concessions that addresses the injustices for international students and part-time students. I hope that she will support this petition.

**Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (16:06):** I make a contribution as the Minister responsible for tertiary education in New South Wales. The Minister for Transport will also respond to the petition. She will talk about the cost pressures on the system and some of the issues around the transport concessions and the way they work. I emphasise to our international students how much New South Wales appreciates them. We very much appreciate the international students who come into our community, bringing with them their cultural diversity and their experiences. They often take back home to their country a knowledge of Australia that is incredibly useful in developing partnerships between our countries. It is something that is important to highlight, because a number of issues are affecting international students in Australia at the moment which have attracted some negative publicity. They need to be addressed by the Government in talking about why we value the presence of international students in Australia. I will come back to that.

The Minister for Transport and the member for Cessnock will talk a little bit about the way the Government supports students at the moment and the reasons why, while we would very much like to extend transport concessions, current costs and budget pressures make that difficult. It has a significant cost, which we will hear more about later. Of course, international students and part-time students are able to access the capped amounts on the Opal network for public transport in New South Wales, which is helpful. But I acknowledge that cost-of-living pressures, such as food and accommodation costs, apply just as much to international students as they do to every other student. Recent discussions in the media have blamed international students for things like housing shortages. That is completely overblown. It is important that we have international students in New South Wales, and I express my support for those students who are returning to New South Wales for study, particularly after the COVID disruptions.

According to the recent report of the Property Council of Australia Student Accommodation Council, international students make up about 4 per cent of the rental market, so it is hard to say that they are a driver of housing shortages. The real driver of accommodation problems in New South Wales and Australia is poor policy over many years and a failure to plan. It is important for us not to blame people who have no say over those issues. As I said, we very much value the contribution international students make. I remember visiting a Chinese mining company in one of my previous portfolios in a former incarnation and meeting somebody who had studied in Australia. That helped their understanding of how Australia works and how links could be made. That is important. From the point of view of the New South Wales economy, international educational exports are our second biggest export. They are our biggest service export. They are absolutely vital. It concerns me as Minister responsible for tertiary education that we are seeing visa issues at the moment, which are unfairly impacting on universities in New South Wales and source countries for our international students.

While I support the Federal Government's moves to ensure that people are coming for genuine educational reasons, it is not carrying that across to our universities, which are excellent educational institutions. I would like to see it carefully choose which students are eligible to come to Australia to make their contribution. I am very sympathetic to the issues raised. The Minister for Transport will address them in more detail. I thank the petitioners for the petition, which enabled me to address other issues, and the member for Newtown for bringing it to the Parliament.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (16:11):** I join other members in welcoming all the students in the gallery and thank them for the leadership in bringing this petition of over 20,000 signatures to the New South Wales Parliament. It demonstrates that the issue needs to be on the agenda of this Parliament. I thank the member for Newtown for sponsoring the petition and speaking so strongly to it. I also welcome international students to this State and to Sydney and call for their fair treatment in accessing essential transport services. The number of international students enrolled in New South Wales education institutions has been growing since the pandemic and reached 222,356 enrolments in January, representing over one-third of all international students in Australia. Most study in the city and the inner south.



International students are a vital part of our economy. They spend billions in student tuition fees, providing the main source of income for universities, which is vital to maintaining a world-class tertiary education system. Their contribution to the education sector is more than just financial and includes the new perspectives and ideas they bring to class by virtue of their diverse backgrounds, fostering innovation and research, and broadening the knowledge of all students. International student programs help foster international relations between Australia and other countries. Many graduates will go on to be leaders when they return home, and if they have established relationships in Australia, it could help in political, economic, trade or cultural negotiations. Furthermore, if students have a good experience, they are likely to return with their friends and family for a holiday or even, hopefully, to emigrate to Australia.

The economic benefits of international students go beyond their contribution to the education sector. The Australian Bureau of Statistics calculated their overall contribution to the New South Wales economy at over \$13 million last financial year. As we know, international students work in hard-to-fill roles, like food and beverage, cleaning and delivery, and spend billions on rent, hospitality and retail. They also significantly contribute to their neighbourhoods, making areas around education institutions vibrant places at night, as international students eat at local restaurants. In my electorate, that is especially the case in Pyrmont, Ultimo, Haymarket and the CBD. Students come from across the globe, including from China, India, Brazil, Colombia and Indonesia. My husband came to Australia as an international student from Germany.

Many international students come from families who have saved long and hard to give them the opportunity to study in Australia, New South Wales and Sydney; some go into debt to do this. Students who work are usually on the minimum wage, on limited hours, and much of their pay is spent on high rents and other living and student expenses. They are no more financially well-off than local students. International students rely on public transport to get to and from education, work and social activities. They are unlikely to have access to a car. Because of the rental crisis, if they are not successful in securing student accommodation, they often live a long way from their place of education. Yet New South Wales is the only jurisdiction in the country that does not offer any form of concession or discounted transport to international students, requiring them to pay full fares. Last year Opal fares increased on average by 3.7 per cent. The current adult weekly travel cap of \$50 is now double the concession cap of \$25.

As contributors to our economy and society, international students should be no less eligible for travel concessions than other students. It is discrimination to refuse them this basic subsidy. The City of Sydney recognises the significant value of international students and recently passed a motion in support of this petition. I acknowledge the work of Councillor HY William Chan in bringing that motion and the support of Councillor Sylvie Ellsmore. About 40 per cent of all education providers in the State are located in the City of Sydney, including over 550 education establishments such as universities, vocational and educational training providers, and English language intensive courses. We want international students to have a good experience studying here, and we should help them avoid hardship in what is becoming one of the world's most expensive cities to live in. The budget costs could be modest, especially after accounting for the benefits that international students with good experiences bring to our city.

I thank the Students Representative Council and the Sydney University Postgraduate Representative Association for creating this petition, and the member for Newtown for bringing it to the House. International students provide a massive contribution to our State, and I hope the Government recognises that contribution and urgently extends transport concessions to them.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (16:16):** I acknowledge the wonderful contribution that international students make to everything that happens around not just our universities but also our societies at large. We have spoken about the soft diplomacy that flows when our international students either spend more time here and end up being leaders of our local community, or go home and become leaders in their local community who then have a nice link back to this country. In particular, I recognise the students who have been to the University of Newcastle, which is a bit closer to home for me because I come from the Hunter Valley. Some of those students have had incredible success in their working lives. Indeed, one of them continues to make significant contributions to the university and funds scholarships as an alumni, which is fantastic and welcomed.

The petition seeks to expand transport concessions to all tertiary students, including international students and part-time students. The current concession fare for eligible tertiary students is set at 50 per cent of the adult fare and also capped at \$50 per week on the Opal public transport network. That approach is consistent in every State. Only the Northern Territory offers part-time or remote students access to concession fares on public services in Darwin and Alice Springs. While there have been numerous requests to extend the concession fare to international students over the years, legislation has been in place for decades in New South Wales that restricts full fee-paying students from accessing the same concession fare as domestic students. That is because they are

required to provide evidence indicating that they have sufficient funds to cover both their education and living costs as part of their student visa applications.

The principles underpinning the public transport concession system in New South Wales ensure that the benefits of the concession fares are directed to those who are transport disadvantaged and/or experiencing financial hardship. Each year, millions of dollars in public transport concessions are provided to assist people with those needs. Currently, those who benefit from public transport concessions include children, school students, domestic tertiary students, Centrelink beneficiaries, seniors, pensioners, people with disabilities, asylum seekers and war veterans. That includes specific support for tertiary students studying on Australian Government scholarships, asylum seekers and part-time domestic students with disability. The New South Wales Government significantly subsidises public transport services, and those who cannot access travel concessions are able to access the same Opal benefits as other adult New South Wales residents, including unlimited travel on the Opal network capped at \$50 per week.

However, public transport concession resources have to be targeted and prioritised. New South Wales is facing significant economic challenges, and the budget was left in a dire and parlous state by the former Government. Maintenance of our services and safety were not done—or were not done properly—by the previous Government. We had international contracts for trains that do not fit the tracks. Some of them were not properly fitted out with the safety portals that they needed, and there was a wide range of other problems with some of those contracts. That has added to the parlous state of the budget.

However, I note that work is currently underway by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal to review Opal fares. The tribunal, better known as IPART, will be providing its draft report on new Opal fares in June 2024 and will be holding a series of public hearings that month to talk about its proposals. The hearings will provide all members of our community with an opportunity to have their say on the pricing of public transport fares across the Opal network. Once IPART has made its determination on a new Opal pricing structure, there may be more capacity to consider where and how new concession fares could be offered. To that end, I encourage petitioners and advocates to contribute to that IPART process.

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (16:21):** In response: I thank everyone who signed the petition and particularly thank the member for Newtown for bringing it to the House. I acknowledge the passion and the strength of feeling amongst those advocating for reform, and I also thank the many colleagues and members of this place who have also raised the issue with me in recent weeks. I acknowledge that tertiary students, including international students, are experiencing the same cost-of-living pressures that we all are and that that places significant pressure on them as they study, work and live in New South Wales.

As the Minister and the member for Cessnock outlined, the Government is facing significant budget pressures. We were elected with a \$188.2 billion debt, and the reduction in GST revenue from the Commonwealth Grants Commission increases the budget pressure. These are difficult times requiring difficult choices. In transport, we inherited a mess—a system that was failing passengers. At this time our focus needs to be on improving those services—on expanding the frequency and reliability of transport services and the resilience of our network. That is to the benefit of everybody, and we need to make sure, in particular, we are supporting our frontline workers to provide the essential public transport and other services that we all rely on.

The rationale for the approach to international student concession is that under immigration requirements, international tertiary students are required to demonstrate that they have enough funds to support both their tuition and living expenses when applying for a student visa. Part-time domestic tertiary students and students who undertake study externally or by correspondence can undertake additional employment hours while studying, but I acknowledge that the restrictions placed on the working hours of international students make that very difficult.

I want people to understand that we have provided significant subsidies for fares for people on fixed and low incomes, ensuring that some of the most vulnerable people in our community have access to public transport. That includes a 50 per cent concession on the adult fares accessed by apprentices, trainees, students and young people. International tertiary students on scholarships that are fully funded by the Australian Government through Australia Awards Scholarships are entitled to access tertiary student public transport concessions. We want to make sure students with disability can access those concessions. As previous speakers outlined, we retain the \$50 per week cap that international students and part-time students can access.

Taxpayers subsidise the operation of public transport in New South Wales, and the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal has found that we only collect 25 per cent of that revenue. While we are not able to extend travel concessions to international students and part-time domestic students in the current budget environment, I certainly would not rule out working with the member for Newtown on that important issue in the future.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:24):** In reply: I again acknowledge and thank the 21,061 students and New South Wales residents who signed the petition to bring on this debate. Many members in the Chamber and watching online have raised with me and with the Minister their strong views on the need to address this issue. I thank the Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education, the member for Cessnock and the Minister for Transport for contributing to the debate. I acknowledge that the member for Sydney and my Greens colleagues the member for Balmain and the member for Ballina, who is our education spokesperson, are in the Chamber. I acknowledge that other members in the Chamber also feel passionately about this issue.

I particularly acknowledge and thank Weihong Liang, the president of Sydney University Postgraduate Representative Association, who has been coordinating the most recent iteration of this campaign. I acknowledge the University of Sydney Student Representative Council, the University of Sydney Union, the University of New South Wales Postgraduate Council, the Student Representative Council of UNSW, the University of Technology Sydney Students' Association, the University of Newcastle Students' Association, the Western Sydney University Student Representative Council, the NSW Vice Chancellors' Committee and the National Tertiary Education Union. They all back the call to finally end the discrimination against international students and part-time students when it comes to travel concessions in this State.

I also acknowledge that for international students, taking the step to advocate for changes while they are in this country is a risk. It is a risk to them personally and it takes effort to do so. They do it selflessly, knowing that future generations of international students will benefit from a change that they might not see. I thank them for taking that brave step today. I acknowledge the work they have done. From what we have heard today, the campaign to finally deliver travel concessions for international students and part-time students is not over. We will continue the fight. Congratulations to them all, and well done.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** On behalf of the House, I thank the guests in the gallery for the respectful way in which they have behaved. They are a credit to international students as ambassadors.

**Petition noted.**

*Community Recognition Statements*

**CHARLIZE PARKER AND KHIARNA MUNRO**

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (16:28):** I congratulate two talented young athletes, Charlyze Parker and Khiarna Munro, who have been selected in the under-12 and under-15 Oztag teams, respectively, to represent New South Wales in the State of Origin Oztag championships. Those two athletes are seasoned junior rugby league tag players, and this year they will both be playing in their third season for the East Hills Bulldogs. Khiarna scored an impressive 43 tries in her last season. After displaying that type of talent at such a young age, I am excited to see what the future holds for both of those young girls. They have demonstrated a spirit of commitment and perseverance that is integral to success in sports. Their talent and their determination not only are inspiring to their peers but also demonstrate their immense potential as young athletes. As they prepare to compete in the upcoming Oztag championships in September, I commend Charlyze and Khiarna for their outstanding accomplishments. I wish them luck in their upcoming games and all the best for the future.

**WAHROONGA ELECTORATE JUSTICES OF THE PEACE**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (16:29):** Justices of the peace [JPs] serve our State by voluntarily providing the community with essential services. They can witness a person making a statutory declaration or affidavit and certify copies of original documents. I had the pleasure of meeting Dr Peter Harnwell and Mr Peter Kirkwood, from my electorate of Wahroonga, in Parliament House to celebrate their 50 years of service as justices of the peace. Both of those men have been great servants of the public in many different ways throughout their lives. Sadly, the number of JPs is slowly deteriorating, yet the need for their services is ever increasing. Being a JP is a fantastic way to give back to the community, and our community relies heavily on the services they provide. I encourage those in my electorate to volunteer their time and consider becoming JPs. I extend my deepest gratitude to Dr Peter Harnwell and Mr Peter Kirkwood for serving as JPs for over 50 years. I thank all JPs, in Wahroonga and across the State, for selflessly providing that crucial service to our communities.

**GWEN JOHNSON**

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (16:30):** I recognise Gwen Johnson for her 40 years of dedicated service to Milton Ulladulla Football Club. Gwen's journey began in the late 1970s, not only as a parent but also as a transformative figure who has gone on to leave a lasting legacy. In the early 1980s, Gwen served as the club's treasurer, and in 1985 her visionary leadership led to the formation of our very first women's soccer team. As a player, coach and mentor, Gwen has not only shaped the club's culture but also fostered talent and promoted inclusivity, particularly through the primary school girls soccer program she initiated in 1995. Gwen's unwavering

commitment and passion have touched the lives of countless individuals, inspiring a sense of community and camaraderie. Gwen embodies the spirit of grassroots football, demonstrating the profound impact it can have on individuals and communities. I thank Gwen for her incredible contributions over the past 40 years.

#### **LES BROOKFIELD**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (16:31):** I congratulate Les Brookfield on completing his 100th park run at Dubbo. Parkrun is a free community event held every Saturday morning, starting at eight o'clock, and is a five-kilometre course with a mix of concrete paths and trails. Taking part in 100 park runs is a remarkable achievement for anyone, but for Les it is truly extraordinary. Les is Dubbo Parkrun's most senior participant. He is in the 90-94 age category and uses his walker to complete the course. His family and friends came together to walk alongside him to celebrate the milestone, customising his walker especially for the occasion. Les will turn 95 in August and did his first park run in 2018. He increased his participation each year until COVID stopped it, so to see him achieve this goal in 2024 is a reminder that age should never be a barrier to staying healthy. Les is a true inspiration to us all. His story highlights the power of perseverance and the importance of staying motivated and active. He is a wonderful example to people of all ages. I congratulate Les and say well done.

#### **UNITY GRAMMAR COLLEGE ASTROLAB**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (16:32):** On 8 March I was honoured to attend the launch and opening of the new science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics building, the Astrolab, at Unity Grammar College in Austral. I may be biased, but I believe that the students in my electorate of Leppington are among the brightest and most innovative, and this facility is set to bolster their potential even further. The Astrolab is designed to inspire students from years 7 to 12 through state-of-the-art spaces dedicated to science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics. It features advanced classrooms, science labs, robotics and design workshops, and studios for art, drama and music. While encouraging a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship, the development will not only improve our educational offerings but also strengthen ties with leaders in higher education, business and government. With the Western Sydney airport and aerotropolis only a few years away, it is important that we start developing those skills in our leaders of tomorrow now. The Astrolab truly symbolises Unity Grammar's commitment to high-quality education and readiness for the future in south-western Sydney.

#### **TRIBUTE TO KELLY JOY HOARE**

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (16:33):** I acknowledge the passing of former member for Charlton and my friend Kelly Joy Hoare. Kelly was elected to the House of Representatives for Charlton for the Australian Labor Party in 1998 and held the position until 2007, succeeding her father, Bob Brown. Kelly married Reg Hoare, and they went on to have two children, Naomi and Robert. Unfortunately, their marriage did not last, but they remained good friends until he passed away. Kelly was a wonderful caregiver. She supported him while he battled cancer and looked after her elderly parents, Elizabeth and Bob, during their final years. Kelly was involved in many organisations in Lake Macquarie. She was president of the Toronto Tidy Towns Committee, president of the Toronto Chamber of Commerce and supported many local organisations. Kelly worked for me as a relief electorate officer and in a community engagement role for many years up until her retirement. She had a love of travel and enjoyed many wonderful overseas trips with her partner, Lyn. Her passing was unexpected and sudden, and I extend my deepest sympathies to her partner, Lyn; her children, Naomi and Robert; her granddaughter, Jessica; and her brother, Brad.

#### **ANIKA TABANAG**

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (16:34):** I congratulate Anika Tabanag on her commitment to play National Junior College Athletic Association division one golf at Barton College in the United States of America. Anika's journey is a testament to her dedication and perseverance. Off the course, she was a captain at the Ponds High School last year and displayed exceptional leadership skills in that role. Additionally, her role as a Blacktown City youth ambassador highlighted her commitment to her community and peers. Anika's success is the result of a strong support system, with her dad and other family members providing unwavering encouragement. Her coaches and mentors, particularly Coach Blake Dowd, have played a pivotal role in honing her skills and boosting her confidence. Receiving a scholarship to Barton College is a well-deserved recognition of Anika's talent and potential. At Barton she will embrace new challenges and create lasting memories as a member of the Barton Cougars. We are excited to see Anika thrive and contribute to the success of the Barton golf team. The Ponds community and I wish Anika the best as she embarks on this new chapter. We look forward to watching her journey and celebrating her achievements on and off the golf course. Go, Anika and the Cougars!

#### **EASTERN SUBURBS POLICE AREA COMMAND**

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (16:36):** I recognise the actions of the Eastern Suburbs Police Area Command during the attacks at Bondi Junction on 13 April. Under the leadership of Detective Superintendent

Jodi Radmore, its response was exemplary in the face of life-threatening danger. We ask a lot of the men and women of our Police Force: to walk into difficult and confronting situations as an ordinary part of their job. We especially thank Inspector Amy Scott. Upon being alerted of the news, she ran towards the danger, without backup and without hesitation. No doubt, her actions and instincts saved countless lives. Our community is incredibly proud of the members of the Eastern Suburbs Police Area Command. We owe them a great debt of gratitude. Throughout the situation, they have provided safety, direction and ongoing reassurance to our community. We know that, if the need arose tomorrow, they would be there for us again. We thank them very much.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** I note for the record that Amy Scott was born and bred in Cessnock.

#### **DIFFERENTLY ABLED PEOPLE ASSOCIATION**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (16:37):** The Differently Abled People Association [DAPA] exists because of two parents' love for their son. Vincent Yu was not alone when he started to worry about the future of his autistic son, Bowman. It is a great stress for many parents when their children struggle in any way. This is compounded when they have disabilities or mental health issues. We all want our children to be independent and safe and to use the abilities they have. It is easy to be overwhelmed in the face of difficulty when the barriers against you seem far greater than the opportunities. It is no small feat in the face of that to look for a path forward and, by doing so, forge a path for others to follow. DAPA was born from the desire to do something for a loved one, and that desire has turned into practical action, helping others in similar situations. It has allowed people with differing abilities to find their place in our community and to use technology to boost their independence. I congratulate DAPA. May the next 10 years be ones where many more people are able to benefit from its generosity and tenacity.

#### **DOMONIQUE WYSE**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes) (16:38):** It gives me tremendous pleasure this evening to recognise Domonique Wyse from Taree for being awarded the prestigious title of Land Sydney Royal AgShows NSW Young Woman for 2024. The award recognises contributions and community engagement of young women in rural affairs. Up against 13 other finalists from across the State, Domonique was successful at the Sydney Royal Easter Show on 24 March, which not only positions her as an ambassador for regional New South Wales but also marks a historic milestone, as she is the first representative from the Taree Show Society to claim this statewide honour in the competition's 62-year history. Domonique's involvement includes leadership within the Taree Show Society, being vice-president of Agricultural Societies Council of NSW Next Generation, teaching agriculture, and academic studies within meat science. I congratulate Domonique. Her achievements speak volumes about her commitment to our community and the agricultural sector.

#### **SANTA SABINA OP SHOP**

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (16:39):** When people think of an op shop they may think of the local Vinnies or Salvos store. They would not naturally think of a school, but students in Santa Sabina College in Strathfield have set up their own op shop on campus, which they have affectionately named Santa Style. The shop sells clothing items and is open two lunchtimes a week. The items are priced generally between \$1 and \$20, with proceeds going back to the shop or being donated. As at the end of March, it has sold over 500 items since opening last year. In 2023 alone Santa Style resold some 75 kilograms of material that would have been destined for landfill. These achievements led Santa Style to be the only Australian awardee of the International Baccalaureate Global Youth Action Fund grant and gave students the opportunity to partake in the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Youth mentoring program. I congratulate Lucia Juarez, Lucy Gee, Rochelle Dias, as well as other students and staff, on their initiative and contribution to sustainability.

#### **WALK IT OFF**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (16:40):** Walk it Off is a walking group for mental health. It strives to minimise the stigma surrounding mental health and suicide by providing a safe space for people who may be struggling with life's challenges. The group is committed to raising awareness by offering a supportive environment for anyone to join in and share their life experience. With membership open to anyone, you just turn up and walk, and its living motto is "Change starts with a walk." The newly formed Warragamba group is run by Chris Daniels in memory of Chris' son, who died by suicide when he was in year nine. That led Chris to explore ways to deal with his grief and mental health, and Walk it Off was formed. With regular walks scheduled, it anticipates continued participation and support from the community. Its inclusive approach extends to future plans of developing a women's group to ensure that everyone has access to support on their mental health journey. With safety measures in place and support from sponsors, Walk it Off is poised to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those struggling with mental health challenges.

### SYDNEY FLIGHT COLLEGE

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (16:41):** Bankstown Aerodrome's Sydney Flight College [SFC] took off on an air race across regional Australia last week to raise funds for Angel Flight, a vital non-emergency medical transport organisation. Building on the success of its 2023 air race, which raised \$20,000 for Angel Flight, the SFC set an even loftier goal to raise \$100,000 at this year's event. The funds will go towards helping 200 rural families access the medical treatment that they need. The race includes 15 teams and spans various outback locations, showcasing the navigational skills of the participants and contributing significantly to Angel Flight's life-saving mission. I extend my gratitude to the organisers, participants and supporters of the SFC Air Race for their initiative and dedication to this important cause. Their efforts demonstrate the power of collective action in making a positive impact on our community.

### HOLI FESTIVAL

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (16:42):** On Sunday 24 March I was delighted to join hands with the Hindu community of Willoughby to celebrate Holi, the vibrant festival of colours that celebrates the triumph of good over evil. Originating from India, Holi has spread to other regions across Asia and across the Western world, including Willoughby, where the Indian community is our fastest growing community. Holi is more than just a festival; it is a celebration of life, unity and joy that brightens lives and brings people together. I thank the Indian, Nepali and broader community of Willoughby for the rich culture, colour and tradition that they have brought and continue to bring into our lives. Their contributions make our community a mosaic of diversity, beauty and joy. I thank Ritu Khicha Mirakhur and Sheila Patel, the coordinators of the Indian social group at the MOSAIC Multicultural Centre, for an amazing event at Bales Park in Chatswood, which was filled with joy, colour, food and festivities. I was proud and delighted to wish everyone across Willoughby a colourful and joyous Holi.

### RICHARD PRITCHARD, OAM

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (16:43):** Richard Pritchard, OAM, president of Canley Heights RSL, is a living legacy in my community. Since his youth Richard has shown a passion for serving his nation and comrades, a passion that has grown stronger with time. Richard joined the British Army when he was 15 and served as a Queen's Guard before he moved to Australia in the early '60s. He was in the Australian Army from 1967 to 1973, during which time he served in the Vietnam War. Richard's firsthand experience as a veteran fuels his commitment to serving fellow veterans, particularly the local veteran community. Richard's enduring effort to ensure the spirit of Australian service men and women and their legacies are passed down to future generations is extraordinary. His co-founding of the Victory in the Pacific Day stands as one of his many remarkable contributions. This year marks Richard's 50 years of service with the Returned and Services League. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to Richard and my express profound gratitude for his invaluable contributions to my local community.

### GLOVER'S GARDEN

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (16:44):** I acknowledge Sydney's oldest community garden, Glover's Garden. Located on the grounds of Callan Park in Sydney's beautiful inner west, Glover's Garden celebrated its annual open day on 13 April. It promised tips on gardening techniques, worm farming, an opportunity to meet the chooks and a tour of the garden. I was so disappointed that I was unable to get along this year and, from all accounts, I missed out on a wonderful event. Members' contributions made it special, as always, with sage smudge sticks, lavender bags, T-shirt twine, seedlings, chutney, marmalade, cakes, biscuits and savoury dishes all on offer. I thank the organisers—including the Glover's Garden president, Mr Stephen Gillespie, and Secretary Jenna Bateman—and all the wonderful volunteers who make the community garden so special.

### FAIRFIELD CITY POLICE AREA COMMAND AWARDS

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (16:45):** On Thursday 7 March I had the honour of attending Fairfield City Police Area Command awards ceremony, where the profound impact of the command's service within our community was showcased. From the New South Wales Police Medallion symbolising diligent and ethical service to the National Emergency Medal honouring significant service in response to national emergencies, each award held significant meaning. The accolades reflect the selfless efforts of our force, serving to uphold peace and order in New South Wales. I congratulate recipients Detective Senior Constable Caruana, Inspector Best, Inspector McIntyre, Sergeant Vitorovich, Detective Senior Constable Beckett, Detective Senior Constable Faulks, former Detective Sergeant Stokes, Chief Inspector Calman, Inspector Brickwood, Detective Sergeant Malone, Sergeant Whitehurst, Leading Senior Constable Vitorovich, Constable Eldehaibi and Ms Knox-Haly. I thank them all for the work they do for Fairfield.

### ROD FAHEY TENNIS SCHOOL

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Winston Hills) (16:46):** I take this opportunity to acknowledge the Rod Fahey Tennis School, a sporting organisation that has served my community for over 35 years. Founded by a head coach of Hills Sports High School, Rod Fahey has ensured the tennis development for many community members of the Winston Hills electorate over the years. Rod Fahey Tennis School has worked with thousands of children and adults from the Winston Hills electorate. Rod has contributed to developing local tennis across 12 locations, including Winston Hills and Glenwood. The organisation has connected the community with Tennis NSW, acting as a pathway to inspire countless sporting dreams. Alongside tennis management, Rod Fahey Tennis School has successfully owned and managed a variety of leisure and recreation centres, cafes and children's play centres. During my time as a member of this place, I can confirm that the school is certainly a true leader of tennis development within the Western Sydney area. I extend my gratitude to the staff members of the tennis school for their service and contribution to our local community.

### TRIBUTE TO AUNTY LORRAINE NAYLOR

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (16:47):** I formally acknowledge the passing of an influential Aboriginal community Elder, Aunty Lorraine Naylor, and her contribution to breaking barriers to make things better for her people. Aunty Lorraine Naylor was 73 at her passing. She was a traditional owner and ancestor of the Yuin nation and lived on traditional Wallaga Lake land on the Far South Coast of New South Wales. Lorraine moved to Sydney in her early years to become an enrolled nurse. In her thirties Aunty Lorraine returned to her Yuin community and became involved in advocating for the needs of Aboriginal people. Aunty Lorraine Naylor sat on the boards of many Indigenous organisations for many years: Katungul Aboriginal medical service, Merrimans Local Aboriginal Lands Council, Southeast Aboriginal Regional Management Services, Umbarra Aboriginal Corporation, Gulaga National Park, Little Yuin Preschool and Aboriginal advisory committees to the Bega Valley and Eurobodalla councils. Aunty Lorraine was quoted as saying, "Things are not going to change overnight. I believe we need to walk together and sit around a round table and talk about issues together. I really want to see us all as one big happy family."

### BILL AND CINDY POULOS

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (16:48):** I recognise the achievements of Bill and Cindy Poulos for their 16 years of business in the Moree community as the owners and operators of the well-known and popular Deluxe Cafe. Bill and Cindy have worked tirelessly over that time providing excellence in coffee brewing and customer service and ripping yarns. I congratulate Bill and Cindy on their outstanding achievement. They could always be found at their regular site on Balo Street or servicing town sports on Saturdays as well as supporting the local markets and many community events. I commend Bill and Cindy for not only this terrific milestone but also their contribution to the Moree community as longstanding supporters of local charities and services, as well as keeping the community informed and connected through their various platforms on social media. Bill and Cindy are hanging up the boots for now but I wish them well in their next adventures ahead. I hope they will continue to serve their community of Moree well.

### ASHA NEWMAN

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (16:49):** I congratulate Central Coast musician and songwriter Asha Newman on her tremendous voice and natural ability to musically connect with people on so many levels. Asha, as she is professionally known, once again successfully delivered her heartfelt tunes to accompany the annual International Workers Memorial Day service on the Central Coast. This important service is a time of reflection to stop and think about those who have lost a loved one due to workplace death or occupational illness. Service attendees often describe Asha's voice as pure and angelic. She has a genuine ability to reach out and offer comfort while she performs. Asha's confidence continues to grow, and her musical talents, including songwriting and performance, are soaring. To Asha's credit, she has already appeared on *The Voice Australia* in 2022 and all four international judges vied for her to join their teams. I congratulate Asha and wish her much success in using her talent to pursue her musical dreams.

### MOTHER'S DAY

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (16:50):** I wish all mothers across the Kiama electorate a very happy Mother's Day this Sunday. In particular I wish a very happy Mother's Day to my mum, Margaret Bowcher. My mum immigrated to this country as a teenager. She grew up in Holyrood in Edinburgh. In fact, as a child she had the Palace of Holyroodhouse on her paper run. My nanna used to say, "Margaret delivers papers to the Queen." When she came to Australia, Mum started work at Port Kembla Hospital. She went on to work in small business and became a music teacher, property valuer and real estate agent. But above all else, she has been a terrific mum. I incredibly admire her. This weekend, those fortunate enough to still have their mums with them can shower

them with praise and gifts. We can also remember the important role that mums and women play in our community. I wish a happy Mother's Day to all the mums across the Kiama electorate and New South Wales.

#### **ACTIVUS TRANSPORT**

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (16:51):** I extend my sincere appreciation to Activus Transport, a vital lifeline for our community in the Heathcote electorate. Activus Transport plays an indispensable role in connecting residents with the activities and services they cherish, and has a loyal customer base of approximately 8,000 individuals. The service facilitates visits to loved ones, ensures attendance at essential appointments and enables participation in leisure pursuits. It stands as a beacon of accessibility and inclusivity. Supported by funding from both the State and Federal governments, Activus Transport embodies a commitment to affordability and service excellence. Through the dedication of its paid staff and a formidable team of volunteers, the organisation maintains low costs and heavily subsidised fares. It ensures that transportation remains accessible to all members of our community. I recognise the tireless efforts of staff and volunteers to connect and empower residents throughout the Sutherland Shire. I extend my deepest gratitude to Activus Transport for its invaluable service and unwavering dedication to enriching the fabric of our community.

#### **ABBOTSFORD FAMILY PHARMACY**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne) (16:52):** I congratulate Silvana Gittani and her team at Abbotsford Family Pharmacy, who last night won the award for the most outstanding pharmacy at the Inner West Local Business Awards. This achievement for the Abbotsford Family Pharmacy team could not be more well deserved. Silvana's dedication to providing exceptional care to the community goes above and beyond. She has created a welcoming and compassionate environment, offering personalised support and care to every patient and customer that walks through her door. She also supports and dispenses to aged-care facilities. Her commitment to palliative care services, by providing comfort and dignity to patients in their own homes, is truly remarkable. Silvana's tireless efforts have made a huge impact in the lives of countless individuals and families in our community. This award is a testament to Silvana's selflessness, expertise and unwavering commitment to our community. I sincerely congratulate Silvana and her hardworking team on this outstanding achievement.

#### **TRIBUTE TO PETER SPARKES**

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (16:53):** I acknowledge the life of Peter James Sparkes and pay tribute to his contribution to the Blue Mountains community. Peter lived a long and full life. He was born on 13 July 1938 and died on 4 March 2024. He lived in Winmalee with his darling wife, Lynda. He was father and father-in-law to David and Peta, Mike and Kyle, Geoff and Liz, and David and Maki. He was Poppy and Poppa to a huge extended family and uncle to many nieces and nephews. Peter's niece Rebecca described him as one of a kind and a unique, loving and lovable family man. Peter had a long career with the NSW Department of Education and became one of the youngest ever principals. He was highly respected as a colleague, teacher and leader. He was a valued member of the Rotary Club of Springwood for more than 34 years and was elected to the office of president twice. He was a longstanding member of the Blue Mountains Freemasons. Peter was a man who was fair and square. He was adored by many in my community. He was kind and generous, with a great sense of humour. I had the great pleasure of knowing Peter and being welcomed into his world. He was salt of the earth. Today I honour him. Rest in Peace, good man.

#### **AARON SOWTER**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek) (16:54):** I congratulate Mulgoa local Aaron Sowter and his dancing partner, Tamara Flynn, on winning the inaugural Stars of Penrith event that was recently held at Panthers Penrith Leagues Club. The event involved popular locals pairing up with dance teachers from local studios. Mr Sowter is the owner of Penrith City Plumbing Services. He was approached to participate in the charity dance event after his "dancing plumber" video went viral. His dancing partner, Tamara Flynn, is from Penrith Gaels Maher Lenihan Irish Dance School. The pair did our community proud by scoring 10s across the board and taking out the top spot with their Irish dancing performance. The event was a wonderful success and raised \$140,000 for Cancer Council NSW. I thank and commend Mr Sowter and his fellow participants for contributing to such an important cause. I wish Mr Sowter continued success in all his endeavours, whether they involve business or dancing.

#### **VINCENT KONG, OAM**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (16:55):** In 1980 Mr Vincent Kong, OAM, and his family came to Australia after escaping from Vietnam on a boat and staying in Indonesia. Arriving in Australia with nothing, Vincent worked his way to become a well-known leader in my community. Vincent is now the President of the Australian Chinese Buddhist Society [ACBS]. Through this organisation, Vincent has supported the growth of the Mingyue Lay Temple to create a strong cultural and religious place for Buddhists in my community. Under Vincent's



leadership, the ACBS has also participated in fundraising for humanitarian efforts, including raising vital funds for St Vincent's Hospital and the Red Cross. Vincent is also the co-founder and chairman of Indochinese Aged Care Services. This facility was established to meet the cultural and linguistic needs of the aged population in Cabramatta, especially those coming from Cambodia, China, Laos, Vietnam and other South-East Asian countries. In 2017 Vincent was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for his service to the local community. On behalf of my community, I thank Vincent for all his wonderful work.

#### **CASTLE HILL HIGH SCHOOL HARMONY WINGS PROJECT**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill) (16:56):** I congratulate teachers and students from Castle Hill High School on the fantastic Harmony Wings project. This year, as part of the powerful youth voices unit of study, year 7 English students designed a paper feather with a message about peace, harmony and diversity. All school students and staff were invited to contribute. The wonderful Harmony Wings project celebrates peace, harmony and diversity. The messages were displayed on wings constructed by year 10 student council representatives Juli Appleby, Ho Yi Chiu, Sarvia Ram and Aaadiveer Gill. I thank every staff member involved in the Harmony Wings project and recognise teachers Jessica Morrison, Karen Street and Clarissa Greenhaigh for their work with students to create the colourful cultural wing designs.

#### **FATHER PETER STROHMAYER**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (16:57):** I congratulate Father Peter James Strohmayer, who celebrated the tenth anniversary of his priestly ordination at St Benedict's Shine in Smithfield on 3 May 2024. Father Peter is a true local leader. Raised in Western Sydney, he began his career as a teacher before recognising his vocation to serve Christ. As the St. Gertrude's Parish priest, Father Peter is giving back to the community that raised him. It was humbling to hear inspiring stories about the vital stewardship Father Peter offers his congregation. The 2008 World Youth Day in Poland paved the pathway to Father Peter's vocation. After spending months in the Sanctuary of Our Lady Patroness of Families in Lesniow, with limited connection to the outside world, Peter found a new commitment to faith with the Order of St Paul the First Hermit. Guided by this discipleship, Father Peter strives to work for the common good of our community. I congratulate Father Peter and thank him for his dedication to serving our community. I look forward to our continued work together.

#### **BONNET BAY FOOTBALL CLUB**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (16:58):** I recognise the success of the Back to the Bay weekend held by the Bonnet Bay Football Club to launch the football season on 13 April. After initially being rained out, our community could not have been happier with the Bombers' season launch. There were activities in Lakewood City Reserve such as face painting, while the kids kicked off the new season with round one matches. I was delighted to see the Bombers' new retractable awning on the clubhouse, which provides protection from the scorching sun and wet weather for members and supporters. This was funded by the former New South Wales Liberal Government through the Community Building Partnership program. Of course, the event would not have been possible without the dedication of the Bombers executive committee. I recognise president Andrew Symes, vice-president Gary Williamson, secretary Anthony Macdonald, treasurer Ian Petrovski, junior vice-president Kristina Bennett and committee members Marc Orklin, Kate Cochrane, Davina Dunn and Clive Riseam. I extend my best wishes to everyone at Bonnet Bay Football Club for the 2024 season. Go the Bay!

#### *Private Members' Statements*

#### **WAHROONGA ELECTORATE SENIOR VOLUNTEERS**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (16:59):** Our local seniors make an invaluable contribution to our community. In the Wahroonga electorate, we are fortunate to have many active seniors in the volunteering space. Seniors give their time and energy each week to help many different organisations across the community. Recently I recognised some of those seniors with a 2024 Local Achievement Award. They have all been volunteers in great community organisations in my electorate that I am very familiar with. Two of the seniors recognised at that ceremony were Frank Bradley and Marie Gately. Both have served Hornsby Cathedral Parish for a long time, with Frank joining the parish in 1973. He has served the parish for over 50 years. The parish does incredible outreach in our community, especially helping to feed people living rough on the streets of Hornsby.

Another person who was recognised with a Local Achievement Award was Rosanne Petters. Rosanne volunteers for Lifeline Harbour to Hawkesbury Sydney, which has many volunteers from the Wahroonga electorate in the local call centre at Gordon. Rosanne initially joined Lifeline Harbour to Hawkesbury Sydney as a volunteer telephone crisis supporter, before being appointed as a training manager in 2006. Rosanne has trained and mentored hundreds, or perhaps thousands, of crisis supporters. She is described as dedicated, committed and warm, with much experience and knowledge that she passes on to other wonderful, selfless volunteers.

William "Bill" Soper was recognised for his dedicated volunteering at Computer Pals for Seniors, which has offices in Turrumurra that I have attended on a number of occasions. Bill is the current vice-president and treasurer, was club president for seven years and has been committed to educating seniors in our community on the use of their electronic devices. He was also a very handy cricketer in his younger years. Bill is described as passionate, enthusiastic and as having unquestionable dedication to the group.

Another volunteer who was recognised with a Local Achievement Award from Computer Pals was Dorothy Soper. Dorothy joined the club as a volunteer teacher all the way back in 2007. She has continued to work enthusiastically with seniors, helping them become more confident in the use of mobile phones and tablets. She has been a member of the committee and the club secretary, while being responsible for the organisation of classes, tutorial staff and specialised sessions targeting students with learning difficulties. Both Dorothy and Bill have served our local seniors so generously and have enabled them to learn new skills for many years.

Ian Stuart from Easy Care Gardening received a Local Achievement Award for volunteering for 1,442 hours—or 450 days—in the gardens of older clients. Easy Care Gardening assists the elderly and other people with disability to live independently within their own homes, and offers friendly company while they do it. Ian has also been volunteering at Lifeline since 2006. He joined Rotary in 2013 and has helped with numerous fundraisers, including the Bobbin Head Cycle Classic and Joey Joy Flight, which provides life-changing flight experiences for children living with disabilities and children from less privileged backgrounds. He also hosts a local program on community radio called *Rotary Matters*. Ian has been a wonderful volunteer within our community for many years, and I am incredibly grateful for the way he has generously served the area.

An organisation that was recognised for its ongoing support for vulnerable members of the community was KNC, formerly known as the Ku-ring-gai Neighbourhood Centre. I had the privilege of working closely with KNC during the pandemic, as the need for volunteer services grew during that time. KNC has grown and expanded over time with the help of its incredible CEO, Michele Bell. Michele Bell is the 2024 Ku-ring-gai Citizen of the Year, which was announced at this year's Australia Day ceremony. KNC works with a number of other organisations such as the Women's Shed, Meals on Wheels, Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Multicultural Network and Hills Domestic Violence Prevention Network. Robert Morley from KNC has also been a dedicated volunteer and received a Local Achievement Award. Robert has been described as respectful, kind, empathetic and always ready to help the community.

Anna Struthers received a Local Achievement Award for serving the community for over 30 years at KNC. Anna assists with driving and working with KNC's social group programs. Anna has also been working with multicultural communities and coordinating English as a second language classes. She is a member of the KNC board and is described as compassionate and thoughtful. I am thankful for each and every one of the volunteers at KNC who have provided support to the vulnerable members of our community, particularly during the challenging pandemic. I thank everyone who volunteers in the many local organisations in the Wahroonga electorate. We have such a wonderful community of people who are always willing to put their hands up to help others in need, and I was incredibly happy to recognise some of them recently.

#### TRIBUTE TO FARAZ TAHIR

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (17:04):** The tragic events that unfolded at Westfield Bondi Junction on 13 April left a deep wound in our hearts, shaking our State and nation to the core. The deliberate targeting of women in such a heinous act of violence brought us to a collective standstill, struggling to comprehend the senselessness of such actions. In the face of such tragedy, it is difficult to find solace. But our communities have shown remarkable resilience, coming together to honour the lives lost and support those affected. One poignant moment was the touching vigil held at Bondi Beach, where, despite the rawness of the wounds and the lingering pain, unity prevailed, offering a glimmer of hope amidst the darkness.

I acknowledge all the victims of that fateful day and the enduring grief of the families left to mourn the loss of those whom they loved. But I will shine a light on one individual whose bravery and selflessness stood out amidst the chaos: Faraz Tahir. Faraz, who ran towards the danger in an act of valour and commitment, saving the lives of countless others, had sought asylum in Australia from persecution just a year ago. As a member of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community, Faraz exemplified the values of sacrifice and service that define his faith. His life was tragically cut short while he heroically protected others at Westfield Bondi Junction. Faraz's actions serve as a testament to the courage and compassion that are the epitome of humanity's best qualities, even in the face of unimaginable danger.

I have had the privilege of witnessing firsthand the dedication of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Youth Association in various community initiatives, from flood clean-ups to supporting the homeless and organising blood donation drives. Faraz's commitment to serving others mirrored the ethos of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Youth, who pledge to sacrifice their lives, wealth, time and honour for the greater good. His legacy continues to inspire

others to follow in his footsteps, embodying the spirit of selflessness and compassion. In honour of Faraz's ultimate sacrifice, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Youth Association has launched Faraz's Gift in partnership with Lifeblood, a campaign dedicated to blood donation.

The initiative pays tribute to Faraz Tahir and the five women who tragically lost their lives at Westfield Bondi Junction on 13 April 2024. Faraz's Gift aims to immortalise their memory through acts of generosity and life-saving blood donations. It symbolises Faraz's willingness to give everything to help others, echoing the sentiments of his community's pledge: Love for all, hatred for none. Through Faraz's Gift, his legacy lives on, reminding us of the power of unity and collective action in times of adversity. As we mourn the loss of Faraz and all the other victims, let us also celebrate their lives and the enduring impact of their sacrifice. May their memories serve as a source of strength and inspiration for us all, guiding us to build a more compassionate and resilient society.

It is crucial to acknowledge the broader implications of such tragic events on our society. The Westfield Bondi Junction incident not only resulted in profound loss and grief but also raised important questions about community safety and support mechanisms for victims of violence. It has sparked conversations about the need for enhanced security measures and better mental health resources to prevent similar tragedies in the future. The issues that we find ourselves facing in the aftermath of that tragedy are prevalent, and the Government is committed to addressing them. Additionally, the outpouring of support and solidarity following the incident underscores the resilience of our communities and the importance of coming together in times of crisis.

Faraz Tahir's story highlights the invaluable contributions of individuals who selflessly put themselves in harm's way to protect others. His act of heroism serves as a reminder of the potential for good within humanity, even amidst the darkest of circumstances. By honouring Faraz's legacy and the legacies of all the victims, we reaffirm our commitment to fostering a more compassionate and inclusive society where acts of kindness and courage are celebrated and valued. While the events at Westfield Bondi Junction left a profound impact on our nation, they also served as a catalyst for unity, resilience and collective action. Through initiatives like Faraz's Gift, we honour the memory of those we have lost and strive to create a safer, more compassionate world for future generations.

We can all take a page from the Ahmadiyya community, who are so committed to service. Their faith and community-minded spirit never go unnoticed. I know the Riverstone community, like many around Australia, thanks them for their continued service. It is this sense of service that drew Faraz to the ultimate sacrifice he made. As we continue to mourn, let us draw strength from the courage and resilience of individuals like Faraz, whose legacy will forever inspire us to stand up against injustice and work towards a brighter tomorrow. Registration for Faraz's Gift can be done by searching the campaign name on the Australian Red Cross Lifeblood website. Please join me in celebrating and honouring the lives of those lost by donating blood through Faraz's Gift. May Faraz, and all who lost their lives that day, rest in peace.

### KNIFE CRIME

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (17:09):** Ducking into a Westfield on a Saturday afternoon to pick up groceries, working retail on a busy weekend or attending a service at a place of worship in one's community are regular, everyday things. Until a few weeks ago, we took those things for granted. As the State member for Prospect, and Parliamentary Secretary to the Attorney General, I speak about an issue that has reached crisis point in our State. We must act to protect our communities from violent knife crime. April 2024 will forever be marked in our State's history and our personal memories. On the evening of 15 April 2024 I received a text, and then a call, from an Assyrian community member telling me of the events occurring at the Christ the Good Shepherd Church. I could not believe what was happening in our community, and neither could he. I rushed to the church that night to support my community and stand on the police lines.

The NSW Police Force and the brave paramedics from NSW Ambulance were on site, providing urgent care and working to de-escalate the rising conflict. Their valiant efforts kept our community safe through the night and saw the accused attacker remanded in custody. Bishop Mar Mari Emmanuel was delivering a sermon at Christ the Good Shepherd Church in Wakeley when he was stabbed. Live streamed, intimidation from the act extended beyond the parishioners in the church to those watching at home.

I stand with the Assyrian community in Western Sydney. The electorate of Prospect is home to a vibrant community of Assyrian Australians. My thoughts and prayers are with Bishop Emmanuel and our Assyrian Australian community as they recover from this horrific act of violence. I want them to remember that they are welcome, safe and at home in New South Wales. As it recovers from this startling act of violence, the Prospect electorate has come together to support one another. Enacting the guiding words of the Premier and the NSW Faith Affairs Council, our community has "acted with kindness and respect". We remain a caring and united place, supporting all people to practise their faith.

Only days before, on Saturday 13 April 2024, our State experienced a terrible tragedy. Devastatingly, six innocent lives were lost and a further 12 individuals were hospitalised due to stabbings. Bondi Junction is a fun and vibrant area. It is a mecca in Sydney for backpackers, students, young people, families and people working hard to make a living. As Sydneysiders, we all know the value of working hard. Whether from the west, the south or the inner city, we all work hard, and Saturdays are a chance to do what we want. It was devastating to see that leisure shattered by unforgivable acts of violence. During the tragedy, the New South Wales community came together to support each other, with many stepping up as true heroes. Retail workers sheltered people in their stores. A nurse left the safety of a store to help others. Untrained bystanders entered an active crisis to support police. Our brave NSW Police Force and paramedics answered the call. The courageous acts of our emergency services and everyday members of our community are examples of true Australian spirit and the care that we give to each other.

On his first day of work, security guard Faraz Tahir gave his life to save others. A part of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community in Western Sydney, Faraz fled his home for a safer place. He considered himself lucky to be in Australia but, in all honesty, Australia was lucky to have him. Faraz was a wonderful example of the community of new Australians building their homes and rebuilding their lives in Western Sydney. I was honoured to join his family, friends and community members in gathering to remember a man whose bravery saved many people who were strangers to him on that horrific day in Bondi. The Ahmadiyya Muslim community is honouring Faraz's life with a blood drive, a vital contribution one person makes to the life of another. That was his legacy. Unfortunately, violence as a result of knife crime continues in New South Wales. We must act to address it before further lives are lost. The Minns Labor Government is implementing a suite of commonsense reforms to target the possession of knives to reduce knife crime and protect community safety. Our communities are still mourning. My heart goes out to all of them.

### RURAL AND REGIONAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands) (17:15):** We are in the midst of an existential crisis in rural and regional New South Wales. The death of the humble rural general practitioner is imminent. The whole clunky, outdated health system needs to be turned urgently on its head to ensure that country general practice remains economically viable and attractive for GPs to practise and hang their shingle in the bush. Despite speaking in this place nearly 12 months ago about closures of medical centres and clinics throughout the Northern Tablelands, I am sad to report to the House that another practice in my electorate has been forced to close its doors.

Dr Ricardo Alkhouri of the Uralla Medical Centre has cited concerns about the economic viability of his practice and has been forced to make the hard decision to pack up and move on. He has 4,000 patients on his books. That is 4,000 residents of Uralla, Armidale and the surrounding communities that no longer have a GP. Those people will struggle to find a single GP within a 200-kilometre radius of Uralla that has their books open, let alone able to fit anyone in within the next six months. It will inevitably lead to those people not getting the early assessment and preventative medical treatment they need. They will wait until they are sick and infirm and, ultimately, turn up to our already stretched hospital emergency departments, which, ironically, rely on the presence of rural GPs in the community to work in emergency departments as visiting medical officers. It is a dangerous downward spiral, and something needs to change.

The failures of successive Federal and State governments of all political stripes have allowed this time bomb to tick away, and it is about to explode in our hands. Federal governments have ignored the warning signs and not supported the rural generalist model. They certainly have not supported and bolstered the Medicare system that underpins it, which, decades ago, made being a rural GP an attractive financial option for medical school graduates. I am calling for significant policy change and an urgent overhaul of the system. We cannot go on like this. Without doctors, State governments cannot run hospitals. Without hospitals, it does not matter what else a government or local member does. If there is no health system, there is no community.

A major part of the problem is that State governments are responsible for hospitals and the Federal Government is responsible for general practice, Medicare and aged care. The rural GP falls through the middle of that chasm and no-one takes responsibility for it. Our communities wear the impact of it again and again. It is a clunky, out-of-step, outdated system that does not allow medical practitioners to move easily between private practice and hospital practice. There needs to be greater cohesion between State and Federal governments or a removal of the division of responsibilities so that there is one level of government responsible for the lot, instead of the half-and-half approach that results in the problem that we currently have.

The economic viability and attractiveness of country practice and the humble family GP in the bush has continued to erode right around Australia. In the bush we have lost over 200 GPs in the past decade, and many communities—sadly, some in my electorate—do not have a single GP. Those that have GPs do not have any who are taking new patients. I fear that the country GP is heading towards extinction—and I do not say that lightly.

It scares the hell out of me. Every day I hear from people in my electorate—often the elderly—who are distressed and anxious because they cannot see a GP for a routine check-up. Further compounding the issue, they end up in the emergency department waiting for hours because the one GP who is available as a visiting medical officer is busy seeing someone in their practice or has a line-up a mile long out the door and people have to wait.

Our emergency departments cannot pick up the slack left by the Federal Government abandoning its responsibilities to ensure that every community has access to GPs. The GP Single Employer Model is a good one and, in our region, we have five trainees coming. I look forward to them hitting the ground, but that is only part of the solution. The Federal Government needs to act. I call on it to do so before country communities are left with no health care at all.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** I thank the member for Northern Tablelands. He was classy and on point to the end. It has been a privilege. Go well.

### NEWS MEDIA

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (17:20):** I also acknowledge the member for Northern Tablelands. We will miss him in the Chamber. Earlier this week high school students from across my electorate gathered in Parliament House for the 2024 Youth Advisory Board. This student-led committee looks into and engages with issues facing young people today. Apart from issues of international conflict, environment and addiction, the most profound insights from the young people were on how they interacted with the media and public affairs. They said that, in this highly contested world, there were no safe places where they could express what they really felt and believed without being cancelled, abused or disciplined. They said they could not do it in their homes, schools, churches or social groups, and they certainly could not do it online. They also spoke about how, even though they got most of their news online, they found it very hard to discern what was trustworthy, what was accurate and what was not.

Young people do not consume traditional media. In my experience, from speaking with my teenagers, their friends and young constituents in Strathfield, most do not get their news from TV, radio, print or other traditional media channels. Where do they get it from? They get it from online social media, predominantly TikTok and Instagram. This is borne out by the research. Data released in February this year by the Australian Communications and Media Authority found that 46 per cent of 18- to 24-year-olds nominated social media as their main news source—up from 28 per cent in 2022—with 31 per cent of that cohort citing influencers as their primary preference for news. Although many of the major media companies have presences and accounts on TikTok and Instagram, it is not those accounts that most young people follow or get their news from. Young people view content mostly from—as my 19-year-old daughter says—random dudes filming themselves talking about their take on an issue. They are filming direct original content or curating or editorialising clips from traditional media.

As my Youth Advisory Board member said, there are two main problems with this. First of all, they do not know what is trustworthy or accurate. A lot of that content is very personal takes on what is going on. People are talking about their experiences, but there is not a lot of fact-checking that happens there. Secondly, TikTok, Instagram and other social media platforms are very algorithm driven, so what people see is based on what they have viewed or followed in the past. That means people can miss a lot of content. If they have not viewed a particular topic in the past, it is likely that they will miss it. It was shocking to me that my daughter had not heard about the Molly Ticehurst murder. More than ever, young people need to not only access trustworthy new sources but also have a role in curating and making the news.

Young people are increasingly sidelined in news media and are turning to new sources to get their views. A report by the Foundation for Young Australians [FYA] entitled *Missing: Young People in Australian News Media* sums it up. It found that young people featured in only 3.3 per cent of Australian news articles, and this has steadily decreased. Other findings included a rise in stereotypes as well as under-quoting of young people in news media coverage. The FYA report recommended that more young people be employed in newsrooms to provide greater representation and to start a conversation about making news media more representative.

A survey by the ABC last year found that children and teenagers have a significant interest in the news, with 83 per cent of respondents consuming news from at least one source, 50 per cent getting it from their family and only 27 per cent getting their news from the TV. Young leaders from schools across Strathfield took part in the youth advisory board and discussed whether they would ever be able to afford a home in Sydney, the rising cost of living, what their school was teaching them about drugs and vaping, knife crime and safety, and about the crisis in domestic, family and sexual violence plaguing Australia.

Young people care about these issues. They want to have the latest facts and information about current affairs. With young people bearing the brunt of many of these issues, it is crucial that their voice be heard on the

news. I believe that the major media companies, as well as startups, print, radio and TV, should have teams of young people creating content for young people on platforms such as TikTok, Instagram and others that young people use. I look forward to seeing more young people in newsrooms and active journalism and will continue to support initiatives that help make their voices heard.

### NORTHERN BEACHES HOSPITAL

**Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (17:25):** The Northern Beaches Hospital in Frenchs Forest is unique in the State. As a public-private partnership, the hospital is wholly owned and operated by a private company called Healthscope. The New South Wales Government spends hundreds of millions of dollars every year to purchase services for public patients attending the hospital. The operating model for the hospital, where a for-profit entity delivers our frontline public health services, has been controversial from the outset. The opening of the hospital in 2018 was plagued with teething problems and was the subject of a 2019 parliamentary inquiry that recommended the New South Wales Government never enter into any future public-private partnerships for public hospitals. Funny that. Performance has improved significantly since the bungled opening, but it is fair to say that community experience and the level of public trust in the hospital is very mixed. I hear many stories through my electorate office and local network of family and friends of bad experiences at the hospital—long waiting times, stretched staff and poor continuity of care. There are also many reports of the excellent care provided by healthcare professionals doing their best, and I thank every one of them.

Ensuring high-quality public health services under an integrated public-private model requires constant vigilance. There are a number of factors currently concerning me about the hospital. Firstly, several Bureau of Health Information metrics deteriorated for the Northern Beaches Hospital over the past year. When October to December 2023 is compared with the same quarter in the previous year, the percentage of patients starting emergency department treatment on time dropped 10 points to 71.1 per cent, the percentage of patients transferred from paramedics to emergency department [ED] staff within 30 minutes dropped by 11.2 points to 85.1 per cent and the percentage of patients leaving ED within four hours is down by 5.1 points to 50.6 per cent. These are concerning trends.

Secondly, there are recent reports of unacceptable pressure on staff. Doctor and nurse representatives say there are not enough staff employed by Northern Beaches Hospital to cover rosters, that new staff lack experience and that staff turnover is too high. Since June 2023, there have been a number of staff cuts, including reductions in the number of ED nurses, security guards and nurses in mental health wards. I was angry to hear that the results of a recent workplace survey found that one in two nurses and midwives at Northern Beaches Hospital were described as being in high or very high states of psychological distress at work. This is not okay.

Thirdly, Healthscope is under growing financial pressure. It holds a \$1.6 billion debt which it is currently refinancing. The Healthscope operating income dropped to \$82 million in 2023 from \$182 million a year earlier. The current debt negotiation comes just one year after a previous round of refinancing. This is a sure indication that its financial position is getting worse, and it is reasonable to assume that it is under intense pressure from lenders to do further rounds of cost cutting.

It is for these reasons that I have advocated so strongly for the Audit Office of New South Wales to undertake a performance audit of the hospital. An independent performance audit will be a very useful reference and provide more transparency and clarity for our community. Where the hospital is found to be performing well, we can build public confidence. Where there are issues, we can work to understand and address them. I was very pleased on Monday to receive a letter from the Auditor-General confirming that the performance audit of Northern Beaches Hospital had commenced. The performance audit will use the Auditor-General's new follow-the-dollar provisions. This type of situation is precisely why these provisions were legislated in late 2022. In fact, in 2019 the NSW Labor Opposition introduced a bill to allow follow-the-dollar provisions specifically for the purpose of facilitating an audit of Northern Beaches Hospital. I thank all MPs—and there are many—who worked to deliver the follow-the-dollar laws to enable greater scrutiny and accountability for public money going to private entities.

Securing the performance audit is just one aspect of my advocacy to ensure the best quality health services at Northern Beaches Hospital. I thank Minister Park for yesterday committing to request that the safe staffing task force investigate how to extend nurse-to-patient ratios at Northern Beaches Hospital. I will continue to listen and do all I can for our amazing, dedicated healthcare workers and for the community on the northern beaches, who rely on the care provided at Northern Beaches when they or a loved one are at their most vulnerable. For all intents and purposes, Northern Beaches Hospital is the local public hospital. It is the only hospital in an area of 280,000 people and growing. When people are sick and need help, it is where they go. The northern beaches community has every right to expect the same quality of services as other comparable public hospitals. After all, that is what was promised with the opening of the Northern Beaches Hospital in 2018, when the two previous truly local public hospitals in Mona Vale and Manly were closed.

### SONS OF OBIWAN SABER ACADEMY

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast) (17:30):** Last Saturday was 4 May, which some will know as Stars Wars Day, when we say quite proudly, "May the fourth be with you." I visited local volunteer organisation Sons of Obiwan Saber Academy at Tuggerah. I was welcomed by owner Luke Boyton and his team, surrounded by everything Stars Wars. The academy was founded in 2015 by ex-schoolteacher Luke—a very appropriate name—as a test bed for new, meaningful ways to teach life skills to kids on the spectrum. After six years in the New South Wales school system, Luke recognised the need for students to learn more than just the curriculum and recognised the lack of content that focused on giving students the tools and skills to better know themselves.

Over the years, Luke developed a world-first system using theatre combat to teach cognitive and dialectical behaviour therapy so that the students learn vital skills such as resilience, overcoming the discomfort of learning something new and embracing failure as part of the learning process. Theatre combat is a safe, non-contact activity that is suitable for all fitness levels and abilities for those aged 10 and above. The team provides training in European longsword; balintawak, which is Filipino stick fighting; spinning and tricking; and movement, athletic and performance skills. The instructors are well versed on how to teach those with disabilities and are trained to teach using a variety of learning styles, even in group settings, as they aim to make all of their classes feel as inclusive and mainstream as possible. The classes are customised to suit each student participating in the fun activity, which includes elements of general fitness, flexibility, physiotherapy and personal enrichment.

The academy endeavours to mainstream as many students as it can to ensure they benefit from socialisation within the classes. They teach a world-first technique. The system is designed to be fully inclusive and was originally aimed at those with disabilities to help improve their quality of life. Also, they teach the students how to trust their subconscious mind and zone out, allowing muscle memory to take over, which is an important skill to have, especially for those who experience an overactive mind. Some of the benefits of the system include increased muscle tone, mobility and general fitness; increased proprioception and coordination; getting used to people being inside your personal space; eye contact; improved communication and socialisation; resilience and perseverance; increased self-awareness; and getting comfortable with schedule variation and spontaneity. During Luke's journey running the academy, he has found that everyone needs life-coping skills in their own way. By helping people to become more acquainted with their true selves, the academy prepares them to deal with the larger world at their own pace.

The lightsabers and theatre combat weapons used in the academy are manufactured by Luke with materials sourced locally on the Central Coast. During the week, the academy offers personal classes to kids and adults, service providers, school groups and community groups. The weekends consist of organised tours around Australia attending shows, lessons, conventions, corporate and private events. During my time at the academy last Friday, I was shown how to wield a lightsaber through a few simple steps of choreography for beginners and saw the workroom where it all happens in the manufacturing of lightsabers—and I bought one too—and combat weapons.

On Saturday, I joined Sons of Obiwan Saber Academy and Regional Youth Support Services to attend the launch of Central Coast Comicon, which will be held on 25 May at the Gosford Entertainment Grounds. We hope there is a great turnout for this event, which raises important funds for the coast's youth services. Luke's academy provides programs to support healthy life-coping skills for kids and adults across the Central Coast, Newcastle and Sydney through the love of *Star Wars*. He follows the teachings of Yoda in having people understand their inner self, particularly those on the spectrum. May the fourth be with you!

### HAWKESBURY HOSPITAL WORKERS

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (17:35):** Earlier this year, staff at St John of God Hospital, Windsor, were advised that the healthcare provider would not be renewing its contract. An announcement by the New South Wales Government that the hospital would be operated by NSW Health from 1 July 2024 was welcomed because many feared the hospital might even close. Healthcare workers were also told their leave entitlements would be paid out by the employer, St John of God Health Care, when they transferred to the public system. This was confirmed through correspondence from the Parliamentary Secretary for Health, Dr Michael Holland, in response to my representations to the Minister for Health. Immediately I began receiving appeals from hospital staff and their unions about the unfairness of this and the potential tax burden it created.

I met with healthcare workers who explained their need to build up sick leave and annual leave in case they had to care for themselves and their families through extended illnesses and support for elderly parents. In this scenario, hospital staff would have started work with NSW Health with no reserves of annual leave and who would likely have had to work through a probationary period to access sick leave or carers leave. These workers

had been incredibly hardworking and loyal to the Hawkesbury community through natural disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic. It did not seem reasonable to penalise essential health staff who were expected to transfer to NSW Health. In my view, they should not have been disadvantaged.

I am pleased to say people power prevailed. The nurses, midwives, general staff and clinicians received a memorandum on 2 May 2024 from the Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District confirming staff will have the option to transfer their leave entitlements from St John of God Health Care to NSW Health. Additionally, staff would not have to work through a mandatory qualifying period to be eligible for leave. Staff will have their years of service recognised for the purpose of leave accruals, anniversary date and access to award provisions. This result is a victory for fairness and demonstrates how healthcare workers in New South Wales should be treated. It is a win for those who stood up to advocate to the Government and led the rally that I attended. I was proud to speak in Parliament, make representations, stand with the hospital workers and—who would have thought?—stand with the unions. I was there with them, back-to-back. I am also pleased the Government will not be proceeding with paid parking at Hawkesbury hospital. I thank Dr Holland who confirmed that in writing to me. That would have been deeply unfair to the community and the workers at the hospital.

For over 200 years there has been a hospital at Windsor. It is reassuring to receive confirmation from this Government that Hawkesbury hospital will continue its services after the new Rouse Hill hospital commences its operations. The north-west region of Sydney is rapidly growing and there is room for both hospitals—they are both needed. I look forward to continuing to support all the staff who serve with the Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District. When we work together, we get the best outcomes for those who serve us in the health system, and those who benefit from their skills and dedication.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (17:39):** I thank the member for her contribution. It is a great outcome for the workers of the Hawkesbury hospital. The hospital is now a public institution, which makes their employment more secure and provides a better service to the community after the failure of the private sector to properly and adequately care for the area. I am sure the member for Hawkesbury would join me in congratulating the Parliamentary Secretary for Health and member for Bega, the health Minister, and the new Government on making sure that those workers are State workers and that their entitlements are fully transferred over.

#### CUMBERLAND CITY COUNCILLOR STEVE CHRISTOU

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (17:40):** Tonight I bring to the attention of the House an issue that has been bubbling in my electorate this week. That is the ridiculous concern that Cumberland City Council has about books regarding same-sex families at Merrylands Library. I place on record my absolute disgust that councillors would seek to ban books, particularly books they have not even read. It is yet another example of the ridiculous culture war attention-seeking from Councillor Steve Christou. It has got him all the attention he is seeking. I apologise for providing just that little bit more this evening.

I am also concerned about the precedent the ban creates. It is not just awful for the same-sex parents and rainbow families being maligned by that decision of council, especially those who live in our area; it sets a precedent that could be applied to any group anywhere. There is a long history of books being banned because they seek to promote—in the eyes of the person banning it—the lifestyle, the choices or the religious practices of the people that person does not like. It is also completely out of line with the guidelines under which libraries are supposed to operate in New South Wales. Libraries operate under the Library Act. The decision of the council explicitly contravenes the Library Council's guidelines on freedom of access to information. In fact, this afternoon Dr Caroline Butler-Bowdon, who is the State Librarian, made a statement regarding what Cumberland City Council has done. She said:

The guidelines make it clear that the community can expect to enter their local library and access any book not subject to Commonwealth restriction.

I will also quote from the Library Council guidelines, because they outline how the council is supposed to operate its libraries—not on a whim of bigotry:

Public libraries develop, maintain and provide access to collections of resources to meet the information needs and interests of their communities. Libraries have collection development policies and guidelines to assist in the selection of library material.

The continuous review of library collections is necessary as a means of maintaining a current and useful collection. This procedure should not be used as a means of removing materials believed to be controversial, contentious or disapproved of by sections of the community.

Public libraries provide an unbiased source of information and ideas, with collections that meet the diverse and evolving needs of their communities. This means that different points of view on contemporary and historical issues will be represented, including on controversial issues, as far as reasonably possible.

1. A public library has a role as an unbiased source of information and ideas, including online content. It must accept responsibility for providing free access to materials and information presenting, as far as possible, all points of view on contemporary and historical issues, including controversial issues.



2. Libraries should endeavour to provide access to comprehensive and balanced collections that meet the needs of their communities as far as budget, space and availability of materials allow.
3. Library materials that have not been subject to federal and state restriction or prohibition should not be excluded from a public library on moral, political, racial, religious, sexist, language, or other grounds. Nor should library materials be included on these grounds alone, whatever pressure may be brought to bear by individuals or groups. Quite clearly, the council is out of step with the rules around libraries in this State. If we look at history or around the world, many examples of book banning show what a slippery slope that is. Of course, we all think of 1933 and the Nazi regime. The burning of the book *All Quiet on the Western Front* was met with loud cheers. *The Sydney Morning Herald* reported today that, according to the American Library Association, there were more books banned in 2023 than in any other year on record. All sorts of books get banned in America and for all sorts of really strange reasons. The well-known book *Are You There, God? It's Me, Margaret* was accused of having sexualised content—as *Same-Sex Parents* is. It did not, but it was banned nonetheless. We cannot have people making decisions like this. It is absolutely outrageous and beyond their responsibilities.

## DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (17:45):** Last month, the Government announced a restructure of the Department of Primary Industries [DPI] and the Department of Regional NSW. I have serious concerns about the impact these changes will have on communities in my electorate, particularly regarding DPI research and development. The Cootamundra electorate is home to two of DPI's largest research facilities: the Narrandera Fisheries Centre, and the Cowra Agricultural Research and Advisory Station. The Narrandera Fisheries Centre is a world-class facility for freshwater fish breeding and stocking. The wonderful staff, led by centre manager Martin Asmus and senior fisheries manager Matthew McLellan, do so much in terms of research into native and introduced species, native fish breeding and conservation, and the preservation of our river systems.

This facility played a major part in the response to the Menindee fish kill of 2019, carrying out a bold rescue-and-return mission that saw 70 Murray cod rescued and nurtured at the centre, before 60,000 of their offspring were returned to their native river. Those 60,000 Murray cod were just a fraction of the millions of fish that are being bred at the centre to keep our rivers stocked. The centre's new cutting-edge hatchery, completed in 2022 following a \$6 million investment by the previous Coalition Government, produces Murray cod, golden perch, silver perch and the endangered trout cod. Given the important work they are doing in preserving and maintaining the health of our river systems, now is not the time to take the foot off the accelerator. I implore the Government to continue investing in the centre's future.

The Cowra Agricultural Research and Advisory Station, with director Dr Gordon Refshauge at the helm, is world leading when it comes to investigating new and resilient farming systems in red meat development and pasture management. I was proud to have been a part of a government that invested heavily in turbocharging this research, including \$2.1 million towards a new state-of-the-art glasshouse precinct. The glasshouse research is aimed at increasing the productivity and profitability of agriculture by exploring new crop options. By improving legume content in medium-to-high rainfall pastures, for example, they can help increase livestock carrying capacity and reduce fertiliser costs, potentially saving producers millions each year.

Small farmers like those in my electorate simply do not have the capacity to do this kind of research and experimentation, a point reinforced during a recent meeting I had with Annabel Johnson and Kathy Rankin from NSW Farmers. Our farmers are the world's best. By investing in research programs like those in Cowra, we give them a platform to become even better. Agriculture is the biggest employer in the Cootamundra electorate, with one in five jobs directly employed in agriculture. The annual value of agricultural production in the electorate is close to \$2.5 billion. Clearly our primary industries are at the heart of our long-term sustainability and growth in the region. So it is reasonable to say that I, along with my communities, have a vested interest in the future of DPI research and development.

The Government's decision to coordinate the newly created NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development from the Premier's Department in Sydney is most concerning. It worries me greatly that people making decisions have no lived experience in the regions. They are making decisions on our behalf with no true understanding or appreciation of the ramifications. To put it bluntly, they do not have skin in the game. World-leading research underpins our successful agricultural industry. That is the bottom line. Our primary industries sector faces a significant number of challenges, including variable climate, drought, fires, water security as well as pests and diseases. With the budget expected in just over a month, I urge the Government to back our farmers and invest significantly in DPI research and development. We need to cement our place at the forefront of innovation in order to bolster our on-farm productivity and protect our multibillion-dollar agricultural sector—a sector that fundamentally is responsible for underpinning our entire economy both locally and beyond.

## SIR WILLIAM JOHN MCKELL

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (17:49):** William John McKell was born at 47 Toallo Street, Pambula on 26 September 1891. He went on to become a boilermaker, Premier of New South Wales and Governor-General

of Australia. One of the earliest timber buildings in Pambula, the simple weatherboard building where he was born, still stands today. William McKell was born in the cottage at the rear of this property in 1891 to Robert and Martha McKell. Robert McKell had come to Pambula in 1889 after the discovery of gold and married Martha Shepherd in 1890. When his prospecting activities proved unsuccessful, he returned to his butchering trade, which he operated from that site. In 1892 he moved his butcher's shop to William Street, Candelo, further up the Bega Valley. It is likely that William McKell went to school at the historically significant Kameruka Estate, just down the road from Candelo, in the most important dairying district in the colony at that time.

Kameruka was originally established by the Imlay family in 1834 and was later sold to the Tooth brewing family. Kameruka was developed in the English-style agricultural estate model, building a community in the shape of a village. It contained the Holy Trinity Church, three cheese factories, a clock tower, a village store, a butcher's shop, a blacksmith's shop, a carpenter's shop, a village hall, dairies, some 30 houses, schools, an artificial lake, a golf course and a cricket oval. In January 1885 a team of 22 locals played the touring English XI. The locals still lost. In 1899 the McKell family left the region to live in Sydney. Two years later Robert deserted his wife and children, leaving Martha to raise William and his three siblings in the suburban slums of Surry Hills during the bubonic plague outbreak. The family moved to Redfern, with McKell's mother working to support the family.

William was educated at Bourke Street Public School in Surry Hills. He supplemented the family income by working part-time. Leaving school at 13, McKell became an apprentice boilermaker at Mort's Dock in Balmain in 1906. This adds another dimension of historic connection to the Bega electorate: Thomas Sutcliffe Mort established Bodalla Estate in 1860. Mort transformed Bodalla Estate into a model rural settlement similar to Kameruka. In 1861 Mort established at Darling Harbour the first freezing works in the world, and in 1866 Mort's Dock was expanded to include iron and brass foundries, a patent slip and facilities for boilermaking, blacksmithing and engineering. In 1870 Mort's Dock was responsible for the first local build and manufacture of an entire locomotive.

In a move that was considered radical for the time, Mort offered his employees the opportunity to buy shares in the company to improve labour relations. At the time of his death, Thomas Sutcliffe Mort was spoken of as "the greatest benefactor the working classes in this country ever had". He believed that he should play a major role in rescuing the poor and in converting the rich so that they had a conscience. Mort is commemorated by All Saints' Church, Bodalla, built in his honour by his family and designed by Edmund Blacket using granite quarried on Mort's property. It has been listed on the State heritage register thanks to the Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage, the Hon. Penny Sharpe.

McKell joined the Labor Party in 1908. He qualified as a boilermaker and became involved in trade unionism and politics. As an MP, McKell studied for the bar and was admitted in 1925. He served as the New South Wales Labor member for Redfern for 29 years and New South Wales Premier for seven years. During World War II, McKell set up and chaired the State War Effort Coordination Committee. The Government built ships, roads, air strips and other defence works. New South Wales produced munitions and grew food. A vigorous civil defence and air raid precaution program was instituted. The McKell Government achieved an impressive record in social, industrial, planning and environmental areas, including the Housing Commission of NSW, Kosciuszko National Park and the Snowy Mountains Scheme.

William McKell was appointed the twelfth Governor-General of Australia and served from 1947 to 1953. He was only the second Australian-born person to hold the position. He was subsequently invested with a knighthood and became Sir William McKell. He died on 11 January 1985. His life is linked with the rich history of the Bega electorate. I call for the birthplace of this former boilermaker, Premier and Governor-General to be appropriately recognised.

### GLEBE YOUTH SERVICE

**Ms KOBİ SHETTY (Balmain) (17:54):** I speak on the important work of the Glebe Youth Service and the need for services like it to be properly supported. As members know, Glebe is in my electorate of Balmain. It is a community that actively and openly supports one another. I am so proud to be part of that community. My electorate office is right in the middle of Glebe Point Road, just a short walk from the building where the Glebe Youth Service has been operating since 1989. The socio-economic diversity of the Glebe community is one of the things that makes it so special. We have some of the highest rents and private property values in the country, we have one of the oldest public housing estates in New South Wales, and we have several places where Sydney's rough sleepers can go, knowing they will find comfort and safety. Members of our community look out for one another.

Glebe also has one of the highest First Nations populations in New South Wales and is a meeting point for mob who come from all across country to visit family and maintain community connection. Glebe Youth Service has opened its doors to young people in this community for the past 30 years. It has been in its current location

since 1989, but it was first funded in 1984. The service's longevity is a testament to the hard work of board members and staff, as well as the positive impact it has had on young people through the decades. It is important that we recognise the profound impact of an organisation like the Glebe Youth Service in shaping the lives of local young people and, in doing so, the fabric of our communities. Young people go on to become leaders and role models.

At the heart of the Glebe Youth Service lies a commitment to nurturing the potential of every young person who walks through its doors. The organisation provides a safe and inclusive space where young people can explore their passions, develop new skills and forge lifelong connections. From educational support to mental health resources, from recreational activities to leadership development, the Glebe Youth Service offers a comprehensive array of programs and services designed to meet the diverse needs of our youth. It is an amazing service doing important work. We must not take it for granted. Recent events in Glebe have highlighted how important that work is and how much respect the organisation commands within our community. They have also drawn attention to the urgent need for a more stable funding model, for more resources to be made available and for more than just thanks.

Members may be aware of recent reports of a food delivery rider being assaulted by a crowd of young people on Glebe Point Road. In light of that, Glebe Youth Service acted quickly to redirect its resources to have a stronger presence on the streets. It was able to provide prompt assurances that they were not local Aboriginal kids running amok, as some media outlets had suggested. It was also able to assist the community to convene a meeting to discuss how we can all help keep local kids on track. The consensus at the meeting was overwhelming: Glebe Youth Service must be at the heart of any solution and its needs to be properly supported.

I acknowledge the service's current staff for the incredible work they do. That staff includes CEO Mitra Gusheh, Finance Administrator Christina Yeomans, Youth and Community Development Practitioner Jennifer Norton, Aboriginal Identified Worker Kirawhan Fernando, Head of Social Work Amy O'Neill and Early Intervention Program Manager Habil Mawardi. In addition, Jeff Hockey and Michael Carr have both been significant contributors to the service over many years and are offered casual hours when funds permit, along with a pool of casual youth workers who assist with the service's after dark program on Friday and Saturday nights.

The service is currently surviving by patching limited program funding together, hoping that the few meagre fixed grants it has come to rely on will continue to be available and that its applications for renewals will be approved. It is on tenuous ground and that is completely unsustainable. We need to find a better way to support services like this one, to keep our kids on track and look after our communities as they grow. For our community, the benefits of funding Glebe Youth Service would be significant, and I look forward to discussing this in more detail with members of the Government in coming weeks.

### EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (17:58):** Last month I met with a group of passionate and dedicated community preschool directors to discuss some of the challenges the early childhood education sector is facing, as well as its many and varied successes. Over the course of years I have been privileged to represent these remarkable women and have witnessed firsthand their commitment to providing our local children with the best possible start in life. Without their ongoing efforts, our community would be enormously poorer. I am not breaking new ground when I point out the critical importance of well-funded and easily accessible early childhood education programs. These programs help children develop the social and emotional skills that will enable them to make and maintain friendships. They assist in the expansion of their cognitive abilities and foster language development. At their best, they promote creativity and encourage a lifelong love of learning.

In the time allotted to me I cannot even begin to do justice to the many amazing programs that are offered by our Blue Mountains community preschools. However, to give just one example, I draw the attention of members to the innovative Bush Preschool program that has been developed at Blaxland Preschool Kindergarten. As part of this program, children are taken on regular outings into the surrounding bushland. There they can play outdoors, connect with nature, observe the changing of the seasons and learn how to care for our magnificent but fragile ecosystem. I understand that this program has been a resounding success among parents and children alike. I hope and trust that it will continue to flourish for many years to come.

Recently I received an email from a constituent who detailed, in rapturous terms, his family's experiences at Blaxland Preschool. In this email he noted that his eldest child, having received an exceptional foundation for dealing with the challenges of autism, will likely be joining the year 5 opportunity class. He also noted that his second child, who has benefited from the same exceptional standard of early education and care, is about to set forth on her own schooling career, her enthusiasm for learning already firmly established. He looks forward to a future in which his youngest child receives these same advantages. In his own words:

This school is one of the main reasons why we chose to raise our kids in Blaxland. Blaxland Preschool is more than just a school—it is an institution that brings together and builds both the community and children's futures in a way that all preschools should strive for.

Recently I had the pleasure of taking the Minister to Blaxland Preschool Kindergarten for a fabulous visit. I turn now to the important role that we can play in strengthening the sector and promoting its core aims. This Government and our Minister have already made great strides towards increasing access to quality early childhood education across New South Wales. As we push ahead with much-needed new public preschools, we must not forget to support those that are already in existence. I know from experience that they have many insights to share and are an integral part of the communities they serve.

As a former teacher, I understand that a strong and comprehensive education starts long before children reach the classroom. As they take their first steps into the wider world, it is imperative that passionate and highly skilled early childhood educators are there to guide them. I welcome the efforts of the Childcare and Economic Opportunity Fund to attract and retain a talented workforce. If our education system is to remain competitive, we need to be doing everything we can to ensure that the best candidates want to teach in New South Wales. Before finishing, I take a moment to celebrate the remarkable men and women who play such an integral part in shaping the types of adults our children will become one day. I extend to them my utmost respect and gratitude. I know that early childhood educators are not always recognised and valued as they should be, but I am pleased to witness a growing appreciation for the crucial work that they do.

We have a shared responsibility to provide our children with the best possible start in life. As we move together into an uncertain world, it is in everyone's interests that the next generation is adequately prepared for whatever challenges lie ahead. As the old adage goes, it takes a village to raise a child. We as the Government have an important role to play in nurturing and cultivating our future innovators, teachers, healthcare workers, environmentalists, artists and leaders. Let us continue to do our bit by providing the early childhood education sector with the support and funding that it needs to fully unlock our children's limitless potential.

I give a quick shout-out to my remarkable community preschool directors: Alison Staniford of Katoomba Leura Preschool, Deirdre Wilde of Blaxland Preschool Kindergarten, Jessica Jefferies of Springwood and Glenbrook preschools, Kathy Garland of Blue Gum Montessori Preschool, Kerrie Lovegrove of Kookaburra Kindergarten, and Roslyn James of Lawson Community Preschool.

#### ELTON RAY WINSLOW

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (18:03):** I pay tribute to and recognise Dubbo resident Mr Elton Ray Winslow, known as Ray, who turned 100 on 28 April. Born to parents Adelaide and Blayney, Ray grew up on a dairy farm at Bowraville, attended the local primary school at Simpson Ridge and then went to Coffs Harbour High School. He joined the Commonwealth Bank at the age of 18, and his first branch was at Werris Creek. Ray joined the army when the war broke out, enlisting at Inverell as a signaller. On 17 June 1942 Ray left the army, only to enlist in the Royal Australian Air Force in December of that same year. He headed to the United Kingdom on 15 February 1944 as an airman pilot and was promoted to flight sergeant pilot on 16 July that same year. From October 1944 to July 1945 Ray was stationed at Plymouth, one of the many aerial defence of Great Britain units. His role, along with several other pilots from the empire, was flying Hurricanes and later Spitfires, carrying out dummy fighter and torpedo attacks on ships and naval installations, training anti-aircraft gunners and being vectored over the channel to calibrate radar operations.

Ray was commissioned in July 1945 and, on his return to Australia, he retained the rank of pilot officer on discharge. He rejoined the Commonwealth Bank after the war ended and was sent to various country branches, including Inverell, Nowra, Gloucester and Orange. He then went on to become branch manager at Mandurama, Grafton and Brisbane. Eventually he became the regional manager for western New South Wales, based in Dubbo. Ray retired and moved with his wife, Helen, to five acres just out of Cowra, at Darbys Falls on the Lachlan River. There he indulged in his love of gardening and it is said that he created a Garden of Eden. He remained there for 20 years. Ray and Helen enjoyed that time and then moved back to Dubbo because of Helen's declining health. Sadly, she passed away in 2006.

Ray was nearly 22 when he returned from the war and adapting to civilian life presented some difficulties. But he said it was made easier by the shared comradeship of others, and in 1963 he joined Legacy. Legacy was a field of service deserving of the support of returned servicemen like Ray who were fortunate enough to come back in good health. In 2018 Ray received *The Daily Telegraph's* Pride of Australia award for outstanding community service and more than 60 years of service to Legacy. It is outstanding to have committed to serve and helped others for that long. At the time Ray said, "I was never a hero, but I'm still going strong."

This year Ray attended the Dubbo RSL Sub-Branch Anzac Day remembrance service, and then on Saturday 27 April he celebrated his 100th birthday—a day before the real thing—at the Dubbo RSL Club. He was

joined by family; members of the Dubbo RSL Sub-Branch and Legacy; local, State and Federal government representatives; and past employees of the bank who had worked with him. I extend my really heartfelt gratitude to Mr Elton Ray Winslow on his 100th birthday, and not only recognise his individual achievements but also acknowledge his broader legacy of service, kindness and devotion to others. May the years ahead continue to be blessed with happiness and fulfilment. Happy 100th birthday to Ray.

#### DAVID JONES

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (18:07):** I highlight the extraordinary contributions of a distinguished member of our community, Mr David Jones of Sussex Inlet. For over 60 years David has devoted himself tirelessly to volunteer service, significantly impacting education, community safety, local development and social cohesion. His legacy is a testament to the power of dedicated civic engagement and the profound influence one individual can have on the fabric of a community. David's journey of service began after his education at North Wollongong Technical College, where from 1954 to 1958 he honed his skills, which later paved the way for his professional endeavours. Beginning in 1958, he embarked on a four-year apprenticeship in industrial engraving, stepping into a pivotal role as the director and manager of Wollongong Engraving Co. in 1967. Under David's stewardship, the company flourished for the next 25 years.

In 1965 David married his wife of 59 years, Kathleen, better known as Kate. David is adamant that all his achievements and work in the community have been a team effort, with Kate supporting him in all his endeavours. David and Kate have volunteered in many capacities, including serving as the president of various P&C associations from Balgownie to Keira and Smith's Hill high schools, and even the Illawarra district P&C association where David is a life member. David's roles extended to broader educational support as a South Coast regional councillor for the New South Wales P&C association and he was a valued member of several boards including West Wollongong TAFE and Bulli Hospital.

In 1988 David transitioned from managing director of Wollongong Engraving to a role that would leverage his vast experience for community benefit when he became a community development officer for the Department of Education until his retirement in 2000. For over 12 years David worked diligently to enhance educational environments and support school communities across a vast region, working with schools from Helensburgh to Eden and as far west as Deniliquin. During that time, David and Kate made the move from Wollongong to Sussex Inlet in 1979, where David's volunteer work truly defined his character and commitment.

Perhaps most notably, David has been a steadfast volunteer with Marine Rescue for over 45 years. He has been a monumental figure in that organisation, serving in roles ranging from Sussex Inlet division administration officer to unit commander for 28 years. David's leadership extended regionally and nationally, and he became a regional officer and then a regional director, and ultimately a chairman of the board of directors covering four States. David's commitment was crucial during the 2001 bushfires in Sussex Inlet, where his leadership and foresight helped guide the community through one of its most challenging periods. In recognition of his valiant efforts during those critical times, he was awarded the emergency service medal in the Queen's Birthday Honours list of 2004.

David's influence extends deeply into community life in Sussex Inlet. He was the founding president of the Sussex Inlet Community Forum and led the Together We Can Do It initiative in the 1990s, which was instrumental in helping the community plan and prepare for the future. His leadership in the Sussex Inlet Men's Shed and his role as president of the Sussex Inlet Senior Citizens demonstrate his unwavering commitment to community. David and Kate have volunteered at the Inasmuch nursing home for the past 18 years, where David has assisted Kate with cooking classes and conducted garden activities with residents. They are currently in the process of setting up a vegetable garden for residents of Inasmuch so they can make a contribution to their community through providing food to the local food pantry in Sussex Inlet.

David has been president of the Sussex Inlet Neighbourhood Centre for many years and in recent times the organisation has flourished under very difficult circumstances. The amazing organisation provides community transport, equipment hire, social support, weekly shopping and a hot meal once a week. There is no stopping David and Kate. Currently they are exploring setting up a dementia friends group in Sussex Inlet to support families, carers and friends impacted by the disease. I thank David and Kate on behalf of the whole community for their generosity of spirit and commitment to enhancing the world by dedicating their time and their volunteer efforts for the betterment of others.

#### DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (18:12):** I add my voice to the chorus of members speaking on the issue of domestic violence and the need to do better to address the domestic violence crisis this State and country are facing. Lake Macquarie and Newcastle, like the rest of New South Wales, has seen an appalling and

unacceptable increase in domestic violence offences in recent years. We have experienced an annual 2.3 per cent increase in domestic violence related assaults in the five years to December 2023 and a truly shocking 12 per cent annual increase in sexual assaults. We also know there is a huge amount of under-reporting in this area. Truly appalling figures have been laid bare many times this week, with one in four women and one in eight men in Australia experiencing violence by an intimate partner since the age of 15. Tragically this year in Australia one woman has died on average every four days from domestic violence. That is a national shame.

For a long time, family and domestic violence support services and advocates in Lake Macquarie, the Hunter and across the State have been highlighting the growing problem of domestic and family violence in New South Wales and the desperate need for more funding and support for victim-survivor services and prevention programs. A number of remarkable domestic and family violence support services are operating in the Lake Macquarie and Greater Newcastle area. I acknowledge the tireless work of the advocates and staff members at Nova for Women and Children, Warlga Ngurra Women and Children's Refuge, Got Your Back Sista, Jenny's Place and Survivors R Us. The work that these dedicated service providers do every day and the frontline services they provide literally save lives.

This work is hard, distressing and, right now, relentless. For a long time, advocates and support services have been speaking out about the overwhelming demand on services in the Hunter due to the relentless rates of domestic and family violence across the region, compounded by the housing crisis and the cost-of-living crisis. Advocates and domestic and family violence support workers have described the heartbreak of being unable to meet the demands on the services and the feelings of guilt and stress when they cannot provide clients safe places to stay or the support they need because their services are so overwhelmed.

I thank all of the advocates and domestic and family violence support workers for working so hard to support victim-survivors in the Hunter and across New South Wales, for their bravery and dedication, for refusing to walk away, and for continuing to advocate strongly and loudly for those who cannot advocate for themselves, even when it feels like there is no end to this crisis. There is no doubt it takes a toll on them personally, but they continue to show up day after day to support victim-survivors desperately in need. I thank the Government and Minister Harrison in particular for their leadership, for their recognition of the urgency of this situation and the need for an emergency response, and for their commitments over the previous days, particularly to expanding the Staying Home Leaving Violence program and additional funding for domestic violence support workers.

Of course, more work is to be done. Bail laws and processes need to be addressed. There must be changes to the justice system and more support for the domestic and family violence sector workforce. But what is clear from all sides of this House this week is a recognition of the urgency of this issue, an acknowledgement that it is too important to be politicised, and a commitment to work together for change. The current domestic and family violence crisis will not be solved solely in this place; it takes a whole community's commitment. But the community is speaking out loudly. Women, children and all those suffering violence from intimate partners cannot continue to live in fear, and innocent lives cannot continue to be lost. I welcome the Government's response to this crisis, and I commit to working with the Government, the domestic violence support sector and all in this House on the reform needed to protect victim-survivors and to ensure that those who, tragically, did not survive, such as Molly Ticehurst, are not forgotten.

### WAKELEY CHURCH INCIDENT

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (18:17):** Fairfield is built on hope. Families from across the world have come to New South Wales to escape persecution and war. They have started anew and have been loved and protected. In that process, they have been given a platform to realise their true potential and have contributed back to our great State. We—as a community, as a State and as a nation—are a shining light to the world, a multicultural and multi-faith society, and we are stronger for that diversity. That is why Fairfield was shocked by the events on the night of 15 April at Wakeley.

Everyone deserves to be protected and to practise their faith in peace. There is no place for violence. When I attended the Christ the Good Shepherd Church shortly after Bishop Mar Mari Emmanuel was attacked, I witnessed behaviour that was the opposite of what defines Fairfield. But I saw the very best of us there too. I commend Acting Superintendent Rob Monaghan, Inspector Brad Gordon and the wider NSW Police Force for their bravery and commitment to service that night. Their work protected our community, and for that I thank them. The NSW Ambulance officers exemplified the very best of our State that night. I thank them for treating those injured and for risking their own safety in doing so.

I also commend those members of the public who sought to promote peace and harmony. Since that night, the police are continuing their lines of inquiry and taking subsequent law enforcement action on both the initial attack and the ensuing violence outside the church. They are also doing an excellent job in continuing to keep our community safe. At the same time, I have worked with government stakeholders alongside schools, faith groups,

community groups and the wider public to promote peace and harmony outcomes. I will update the House on my progress in this space in coming months. I proudly say that Fairfield has rallied together and moved forward from this. We will continue to do what we do best—transform lives for the better.

### **DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne) (18:20):** Tonight I talk about the issue of family and domestic violence within the Drummoyne electorate. Over the past few weeks and days we have seen women speaking out and calling for urgent action to address a crisis that affects us all—domestic and family violence—and we must listen. In New South Wales and across Australia we are facing an epidemic that is claiming the lives of women and imposing trauma on families and children. The recent tragedy of Molly Ticehurst's murder is a stark reminder of the systemic failures that allow this violence to persist. Molly's story is a heart-wrenching example of a system that failed her at every turn. Despite multiple pleas for help, she was left unprotected and her life was taken in the most tragic way.

This is not an isolated incident. We all know that. This is what happens when the system is broken, which prioritises perpetrators over the safety of victims. We need urgent action to address the glaring gaps in our bail laws. We need funding for on-the-ground services and supports. I acknowledge the funding commitments that have been made by State and Federal governments. We need reforms that prioritise protection of women, who are overwhelmingly represented victims in the statistics. We need reforms that hold perpetrators accountable and keep women safe. We need programs that provide adequate resources for those fleeing domestic violence.

I stand with a heavy heart to mourn the tragic loss of Molly. I convey my deepest and sincerest condolences to her loved ones. Last year our community was shocked and rocked by the tragic and violent death of Cati Machado of Chiswick when she was killed by her former partner. We heard the sad news of another death yesterday of a woman killed by a man known to her. These tragic stories are a reminder that behind the statistics are real people and real lives shattered by violence. We owe it to every victim of domestic violence to stand up and demand change because enough is enough. We cannot and we must not turn a blind eye to this issue any longer. The status quo is unacceptable, and we cannot continue to fail women and children in this way. Let us all in this Chamber work together to create a system that empowers survivors, holds perpetrators accountable and ensures that no-one is left behind. Let us act now.

I have spoken to many in my community who believe that support services in our community need to be improved. This week I have written to the Minister asking for her support for the rollout of the Staying Home Leaving Violence program for residents of the City of Canada Bay local government area. I relayed my genuine commitment to working together with her and with the Government on this. That is what we are elected to do in this place, and this issue should always be above politics. As we observe Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month in May, let us remember Molly and Cati to ensure that they are not forgotten. I say to the women whose lives have been tragically cut short that we are so sorry this system has failed them. To those who are afraid to leave or are suffering in silence right now, know that help is there. My door is always open. If anyone or someone they know is experiencing domestic or family violence, they can call or text 24/7, 1800 RESPECT.

### **HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (18:23):** Housing and homelessness has occupied my mind since I was elected in March 2019, when we were already in the grip of a housing crisis. All members would appreciate that crisis has deepened. There is a lack of affordable housing, escalating homelessness and no houses coming onto the market. Over a long period, governments have retreated from building housing. In August 2019 I hosted a housing and homelessness forum with people from across my electorate—all the local government representatives and stakeholders. We produced a submission that went to the previous Government in August 2020. In that report we put forward six key recommendations from the housing and homelessness forum, and I included some 15 recommendations of my own.

The first six recommendations were to develop new social housing properties with targets; make part of what was then Social and Affordable Housing Fund funding—we now have the Housing Acceleration Fund at the Federal level—a regional allocation, because in the regions we often do not get a target and we need that to happen; increase transitional accommodation because we desperately need it; allocate more homeless support; redevelop Housing NSW properties for better quality housing; and extend planning instruments to allow for affordable housing et cetera.

Some of the priorities I put forward were to invest in public stock; for the policy to include smaller scale housing developments; to, as in other places, alter the rules to make sure that a percentage of new developments are affordable; for the New South Wales Government to work closely with the Federal Government; and to ensure that the planning framework facilitates different types of housing, including small houses and secondary detached

dwellings. Some of that has happened in some places, but there is still a lot of work to do. Over the past four years, through advocacy and working with locals, I managed to secure 12 social housing dwellings, with 64 dwellings coming on through Landcom and local government. Recently we have had 50 more through the build-to-rent initiative.

The former Government conducted a regional review that contained some great stuff. The findings were actually better than the recommendations. The recommendations were quite good but the findings were better, and I acted on those findings. There was a Housing 2041 strategy that had no targets. I have always said that we must have a housing strategy with targets, and I am driving that now. Homes NSW has changed since the three agencies have come together. I like that model because I found having three different agencies too messy. Now the agencies work together and focus their core attention where it is necessary.

The floods in 2022 certainly exacerbated the housing crisis in the Northern Rivers, which is my area. We now have 11 pod villages for internally displaced people. Now over 1,000 people live in 546 housing units. That prompted me to organise and host a housing round table on 30 April in Murwillumbah. It was attended by State MPs from across the region, Federal MPs, mayors and general managers—all the stakeholders. Minister Jackson, the Minister for Housing, Minister for Homelessness, and Minister for the North Coast, also attended. We will not resolve the problem overnight, but we had a great conversation and we secured some outcomes. We will have more conversations in the future.

I have long recommended a couple of things, including rent-to-buy schemes. I have seen that work. I also recommend secondary dwellings and density. We talk about density in the city, but we need it in the regions and in regional CBDs as well. We want more of that density. Those of us from the regions know what I am talking about. I have also long recommended that we have something like Defence Housing Australia. When someone says that the Government is not involved in building houses, I say they should look at Defence Housing Australia. A couple of years back—I am relying on my memory—it had about \$40 billion worth of assets. It pumped about \$11 million back into government coffers and actually built housing, including affordable housing. It is a good model that I still advocate for.

#### WINSTON HILLS ELECTORATE COMMUNITY EVENTS

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Winston Hills) (18:28):** Temporary Speaker Kemp, I take this opportunity to congratulate you on your elevation to your Temporary Speakership. You are doing an outstanding job. I speak about a recent visit from the Leader of the Opposition to the Winston Hills electorate. It is always a great honour to host my colleagues from this place at Winston Hills, where they get to see the community that I serve. Recently, when the Opposition leader came out, he spoke to businessowners, local residents and community organisation representatives. One of the greatest parts of being the local member for Winston Hills is having businesses across the electorate that are family-owned, passionately run and serve the community well.

There is little better example than Els Café at Winston Hills Mall, which is run by a local family. The family brings decades of experience in the food industry across Western Sydney. Café Els focuses on modern Australian food for breakfast and lunch, and it also does fantastic coffee at 7.30 in the morning. The Winston Hills Mall is also home to Mimmo's Mens Hair Stylist, which has been owned and operated by Mimmo for many decades in the mall. I still have fond memories of Mimmo cutting my hair many decades ago when I was younger. We stopped for a chat with The Wild Fishmonger, which is a fish and chips shop that is relatively new to the mall. The Leader of the Opposition and the fishmonger spoke about the troubles that customers were facing with cost of living and their efforts to support customers with specials and a wide range of products at competitive prices.

It is always terrific to visit the students at St Paul the Apostle Primary School. I often visit the school during their studies of civics and government to discuss the structure of government and give them a perspective from the New South Wales Parliament. St Paul the Apostle Primary School was founded in 1973 by Father David Scott and the Sisters of Holy Faith. St Paul's was run by the Sisters of Holy Faith for over 20 years in its early establishment. The school has undergone many changes over the years, including during my time in this place. Each time that I have attended the school, it is always great to see the fantastic students and the hardworking teachers who care for those students. I acknowledge the principal Kathryn Newman, who is doing an outstanding job supporting the students and their families in the community in which we live.

The Opposition leader and I took the opportunity to speak with year 6 students about leadership and what it means to be a leader, as they continue their final year of primary school before heading off to high school. It was great to hear how different leadership can be viewed in different ways and hear from students about how they aspire to be leaders. We spoke about many famous leaders, including Nelson Mandela, Steve Jobs and Rosa Parks. They all had different leadership traits—however, they were no less important. It is surprising but comforting to know that the year 6 students, aged 12 and 13, had such a great understanding of those people and their historical significance.



We then took off to the Seven Hills RSL to speak to the Seven Hills-Toongabbie-Wentworthville sub-branch about its war memorabilia area. The Seven Hills RSL is home to one of the most historically rich and culturally significant collections of war memorabilia in the suburbs of Sydney. Whether it is the medals, photographs or letters or guns, uniforms and cannons, the Seven Hills memorabilia area is a testament to the hard work of the sub-branch members in maintaining the rich history of Australia within the RSL. The work of the sub-branch in educating younger generations in our community of war stories and artefacts is to be commended. For that, we presented the sub-branch with a community recognition award to acknowledge and thank them for the invaluable work that they do in our community.

I take this opportunity to particularly thank the office bearers of the sub-branch, including president Ross Coughran, vice-president Peter Sparrow, secretary Chris Gammage, treasurer Peter Dwyer and all the other committee and trustee members. I also thank them for another year of the Anzac Day service, which they provided recently at the Seven Hills RSL. It was great to see so many generations of locals coming together to commemorate our service men and women. This year's service was one of the largest gatherings at the RSL that I have ever experienced. I also acknowledge the presence of local schools, sporting clubs and scout associations on Anzac Day and the laying of wreaths by each of those organisations. This includes the Toongabbie Public School, the Hills Sports High School, the Winston Hills Scout Group and many others. It is inspiring to see the younger generation play a role on these important days of national reflection and commemoration.

### POTTS POINT-ELIZABETH BAY PRECINCT

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (18:33):** Temporary Speaker Kemp, congratulations on your appointment to the Speaker's panel. The Potts Point and Elizabeth Bay precinct is a special place. Nestled within the night life of Kings Cross and the stunning harbour and only a short walk to the central business district, the area is home to one of the country's most vibrant and diverse populations. Potts Point and Elizabeth Bay were the first places in Australia to provide high-density living. They have supported apartments for over 100 years, from art deco buildings of the 1920s to 1940s to the modernist buildings of the mid-twentieth century. Over 100 important art deco and modernist apartment buildings still exist in the region. The two styles complement each other and the nine remaining colonial villas. The region shows Sydney's architectural history from colonial times to the mid-century in a small area.

Apartments account for 90 per cent of homes in Potts Point and Elizabeth Bay and accommodate 98 per cent of its population. Most apartments are studio and one-bedroom flats that provide vital affordable housing close to the city and support high-density living. The one-square-kilometre region has 18,000 residents. That density provides the foundation for diversity and liveability, attracting a mix of single people, LGBTIQ+ people, artists, creatives and city office workers. It is one of the first communities in Australia where lone women and LGBTIQ+ people could live without judgement, and it remains a place where they feel comfortable and that they belong. Currently, over 60 per cent of households have only one person.

Potts Point and Elizabeth Bay are the quintessential example of high-density affordable living that is harmonious and lively. The streets are pedestrian friendly and activated, and most people rely on walking and public transport to travel. The 2021 population census shows 49.1 per cent of homes do not have a car, compared to 9 per cent for New South Wales. The diversity is evident throughout the community in its active streets, which burst with people day and night. But the unique architecture and the population density it supports are at risk from redevelopment proposals that would completely transform what makes the place special.

Increasingly, development applications in the region propose demolishing art deco and modernist buildings to replace them with buildings that offer fewer, larger apartments. No recent proposals would provide affordable studio or one-bedroom apartments. The six most recent development projects combined would result in a huge net loss of 127 apartments. Smaller homes have long supported the diverse community of Potts Point and Elizabeth Bay. If the studio and one-bedroom apartments are replaced with larger, more expensive apartments, existing residents and the cohort they represent will be priced out of the area, undermining its diversity and the Government's aims to increase urban density close to transport and services.

Only three twentieth-century apartments are State Heritage listed and some small, prominent art deco buildings have local heritage recognition. Many modernist buildings are identified as detracting. I share the growing community concern that the precinct could lose its unique character and social fabric. A group of passionate locals has established the Potts Point Preservation Group to protect the region into the future. The group is not anti-development, but it wants to protect twentieth-century architecture and the density, housing make-up and social fabric it supports. Listing individual buildings would be slow and cumbersome, and ignores the important collective value of the buildings and streetscapes. As such, the preservation group is instead advocating to make the small region a State Heritage conservation area, which members point out has the added benefit of raising the area's profile as a tourist destination.

I thank the staff of the Minister for Heritage and the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces for meeting with the group and committing to working with them to find a solution that will protect the region's housing stock and affordability, ensuring its continued diversity. I look forward to hearing an update from them soon. The City of Sydney has asked the planning department to approve changes to the local environment plan to prevent any net loss of housing in redevelopment proposals for consultation. It is assessing what other tools are available to council to protect the area. At a time when the Government is trying to sell the benefits of urban density, Potts Point and Elizabeth Bay should be celebrated and protected for their unique twentieth-century architecture and for embracing apartment living. The region shows that urban density done well can support a lifestyle that is the envy of the country, with a vibrant and diverse community. I call on the Government to work with the City of Sydney and the Potts Point Preservation Group to ensure that the region's housing stock, affordability and diversity is protected into the future.

### HOUSING SUPPLY

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (18:38):** There is a crisis that is silently gripping the lives of thousands of individuals and families across New South Wales, and that is the rental crisis. We know that renting is often the best choice for individuals and families based on their different needs and circumstances, and when the great Australian dream of owning your own home is out of reach, renting should be a safe harbour and a place of stability and security. However, we know that for many that is simply not the case. As a renter myself, I understand and have felt firsthand the fear and uncertainty that can come with renting. In my local community, more than 46 per cent of people are renters, so it is always right that I speak up on their behalf on this crucial issue. I have sought to champion this issue during my time as an MP in this place, and I was proud to take a suite of measures to the last election to ease the burden on renters on the North Shore and across New South Wales.

A bill introduced by the member for Newtown to address the issue of ending no-grounds evictions is currently before the Parliament. Both the Liberal-Nationals Coalition and the Labor Party took ending no-grounds evictions to the last State election. It should not be a partisan issue, and there is scope to achieve consensus. Like me, the member for Newtown and a few others in this place are staunch advocates for renters. I have been listening to debate on that bill and considering how it can be improved or what further legislation can be brought before the House to achieve those crucial reforms. I am not alone in this. My team has the youngest cohort of MPs in the history of this Parliament, and age, as we know, is a key demographic factor in home ownership and renting. Together, we are all facing the squeeze between the desire to own a home and renting one, and I am proud to join my colleagues in advocating for renters in this place. Unfortunately, not everybody in this place has demonstrated the will to resolve the issue.

Let us first confront the stark reality of rental affordability. The cost of renting in New South Wales has skyrocketed in recent years, and given the cost-of-living crisis, too many individuals and families are forced to spend a significant portion of their income on rent. In my local community the average median weekly rent change in 2023 was a 15 per cent increase, which reflects my own experience as a renter. Across my local community, housing stress—typically described as expending 30 per cent or more of a household budget on rent—is playing a significant role. Based on the latest Australian Bureau of Statistics data, far too many people in my community—more than 27 per cent—are experiencing housing stress. We hear too many stories day in and day out of tenants being evicted by landlords with no grounds, leaving many stranded and without somewhere to live.

We know that no-grounds evictions disproportionately impact vulnerable groups such as low-income renters, seniors, people with disabilities and single parents—people who may already face barriers to accessing affordable housing. We also know that those attempting to leave situations of domestic and family violence often delay leaving or do not leave, and we know, at the moment, how crucial it is that we find a safe place for them to live. I note that Domestic Violence NSW, the Women's Legal Service and Lucy's Project have jointly written to the Premier, the Treasurer and the Minister urging them to move on the no-grounds evictions reforms. Despite widespread recognition of the need to address the issue, the Minns Labor Government has thus far failed to deliver on those reforms. Members opposite seem to be sitting idle, regardless of all their rhetoric on wanting to help renters in this State. This Government continues to drag its feet on progressing key areas of rental reform, including its commitments to prohibit no-grounds evictions, to establish a portable rental bond scheme and to make it easier to have pets in rentals—and let's not talk about the rent bidding fiasco from last year.

This issue should not be viewed as a battle between landlords and tenants. Landlords do and will play an important role in solving the rental crisis, but I am concerned that certain contributions in this place have not been constructive in solving the challenge and do not meet community expectations. Overall, there has been a lack of progress from all the major parties in this place despite the rhetoric and promises. Given this, I am strongly considering any options available to me to ensure that the issue is front and centre and considered urgently in this place. I know we have a bill before the Parliament for consideration, but we cannot shy away from the fact that a

year after the Minns Labor Government was sworn in it has objectively failed the people of New South Wales on this issue.

Anyone who shares my position on this has my support. This should not be a partisan issue, but we need bold and decisive action to address this crisis and ensure that all renters in New South Wales can live with dignity, security and peace of mind. I reiterate my commitment to those who have elected me, who work hard every day, who aspire to and seek opportunities but who are struggling with economic challenges. I will continue to champion this issue for them and people across New South Wales, because every person deserves a place to call home.

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (18:44):** I say to the member for North Shore that members on this side of the House are not sitting idle. There is a commitment from a lot of members to address the housing crisis, which is many years old. I do not want to sledge across the Chamber, and I did not do so in my private member's statement, but the fact is the Minns Government is moving on the housing crisis. It cannot be fixed overnight. After 12 years, pets, rent bidding, the cost of rent and the lack of stock are being moved on, whereas under the previous Government a lot of housing stock was sold off. It also did not do the hard yards to address housing density. I say to the member for North Shore that I do not doubt her sincerity to want to move on this issue because of the dire crisis, but the Minns Labor Government is clearly moving on housing.

### DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (18:45):** We recently recognised National Domestic Violence Remembrance Day, and many have rightly demanded less talk and more action from politicians. Yet for all the devastating news we have read in recent weeks and months, this is also an important opportunity to reflect. As we discuss solutions to domestic violence, I think of the generations of Australians who were never counted; the victims who suffered, and continue to suffer, silently; the victims who suffer openly and remain stonewalled by institutions designed to protect them; and perpetrators never held accountable. Sadly, for many this happens far too close to home. It is difficult to confront and acknowledge that it could happen to you or that it could be happening in your family.

While this issue is multifaceted, there are two critical causes that I do not feel we talk about enough. Domestic violence represents a form of entitlement—people, overwhelmingly men, feel entitled to control or hurt another person through force or coercion. That entitlement is generations in the making and will not just end on its own. There is also a lack of accountability among men. Men need to hold other men accountable. Sadly, I do not think that happens anywhere near enough. I know some people do not like characterising this as a men's issue and prefer using other terms, but that is not my view. The trends and statistics are quite clear. The era of "not all men" needs to end. This is overwhelmingly male violence against women, children, families and other men. All men are responsible for addressing the scourge of domestic violence, and governments at all levels are too.

In the immediate term, I support the bail reforms proposed by the Leader of the Opposition and introduced today by the Manager of Opposition Business. The reforms include ensuring that magistrates, not registrars, determine bail for serious domestic violence charges where bail is opposed; expanding the grounds to suspend bail, pending review, in serious personal violence charges; and expanding the use of electronic monitoring devices to those bailed on serious domestic violence charges. Those are important and immediate steps that can be taken to address what Ryde police tell me is a 45 per cent year-on-year increase in domestic violence rates.

Over the longer term, I am also supportive of calls for a royal commission, which will offer a level of gravitas that I do not believe governments have ever afforded to domestic violence. However, this must be coupled with immediate measures that can reduce harm now. I am disappointed to see the Government rule out this step; my hope was that a royal commission would recommend practical, evidence-based steps governments can take to elevate education, early intervention and restorative justice over the long term in this space. Help is needed to escape immediate harm, but if wraparound support, like emergency housing and financial assistance, is not adequately funded, women will never be able to leave and stay away from violent or coercive relationships. From here, the cycle continues. On average, it takes women seven attempts to leave.

I have learned a lot about this issue by working with an incredible person, Cate Sinclair, from an incredible local provider, the Northern Centre. It runs a program called SafeT to help women who get away, stay away. It funds this program almost on its own, which is not sustainable given the ever-increasing demand. It needs to be at the table. Before the last election, I was able to secure a \$600,000 funding commitment for SafeT. However, this was not matched by the now Government. I am eager to work with the Government on that. With \$925 million recently put on the table by the Federal Government, and the New South Wales Government releasing its own funding package, my office will write to the responsible Ministers, urging them to fully fund the Northern Centre's SafeT program. Ryde is not immune to these challenges and, in an area where our multicultural diversity requires a culturally sensitive, trauma-informed response to domestic violence, services like the Northern Centre are needed now more than ever before.

The Federal Government estimates that gender-based violence costs Australia \$26 billion a year and gendered financial abuse costs approximately \$10.9 billion a year. While the funding announcements by the Federal and State governments is progress, there is still a long way to go to help women escape the cycle of abuse. Domestic violence does not discriminate and, while we have a wonderful community in Ryde, we are not immune either. If you require assistance, support is available from groups like 1800RESPECT, the Northern Centre, the Men's Referral Service and Lifeline. Events of recent weeks should not have been the catalyst for action, but action now is necessary to do justice to the most egregious of tears in our social fabric.

*Bills*

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT (DE-AMALGAMATIONS) BILL 2024**

**Returned**

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

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 18:50 until  
Tuesday 14 May 2024 at 12:00.**

*Written Community Recognition Statements*

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

**TAYLAH POWER**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—Mr Speaker I would like to commend my constituent Taylah Power, a mum who is on the front-foot when it comes to combating the rising cost of children's sport. In a bid to allay the escalating cost of equipment, uniforms, fees and registration, Ms Power organised an exchange day for parents trying to budget for the next season. No money changed hands but boots, racquets, bats and the like could be swapped or rehomed. One of five siblings, Ms Power was heavily involved in sport while growing up and says she benefited from a team environment. But she recognised the financial strain it placed on her mum's budget and hand-me-downs were gratefully accepted. Now, with two boys of her own, Ms Power is locking horns with the same financial issue and is taking a leaf from her mum's book. Parents have jumped on board with around 200 families reaching out to Ms Power after her social media post and dozens dropping off equipment and picking up items during the exchange. Mr Speaker, organised sport is great tool for kids to learn teamwork, resilience and have fun with their friends. I thank Ms Power for her initiative.

**DARCY HOWARD – NSW YOUNG AUCTIONEER 2024**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—Mr Speaker, I congratulate Darcy Howard, an employee of Forbes' stock and station agents MCC Chudleigh Dobell, who has brought NSW honour to the firm. One of three Forbes-based auctioneers to make the state finals of Young Auctioneer 2024, contested as part of the Royal Easter Show in Sydney, Mr Howard was judged the best of a field of 10 after an intense sale. He also endured a nerve-racking time waiting for his turn, having drawn the 10th position, meaning he was the last to stand up. To earn the title of NSW Young Auctioneer for 2024, Mr Howard auctioned three steers from Molong farmer Stuart Hobbs and modestly credited their presentation as a big part of his success. He also paid tribute to Jack Whitty and Ryan Brown from another Forbes firm who contested the finals and performed admirably, Ryan earning a highly-commended note. As the NSW winner, Darcy will now contest the Australian Young Auctioneer finals in 2025. Mr Speaker, the Forbes Central West Livestock Exchange is an integral part of the district's rural ethos and the industry is in safe hands with Darcy, Jack and Ryan involved.

**ORANGE CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I would like to applaud connections of the Orange Chamber Music Festival, which has just completed a fifth event on its way to becoming one of the leading cultural events in regional NSW. Founded and curated by Orange musicians in 2019, this not-for-profit festival delivers a diverse program which highlights local talent and artists with international performance experience. This year's festival, which was a highlight of Orange's arts calendar for March, brought together 60 artists and ensembles performing at a dozen venues in around Orange. Performances included casual café concerts to more formal recitals. The goal of the festival, according to director Carmen Nieves, is to showcase Orange as a cultural destination and this appears to be working with more than 80 per cent of audiences coming from outside the city. A goal of the festival is also to make chamber and classical music more accessible to rural communities. Mr Speaker, with Orange on the verge of creating the infrastructure to become a true regional music hub with its \$25 million Conservatorium

of Music project, events like the Orange Chamber Music Festival are of enormous value and I congratulate the team behind this year's successful event.

### **PNP CONSTRUCTIONS**

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden)**—I would once again like to acknowledge the fantastic work of a business located in the Camden electorate, PNP Constructions, who have had their outstanding work recognised once again taking home the top prize in the Bathroom Improvement category of the 2024 Australian Small Business Champion Awards. Currently, the only recognition awards program that celebrates the achievements and considerable economic, social, and cultural contribution of Australia's small business. The Awards specifically highlights the finest of Australia's small businesses in the retail, services, and manufacturing industries across a total of more than 100 categories. The team at PNP design, build and create high end bespoke and stress-free complex home modifications and Specialist Disability Accommodation properties for people living with disabilities so they can live in safety and comfort. PNP Constructions have outdone themselves once again, proving any small business can make a huge impact for so many people in society. This award truly recognises their continual efforts to make a positive impact in the lives of people living with a disability. Congratulations PNP Constructions for winning this award, to Eva, Marcus and all of the team, you certainly deserve it.

### **MOTHER'S DAY**

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden)**—On Mother's Day, we should all take a moment to acknowledge all that mums do. We are all thankful for the positive impact our mums make in our lives. In many respects they are the unsung heroes who keep this State together. Those of us who have the privilege of having our mum in our life should realise how lucky we are. Mums often do work that goes unnoticed, from mundane tasks to occasional moments of joy, mothers always without expectation of acknowledgment or praise do incredible work, whether that be at home, in the workplace or in the community. I especially wish all the mothers in Camden and a very happy Mother's Day for this Sunday the 12th of May and thank them for all they do to keep the community running. So, here's to all the mums, the true unsung heroes of our society.

### **APPIN MASSACRE MEMORIAL SERVICE**

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden)**—On Sunday 14th April, I had the honour to attend the Appin Massacre Memorial ceremony hosted by the Wunga Myamly Reconciliation Group to pay respect to the Dharawal people murdered by the British Military on the orders of Governor Macquarie on the 17th of April 1816. What happened on this day, 208 years ago, is one of the most heinous killings of the colonial Australian period. Remembering this day is an important part of healing and reconciliation. It was a wonderful ceremony to attend, some of the stories that were told were absolutely heartbreaking, but it was fantastic to see so many local people turn out to honour the victims and legacy of this tragedy. Thank you to all those who put on and supported this wonderful event including, the Tharawal Land Council, Aboriginal Communities of Macarthur Region, and the NSW Reconciliation Council.

### **DR MOHEB GHALY OAM**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to congratulate Dr Moheb Ghaly OAM as he celebrated half a century in medicine. While studying medicine, Dr Ghaly only ever wanted to be a surgeon. He graduated in Egypt in 1974 and started his internship on his birthday. Now, Dr Ghaly has a private practice and is a medical officer operating at Manning Base Hospital, as well as Mayo Private Hospital and the Cape Hawke Hospital in Forster. Dr Ghaly is an exceptional surgeon and has been practising medicine in Taree for 38 years of his 50-year career, he has mentored countless medical students and trainees - benefiting our community in many ways. On the 1st of March, having only just finished an operation and cleaning up, Dr Ghaly came down the halls of the Mayo Private Hospital to find himself walking through an applauding guard of honour - a spontaneous show of the respect afforded to him from his work colleagues, some of them still in scrubs from the operating theatre. Congratulations Dr Ghaly, on this incredible milestone - thank you for the countless lives you have impacted and for your contributions to our community over the years.

### **DONNA YARNOLD**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to recognise Donna Yarnold for her efforts in organising Pink Stumps Day to raise money for the McGrath Foundation. The Taree West Cricket Club Mums and their children, all dressed in pink, battled it out on the pitch against each other at Taree. There were two games of cricket, one for under 15s and another for under 10s. Overall, the event raised \$2,535 for the McGrath Foundation, which included an online fundraiser. \$357 was raised at Taree City Central, with the rest being made up on the day with the sale of cupcakes, raffles and other activities. The McGrath Foundation funds the McGrath Breast Care Nurses. Congratulations to Donna and the Taree West Cricket Club, thank you for raising funds for a worthy cause.

### ROSEMARY SINCLAIR AO

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to acknowledge Rosemary Sinclair AO for her 15 years of advocacy dedicated to First Steps Count Child and Community Centre. First Steps Count is not your typical childcare centre, it's a welcoming space where families with children aged 0-12 can connect, while accessing support and services to improve health, education and wellbeing outcomes for their children. Earlier this year, First Steps Count celebrated the official opening of its second stage which included a purpose-built playroom, a nature-based playground that blends beautifully with the surroundings, a co-working space and additional facilities for families and staff. This milestone marked the culmination of a 15-year endeavour, with Rosemary and Dr. David Gillespie, Federal Member for Lyne, jointly cutting the ribbon to officially declare the centre open. Thank you Rosemary, your vision and dedication has been instrumental in bringing this valuable resource to our community. With over 100 families participating in playgroup sessions every Wednesday, it's clear that this centre is making a real difference in people's lives.

### HILLS LITTLE ATHLETICS AWARDS PRESENTATION

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—On Sunday, 7th April 2024 I attended the Hills Little Athletics Awards Ceremony. The club this year had an amazing 830 registered athletes. The club had a successful year with 105 athletes qualifying for the Little Athletics State Championships. There were five athletes within the U13 to U15 Age Groups selected to represent NSW at the Little Athletics National Championships. Congratulations to Xavier Zhara U13 Boys, Hayden Free U13 Boys, Oliva Scott-Rogers U14 Girls, Amelia Newman U14 Girls, and Keegan Free U15 Boys. The club inducted two new Life Members and I congratulate the new Life Members, Feona Henness and Sophie Roche. Five Athletes were recognised as Athletes of Year, and I recognise Savannah Cox – Junior Girl; Owen Tang – Junior Boy; Cameron Bloem – Senior Boy; Olivia Scott-Rogers and Annissa Quee – co-winners for Senior Girl. I recognise volunteers Neil Jackson who was awarded the Keith Gray Award and Isal Berry who was awarded the President's Award. Lastly, the club also recognised Olivia Bloem and Benjamin Kasozi who whilst reaching the end of their Little Athletics journey each qualified for the State Championships in each of the 9 years it was possible. Congratulations to Hills Little Athletics.

### CASTLE HILL RSL CRICKET CLUB, ANNUAL AWARDS PRESENTATION, CLUB PERSON OF THE YEAR

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—On 28 April 2024 I attended the Castle Hill RSL Cricket club Annual Awards Presentation. The Award Presentation was the club's 165th Awards Presentation. The club has a long and proud tradition playing its first game in 1858 and currently has around 500 playing members across all formats ranging from Junior Blasters through to Vintage teams. One of the important awards presented each year is the Club Person of the Year. I congratulate the nominees who were Petar Sredojevic, Darren Jenkins and Don Jayokody. The Club Person of the year was Mohit Shivdasani. Mohit was the Under 15 Coach. Mohit organised two players to be put through the Duke of Edinburgh program. Since moving to Castle Hill from Melbourne in 2018 Mohit has played an active part in the club as an assistant coach and manager. This year Mohit stepped up and faced the challenge of being the lead coach for a new team for this year. Mohit faced the challenge with passion and enthusiasm. Thank you, Mohit, for your passion and dedication to the Castle Hill RSL Cricket Club.

### NORTH-WEST SCHOOLS RUGBY CHAMPIONSHIPS

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—I announce the commencement of the North-West Schools Rugby Championship, a new Rugby Championship to be played by schools in the North-West Sydney region. The opening match of the championship was held between Redfield College and William Clarke College at Redfield College on 03 May 2024. NWSRC is an exciting new schools-based Rugby Union competition aimed at revitalising Rugby Union across the region. The championship is founded on the principles of local growth, rugby resurgence, and community unity. With the participation of esteemed schools such as Redfield, William Clarke, Arndell Anglican, Rouse Hill Anglican, Pacific Hills Christian School, and Penrith Anglican, NWSRC will showcase thrilling competition across three divisions. Julien Perrottet, Championship Director and head coach at Redfield stated, "Looking ahead, our vision extends to incorporating a women's 7s division and expanding the championship to primary schools. The enthusiasm for rugby revival and excellence is palpable, with numerous schools expressing interest in joining next year and seeking rugby development programs to reignite the sport within their schools. We also aim to give the students an experience they will never forget." I commend Julien and everyone involved in the formation of this new and exciting Rugby Championship.

### BIRTHDAY MESSAGE - KERRY MARANDO

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in wishing Kerry Marando a joyous 70th birthday! Her spouse, George, asked me to deliver the following message in the NSW Parliament: "Wishing my wonderful wife the happiest and healthiest 70th 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 Kerry's day a little extra special. May this birthday be filled with love, laughter, and cherished moments that can be taken forward on life's journey. Wishing you continued happiness and prosperity in the years ahead. Happy birthday Kerry!

#### **BIPOLAR AUSTRALIA 10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in wishing Bipolar Australia a happy 10th birthday! Bipolar Australia was founded on 22 April 2014, by a group of people with bipolar and their carers. Its purpose was to become the peak not-for-profit organisation supporting everyone affected by bipolar disorders, including people with the condition, their carers and families, mental health services, professionals and researchers. Bipolar Disorder is a serious lifelong mental health condition which features pronounced mood swings. The condition was formerly known as manic-depression and affects about 600,000 Australians. Bipolar can be diagnosed, treated, and well managed. The team, including founding member and Ryde constituent Michael Blowol, believe every person affected by a bipolar disorder should be provided with effective support, so they can live well and fulfill their potential. Bipolar Australia encourages the formation of Bipolar Support Groups; develops broad-based education programs including publications and online courses, assists scientific research, and holds campaigns to raise community awareness of the condition and fight stigma. Happy Birthday to all their volunteers in this our first decade of hard work. No doubt there will be many more to come.

#### **BIRTHDAY MESSAGE - OLIVIA KRSTIC**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in wishing Olivia Krstic a joyous 13th birthday! Her father, Frank, shared these heartfelt words: "Dear Olivia, wishing you a wonderful birthday now that you are turning thirteen. We hope you have a fantastic birthday. Congratulations on becoming a teenager. Remember to always believe in yourself and make your own kind of music. Wishing you good health and a happy life. With lots of love and best wishes from Mum and Dad." 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 Olivia's day a little extra special. May this birthday be filled with love, laughter, and cherished moments that can be taken forward on life's journey. Wishing you continued happiness and prosperity in the years ahead. Happy birthday Olivia!

#### **JACK & JILL KINDERGARTEN HORNSBY**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby)**—Jack & Jill Kindergarten Hornsby has operated for 63 years with families connecting through multiple generations. They see each child as an individual and nurture skills to help them to reach their full potential and become responsible citizens within their community. Pearl Sachinwalla has a 27-year connection with the centre starting as a parent in 1997. In 2002 she started teaching casually covering a maternity leave position, which led to permanent employment in 2003. In 2012 she took on the role of teaching Director and in 2018 Pearl moved into the role of Director/Inclusion support teacher. Pearl has worked hard to ensure that the preschool is a place where everyone is welcome and all children regardless of ability, gender, language, or culture, are equally valued. A large part of the centre's success is because Pearl spends large parts of every day in the classroom working with the children. This is how she is able to model inclusive practice. Pearl works hard to lead by example and empower staff to be their best. Karen Fenwick and Kathy Norris have both been dedicated educators at the Jack & Jill, Hornsby for 18 years.

#### **MAREE SUMPTON**

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby)**—Today I recognize Maree Sumpton, a very special lady to so many in the electorate of Hornsby. Maree retired as Principal of Hornsby North Public School last year, after serving in that role for a quarter of a century. Mrs Sumpton was always deeply committed to high quality teaching and learning programs. She created an environment at the school that allowed each child to pursue and ultimately achieve their own personal best in all aspects of school life. This includes academic pursuits, sports, arts and leadership. Maree Sumpton's long term influence at Hornsby North Public School played a significant part in the school achieving a ranking in the top 10 of all NSW Primary Schools for NAPLAN. An extraordinary achievement! Maree has always been widely recognized as a leader with purpose, commitment and dedication, as well as an educator who openly displays care, courtesy and common sense. Her open-door policy and belief that education is a partnership between her teachers and the family has earned her widespread respect and admiration. Thank you, Maree, for your dedication to the community and to education. I highly value your friendship and wish you the best in your deserved retirement.

#### **GRENFELL GARDEN CLUB**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—The dedicated volunteers of Grenfell Garden Club are always finding new ways to support our community. Just this week, they organised their Biggest Morning Tea, raising

an impressive \$767 for Cancer research. Recently, the club extended its support to a local family to assist with the travel costs associated with their sick child's specialist appointments in Sydney. Further, the Garden Club has supported The Nepal School Fund, which provides feminine hygiene packages allowing young women to attend classroom education. This act of compassion and community spirit embodies the values of the Garden Club, fostering a sense of empathy and connection. In the coming months, the Grenfell Garden Club will mark a significant milestone—its 60th birthday, with over 35 members and guests coming together in celebration. The Grenfell Garden Club provides a therapeutic way of connecting with nature, with others in the community and bringing like-minded people together to share ideas on all things relating to plants, flowers, horticulture, landscaping and wildlife. These contributions by the Grenfell Garden Club benefit the whole community both locally and internationally. Well done on your fund-raising efforts.

### ANGLERS COMPETITION

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—Members of the Ganmain and Grong Grong Anglers clubs, united by their love for fishing, engaged in a spirited battle for the top cup at the annual Ganmain versus Grong Grong Anglers' competition. With much excitement the two (2) clubs set sail along the Murrumbidgee with 15 boats on the water including 50 people in attendance. A total of 64 Cod, four trout cod, one yellow belly, one silver perch, and four carp were reeled in on the day, adding to the friendly competition between the rivaling towns. The boat that caught the greatest number of fish during the competition belonged to Michael, Sarah, Harper, and Willow Powell. Nita Jessup was named Lady Angler for her catch of a 69cm Cod. The biggest Cod caught went to Chris Nelson with his catch of a 70cm. Doug Lander claimed the yellow belly prize with his catch of a 50cm yellow belly, and Max caught the silver perch. The top prize of the Tindle/Reynolds Cup was closely fought out, but the prize was finally awarded to the Grong Grong Anglers. Well done to both Anglers Clubs on a successful competition.

### FIFTY YEARS OF SERVICE

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—It's not every day that we get to acknowledge 50 years of service as Justice of the Peace. Yet, for two constituents from the shires of Cowra and Gundagai, this extraordinary milestone became a reality. Mr. Bill Murphy, OAM of Cowra, and Mr. David Malligan of Burra Creek, within the Gundagai Region, were both bestowed with a rare honour. They were invited to attend a special ceremony at NSW Parliament House in April 2024, where they were presented with their 50-year recognition certificates. Mr Murphy, his wife Christine, and 150 other Justices of the Peace attended the ceremony. The Attorney General of NSW, Mr Michael Daley, presented Mr Murphy with his certificate. Mr Malligan was unable to attend. Justice of the Peace (JP) are invaluable members of New South Wales and play a crucial voluntary role in their local communities. A JP's primary roles are to witness a person making a statutory declaration or affidavit and to certify copies of original documents. I have no doubt, over the past 50 years, Mr Murphy and Mr Malligan have signed their fair share of documentation. I congratulate and thank them for their service.

### KEVIN TREVITT

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport)**—I would like to acknowledge and congratulate Mr Kevin Trevitt, Vice President of the Bayside Men's Shed in Kyeemagh for being awarded the Shed's first ever Certificate of Excellence. Prior to joining the Men's Shed, Kevin had a diverse background. He was a chemist, then an electrician and finally became a pilot. After he retired, being the resourceful and innovative person he is, Kevin invented a unique way of extracting the silver from photographic solution in commercial quantities. Kevin is also the primary carer for his wife. Kevin is known as a kind, humble, caring and patient human being. His fellow members enjoy his great sense of humour and his good listening skills. Kevin has had an extremely positive impact at the Men's Shed and is regarded by his colleagues as a thorough gentleman, always ready to help. His tenacity and never-give-up attitude is contagious, and his fellow members feel privileged to have Kevin amongst them. I applaud Kevin for the honour bestowed on him and I wish him well for the future.

### GRAFTON ROWING CLUB

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I would like to congratulate Grafton Rowing Club for hosting the "Head of the Clarence" and 2023 Regatta in December last year. With over 60 rowers hailing from various towns in the Northern Rivers region such as Iluka, Grafton, Murwillumbah and Lismore the competition was fierce. Additionally, teams from two Brisbane schools competed, creating an exciting atmosphere full of camaraderie and sportsmanship. The Grafton Rowing Club are to be commended for their warm hospitality throughout the weekend, making all participants feel welcome and appreciated. The weather held up for the event and as our mighty Clarence River would have to be one of the best, it made for the perfect location for such a prestigious event. Well done to Grafton Rowing Club, organisers and competitors alike for a fantastic weekend of rowing.



**KIMBERLEY MCPHILLIPS**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I would like to acknowledge the outstanding achievements of Mrs Kimberley McPhillips, Clarence Valley teacher and Digital Classroom Officer. Mrs McPhillips was recently recognised by the NSW Department of Education's Rural Access Gap Program, as an outstanding Digital Classroom Officer. The Program has created more than 1000 Digital Classroom Officer roles, significantly improving teacher confidence in using digital tools. This has led to enhanced student engagement and improved academic results. Notably, Mrs McPhillips was the sole representative from the Clarence Valley, making her achievement all the more remarkable. Mrs McPhillips stood out as one of only 30 Digital Classroom Officers selected and was invited to share her journey and make a presentation at the Information Technology Directorate, in Sydney, and was honoured with an award for her contributions. This recognition is a testament to her exceptional skills and dedication in the field, marking a truly outstanding accomplishment. Congratulations Kimberley, and well done.

**MACLEAN LION'S YOUTH OF THE YEAR WINNERS**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I would like to congratulate Maclean High School Students, Millie Speirs and Imogen Hinde for the outstanding leadership and impressive talent displayed at the Lion's Youth of the Year Event 2023. Millie has been crowned the 2023 Maclean Lion's Youth of the Year Final Winner, while Imogen has earned the title of the 2023 Maclean Lion's Youth of the Year, Public Speaking Winner. Millie's victory will now see her advancing to the next level of competition, showcasing her skills on a broader platform. Well done to the Maclean Lions club for providing such a valuable opportunity for students to shine and grow. Your support and dedication to fostering the development of our youth are truly commendable. Well done Millie and Imogen, on such a fantastic achievement.

**PAUL BARBER, KERRY BACKHOUSE, RONALD GRAY - 50 YEAR JUSTICE OF THE PEACE**

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury)**—Mr Speaker, I rise to congratulate three outstanding members of the Hawkesbury community. In April, Mr Paul Barber and Mrs Kerry Backhouse were recognised by the NSW Attorney General, for 50 years' service as Justices of the Peace to 2023. Mr Ron Gray was recognised in April for his 50 Years service as a Justice of the Peace which he reached in 2022. A Justice of the Peace performs an important voluntary role in our society as they assist people in the Justice system in matters of statutory declarations and certifying copies of original documents. I thank Mr Barber, Mrs Backhouse and Mr Gray for their selfless contribution to the people of Hawkesbury.

**POTGIETER FAMILY**

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury)**—Mr Speaker, I pay tribute to the Potgieter family from North Richmond. The Potgieters fled violence and land takeovers in Rhodesia in 1978. Their farm at Bulawayo had been in their family since the 1890s. Edward and Radiance were married in 1958 and farmed until squatters and the Government forced them off their farm. Edward, Radiance and their four daughters, Theresa, Angela, Tracey and Anita arrived in Australia with two hundred dollars and a few personal belongings. They worked hard, saved and asked for no help from Government. Edward was a printing engineer. They rented then bought a house in Westmead before moving to North Richmond forty years ago. Edward passed away in March 2021 after sixty-four years of marriage to Radiance. Radiance says she is grateful to Australia, but I believe our country should appreciate the contribution her family has made as self-reliant, productive new Australians.

**EISHA JOY HOBSON**

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury)**—Mr Speaker, Eisha Joy Hobson is a Year 7 student at Windsor High School. She is a passionate advocate for the environment. Eisha was recognised at the 2024 Stargazer Pageant and was crowned Miss Little Junior and Teen Earth Australia 2024. Her talents in singing and modelling complement her interest in environmental issues. I would like to acknowledge Eisha Joy Hobson for her achievement as Miss Teen Earth. I look forward to hearing more about her contributions to the Hawkesbury community, her school development and advocacy for the environment. We should all be encouraged to see the next generation caring so deeply for the future of the country. Thank you Mr Speaker.

**GYMEA ANGLICAN CHURCH MOBILE FOOD PANTRY FIFTH ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I congratulate GyMEA Anglican Church on the fifth anniversary of its mobile food pantry. The pantry operates on the first and third Thursday of each month and provides food at subsidised rates to locals who are struggling to make ends meet. GyMEA Anglican coordinates the visits by the Anglicare pantry van, which offers people the chance to fill their shopping bags for \$12 with food that would normally cost \$60. The mobile pantry has become a vital service for many facing cost of living pressures and helps an average of 15 people on each visit. I recognise the efforts of the volunteer team that has helped provide

the service – coordinator Stephen Leitch, Pam Wilmington, Jenny Crowe, David Thornton, Joan Riley, Souad Kneissner, Trish Stockbridge, Daphne Lee, Shan Leece, Anne Stephenson, Rochelle Andrew, Maureen Cartwright and Kingsley Minty.

#### **CRONULLA HIGH SCHOOL – WORLD'S GREATEST SHAVE**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I recognise Cronulla High School students who've raised more than \$16,500 for the Leukaemia Foundation in the World's Greatest Shave. The whole school gathered at an assembly on 26 March to watch students have their hair cut, shaved, or coloured to raise money to help give people facing blood cancer life-changing practical and emotional support and fund critical research. Congratulations to all students who came away with new hairstyles or donated money to the event for such a great cause. I highlight the efforts of four students who shaved their hair off and raised more than \$1000 each - Isla Penwarden (\$2,500), Katherine Imlay (\$1,806), Rik O'Leary (\$1,668) and James Young (\$1,103) - and the work of teachers Kate Hollywood and Wade Kelly who drove the event.

#### **RECOGNITION OF VOLUNTEER PETER TITMUS**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—Wingecarribee resident Peter Titmuss is the deserving recipient of the Southern Highlands Community Foundation's 'Highlands Hero' award for April 2024. Peter is a volunteer for Bradman Foundation, and over the last two years has focussed his efforts on repairs and renovations at the Bradman Museum and Oval Precinct. The home of cricket legend Donald Bradman is a renowned feature of Bowral in the Southern Highlands, and thanks to Peter's hard work and efforts the Bradman Museum and Oval Precinct is ready to welcome many more visitors well into the future. The award is accompanied by a \$5000 grant to the volunteer's organisation, which the museum plans to use for tools and equipment to help Peter maintain the presentation and safety of the Museum and grounds. Peter is known for his commitment, work ethic and high standard to which he holds himself and his work around the Museum. The immaculately maintained and presented Museum and grounds is credited to Peter. Being a self funded not-for-profit organisation, the museum benefits from the time and efforts that volunteers from the community contribute, and Peter is an example of selfless giving for the betterment of others.

#### **BRIDGERTON IN BOWRAL**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—I can't think of a better place than Bowral, the charming country town, to have been chosen for the world premier of the latest season on Bridgerton. Over one week in April, Bowral looked even more beautiful with Corbett Gardens and Bong Bong Street decorated in the romantic Regency style. The Southern Highlands put on a show worthy of the Netflix sensation Bridgerton, which has charmed millions of viewers worldwide. Local favourite Empire Cinemas screened premiers of the third season, and locals and visitors attended a Regency-themed garden party at Milton Park with the stars of the show. Drawing many visitors to the town, the event has spotlighted two significant sites in the Highlands, historic Milton Park Country House and Retford park, the instantly recognizable pink heritage manor, donated to National Trust NSW by James Fairfax. I would like to recognise the many local businesses who got behind this event, showing their support by decorating their storefronts, offering Bridgerton themed activities and showing the world the best that the Highlands has to offer.

#### **SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS BOTANIC GARDENS EDUCATION CENTRE**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—It was an absolute pleasure to be at The Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens (SHBG) with Stephen Jones MP, Mr Viv May, Wingecarribee Shire Council, all the wonderful Volunteers, Committee and Community attendees to officially open their new Education Centre. The Southern Highlands Botanical Gardens latest project is yet another significant achievement in the development of this local attraction. The new Education Centre offers indoor and outdoor learning activities, practical gardening experiences and, immersive horticultural education, hands-on learning all year round. Benefactors Chris B and Charles M were very generous in providing additional funding support for sheds and equipment for SHBG, a community operated not-for-profit charitable company wholly run by volunteers. Well done to everyone involved and thanks to the support of volunteers, the community, and funding from both the Federal and NSW Government and support from Council, as well as the impeccable commitment of the construction team and Pitch Studio, the Education Centre was made possible. In the cool climate and often delightfully icy winter months of Southern Highlands weather, education can now take place at any time, as the Botanic Gardens welcomes the community in this beautiful new building.

#### **THE INAUGURAL IFTAR COMMUNITY DINNER – CANLEY VALE HIGH SCHOOL 2024**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—On 4th April 2024, I was honoured to participate in the inaugural Iftar Community Dinner held at Canley Vale High School. The event brought together students, staff, and community members in a display of unity and solidarity during the holy month of Ramadan. I was delighted to see Ms. Effie

Niarchos, the Principal of Canley Vale High School, and Ms. Lisa Porter, the Director of Fairfield area, at the school. Their commitment to fostering inclusivity and understanding within the school community is truly commendable, and their support added to the significance of the occasion. I extend my gratitude to Ms. Rana Abedine, the Community Liaison Officer, for her tireless efforts in organizing this meaningful event. It was evident that her dedication and hard work contributed to the success of the evening, which provided an opportunity for people from diverse backgrounds to come together. The Iftar Community Dinner holds profound significance symbolizing the values of compassion, empathy, and respect that are central to the spirit of Ramadan. It was a privilege to be part of such a meaningful gathering and to witness the strength of our community.

#### **CABRAMATTA LUNAR NEW YEAR FESTIVAL 2024**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—On the 24th February 2024, tens of thousands of locals and visitors visited the Cabramatta Lunar New Year Festival organised by our local Fairfield City Council. This marks the auspicious arrival of the Year of the Dragon with vibrant and colourful celebrations. I had the privilege of attending the opening ceremony with the attendance of many distinguished guests in my local area, including Leaders of local Communities, Clubs and Associations, Mayor, Councillors and more. The essence of Asian tradition and culture permeated the festival grounds, manifesting in captivating lion dancing performances, immersive workshops, exhilarating martial arts displays, and serene calligraphy stations. Children revelled in a myriad of engaging activities and games, while amusement rides added an extra layer of excitement. As day turned to night, the local restaurants bustled with diners savouring culinary delights, ensuring a feast for both the senses and the soul. The festivities reached a crescendo with a mesmerizing fireworks spectacle, illuminating the night sky in a dazzling array of colours.

#### **COMMUNITY IFTAR DINNER – BONNYRIGG MOSQUE 2024**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—The 8th April 2024, marked a truly special occasion as I had the privilege of participating in the Community Iftar Dinner hosted at the Bonnyrigg Mosque. This gathering exemplified the essence of community spirit and inclusivity, bringing together individuals from diverse backgrounds to share in the spirit of Ramadan. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Executive team and Mr Adem Cetinay, the Public Officer of the Bonnyrigg Turkish Islamic Cultural Association, for extending their generous invitation. Their dedication to fostering harmony and understanding among different communities is truly commendable, and it was an honour to be a part of such a meaningful event. As we shared in the traditional Iftar meal, the warmth and fellowship among attendees were evident. The atmosphere was filled with a sense of unity and commonality, transcending cultural and religious differences. Events like the Community Iftar Dinner serve as powerful reminders of the importance of coming together in times of celebration and reflection. They offer a glimpse into the richness of our cultural tapestry that unite us as members of the broader community. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to partake in this memorable evening.

#### **JONES FAMILY RETIREMENT**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to acknowledge the Jones family, who after 4 decades in the hospitality business are stepping away from the Quality Resort Siesta in Lavington. Raymond and wife Tina first took the reins back in 1983, before passing it onto son Stephen and his wife Nolene. Over the years the popular resort, has grown from 38 rooms and an outdoor pool to 88 rooms, two restaurants, and indoor pool and its much-loved spa shaped like a Mexican sombrero hat. The Siesta has won countless Australian and International awards recognising its excellence customer service and guest experience. Guests have included celebrities Jimmy Barnes, Peter Garrett and Eric Bana. The fact that many of the resort's 60 staff have worked at the venue for over 20 years speaks to the values and culture that the Jones' have instilled in their much-loved business. Stephen and Nolene, I wish you both the best in your well-deserved retirement, your drive to advance Albury's hospitality industry is to be commended.

#### **CHARLIE DUNN'S SHEARING DREAM**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to acknowledge a remarkable young man named Charlie Dunn, who at just 12, is fast gaining a reputation as a young gun on the Australian shearing circuit. The Culcairn youngster, who first took to the shears at just five years old on pet lambs first learning how to blade shear before expanding to an electric hand piece, recently set a personal record of shearing 130 sheep in day. Parents Donna and Clint as well as older sister Matilda, have proudly welcomed the ongoing positive feedback and encouragement the Walla Walla St Pauls College Year 7 student receives from the older generations, who deeply value the connection to the land and traditional farming practices that Charlie embodies. Charlie, many say you make shearing look easy, but we know that it's not a simple task at all. Well done, for your infectious enthusiasm in farming and for your ongoing passion to "cleanly take the wool off the sheep".

### **SHELLHARBOUR JUNIOR FOOTBALL CLUB**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to congratulate the Shellharbour Junior Football Club for being awarded Club Changer of the Year by the national governing body, Football Australia. The esteemed award recognises the club's outstanding contributions to the local community, and its dedication to fostering a positive environment for young footballers. The club was nominated by Football NSW for Club Changer of the Year due to its drive to boost female participation rates. Shellharbour's numbers have grown year-on-year, with 1100 juniors registered for 2024. Their recent Summer Football competition saw 1500 players take part. The club also has teams in both the men's and women's Illawarra Premier League senior competitions. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate the Shellharbour Junior Football Club on this wonderful achievement and wish the whole organisation well for the current football season.

### **LARA PERO**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to congratulate Lara Pero, from Warilla High School, for securing a position in the esteemed Future Leaders Academy. Bailey successfully applied for a place at the Future Leaders Academy Pacific Student Leadership Program to be held in Vanuatu later this year. This is a prestigious international leadership camp linked to the Duke of Edinburgh's Hillary Award. There are only 40 places available for Australian and New Zealand applicants, and to have three of our students selected speaks volumes to their leadership and advocacy skills. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Lara on this wonderful achievement and wish her well in all her future endeavours.

### **CHELSEA JAMES**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to congratulate Chelsea James, from Warilla High School, for securing a position in the esteemed Future Leaders Academy. Bailey successfully applied for a place at the Future Leaders Academy Pacific Student Leadership Program to be held in Vanuatu later this year. This is a prestigious international leadership camp linked to the Duke of Edinburgh's Hillary Award. There are only 40 places available for Australian and New Zealand applicants, and to have three of our students selected speaks volumes to their leadership and advocacy skills. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Chelsea on this wonderful achievement and wish her well in all her future endeavours.

### **HOLI & MAHASHIVRATRI AT RAM KRISHNA TEMPLE**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)**—Ram Krishna Temple in Austral has long been and continues to be a centre of Hindu celebration in my community. I would like to recognise two recent events held at the temple: I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to Ram Krishna Temple in Austral for welcoming Premier Chris Minns and myself for Maha Shivaratri celebrations on 8 March. We were blessed to observe special rituals, blessings, prayer and meditation. It is believed that observing the day with sincerity and devotion leads to the attainment of self-realisation and spiritual enlightenment. I was also fortunate to be in attendance at the Temple again on 24th March for the most joyous occasion of Holi, also known as the Festival of Colours, involving festive activities like throwing coloured powders, singing, dancing, and delicious food. It is always an honour to partake in this celebration with our Hindu community.

### **CHASE BUXTON**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)**—Chase Buxton, a year 7 Student from Eagle Vale High School in my electorate is an avid artistic gymnast. Training at the PCYC Campbelltown and NSW High Performance Centre, in March 2023 he competed at the NSW Senior State gymnastics championship in Sydney and achieved some amazing results. Chase's outstanding performance led to him clinching six gold medals and a silver in his division, thus earning him the title of state champion and securing a spot in the Australian Gymnastics Championships for the first time where he also performed impressively. With such exceptional achievements I have no doubt that we will see more of Chase on the world stage for many years to come.

### **ARYA AWARDS**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)**—On 15 December I joined the Afghan Fajar Association at the Afghan Refugee Youth Achievement (ARYA) Awards Night. The night was a celebration of diversity and the immense talent within the Afghan communities in Sydney. The ARYA Awards focuses on celebrating the contributions of refugees, particularly younger people, to their communities and their efforts in living by their Australian values of community citizenship, volunteering, companionship and giving back. The AFAIC undertake many projects with support from local organisations to reach multicultural youths, particularly those in disadvantaged backgrounds. The work of organisations like AFAIC do to help our refugee communities allows multiculturalism to thrive. It was great to see the achievements of our young people and the empowerment of

people from CALD backgrounds. Thank you to the AFAIC for having me and congratulations to all the volunteers involved in putting together this great event.

#### **NORTHSIDE ENTERPRISES – THE NORTHSIDER**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)**—Mr speaker, I wish to acknowledge the work of Northside Enterprises in my electorate of Manly. Northside enterprises was established for people with disability under the motto 'Supporting People to Support Themselves'. This year, Northside is celebrating 33 years since their first six participants accessed support, and 15 years since the Bushlink program literally broke new ground and found a new approach to deliver inclusion. Coinciding with the anniversaries is the return of 'The Northsider' newsletter, providing updates on the organisation's activities. The original 'Northsider' ran from 2008 to 2016, and now provides rich reference material on the development of Northside Enterprises over the years. The organisation is also enjoying a freshly renovated workplace, made possible through a Community Building Partnership grant. In appreciation of the funding, Northside Enterprises hosted a morning tea to show off their renovations. I was pleased to be included on the guest list, and to see first-hand their new facilities as well as learn more of their support programs. I wish Northside Enterprises every success for the future.

#### **ROTARY CLUB OF BALGOWLAH**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)**—Mr Speaker, I wish to acknowledge the outstanding work of the Rotary Club of Balgowlah in my electorate of Manly. The Club will celebrate its 50th Anniversary at its changeover evening on 19 June. In the past 50 years it has supported many local organisations including Bear Cottage, Lifeline Northern Beaches, Arranounbai School for disabled children, Dalwood Spilstead for vulnerable families, and One Meal. It has provided ongoing support to Balgowlah Boys and Mackellar Girls Schools, as well as the annual Youth Science Challenge and the Herdegen Awards for community achievement to students in years 7 to 11. In regional NSW the club supports the town of Condobolin, and in 2022 conducted a Flood Relief Drive for the NSW Northern Rivers. Some funds also went to our Northern Beaches. Overseas, the Club's support extends to the School of St Jude in Tanzania and is a founding partner of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative. I have had the privilege of attending a number of the Club's events including the presentation of awards. I congratulate the Balgowlah Rotary Club on its 50th Anniversary and wish it well for the next 50 years, and beyond.

#### **STELLA MARIS VISIT TO AYAH**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)**—Mr Speaker, I wish to highlight the comments of a student from the Stella Maris College, Manly, after visiting the recently established Adolescent and Young Adult Hospice or AYAH on the former Manly Hospital site. Isabelle Churchus was accompanied by fellow-students, Pascaal Meleo, Ruby Archer and Caitlin Turnbull. Following the visit, Isabelle wrote in part: I was moved by the patients' love of life and positivity in a situation that most of us can only imagine. It was very shocking to learn the AYAH is the only one of its kind in Australia, meaning that other young people around Australia, who suffer from life threatening diseases, are unable to receive sufficient care for their demographic, as they would be put into palliative care alongside elderly people. I hope there will be more places like this built around Australia. I urge each of you to look up the Adolescent and Young Adult Hospice in Manly and have a look at their incredible work. Well done Isabelle, along with Pascaal, Ruby and Caitlin.

#### **RECOGNISING JESSICA SNOWS ACCOMPLISHMENT**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—The president of the Urunga Football Club, Jess Snow, has been granted a prestigious scholarship to the esteemed Women in Football leadership program. Women from all facets of football will come together for this programme to exchange stories, look at leadership philosophies, talk about influencing and interacting with stakeholders, and discover the importance of networking. The programme aims to advance a person's education and abilities while giving women the self-assurance to pursue leadership positions and/or advance in their careers. Its goals are to give participants a chance for professional growth and to empower female football players to make a bigger, more beneficial impact on the game. This success is a result of Jessica's commitment, vision, and enthusiasm for expanding the roles of women in football. Jess is very dedicated to the Urunga Football Club, where she continues to promote quality and inclusivity. In addition to being a reflection of her own accomplishment, her participation in the Women in Football leadership programme gains recognition for the Urunga Football club and community. I congratulate Jessica on her accomplishment and wish her continued success in this endeavour and beyond.

#### **MALI ADAM SURFING THE WAVES**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—I stand today to recognise the young talented surfer of Crescent Head. Mali Adams is only 13 years old but already making waves on the Australian under 14 girls surfing scene. She is a top contender in the Australian junior Tour and competes all of the country. Just recently, Mali travelled to Phillip Island in Victoria and the sunshine coast in the Queensland to show off her incredible skills. Mali had a

fantastic year in 2023, achieving several incredible feats overall. To mention a few, at the 2023 Ride the Wave Junior Pro - Shortboard tournament, Mali won the silver medal. Mali came out 3rd in the Woolworths surfer Groms comp, with some impressive results at the finals of 2023 year's rip curl gromsearch series also. Mali has also proved this year, 2024, to be promising with a top outcome in winning the under 14 girls title at the first-ever reflections cadet cup in February. Mali's big dream is to represent Australia in surfing at the Olympic games. With her determination and skills, I have no doubt she will make that dream come true.

### LIONS YOUTH FINAL

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—On Saturday, April 6, in Armidale, the Lions Youth of the Year District Final was conducted. Lily Kelsey, a student from Nambucca Heads High School, represented the area with pride. Thus far in the tournament, sixty students from sixteen different Lions Clubs have vying for the privilege of representing the district in the 2024 State Finals, which will take place in Sydney. Lily Kelsey, a representative of the Nambucca Heads Lions Club, was among the six students that made it to the final with Family and Lions members from the Kootingal, Maclean, Gunnedah, Nambucca Heads, Port Macquarie, and Armidale – Dumaresq clubs providing strong support on the day of the competition. Lily presented a five-minute speech on the topics of "Leadership" and "Making first impressions," which are crucial components of her responsibilities as the school captain of Nambucca Heads and the Young Citizen of the Year for Nambucca Valley Council. She received praise for both her school community service projects and her public speaking performance. The judges deliberated for a considerable amount of time in what turned out to be a hotly contested final.

### LIFE AWARDS

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—Congratulations to the Murrumbidgee Local Response Group for winning a prestigious accolade at this year's NSW LiFE Awards, hosted by Suicide Prevention Australia. The response group - which is a collaboration between the Murrumbidgee Primary Health Network (MPHN), Murrumbidgee Local Health District, NSW Police, NSW Ambulance and Wellways – received the Communities in Action Award for its outstanding contributions to suicide prevention. MPHN Acting CEO Narelle Mills says the achievement recognises the importance of collaboration when supporting communities impacted by suicide and will allow a benchmark to be set. Wellways Acting NSW/ACT General Manager Zoe Evans, who travelled to Sydney with MPHN's Suicide Response Coordinator Seryn Adams to accept the award on behalf of the group, said the collaborative approach allows for the provision of tailored support to impacted families and the wider community, helping to prevent further loss of life. The group also received two nominations for awards recognising its Frontline Guide and STOP Campaign which have been pivotal in advancing suicide prevention and aftercare strategies across the region. These are amazing efforts that literally help to save lives and I heartily congratulate all involved for working together to make such a difference.

### MEALS ON WHEELS

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—Every day, volunteers in the Wagga Wagga community do their part to improve the lives of others, among them the dedicated helpers at Meals on Wheels. The organisation recently recognised volunteers for many years of service to the community, with Wagga's Margaret Priest and Mary Dwyer leading the field by each notching up more than 40 years of making a real difference to those in need. After decades of service, Mrs Priest and Mrs Dwyer continue to deliver meals and companionship to appreciative clients. Both women say they have found enormous satisfaction in supporting their clients, many of whom are socially isolated, and their regular visits have made a great difference in keeping people not only fed, but also connected with their community. On behalf of the Wagga Wagga community, I'd like to thank both ladies for their compassion and dedication. My congratulations also to other Wagga volunteers who have reached significant milestones. They are: (20-30 years) Eva Bergmeier, Helen Collie, Julie Hanlon, Lyn Stewart, Robert Nolan, Milton Loiterton, John Craig, Pamela Sweeney, Ruth Wheaton, Inner Wheel Club of Wagga Wagga; (31-40 years) Lesley Nolan, Lynne de Jong, Carmel Pearce and Desmond Salan. Well done to all.

### MARY IRONS

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—Social afternoons with her mother-in-law at a country Red Cross branch six decades ago led Lockhart's Mary Irons to a remarkable milestone in community service. It was at the Faithful branch of the Red Cross – near Boree Creek – where Mrs Irons first joined the globally beloved organisation in 1964. In a lifetime of quiet dedication since, she has volunteered with the Red Cross for countless causes, including supporting troops overseas, disaster relief and lending a hand to local people in times of need. She has also volunteered for Meals on Wheels, her children's school P&C, local sports clubs and more. To this day, she continues to volunteer at Lockhart's Red Cross Op Shop which is as popular with visitors as it is with locals. In celebration of her service, Mrs Irons was recently awarded a rosette to recognise her 60th year with the Red Cross. Modest about her achievements, Mrs Irons says her husband John deserves much of the credit for his

support over the years. Her community, however, knows what wonderful work she has done, and, on their behalf, I would like to say to Mrs Irons, congratulations and thank you for your service.

#### **HITTING THE HIGH NOTES FROM DAWN**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to acknowledge Dr Tony Smith of Howlong, NSW, for his remarkable dedication and talent with the 50th anniversary of his first public performance of 'The Last Post' at the break of day on April 25. Dr Smith, the son of Howlong based Vietnam veteran Colin Smith, has been paying tribute to servicemen and women on the Border through his moving melodies. From a young age, Dr Smith's musical prowess extended beyond the trumpet to becoming skilled in playing 20 different instruments. His dedication to his craft and his heartfelt tributes to our veterans resonate deeply, enriching our community with the power of music and remembrance. I extend my sincere appreciation to Tony for his contributions over the past 50 years which add to the solemnity of the occasion where we remember those who served. Mr Smith's rendition of 'The Last Post' is a powerful tribute, embodying the sacrifice, honour, solemnity, and respect for our fallen members of the armed services.

#### **CELEBRATING THE 95TH BONALBO SHOW**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—It was a pleasure to speak at the official opening ceremony for the 95th Bonalbo Show, which was well attended and another success for President David Whitney and his hard-working committee. As Mr Whitney wrote in his President's message, the show was a celebration of the agriculture and rural endeavours across the local community. "The committee strives to provide an event for the local district that offers something of interest to everyone," he wrote. "We could not hold our show without our exhibitors, our hard-working volunteers, and our generous sponsors, and we extend our thanks to them for their continued support." I'd also like to recognise Mr Whitney's fellow office bearers -- Secretary Michelle Malt, Treasurer Todd Weston, Vice-Presidents James Fraser, Tom Amos and Owen Osborne. Committee members include Merlene Allen, Daryl Amos, Jarrod Hodges, Donald Johnston, Paul Johnston Snr, Ellen Lowe, Clive Newton, Gavin Smith, Chris Whitney and Joy Whitney. In the weeks leading up to this year's show, I had been laid low by a bout of Covid, so I ensured I was fully recovered before attending. It was just great to get out and about at a picture perfect Bonalbo Showground.

#### **DRAKE LAND RETURNED TO ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I Want to warmly congratulate Jubullum Local Aboriginal Land Council – its Board members and Chief Executive Officer Michelle Nagas – on their successful land claim near the village of Drake in Tenterfield Shire. The New South Wales Government will return 104.4 hectares of Crown land at the western edge of the village as freehold land to the ownership of the Land Council. I appreciate the dedication and hard work that Jubullum LALC and the NSW Aboriginal Land Council have put in to reach what is a landmark win worth celebrating. The local Aboriginal community rightfully is proud of their culture and history, and securing this land, to which they have deep ties, represents the start of a more prosperous future. Michelle Nagas said: "The approval of this land claim is very exciting. It involves a substantial block of land close to Drake village, which provides strong opportunities. "We will have discussions with the Land Council and consultations with the community on the future use of the site," Michelle said. Under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983, Local Aboriginal Land Councils and the NSW Aboriginal Land Council have a right to lodge claims on Crown land.

#### **GREEN HATS FOR AARON LOOKING OUT FOR APPRENTICES**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I Commend the Green Hats for Aaron Facebook page for keeping alive the memory of the late Aaron 'AZ' Fryer, then 17, who was just five weeks into his plumbing apprenticeship when he was struck by an unsecured excavator bucket and killed. Everyone deserves to come home from work, and I congratulate Aaron's parents Justine and Ian, and campaign ambassadors Leigh Matthews, Byron Davies and Ian Anderson, for raising awareness of workplace death and injury. I thank the increasing number of companies who are issuing green hard hats for their young apprentices, identifying them as new and inexperienced to industry. Thanks to our union leaders and delegates who have been so encouraging of embedding this simple but effective initiative in workplace health and safety best practice. I note that my Parliamentary colleague Tweed MP Geoff Provest champions the campaign. We pause on International Workers' Memorial Day or Workers' Mourning Day each year to remember workers like Aaron Fryer. It's a day of remembrance and action for workers killed, disabled, injured or made unwell by their work. In New South Wales, an event was held at Darling Harbour's Reflection Park on 29 April.

#### **FORSIGHT**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I was pleased to recently meet with Andrew Harvey, CEO, and Michael Cockerton, COO, of Forsight to hear about Forsight's work as a not for profit, for-purpose

organisation. Foresight provides Supported Independent Living to individuals with a range of sensory impairments and additional disabilities, including through two Supported Independent Living homes in my electorate of Badgerys Creek. It was a delight to tour one of their Supported Independent Living homes. The organisation was established in 1978 by a group of parents and teachers who wanted to ensure that their children had a pathway to independent living as young adults and beyond. This led to the establishment of a supported living home for adults who were blind or deafblind. Today, the organisation's mission has expanded to include people with a range of sensory impairments and additional disabilities in a growing number of homes. I commend the organisation for the important work they do in creating safe, comfortable and nurturing environments where individuals belong and thrive.

#### **PURE PILATES LUDDENHAM**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I congratulate Yvonne Cameron for spearheading a new Mat Pilates fitness venture in Luddenham, by the name of Pure Pilates. Pure Pilates seeks to enhance the health and wellbeing of all participants and is a welcome addition to our local community. I'm delighted that an individual of Yvonne's knowledge and experience in the field of health and fitness is working towards building a community of health-conscious individuals in our very own region. Her commitment to this field has seen her transform from a gym enthusiast to a qualified personal trainer and instructor. In addition to Mat Pilates, Yvonne is also a qualified Personal Trainer, Body Pump, Body Combat, Body Attack, Body Balance, X55, Heartmoves for Older Adults and Reformer Pilates instructor. On behalf of the Badgerys Creek electorate, I congratulate Yvonne Cameron on the opening of Pure Pilates and I wish her success in all her endeavours.

#### **SAVAGE CREW**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I congratulate Oran Park local Daniel Quintano of Oran Park business 'Savage Crew' on Savage Crew's recent establishment as a health and fitness business dedicated to the local community. Locals and visitors alike are able to participate in Savage Crew's specialisation of outdoor group fitness, with classes held at Julia Reserve in Oran Park. I'm pleased to learn that there are classes to cater for all, including those with busy schedules, with sessions available throughout different parts of the weekday. It's wonderful to see Savage Crew's focus on working together with their members to build a great community where everyone supports each other in working towards their goals, particularly in the growing and vibrant area of Oran Park. I congratulate Daniel Quintano and Savage Crew on the establishment of the business and wish them the best as they continue to strive towards improving the health and fitness of others.

#### **FAITALA MOLEKA**

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith)**—I want to acknowledge the achievements of a Penrith local, Faitala Moleka. On Saturday, Faitala will take the field for the Wallaroos our national women's rugby team in the Pacific Four Series opener against Canada at Allianz Stadium. At the age of 19 Moleka is pushing boundaries and doing her community proud. Faitala grew up in Cambridge Park playing league, but by chance she discovered her passion for rugby not knowing she would one day represent not only Western Sydney, but Australia. Faitala's journey to her international debut for the Wallaroos is nothing short of inspirational. In December 2022, Moleka represented NSW Under 17 Girls in a sevens competition. Now at 19 she's already breaking barriers and making her community proud. Her story highlights the power of discovering one's passion and talent unexpectedly, and then pursuing it with dedication and determination. We will all be cheering for her as she steps onto the international stage representing Australia. This marks another milestone in her remarkable journey in rugby and serves as an inspiration to aspiring female athletes. To Faitala we wish you the best of luck this weekend and we will be all cheering you on from Penrith.

#### **JAMBEROO RSL ANZAC DAY COMMEMORATION**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises the Kiama-Jamberoo RSL Sub Branch for hosting its Pre ANZAC Day Service at the Jamberoo School of Arts Hall on Saturday 20th April 2024. I was honoured and privileged to attend and lay a wreath on behalf of our local community. I acknowledge and thank Terry Stamp for helping arrange the logistics for this service. I was pleased to catch up with Mongo Delamont who continues his service to the RSL. Our local community appreciates the work of RSL Sub Branches and their volunteers. They work hard to host the ANZAC Day Services. Many locals have memories of family members who served. I remembered the service of my grandfather who lost his arm during battle on the western front in France. He returned home only to later die from his injuries due to a blood clot. My father was two years old. My father never knew his father. Legacy played a big part in the lives of my grandmother, my father and his two brothers. I acknowledge the wonderful work that Legacy do.



### **BOMADERRY RSL ANZAC DAY SERVICE**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises the Bomaderry RSL Sub Branch for hosting its ANZAC Day Morning Service at Walsh Memorial Park in Bomaderry on Thursday 25th April 2024. I was honoured to attend and lay a wreath on behalf of our local community. I acknowledge and thank the President of Bomaderry RSL Sub Branch Rob Madden, Vice President Christopher Browne, Secretary Allen Scott and Treasurer William Harrison. Our local community deeply appreciates the work of all our RSL Sub Branches and their volunteers. These volunteers work so incredibly hard to host the ANZAC Day Services along with other commemorative services throughout the year. Many locals have memories, stories and family connections to those who serve or have served. I remembered the service of my grandfather who lost his arm during battle on the western front in France. He returned home only to later die from his injuries due to a blood clot. My father was just two years old. My father never knew his father. Legacy played a big part in the lives of my grandmother, my father and his two brothers. I acknowledge the wonderful work that Legacy do.

### **MARY WELLS**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—It's an honour and a pleasure to be able to congratulate Bathurst resident Mary Wells on reaching the wonderful milestone of turning 100. Mary hasn't made a fuss of becoming a centurion and to her credit still lives independently in a units complex at Kelso. Born in Bankstown in 1924, raised on Sydney's Upper North Shore and a nurse for many years, Mary met her husband on a holiday to the Moree district and proceeded to raise a family before returning to the workforce. She took up a job at Bathurst Hospital and worked the night shift in the maternity section for many years before taking on private nursing locally. Mary finished working at aged 88 and unfortunately lost her husband in 2016 when he was 94. And Mary's secret to a long life ... she's not a drinker, not a smoker and loves her fruit and vegetables. However, she is especially proud of serving in the Australian Army Medical Women's Service during World War Two and the fact that her three brothers also second in that conflict while her father served in Gallipoli in the First World War. Congratulations Mary on this momentous occasion.

### **LEANNE HAMILTON**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—This statement recognises the contributions Leanne Hamilton has made to the Bathurst business community and to the lives her customers. There are only a few special moments in life that require some of our most glamorous outfits. For over 20 years Leanne has created stunning wedding gowns that have embodied the personality and flare of each individual client and have made every bride feel like a princess on their big day. The craftsmanship and detail that has gone into each gown is second to none, each finished to such a high quality they feel more like a work of art rather than just a dress. Starting from nothing, LMH Couture has become a national award-winning business that has been all achieved through dedication, hard work, and many hours behind the sewing machine. Brides and many other lucky customers across the Central West who have had the privileged of owning a LMH Couture gown know Leanne's passion for each creation and the stellar service she provides. The closing of LMH Couture sets Leanne on her next adventure. Leanne is looking forward to spending more time with her family and focus on her artist career full-time. Congratulations.

### **CAMDEN HAVEN DRAGON BOAT CLUB**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Congratulations to the Camden Haven Dragon Boat Club on their successful application in the latest Local Sport Grant Program. The Camden Haven Dragon Boat Club was established in 2008 offering competitive and social paddling opportunities for men and women aged over 12 years. The Club has two 20-seater Champion dragon boats and competes regularly in local, state and national championships. The dragon boaters have been successful in securing a grant for \$2,947.91 to conduct a program called the Camden Haven Dragon Boat Challenge. The Local Sport Grant Program seeks to support grassroots sporting clubs to increase participation, improve access to sport, host events and improve recreation facilities. I also take this opportunity to single out the CanSurvive initiative as part of the Camden Haven Dragon Boat Club's commitment to those members who have lived through a cancer diagnosis. These inspirational members fundraise and enjoy social activities together, most of which still partake in the weekly paddle on the Camden Haven River. Congratulations to the members on promoting and expanding the wonderful sport of Dragon Boat racing in the Camden Haven.

### **PAIGE GOLDIE – RAS YOUTH MEDAL AT SYDNEY ROYAL EASTER SHOW**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Today I would like to recognise MacKillop College's Year 9 student Paige Goldie, who is the proud recipient of the RAS Youth Medal. The Royal Agricultural Society of NSW (RAS) Youth Medal aims to acknowledge an individual who has made a remarkable impact on a particular section of the show, whether as an exhibitor, competitor, steward or judge. A deserving winner, Paige has entered numerous Arts and Crafts sections over many years and has won an impressive selection of ribbons

for her efforts. Paige was presented with her medal on the main arena before the Grand Parade of this year's show - I imagine this was a very exciting moment for her! Mention must also be made of Paige's Art teacher, Ms Loretta North who has taught many techniques, inspired her students to submit their works and continually guided them in their love of creative arts. I congratulate Paige on this fantastic achievement for one so young and I hope that she continues to develop her talent and exhibit her works into the future.

#### **SALLY SHAW & ALLISON TROTTER**

**Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)**—Today I would like to acknowledge the retirement of Sally Shaw and Allison Trotter from Hastings Secondary College Westport Campus who have served a combined 64 years as local educators. Both Sally and Allison were recognised recently for their dedication and commitment to education. Mrs Sally Shaw began her journey at Westport Campus in 1988, as the Home Economics educator before becoming the Careers Advisor. Ms Allison Trotter joined the Creative and Performing Arts Faculty in 1994 and served in this role for twenty-nine years. Both Sally and Allison have participated in various aspects of school life at Westport and across the school community, notably leaving a lasting imprint on the students they have so passionately supported over the years. Tammy Frater and College Principal Meaghan Cook agree that "retirement signifies more than bidding farewell to a job; it celebrates the dedication, identity, and pride one has in their career. Sally and Allison have been supportive colleagues, pillars of Hastings Secondary College, dedicating a large part of their careers to providing opportunities for all students to excel." I wish Sally and Allison all the success in their future endeavours.

#### **TEAM OCEANUS SYSTEMS**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)**—On their own, Alfie, Isaac, Rishi, Joseph, and Jake are students from St Phillip's Christian College. Together, they are Team Oceanus Systems, the National Champions of the SUBS in Schools Submarine Class. The SUBS in Schools program allows students to design, build, and test miniature submarines, fostering STEM skills and providing real-world engineering experiences. After being named NSW Champions, Oceanus Systems and their sub flew to Adelaide for the national competition. After days of water trials and submarine testing, the team took out the top spot! Oceanus Systems also took out Best Engineering CAD, Best Engineered Submarine, Best Manufactured Submarine, Best Sea Trial, Best Graphic Design, Best Team Marketing, Best Team Trade Display, Best Team Portfolio, Best Team Verbal Presentation and the Innovation Award. I can't wait to see what these students have ahead of them. Congratulations on this remarkable achievement!

#### **CHARLESTOWN ELECTORATE SOCCER CLUBS**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—The last weekend of April marked the kick-off of community football season, and I want to acknowledge and thank Charlestown Electorate soccer clubs. Community sport is so important, offering an opportunity for people of all ages to come together and exercise, build friendships and expand their horizons. We know the benefits that community sport has for those who get involved on and off the field, and it's great to see so many clubs around the electorate building active memberships. It is particularly gratifying to see clubs build on the success of women's sporting events both here in Australia and around the world to bring more women and girls into the sport. I want to acknowledge Cardiff City Football Club, Charlestown Junior Football Club, Dudley Redhead United Football Club, Garden Suburb Football Club, Kahibah Football Club, Kotara South Football Club, New Lambton Football Club Juniors, South Cardiff Community Football Club and Warners Bay Football Club. I wish local clubs, including players, coaches, referees, volunteers and supporters, all the best for the 2024 season.

#### **SQUIRREL GLIDERS AT BLACKBUTT**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—Squirrel gliders are at risk of local extinction due to habitat loss, as well as vehicle collisions and predation by introduced species. The Charlestown electorate has seen previous success with the restoration and preservation of glider habitat, and I want to acknowledge the team from the University of Newcastle, supported by City of Newcastle and FAUNA Research Alliance, who will investigate ways to protect squirrel gliders across the Lower Hunter. Intensive monitoring by the University team has confirmed the presence of squirrel gliders in the Charlestown electorate's Blackbutt Reserve, and the collaborative research project will evaluate the abundance, habitat use and genetics of the species in Blackbutt and at the nearby Jesmond Bushland. So far, 19 males and 18 females have been identified across both reserves, and the research will work to determine how best to maintain the populations genetic diversity and prevent local extinction. The effort is being led by Dr Ryan Witt from UoN, a wildlife conservation scientist. His team includes Charlestown electorate resident Oliver Brynes. I wish them all the best.

**CALLUM MARTIN**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—13-year-old Charlestown junior athletics star Callum Martin has a clear goal in mind: he wants to represent his country at the Olympics. Callum's chosen sport is walking, and it looks like he's well on his way to achieving his goal. In April, he took the gold in the under-13 3km walk at the 2024 Australian Junior Championships in Adelaide. A student of Hunter Sports High, Callum not only won the race by a minute but achieved a personal best time—walking three kilometres in 13 minutes and thirty-three seconds! He is a member of the Adamstown New Lambton Athletics Club, which is where he first discovered his walking prowess. Two years on, and he is going from strength to strength in the sport. Callum puts his success down not only to his innate ability, but his hard work, singling out his coach Joanne McGinniskin for all her support. Callum's mum, Marissa, reckons good hip flexibility helps as well! Congratulations, Callum, and I wish you all the best. Fingers crossed we'll be seeing you on the track at Los Angeles 2028 or Brisbane 2032!

**KOBE SORENSEN**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I congratulate Kobe Sorensen of North Cronulla Surf Life Saving Club on being selected to represent Australia at the World Life Saving Championships. Kobe will be part of the 12 person youth team that will compete at the championships on the Gold Coast in August and September. Kobe's selection in the national team followed an impressive season that culminated with a strong performance on the sand at the Australian Surf Life Saving Championships that obviously caught the eye of national selectors. Kobe came second in the under 17 beach sprint<sup>[1]</sup> before taking out the under 17 beach flag event under lights on the Sunshine Coast backed by the roar of team North Cronulla. The North Cronulla club says Kobe went from strength to strength in the beach flag competition and took the title in truly convincing fashion, in what is a special addition to an already glittering resume. Well done Kobe and I join with your club in wishing you success on the world stage.

**GREGORY STEPHENS**

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)**—On behalf of the Newtown electorate, I would like to congratulate Mr Gregory Stephens on 50 years as a Justice of the Peace. What a remarkable achievement! Justices of the Peace hold a special place of trust in our community and provide a valuable service to their neighbours and colleagues. Our JPs interact with a diverse array of individuals, creating connections that can extend beyond community service. I acknowledge and thank Mr Stephens for 50 years of remarkable community service as a Justice of the Peace.

**REDFERN COMMUNITY CENTRE**

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)**—On behalf of the Newtown Electorate I want to share my warmest congratulations to staff and volunteers at Redfern Community Centre for recording twenty years of remarkable service to the Redfern community. Over that time the Redfern Community Centre has connected with so many local people through education, health support, community facilities and services. I have so many memories of the countless events, community meetings, gatherings, actions and celebrations I have attended at the centre during this time. These memories have been vast – from memorials recognising the life-long contributions of social justice warriors to public meetings on local developments; from creative events to community celebrations. The open area outside the centre has seen us rally in our thousands for First Nations justice, enjoy countless BBQs and see the next generation playing. The Centre has made such a remarkable contribution to the wellbeing of our neighbourhood over so many years and I know I speak on behalf of many when I say how grateful we are everyone who keeps the doors open. Congratulations on twenty years!

**RONALD ROSALKY**

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)**—On behalf of the Newtown electorate, I would like to congratulate Mr Ronald Rosalky on 50 years as a Justice of the Peace. What a remarkable achievement! Justices of the Peace hold a special place of trust in our community and provide a valuable service to their neighbours and colleagues. Our JPs interact with a diverse array of individuals, creating connections that can extend beyond community service. I acknowledge and thank Mr Rosalky for 50 years of remarkable community service as a Justice of the Peace.

**JO SCHADE - HAY**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Today I would like to recognise Jo Schade, described as a Hay institution, she is always there, working away in some capacity, in her job and for the town. Jo trained as a midwife before moving to Hay, originally for 6 months, but 54 years later is still there! She became the baby health clinic nurse and was, and still is, the person parents turn to for comfort, advice or just to share concerns. Throughout her

career she has made a positive difference in people's lives. As is not unusual in a small town, Jo took on many nursing roles over her years of service, facing many challenges. It was while working as a child and family nurse that Jo realised the need for child care services in the town. It began with occasional care, eventually becoming a permanent service, now Hay Children's Services Early Learning Centre. Jo worked tirelessly for the first 20 years, organising, fundraising and lobbying politicians. I commend Jo for her dedication to her community and wish her well in her retirement.

#### **MEN IN A SHED - DARETON**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Madam/Mister Speaker, Today I would like to recognise the Men in a Shed, Dareton for the vision that inspired the creation and subsequent upgrade to the largest Men's Shed in the Southern hemisphere. The members use their combined skills to do everything from making small wooden toys, to restoring a Sabre Jet and everything in between. For two to three hours the men can talk shoulder to shoulder in mateship and forgetting tough times. The facility is a community acquisition and already there many organisations sharing the space. Dareton's township population is approximately 600, but with a large drawing capacity of many retired blockies with skills to share. The shed was opened officially on 26 April 2024 as part of the 100-year Dareton Centenary celebrations, and I congratulate the tireless efforts of President Peter Noonan, Past President Peter Waters, Noel Morrison, Neil Plumridge, Bob Jones, and Merv Wescombe.

#### **DUANE INGRAM - LEETON**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Madam/Mister Speaker, Today I would like to recognise Leeton's Duane Ingram for his 20 years of dedication to Tocal Agricultural College in Yanco. His commitment and hard work have made a significant impact on the lives of the thousands of people he has trained, and his contributions are truly commendable. This career milestone is a reflection of Duane's dedication and resilience. The positive influence he has made to so many Indigenous people, the Aboriginal Rural Training Program and the Tocal College is an incredible achievement. Duane is an accomplished trainer and is well deserving recognition for his many years of service to the institution. As he continues his journey, I'm sure the next chapter will be filled with even more accomplishments, growth and fulfillment. Congratulations on these amazing achievements and I'm sure in the coming years there will be more successes for you and more lives changed by your guidance.

#### **MAITLAND CANCER APPEAL**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Congratulations to the Maitland Cancer Appeal, a group of dedicated volunteers who work tirelessly to fund medical research to benefit cancer patients for years into the future. The group was formed in 1982 with the aim to start an Oncology Unit in the Hunter Valley and this was achieved thanks to a whole of community effort. The Appeal however continued their good work, raising money through raffles, market days and eventually the appeal evolved into an op-shop and linen service. The Maitland Cancer Appeal has just donated \$200,000 through their Rutherford Op Shop for Brain Cancer Research. The funds were evenly split between Children's brain cancer researcher Professor Matt Dun and Foundation Chair of the Mark Hughes Foundation Centre for brain cancer research Dr. Mike Fay. There are currently few options for those suffering from this terrible disease and researchers are desperate to find better outcomes and more effective treatments. The Maitland Cancer Appeal committee members and volunteers, many of whom have been personally touched by cancer, chooses who they want to donate to. To date the committee have donated over \$2million to cancer research in the Hunter. Congratulations to the Appeal on their amazing efforts.

#### **MAKYE TELFER**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Congratulations to Makye Telfer who represented Australia in the under-18s men's softball team at the World Cup which took place in Mexico. Makye has been playing softball for almost a decade as a catcher. He is following in his fathers footsteps who also represented Australia in the under-19s level as a catcher. The two, in fact, still play together in first grade every Saturday. Makye's dedication to the sport of softball goes beyond the sport itself. He has worked part-time and has fundraised to pay for the trip to the tournament. The sport of softball requires all team members who attended the competition in Mexico, including players and staff to pay for themselves, including any new equipment that they may have need. As a former Maitland High School Captain, Makye's good character and sportsmanship, shone through on and off the field. The Australian team finished 5th in the tournament. Making the Australian team is undoubtably a reflection of years of dedication and hard work. Congratulations Makye and congratulations on your efforts and success in Mexico.

#### **IRENE HATZIPETROS RE-ELECTED AS CHAIRPERSON OF FOOTBALL ST GEORGE**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I rise to congratulate Irene Hatzipetros, who was recently re-elected as Chairperson of Football St George. I have known Irene for many years now and I can confidently

say that she is one-of-a-kind. Football St George is a grassroots sporting organisation that has operated in our community for many years now. They continue to grow year after year, thanks in part to the wonderful team of executives and staff members that continue to foster inclusivity and excellence. Local football in the St George region continues to grow and flourish and we need a team of professionals to ensure that this growth is met with commitment and drive. Football St George held over 3000 games last year – what an incredible milestone! I know firsthand that Irene has worked incredibly hard over the years to deliver for the football community. I would once again like to congratulate Irene on her re-election and wish her all the very best over the coming years. I look forward to working alongside Football St George well into the future.

#### **FIFTY YEARS OF THE LIONS CLUB OF LUGARNO**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, what an honour and privilege it is to recognise the work of one of the finest community organisations running in our local area – the Lions Club of Lugarno. They are truly one of a kind! As a Member of Parliament, I come across all sorts of community organisations, made up of different people with different goals and ideas. I truly believe that this is the best part of my job. However, I can confidently say that the Lugarno Lions are some of the best around. They have donated millions of dollars over the years to people across our community, including contributing funds towards our community's crowning jewel, St George Hospital. Just over the last ten years, they have organised countless community events, including trivia nights and market days, all while assisting communities in need across New South Wales. I look forward to supporting the Lugarno Lions for the next 10 years, and then for many more years after that. I'd like to thank each and every single member of the Lions - past, present and future.

#### **DANIEL LONG**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I would like to acknowledge an esteemed ANZAC veteran within our community, Mr Daniel Long. At the age of 104, Daniel continues to educate the next generation by promoting peace and sharing his experience of war. I had the opportunity to meet Daniel recently at the Georges Estate ANZAC Day ceremony, where he received special recognition for serving his country and the Commonwealth. This special honour has only been bestowed to six returned servicemen in the Sydney region so far. It was wonderful to see Mr Long's family in attendance and it is certainly evident that he is a much-loved and well-cherished member of the community. The stories he tells are absolutely heartbreaking and remind us of the importance of prioritising the health and mental wellbeing of our veterans. ANZAC Day provides us all with an opportunity to recognise the servicemen and women in our community who make a difference, so I would like to thank Mr Long once again for his service to country. May their sacrifices never be forgotten. Lest We Forget.

#### **WILLOUGHBY SCHOOL LEADERSHIP FORUM**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—On Thursday 4 April, it was my pleasure to host the student leaders of schools across my Willoughby community for a leadership forum in Parliament House. These impressive young leaders are a positive role model for their school peers, and this reception was a fitting recognition of their leadership and contribution to their respective school communities. I was honoured to present each leader with a 2024 Certificate of Leadership. I was most impressed by the maturity of these young leaders who came prepared with insightful and thoughtful questions and comments on a range of matters including mental health, housing, cost of living, democracy and civil debate. Representing St Pius X College Chatswood, Willoughby Girls High School, Glенаeon Rudolf Steiner School, Cammeraygal High School and Mercy Catholic College Chatswood, these leaders are a credit to each of their schools and their service has done their families and school communities proud. I wish each of these leaders well as they continue to lead their peers through the 2024 school year.

#### **HIRONDELLE HOSPITAL CHATSWOOD**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—Mental health issues are a significant and growing experience and concern for people and community in Willoughby and across NSW. On Thursday 28 March, I pleased and proud to visit the recently relaunched Hironnelle Private Hospital in Chatswood. Hironnelle prides itself on providing high quality, personalised mental healthcare treatment to patients who suffer from a variety of conditions including anxiety, depression, trauma and substance abuse. Having hospitals like Hironnelle with dedicated medical professionals, teams and facilities focus on mental illness with sensitivity, diligence and the best models of care matters immensely in the modern era. I would like to express my appreciation to the CEO of Hironnelle, Laura Moran, together with Yumei Long and Dr Bruce Lachter, for a most informative, enjoyable and thoughtful visit to this impressive local facility. I thank the dedicated staff of Hironnelle for what they do in investing in this local hospital and for their dedication to treating mental health patients with such quality care.

#### **WILLOUGHBY ARTS CENTRE**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—I had the joy of returning to the Willoughby Arts Centre for their annual Art Fair and Market Day on Sunday 24 March. Packed with activities and exhibits, the Art Fair featured an art

sale of over 1 000 artworks, a ceramics sale, open studios and artist demonstrations, an art books and supplies stall, a jewellery and accessories stall, a BBQ, café and coffee cart, homemade cakes and jams, and a kids activity with the artist and children's author, Szilvia Gyorgy. I would like to thank the Willoughby community for their kind donations and volunteering efforts that helped make this wonderful community event a success. I would also like to thank President Brian Manning of the Willoughby Arts Centre, together with Manager Louise Ruddock, and the many artists who made me so welcome. I give particular thanks to the talented local artist, Jane Guthleben, for helping me choose some books and artwork from this Fair. The event was wonderful, proving what a treasured local institution the Willoughby Arts Centre is with its thriving hub and community of artists and art lovers.

### **TOTAL FIELD DAY**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Happy 40th anniversary to the Tocal Field Days! The Tocal Field Days are a rural institution, attracting exhibitors and visitors from across regional NSW and over 20,000 visitors over the weekend. This significant anniversary was celebrated with a cake last weekend, cut not by a knife but by an axe. A fitting recognition of the woodchopping event which featured for the first time this year. Congratulations to Principal Darren Bailey, the Tocal Agricultural College, volunteers and sponsors who put so much effort into making the three days a success! Special congratulations also to the teams from Transport for NSW with their excellent Truck Blind Spot Display and the Maritime Tent. It was great to also catch up with the Port Stephens Hunter Police District team. The days are an opportunity for local community groups to fundraise and promote their work. A special personal thanks to the volunteers from Maitland CWA, Slow Food Hunter Valley and the Rotary Club of Rutherford Telarah for helping me with my stock (as in soup) emergency! Thank you also to Tocal Agricultural College volunteers and Maitland Rotary Club on getting the site set up! I look forward to next year!

### **CENTRAL COAST SURF LIFE SAVING**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—As the flags have now been lowered for the final time this season, I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to all the dedicated volunteers who have tirelessly patrolled our beaches, ensuring the safety of both locals and visitors. With over one million people visiting our coast and facing over 18,000 preventative actions, 1,499 first aids, and 406 rescues, your commitment and professionalism have been nothing short of exceptional. Your selfless dedication, totalling over 86,300 volunteer patrol hours, is truly commendable. To the surf lifesaving volunteers across our 15 clubs on the Central Coast, your tireless efforts have not gone unnoticed. You embody the true spirit of community service, and your actions have undoubtedly saved lives. Thank you for your unwavering commitment to keeping our beaches safe. Surf Life Saving Central Coast, your support and leadership have been instrumental in ensuring the success of our local clubs. Your professionalism and dedication are an inspiration to us all. As we bid farewell to another season, let us reflect on the immense impact of your service and express our deepest gratitude for all that you do. Thank you for your outstanding contribution to our community.

### **CENTRAL COAST SES**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—On behalf of a grateful community, I would like to acknowledge and give thanks to our Central Coast SES units. In the wake of severe weather that recently swept through our region last month, our dedicated volunteers rose to the occasion with unwavering courage and selflessness. With almost 600 requests for assistance pouring in, our SES teams worked tirelessly around the clock, ensuring that every call for help was answered within 72 hours. From storm-related damage to flood rescues and evacuations, volunteers faced every challenge head-on, demonstrating remarkable resilience and professionalism. I extend my deepest thanks to the 175 volunteers from both the NSW SES and NSW Rural Fire Service who contributed over 2500 hours of their time to assist the Central Coast community. Your commitment to service is truly inspiring, and your efforts have made a profound difference in the lives of those affected by the severe weather. I also want to express gratitude to Central Coast Council for their support in providing sandbags and resources to aid in the relief efforts. To our volunteers, their families, and employers, I offer a heartfelt thank you for your unwavering commitment to the well-being of our community.

### **TERRIGAL RUGBY CLUB**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—I would like to congratulate Terrigal Rugby Club on their recent annual "Long Lunch" event at Terrigal Trojans. It was a day filled with generosity, entertainment, and community spirit. Supporting our local sporting clubs is so important and I would like to acknowledge loyal Long Lunch sponsors Central Coast Motor Group, Galaxy Group, auctioneer Tim Andrews from LJ Hooker Terrigal, MC Todd Atkins and all the businesses that donated prizes, including Central Coast Harley-Davidson, Galaxy Group, Magenta Shores Resort, Crowne Plaza Terrigal, Bells at Killcare, Peats Bite, Central Coast Motor Group, The Vintage, Margan Wines, Five Star Day Spa, Meribella, Professional Carpet Cleaning & Pest Control, Trojans Restaurant, Masterfoods and Hoyts Erina. Your generosity helped make the event a success. A heartfelt thank you

goes out to everyone involved in the Save our Kids Suicide Prevention (SOKS) fundraising raffle. Special recognition to Michael Newton from Galaxy Group who after winning the raffled Harley-Davidson generously donated the bike back to be auctioned to continue to raise funds. This event showcased the strength of community spirit and the power of coming together for a worthy cause. Congratulations once again to the Terrigal Rugby Club for a successful fundraising event.

#### **ARTIST PETER DAY**

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills)**—I would like to recognise the amazing artistic contributions of local artist, Peter Day to the arts and acknowledge his participation in the Personal Structures Exhibition at the prestigious Venice Biennale 2024. Peter received an invitation to take part in the international exhibition and will exhibit two works in Venice highlighting the impact of climate change. This impressive achievement follows on from a career in the arts spanning over four decades and recognises his expertise in creating site-specific and issue-based works of art. Peter's works include large-scale murals, as well as sculptures, ceramics, mosaics and urban design projects dotted across cities throughout NSW including several in my electorate of East Hills. A Churchill Fellow, Peter's expertise extends to working with all three tiers of government and the United Nations, winning numerous art awards and Australia Council grants, appointment to various artist-in-residencies and teaching at many NSW universities. Congratulations Peter on this fantastic accomplishment. Thank you for bringing your expertise to the public and community arts landscape in NSW and for highlighting the important issue of climate change at the Venice Biennale this year

#### **FIRST PICNIC POINT SCOUT GROUP**

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills)**—I would like to acknowledge and celebrate the 66th anniversary of the 1st Picnic Point Scout Group and their invaluable contributions to our community. For over six decades, the 1st Picnic Point Scout Group has been a beacon of service, mentorship, and camaraderie for generations of young people in our area. Through their dedication to scouting values and leadership development, they have helped shape countless individuals into responsible, compassionate, and engaged members of society. I recently attended the group's Volunteer Recognition and Family Night, which was an opportunity to honour the commitment and hard work of their volunteers who have selflessly dedicated time and effort to the betterment of our youth. In particular, I would like to acknowledge Robert Stevens, who received an award for 55 years of service towards the scout group, Karen Toddie, for her 25 years of service, and Paul Muldoon, who received an appreciation of service award. Congratulations to all award recipients, and to 1st Picnic Point Scout Group on their 66th anniversary. Thank you for your service to our community.

#### **BROKEN HILL DISTILLERY**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**—Congratulations to the Broken Hill Distillery on their win at the 2024 World Gin Awards in London. They came away with the Country Winner (Australia) in the Matured Gin category for their Outback Strength Gin, ranking it in the top 13 at the World Gin Awards. I have had the pleasure of visiting the Broken Hill Distillery and was given a "behind the scenes" tour by owners, Paul and Eric Hanna. Paul the Distiller, explained the "Franken still", a piece of very cool and functional art. They run the still several days a week, and people can watch it in operation. They have created a great spot for tourists and locals alike. It is very much a labour of love and they have created a product unique to the Far West. Paul and his team are to be commended for their efforts and congratulated on this amazing achievement.

#### **BROKEN HILL GIRL GUIDES**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**—After almost 100 years of operation, the Broken Hill Girl Guides have closed their doors. Sadly, dwindling numbers of adults for leadership roles, has meant that girls who want to experience guiding will not be able to, in Broken Hill. Since its inception the Guide Program has provided adventures, leadership opportunities, badges, and an opportunity to give back to their communities. The Girl Guides have been very popular in Broken Hill and participate in many community events. Leading the Christmas parade, decorating the Christmas float and selling candles for Carols in the Park, are some of the community service events that will be impacted by its closure. I say thank you, to the past leaders who have given their time so willingly, to offer a program of activities that improves the skills of our youth. They will be missed.

#### **VALE BRIAN WARREN**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**—Brian Warren was born and raised in Werris Creek in 1947, settling as a Wee Waa resident from 1990. Brian John Warren volunteered his time as position of Treasurer at Wee Waa and District Historical Society and Namoi Echo Museum for almost 13 years, whilst also taking on the role of licensee and treasurer of the Wee Waa gold Club. The former serviceman fought in the Vietnam war, he served as a Lance Corporal in the 6th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment from May 8th 1969 - September 10th 1969. Devoting himself to both his country and community, Brian was held in high regard and was a well-respected

member of the community. Brian had a significant impact on the community. May his legacy be forever remembered.

### **SYDWEST MULTICULTURAL SERVICES**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—SydWest Multicultural Services offer vital support to our Western Sydney community, helping people from all walks of life access settlement, aged-care, disability, housing, family and youth assistance. Striving to empower individuals through person-centred services, skill sharing and evidence-based representations, SydWest is enhancing social capacity in our communities. Via their 'New Way Forward Program', SydWest provides culturally-sensitive case management to at-risk CALD youth in the Blacktown LGA. Delivered to young people involved with, or at risk of becoming subject to criminal penalties, the New Way Forward Program provides early intervention and advocacy services. Grassroot organisations like SydWest are critical to reducing recidivism and youth crime rates. By identifying and addressing factors that lead to interaction with the criminal justice system, like education, employment, family relationships and mental health, SydWest is helping pave a better pathway for our children. Their considered services have resulted in 90% of New Way Forward Program participants commencing employment or education. Thank you to SydWest CEO Elfa Moraitakis, Settlement and Community Programs Manager Clement Meru and the SydWest Team for your dedication to supporting our community.

### **CONSORTIUM OF TAMIL ASSOCIATIONS – ANZAC DAY**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—On Thursday, 25th April 2024, I was honoured to attend the ANZAC Day Ceremony organised by the Consortium of Tamil Associations NSW in Wentworthville. Our Western Sydney community came together to remember all those who fought for our sovereignty, serving with courage, mateship, and endurance at Gallipoli and on the Western Front. We paid tribute to all the young men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice for the safety and freedom of their families, children and recognised our duty to carry the Anzac legacy forward. As a community, we honoured our Australian Defence Force personnel who continue to serve our nation proudly in conflict and humanitarian efforts around the world. We thank you for your dedication to serve others and selfless sacrifice to ensure our safety and security. Particularly, I recognise Mr Easan Ketheesan, a member of local our Tamil community currently serving in the Australian Defence Force and thank him for his moving Commemorative Address. Thank you to the Consortium of Tamil Associations NSW President, Mr Bala Suthersan, Secretary, Mr Rishi Rishikesan, and members of the Association for organising this thoughtful Anzac Day Commemoration for our Western Sydney community. Lest We Forget.

### **SMITHFIELD RSL SUB-BRANCH – ANZAC DAY**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—On Thursday 25 April 2024, I was honoured to attend the Anzac Day Dawn Service hosted by Smithfield RSL Sub-Branch. On Anzac Day we commemorated that immortal day when 416,809 young Australians, by their deeds and actions at Gallipoli, demonstrated to the world, that Australia was truly a nation. We remembered all those who paid the ultimate sacrifice for an ideal and a way of life and honoured the service and sacrifice of past and current Australian Defence Force personnel and their families to protect our freedom, democracy and sovereignty. Thousands of locals from our Western Sydney assembled to honour our Anzacs at the Dawn Service. We recognised the Anzac legacy of courage, endurance and mateship at the heart of the Australian spirit and our duty to carry it forward. Together, we remembered all those who continue to serve our nation in times of war and in peace keeping efforts. Thank you to the Smithfield RSL Sub-Branch President Mr Bill Cruwys OAM, Senior Vice President Mr Eugene Kajan and the Smithfield RSL Sub-Branch for facilitating this thoughtful and moving commemoration. At the going down of the sun, we will remember them. Lest we forget.

### **WOW DAY: ACKNOWLEDGING SES WORKERS**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—Speaker, Today I want to take the time to acknowledge the amazing work and dedication of the State Emergency Services volunteers in the north shore electorate. Thousands of events are being held across the country to say thank you to the 6 million Australians who volunteer their time. On May 22 we will recognise the tremendous work our volunteers do through Wear Orange Wednesday. National Volunteer Week is an annual celebration to recognise the invaluable work of our nation's volunteers. This year's theme is 'Something for Everyone.' It represents the millions of volunteers who make a profound impact on our society, and when it comes to volunteering, there really is something for everyone. In the North Shore, our SES units and volunteer organisations simply wouldn't be feasible without the time and support they get from local residents. I'm always so proud to see so many volunteers in the north shore electorate, who lend themselves selflessly to support our local organisations. To all the volunteers in the north shore, I say a heartfelt thank you for all you do, and I look forward to joining and supporting you on your future endeavours.



**SYDNEY BEARS WOMENS RUGBY LEAGUE CONGRATULATIONS**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—Speaker, as a huge fan of the North Sydney Bears, I want to congratulate the North Sydney Bears Womens Team on another successful season as part of the club's female pathway program. The NSWRL female pathway program continues to develop, gaining more traction as the seasons progress. The program focuses on providing a clear path for aspiring Jillaroos to reach the pinnacle of success in the Women's Rugby League arena. The North Sydney Bears Tarsha Gale Cup team completed their third season in the NSWRL junior representative competition, constantly honing their skills, working on their teamwork and always remaining resilient and determined during a difficult and competitive season. I would like to commend the entire team on their admirable season, as well as congratulate the 2024 Tarsha Gale Cup Award winners: Sienna Deeley for Most Valuable Player, Charli Pitstock for Players' Player, Emily Audet for Team Person of the Year, Jayla Dicker for Best Defensive Player, and April Mayor for the Coaches Award. Well done ladies and best of luck for the upcoming season.

**CLARKE MEDAL AWARDED TO PROFESSOR MONINYA ROUGHAN**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—Speaker I would like to congratulate Professor Moninya Roughan, who was recently awarded the Prestigious Clarke Medal by the Royal Society of NSW for her distinguished research in the natural sciences. Professor Roughan is a respected community member of the Sydney Institute of Marine Science and an esteemed leader at the Coastal and Regional Oceanography Lab at UNSW. Her work is recognised in distinguished international journals, including the recent publication in Nature Communications. It is heartening to see members of the Sydney Institute of Marine Science, a world-leading institute based in Mosman, achieve such accolades and recognition for their outstanding work. Professor Roughan's achievement is a testament to her dedication, innovation, leadership, and forward-thinking spirit in the field of marine science. I would like to offer my congratulations to Professor Roughan for her outstanding achievement. The Clarke Medal is a prestigious award, and Professor Roughan now joins a hall of fame. Congratulations Professor Moninya Roughan, and best of luck in your future endeavours.

**BERYL HARTLEY**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker, I would like to acknowledge Beryl Hartley from Narromine who was recently awarded the prestigious Nancy-Bird Walton Memorial Trophy from the Australian Women's Pilot's Association. Nancy-Bird Walton AO OBE has been described as a trailblazer in the sky and was very passionate about her craft, establishing the Australian Women Piolets Association in 1950, of which she served as president for 40 years. She was a frequent visitor to Narromine. This award is the association's most prestigious award and is given in recognition of the most noteworthy contribution to aviation by a woman in Australasia and is sponsored by the family of the late aviation pioneer. Beryl's recognition as a deserving recipient of this prestigious award speaks volumes about her significant contributions and expertise in the gliding industry. Her impact and authority within the field are widely acknowledged and celebrated. The success of the World Gliding Championships that were held in Narromine last December, was largely due to Beryl's instrumental role in securing and coordinating the event. Congratulations Beryl on your receipt of this award and all you do as a champion of gliding and Narromine!

**HELP A MATE GOLF DAY**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker, I would like to congratulate local organisation "Help A Mate" on the success of their inaugural charity golf day. Help A Mate was founded by Mick O'Neill in 2023. Their mission is to make a difference in the lives of their mates facing mental health and homelessness challenges in Dubbo. Starting out with initiatives such as collecting and recycling bottles, cans and batteries and running Bunnings BBQ's to make meaningful impacts, the committee's passion and dedication to make a difference was on full display on Friday 12 April 2024 as 80 golfers gathered at the Dubbo Golf Course. The day served a dual purpose. Fundraising, and providing a platform to raise awareness of the issues faced by many in Dubbo. The event also emphasised the importance of looking out for our mates and supporting each other. A cheque presentation of \$10,000 to Tradies in Sight at the conclusion of the day encapsulated the spirit of compassion, unity and resilience that defines the Dubbo community. I have no doubt the committee will continue to make meaningful strides in the community, and I thank them for all they have done and continue to do.

**GEORGE MACK**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker, I would like to acknowledge George Mack of Narromine who was recently awarded a Monarch Chevron Award for 15 years' service to the Narromine Lions Club. Club President, Vicki Drew, had the honour of making the presentation to George at their recent meeting. George's dedication to community service is evident through his active involvement with the Narromine Lions Club. The prestigious award is testament to his commitment to the club and the community. As a valued Lion, he consistently

lends his time, skills and expertise to the various projects and initiatives undertaken by the club. His unwavering dedication to serving others has earned him the respect of club members and community members alike. Organisations like the Lions Club, with a rich history of 70 years in Narromine, owe their success and longevity to dedicated volunteers like George. His tireless efforts have been instrumental in the clubs' achievements and positive impacts in the Narromine community over the last 15 years. I applaud George for his ongoing commitment to making Narromine a better place for all!

#### **RECOGNITION OF TOM AND JUDY HARTMANN**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise the achievements of Tom and Judy Hartmann in winning a gold medal at this years Royal Agricultural Society's (RAS) Sydney Royal Taste of Excellence. Additionally, their Frantioio oil was judged the champion single varietal extra virgin olive oil (commercial volume) for 2023 and was announced at the RAS Fine Foods Awards ceremony recently. I congratulate Tom and Judy on this outstanding achievement. Tom and Judy started their olive grove – Glen Olives, at Glen Innes 22 years ago and since this time they have been perfecting exceptional extra virgin oil and table olives, reflecting the distinctive character of a cold-climate region on the Northern Tablelands. I commend Tom and Judy for winning these awards in this highly competitive field, for their dedication and commitment to sustainability and hands-on farming practices and for producing olives that stand out in terms of quality and uniqueness.

#### **GUYRA GUN CLUB SHOOTERS**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise Guyra Gun Club shooters for success at the Australian Clay Shooters Association's Down the Line (DTL) Championships, held at Wagga Wagga recently. I congratulate Ben Rumbel, Dustin Hone, Jeff Richardson and Brad Henshall for making the open Australian Macintosh Team and Dave Edmonds for the Super Vets team. Brad became the 2024 National Champion of Champions winner; Dustin won the Open Macintosh High Gun and National Junior High Gun; whilst Ben made the all-Australian top ten out of 460 shooters. I congratulate Tammy Henshall for shooting in the NSW Ladies competition and Charlie Ward for shooting in the NSW Juniors. Charlie shot in the National Skeet Carnival previously and following this event achieved 2024 Australian National Ladies Champion (12 gauge) and was selected to shoot in the Australian Junior Team. Special thanks to the Guyra Gun Club, for their support of the shooters throughout this remarkable experience. I commend the competitors on their hard work and commitment to the sport. Brad and Dustin will represent Australia in England in the DTL Championships, and the Northern Tablelands Electorate will be right behind them!

#### **RECOGNITION OF SUSANNAH SIMPSON**

**Mr ADAM MARSHALL (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise Susannah Simpson for being nominated by her colleagues at Aussie Hay Runners, to feature as one of the inspirational women of the New England Region, for International Women's Day. I congratulate Susannah on this very worthy nomination, which comes at the back of Susannah's extensive work in the local community and valuable work to Aussie Hay Runners. Such is her commitment to the community, Susannah's cattle property is used as a depot for hay bale distribution to those in need, as well as serving to provide free camping to first responders and veterans. Susannah has the support of partner Jeff and together they have a family of four, each contributing to farm life on their cattle property. I commend Susannah on this wonderful achievement and for her hard work and tireless giving selflessly to others in her community and region.

#### **BOWNING PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise today to recognise the 175th celebration of Bowning Public School. Bowning Public School was established in 1849 and is one of the oldest inland schools in Australia, which has remained open. Bowning Public School stands as a historic monument and the 175th was celebrated by many former students, staff members, Principals, along with many community members involved in the school. Those involved in the school both past and present had the opportunity to purchase a commemorative paver to have their names engraved and added to the pavement area to have their names etched into the growing history of the school. What an incredibly fabulous celebration, with students taking charge of the opening ceremony, introducing invited guests to speak about the history and their experiences of the school. I take this time to acknowledge Principal Mrs Belinda Brown, members of the advisory committee who completed the preparatory work, and artists performing on the day which culminated in such an enjoyable and memorable event. I note the significance of celebrating these momentous events to continue to draw community connection and the pride of our history in regional New South Wales.

### **SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS ARTISANS COLLECTIVE (SHAC)**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise today to recognise the Southern Highlands Artisans Collective (SHAC). Opening in May 2019 in the township of Robertson, the SHAC is a not-for-profit organisation that brings together talented local artists from across the Highlands, providing a space to display and exhibit their creative works of art. Following the end of lease arrangements in the latter part of 2022, the SHAC were required to move and operate from the Old Bowral Town Hall. Whilst very grateful that they were able to temporarily locate the SHAC at this site, there was always hope that a permanent location would be found. Now, enthusiastically, the SHAC will be relocating to Hoddle Street in Robertson. This move will rekindle the SHAC's relationship with the creatively spirited community in Robertson. The SHAC will continue to promote local artists and artisans and encourage community participation in the arts through their workshops and events. I congratulate the SHAC on their return to Robertson, where they will continue to support talented locals in fostering creative pursuits.

### **TARALGA SPORTS CLUB**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise today to recognise Taralga Sports Club. The beautiful township of Taralga boasts an extraordinary level of social activity, with a variety of community groups across the diverse pastoral and agricultural area. The Club initially opened as a Bowling Club in 1962, becoming a licensed Club in August 1963. The Club is community-owned and has received unfailing support over the last sixty years. This is an extraordinary achievement for the Club, demonstrating how fundamental it is to the fabric of the Taralga district. The sixtieth anniversary was celebrated in style which included market stalls, and entertainment provided by DJ Keefy Miller, Taralga Ukulele Group, and the "Lumpy Underdaks". There were a range of activities, which included bowls, dog high jump and tug-o-war. A charity auction was held in order to raise money for an outdoor playground at the Taralga Sports Club, enhancing the family friendly atmosphere. Always mindful of the external pressing needs of the community, a ferret race was held to raise monies for the Goulburn Branch of 'The Children's Medical Research Fund'. I congratulate the Club on its longevity and its inclusive and community-spirited values.

### **BIDGEE BIDGEE BRIDGE**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)**—The opening of the Bidgee Bidgee Bridge on the 9th of April completed a major infrastructure upgrade that not only connects the new 5.7 kilometre Parramatta Light Rail, it also includes a shared pathway – a link that our area desperately needs. We know that connected cities that allow people to travel easily are places that facilitate community and encourage people to adventure out of their area and into others. An important aspect of creating great places. The bridge is named after Bidgee Bidgee; the leader of what became known as the 'Kissing Point Tribe' - river people who lived on the river flats, mangrove swamps and creeks of the Parramatta River. From this bridge you can look over the places where Bidgee Bidgee lived. He was born in Meadowbank and spent much of his time along the river. The name of the bridge was determined after extensive community consultation of over 500 suggestions. The bridge embraces the presence of our first peoples, whilst valuing and recognising our opportunity for a strong and connected community into the future. Bidgee Bidgee stood in the gap between the old world and the new, much as this bridge does today.

### **BARBARA AND RICHARD HOWES**

**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)**—Barbara and Richard Howes are true locals of the Wyong area, both sharing their time, energy, and talents in supporting the community through voluntary work. Together they organised Barbara and Richard Howes Charity B.B.Q. events to raise funds for over 20 years to a variety of charities across the Central Coast. From raising funds at their home turning into one of the Central Coast's biggest barbecues. The barbecues supported funds for Wyong Public Hospital Medical Equipment starting in 2007 with 120 people raising \$4,000 to purchase a \$5,516.40 ECG and Lung Capacity Monitor. The remaining funds were put in by the Howes. In 2008, the number of attendees increased to 240 and raised \$7,000 to purchase a LXI Spot Vital Sign Monitor for taking blood pressure and temperature. In 2009, the couple set up the event with the help of the Freemasonry Lodge Wyong Tuggerah Lakes and raised \$10,160. Masonic Care Centre agreed to match the funds and donated a total of \$20,160, to purchase five electric beds. The community support is outstanding along with Barbara and Richard who would spend months to organise these events.

### **NOAH MORRIS**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast)**—Congratulations to 17 year Noah Morris for winning first place in the Central Coast Council youth photography

competition Your World, Your Way. The competition celebrates the talent and creativity of young photographers from across the Central Coast, and Noah's achievement is truly remarkable, with two of his works making the top 20 shortlist. Noah demonstrated exceptional skill and vision in capturing the essence of their world through their lens, impressing the judges with his unique perspective and artistic flair. Noah was awarded his first-place prize at the exhibition opening on Wednesday 4th April with his family at the Erina Centre Exhibition Space. His incredible prize is \$1500 including a share in the Your World, Your Way professional development prize package valued at \$4,700. Noah's work 'Consumer Tavern' is on exhibition at the Erina Centre Exhibition Space, Erina Fair. Well done on Noah's achievement presenting his photography skills.

#### **WOOLOOWARE SHORES RETIREMENT VILLAGE ANZAC DAY COMMEMORATIONS**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I acknowledge the importance of Anzac Day and the commemorations held by the Woollooware Shire Retirement Village on 25 April. Anzac Day is one of the most significant days on our national calendar. It marks the anniversary of the first major military action fought by Australian and New Zealand forces during the First World War at Gallipoli where more than 8,000 Australian soldiers lost their lives in defence of the Commonwealth and Allied Forces. To mark the occasion, the Woollooware Shores Retirement Village hosted its annual Anzac Day Service at their auditorium. The service provided the opportunity for Woollooware Shores residents to come together and reflect on the sacrifices our veterans made in defending our nation. I recognise Village Manager Liza Fox, Residents Committee President David Edwards as well as Reverend Garry Dawes, Reverend Andrew Nixon, George McLean, Graham Lane, Lorna Jackson, Ron Jones and Jim Jenkins for their contributions during the service. I thank the Woollooware Shores Retirement Village for hosting this commemoration and ensuring that this important day is remembered in our community.

#### **MIRANDA RSL SUB-BRANCH ANZAC DAY COMMEMORATIONS**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I acknowledge the importance of Anzac Day and the commemorations facilitated by the Miranda RSL Sub-Branch on 25 April. Anzac Day is one of the most significant days on our national calendar. It marks the anniversary of the first major military action fought by Australian and New Zealand forces during the First World War at Gallipoli where more than 8,000 Australian soldiers lost their lives. To mark the occasion, the Miranda RSL Sub-Branch hosted a Dawn Service at the Miranda War Memorial. The service provided the opportunity for our community to come together and reflect on the sacrifices our veterans made in defending our nation. I recognise Warren Barnes OAM, Major Jeremy Barraclough, Greg Beavis, Joan Thorp, Melissa Bush, Simon Militano, Todd Ridgeway, Tara Collier, Coralie Price, Arsenia Gatziastras and Emily Kyriakides for their contributions during the service. I also commend the hard-working executive of the Miranda RSL Sub-Branch. I recognise President and event organiser Alan Lark, Joanna Beavis, Shane Hall, Zac Miner and Steve Bull for their ongoing efforts. I thank the Miranda RSL Sub-Branch for hosting this commemoration and ensuring that this important day is remembered in our community.

#### **YOM HASHOAH COMMEMORATION 2024**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—I was honoured to join members of our vibrant Jewish Community on Sunday 5 May to commemorate Yom HaShoah. In 2024, the commemoration focused on the 80th anniversary of the Nazi invasion of Hungary. At that time, Hungary had the largest Jewish population in Europe of 825,000, in which over 565,000 were murdered. The service honoured Barbara Grunstein, who survived three concentration camps; Joe Symon who survived a labour battalion and fought in the underground resistance; and Lilly Wolf who survived a death march and was saved by Raoul Wallenberg. Candles were also lit by Judy Bahar, Judy Davis, Ernie Friendlander OAM and Vera Seder. We also had the privilege to hear from Jan Anger, whose father, Per Anger, saved Jewish lives in Hungary by providing Swedish documents, and worked alongside Raoul Wallenberg to save Jewish people from deportation to camps. I recognise and thank the Jewish Board of Deputies, led by President David Ossip and Chair of the Shoah Remembrance Committee, Dane Stern. I am proud the Davidson electorate is home to a large and vibrant Jewish community. I stand with them to make sure the Holocaust is never forgotten and never repeated.

#### **KU-RING-GAI NETBALL ASSOCIATION: 2024 SEASON OPENER**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—On Saturday 6 April, I attended the season opener of Ku-ring-gai Netball Association's (KNA) 2024 winter competition at South Turramurra. KNA has been a long-standing sporting pillar within our community that promotes fair play, teamwork and place of belonging. They are made up of thousands of players, umpires, coaches and volunteers across 18 clubs, offering a range of opportunities. I recognise and thank President Rod Jackson, Vice-President Ruth Havlant, Secretary Helen Pratt, Treasurer Ian Eldershaw, Committee Members Gillan Boyd and Mick Flarey, and patron and patriot Brenda Williams OAM, for all of their ongoing dedication. I acknowledge all that take the time to support the organisation through

umpiring, coaching, managing and administration support for the benefit of our local community. I look forward to visiting again the association later in the year, and wish them all the best for the season ahead.

#### **KU-RING-GAI LITTLE ATHLETICS: 2023-24 SEASON**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—On Sunday 28 April 2024, I attended the Annual Award Presentation for Ku-ring-gai Little Athletics Centre. Proudly, they are the second largest club in NSW, having been establishment in 1977. Ku-ring-gai Little Athletics has a wonderful motto, "family, friendship, fun and fitness". At the annual award presentation, I had the honour of presenting the Bi-Centennial Founders Cups to the best male and female athlete. I recognise and thank President Michael Hooton, Vice-President James Fisher, Secretary Simon Clatworthy, Treasurer Denis Scott, Registrar Katie Sumpton and General Executive Members Martin Laslett, Wayne Fourie, Richard Gerke, Leonie Endicott, Martin Vedris, Mandy Fourie, Kirstie Duvnjak, John Grant, Sarah Achike, Courtney Heyden, John McFadden, Michael Lally and Belinda Rudolph. Thank you for your volunteerism. I am proud to represent, promote and champion Ku-ring-gai Little Athletics in our community and in the NSW Parliament.

#### **THE OCEANIA YOUNG LEADERSHIP PROJECT**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—An incredibly impressive group of young leaders ran the Oceania Young Leadership Project with Cumberland Multicultural Community Services on 1 May 2024. I was delighted to attend the event showcasing this project at the Auburn Youth centre in Lidcombe. The project provided workshops to Pasifika young people across the Cumberland, Liverpool, Fairfield, and Blacktown Local Government Areas to help increase the knowledge and skills of young Pasifika people in the areas of education, employment, and leadership. Workshops were designed with advice from the Oceania Young Leadership Project Committee that was made up of young people from the Pasifika community. The project has been rolled out during 2023 and 2024 with 200 young people accessing the four delivered workshops. A special thanks to Cumberland Multicultural Community Services (CMCS) for this great project and initiative, who has been a champion for multicultural communities for over 40 years. Congratulations also to the committee involved in organising such a beneficial program for the Pasifikan community to use as a stepping stone up towards further education and hopefully future leadership roles!

#### **TURKISH CENTENARY FESTIVAL**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—I was absolutely delighted to attend the Turkish Centenary Festival held at Auburn Galipoli mosque on 5 May 2024, where 100 years of the Turkish Republic was celebrated over two days at this beautiful mosque. The festival was a vibrant showcase of Turkish culture, featuring a traditional bazaar, food stalls, an ice cream truck, and activities like Ebru art, Zeybek dance, and virtual reality experiences. I must say the Zeybek dance was my favourite! My sincere thanks goes to Erol Tarpis and Asiya Rodrigo, the lead organisers, and all the volunteers whose hard work turned these two days into a culturally beautiful day out for the public to share in. I was grateful to attend this event with The Hon Jason Clare MP, Minister for Education; The Hon Stephen Kamper MP, NSW Minister for Multiculturalism; The Hon Ali Sevim, Consul General, Turkish Consulate Sydney; The Hon Jihad Dib MP, Minister for Youth Justice; Lynda Voltz MP, Member for Auburn; Donna Davis MP, Member for Parramatta; Mayor Lisa Lake, Cumberland City Council; The Hon Laurie Ferguson MP OAM and Councillor Glenn Elmore among other community and political leaders. Well done Auburn Galipoli mosque!

#### **INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—On Friday 8 March 2024, International Women's Day (IWD) remains a vital occasion for forging women's equality and inclusion. On this day we celebrate the incredible achievements and contributions of women around the world and locally. In my electorate I attended the International Women's Day event at Cumberland Council. In Western Sydney there was a number of women recognised for their outstanding achievements. Cumberland Council's IWD event was coordinated in collaboration with Cumberland Women's Health Centre (CWHC) and the Parramatta Cumberland Primary Prevention Working Group. This event was to acknowledge the women in the local community sector. CWHC is a non for profit community based organisation which was established 26 years ago to provide women's health services and domestic violence specialist response services to women in the Parramatta, Cumberland and Baulkham Hills area. CWHC has been instrumental in empowering vulnerable women in our local community. I was delighted to attend this event.

#### **ST MARK'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL DRUMMOYNE**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I acknowledge the students of St Mark's Catholic Primary School in Drummoyne for participating in a School Liturgy commemorating Anzac Day. I want to congratulate each and every student for the respect that was shown on the day. Their thoughtful engagement and reverence during the service was to be commended. The way in which the students listened to war veteran

Catherine Lewis, Vice President of the Five Dock RSL Sub-Branch speak about her story of courage and sacrifice, participated in the wreath laying and then proudly sang our national anthem, showed a deep understanding of the significance of this important day. I would like to acknowledge the strong leadership of the school, led by School Captains Eve Cameron & William Kobylinski and Vice Captains, Halena Lattouf & Georgia Romaniuk. The way in which the senior leaders led the Liturgy demonstrated a maturity and empathy that made the entire school community proud. I would like to acknowledge and thank the Principal of St Mark's, Mrs Melissa Lentini and Mr Anthony Wakeling for coordinating a special commemoration. Well done and thank you to St Mark's for making their Anzac Day liturgy so meaningful.

#### **DOM PANINO**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I rise to sincerely congratulate Dom Panino on their well-deserved win at the Inner West Local Business Awards for the Most Outstanding Café category. Dom Panino's commitment to serving the Inner West community with exceptional food and outstanding customer service has truly paid off. Your dedication to customer service, honouring the Italian heritage and commitment to using only the freshest ingredients has earned you a loyal following, and it's no surprise that you've taken home this prestigious award. Your passion for providing a welcoming and inclusive environment for all is evident in every aspect of your business. From the moment customers step through your door, they're treated like family. This award is a testament to your hard work, and the heart and soul that you put into your business each and every single day. You've made the Inner West community proud, and the Italian community proud. I want to sincerely congratulate Domenico Ruggeri, his wife Sara Ruggeri and their family, as well as their hardworking Dom Panino staff. May this award be just the beginning of many more successes to come. Congratulations once again! Wishing you all the best.

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