



**New South Wales**

# **Legislative Assembly**

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)**

**Fifty-Eighth Parliament  
First Session**

**Thursday 16 May 2024**

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Thursday 16 May 2024**

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

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

## *Committees*

### **JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON ARTS AND MUSIC EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

#### **Establishment and Membership**

**The SPEAKER:** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council informing the Legislative Assembly that it has this day agreed to the following resolution:

- (1) That a joint select committee be established to inquire into and report on arts and music education and training in New South Wales, and in particular:
  - (a) the quality and effectiveness of arts and creative industries education, including:
    - (i) progress towards a long-term goal of quality arts and creative industries education;
    - (ii) the present level and status of formal arts and creative industries education across all levels, including primary, secondary and tertiary levels;
    - (iii) robust and evidence-based arts and creative industries education in initial teacher education courses in the tertiary sector;
    - (iv) the role of arts organisations and creative professionals in education and the development of creative skills across the arts;
    - (v) the contribution of the national performing arts training organisations in New South Wales and the adequacy of the support they receive;
    - (vi) the efficacy of the current primary and secondary school curriculum in delivering learning outcomes in arts and creative industry-related subjects;
    - (vii) the availability of support for teachers and principals in delivering quality arts education, and ensuring that an inclusive approach is taken towards resource allocation for regional schools across New South Wales;
    - (viii) the most effective approach for the arts, culture and creative industries to coordinate with the education system to support the development of creative skills;
    - (ix) ways that students can learn entrepreneurial skills and gain industry experience to ensure they are job ready;
    - (x) measures of success in arts education;
    - (xi) factors influencing student decisions to pursue further arts education, including but not limited to course choice, course location and the method of study; and
    - (xii) notable approaches to arts and creative industries education in other jurisdictions;
  - (b) the quality and effectiveness of music education and training, including:
    - (i) progress towards a long-term goal of quality music education, including actions to address identified barriers;
    - (ii) the present level and status of formal music education across all levels, including primary, secondary and tertiary levels;
    - (iii) robust and evidence-based music education in initial teacher education courses in the tertiary sector;
    - (iv) the role of regional conservatoriums and creative professionals in music education;
    - (v) the efficacy of the current primary and secondary school curriculum in delivering learning outcomes in music-related subjects;
    - (vi) the availability of support for teachers and principals in delivering quality music education and ensuring that an inclusive approach is taken towards resource allocation for regional schools across New South Wales;
    - (vii) the most effective approach for the music and the creative industries to coordinate with the education system to support the development of creative skills;

- (viii) ways that students can learn entrepreneurial skills and gain industry experience to ensure they are job ready;
  - (ix) measures of success in music education;
  - (x) factors influencing student decisions to pursue further music education, including but not limited to course choice, course location and the method of study;
  - (xi) notable approaches to music education in other jurisdictions, and
- (c) any other related matters.
- (2) That, notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the standing orders of either House, the committee consist of nine members comprising:
  - (a) four members of the Legislative Council, of whom:
    - (i) two must be Government members, being the Hon. Emily Suvaal and the Hon. Anthony D'Adam;
    - (ii) one must be an Opposition member, being the Hon. Jacqui Munro;
    - (iii) one must be a crossbench member, being Ms Abigail Boyd; and
  - (b) five members of the Legislative Assembly:
    - (i) two must be Government members;
    - (ii) one must be an Opposition member; and
    - (iii) two must be crossbench members.
- (3) That the committee elect a chair and deputy chair at its first meeting.
- (4) That, notwithstanding anything in the standing orders of either House, at any meeting of the committee, any four members of the committee will constitute a quorum, provided that at least one member of each House is present at all times.
- (5) That, unless the committee decides otherwise:
  - (a) all inquiries are to be advertised through social media, stakeholder emails and a media release distributed to all media outlets in New South Wales;
  - (b) submissions to inquiries are to be published, subject to the committee clerk checking for confidentiality and adverse mention and, where those issues arise, bringing them to the attention of the committee for consideration;
  - (c) attachments to submissions are to remain confidential;
  - (d) the chair's proposed witness list is to be circulated to provide members with an opportunity to amend the list, with the witness list agreed to by email, unless a member requests the chair to convene a meeting to resolve any disagreement;
  - (e) the sequence of questions to be asked at hearings alternate between Opposition, crossbench and Government members, in that order, with equal time allocated to each;
  - (f) transcripts of evidence taken at public hearings are to be published;
  - (g) supplementary questions are to be lodged with the committee clerk within two business days following the receipt of the hearing transcript, with witnesses requested to return answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions within 21 calendar days of the date on which questions are forwarded to the witness;
  - (h) answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions are to be published, subject to the committee clerk checking for confidentiality and adverse mention and, where those issues arise, bringing them to the attention of the committee for consideration; and
  - (i) media statements on behalf of the committee are to be made only by the chair.
- (6) That the committee report by Friday 29 November 2024.
- (7) That a message be sent acquainting the Legislative Assembly with the resolution and requesting the Legislative Assembly appoint five of its members to serve on the committee.

Legislative Council  
15 May 2024

PETER PRIMROSE  
Deputy President

I set down consideration of the Legislative Council's message for a later hour.

*[Notices of motions given.]*

### *Bills*

## **ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT AMENDMENT (AFFORDABLE HOUSING) BILL 2024**

### **First Reading**

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

## Second Reading Speech

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (10:19):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

On behalf of The Greens, I introduce the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Affordable Housing) Bill 2024. There is not a single person in this Chamber who does not already know about the housing crisis that is crushing our communities. Rents are at an all-time high and low-cost boarding houses are disappearing across the State. Public housing estates are being demolished as our waiting lists are ballooning out, and 30,000 renting households are evicted every year for no reason.

It would be easy to say that our housing market is broken, but it would also be wrong. As Anglicare Australia put it in its latest *Rental Affordability Snapshot*, it was actually designed this way. The decades-long gutting of funding for public housing, inadequate protections for renters, outsourcing of housing delivery to the private market and prioritisation of solutions that prop up private investors—like negative gearing and Commonwealth Rent Assistance—have all contributed to the incredibly dire housing landscape our communities are forced to navigate today. Homes have become a vehicle for investment and profit rather than a safe, secure place for people to live, and we in this place have a responsibility to reckon with and rectify this problem. We must take the profit motive out of housing and restore the social safety net by funding a massive increase in public housing.

In the decade after World War II, the New South Wales Housing Commission built almost 38,000 public homes—18 per cent of all homes built in New South Wales in that period. Today social housing, which is a combination of public housing and housing run by community housing providers, accounts for a measly 4.7 per cent of total housing in New South Wales. We have seen a woeful lack of ambition from successive governments of all stripes when it comes to delivering new social housing. Just this week, the Federal Labor Government announced in the budget that it would fund 40,000 new social homes nationwide. That might sound impressive without the context, but it is a shockingly low figure with the context that 57,000 households are on the social housing waiting list in New South Wales alone, so the national budget for delivering social homes would not even fill the waiting list in New South Wales of people who have been approved for public housing.

Rather than listening to the experts like the NSW Council of Social Service [NCOSS], the Tenants' Union of NSW, Shelter NSW, Vinnies and Homelessness NSW—which all used their pre-budget submissions to urge the Government to invest in restoring social housing to 10 per cent of overall housing stock in New South Wales—the Minns Labor Government is instead focusing on a different type of housing, and that is affordable housing. Its centrepiece housing solution, planning reform that will take years to deliver a single home, does not guarantee any social housing but instead drip-feeds what is called affordable housing at an alarmingly low rate—2 per cent of a development here, 15 per cent of a development there.

People could be forgiven for begrudgingly conceding that those low percentages are better than nothing, assuming that affordable housing is what the name suggests: housing that communities can afford. The reality is, though, that there are significant shortcomings to affordable housing as it is defined and to how it is regulated. They must be addressed if New South Wales Labor is choosing to prioritise this area of housing, which is why I am introducing this bill on behalf of The Greens today. Firstly, the current definitions of affordable housing in New South Wales are lacking in both detail and clarity. The Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, in section 1.4, states:

*affordable housing* means housing for very low income households, low income households or moderate income households, being such households as are prescribed by the regulations or as are provided for in an environmental planning instrument.

Notably, it is completely silent on how rents in affordable housing need to be set. Similarly, section 13 of the housing State environmental planning policy [SEPP] defines affordable housing largely by defining who is eligible for it, that being households that meet a number of criteria. The SEPP states:

- (a) the household—
  - (i) has a gross income within the following ranges of percentages of the median household income for Greater Sydney or the Rest of NSW—
    - (A) very low income household—less than 50%,
    - (B) low income household—50–less than 80%,
    - (C) moderate income household—80–120%, and
  - (ii) pays no more than 30% of the gross income in rent, or
- (b) the household—
  - (i) is eligible to occupy rental accommodation under the National Rental Affordability Scheme, and

- (ii) pays no more rent than the rent that would be charged if the household were to occupy rental accommodation under the Scheme.

That defines the eligibility criteria for who is allowed to access affordable housing. But even though it refers to people's income, that is in relation to eligibility, not in relation to the rent being paid. In fact, in the SEPP, no parameter is given for how rent should be set for an affordable housing property. The only guidance for rent setting is found in the *NSW Affordable Housing Ministerial Guidelines*. If members are confused already, that is why The Greens are introducing this bill. There are not necessarily contradictory definitions in the *NSW Affordable Housing Ministerial Guidelines* and the SEPP, but there is an absence of clarity over how rents should be set in affordable housing.

In general, the ministerial guidelines say, households on very low and low incomes should not spend more than 25 per cent to 30 per cent of their gross income on rent. Anything more than that is housing stress, and that is why that guideline exists. In spite of that, the same guidelines also allow community housing providers—which are, overall, the ones who manage affordable housing—to rent out affordable housing "at a discount of at least 20 per cent of market rent". In a practical sense, this means that affordable housing rents are capped at no more than 80 per cent of market rent, and this cap only applies for 15 years from the issuing of an occupation certificate. After this time, the formerly affordable housing can be rented out at any rate and at market value.

What is more, there is no central register of affordable housing across the State, meaning we have no clear picture of where and how much affordable housing actually exists and whether it meets community need. We have been asking for this regularly for a very long time. How much affordable housing do we have in the State? No-one can answer the question, not because they are avoiding answering a question that The Greens are asking but because literally nobody knows. We are in the middle of a housing crisis. The bill seeks to make very clear how rents are set under affordable housing but, just as importantly, to also allow us to keep track of the affordable housing and not lose it from under our noses in the middle of an affordable housing crisis.

The bill addresses each of those issues, and I now turn in detail to the substance of the bill. First, it creates a new division 4.12, Affordable Housing, in the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, new section 4.71 of which sets out a clear, three-part definition of affordable housing. The Greens want to establish that as a clear definition. The definition of affordable housing states that affordable housing is for the benefit of very low, low- and moderate-income households, to be held in perpetuity and rented out at no more than 30 per cent of the gross household income of eligible households. That would make the affordable housing in this State genuinely affordable. In line with the current definitions in section 13 of the housing SEPP, the bill defines very low income households as earning less than 50 per cent of the median household income for Greater Sydney or the rest of New South Wales, low-income households as earning less than 80 per cent and moderate-income households as earning between 80 per cent and 120 per cent.

Affordable housing is meant to be an alternative to the private rental market for people in these income brackets, many of whom are struggling to cover rising rental costs and are not eligible for social housing. How can it be a meaningful alternative when affordable housing tenants can be charged more than 30 per cent of their income in rent and, therefore, are considered to be in housing stress or rental stress? How can rent be genuinely affordable when the private rental market is still dictating the rent that affordable housing tenants can be charged? Thanks, in part, to Labor's refusal to limit or regulate rent increases in the private rental market in any way, the discount to market model is resulting in perverse outcomes where affordable housing is anything but affordable.

In August last year so-called affordable housing properties in the eastern suburbs made headlines for their absurd prices. In Bondi a two-bedroom apartment cost \$1,150 a week. In Clovelly a two-bedroom apartment cost \$1,160 a week. These would be exorbitant rents in the private rental market but, supposedly, these are affordable housing dwellings. It is difficult to imagine who can afford these apartments, but these astronomical rents are permissible under the current regulations because they are 80 per cent of market rent. To be clear, 80 per cent of a hyperinflated market rent is still incredibly high and beyond the reach of many who qualify for access to affordable housing.

The bill uncouples the rent-setting mechanism in affordable housing from the private rental market and instead pegs the rent to the tenant's income so that it is affordable for people, which is the intention of affordable housing. That is similar to the current approach Housing NSW takes to public housing whereby tenants pay between 25 per cent and 30 per cent of their income on rents, and it is comparable to other jurisdictions—New York, for example—where similar affordable housing models are used. The bill will ensure that community housing providers cannot charge more than 30 per cent of the tenant's income in rent, being the maximum percentage of income a household can spend on housing before being considered to be in rental stress. It is also the rent-setting mechanism supported by NCOSS, Shelter NSW, Mission Australia and the Community Housing Industry Association NSW.

It is important to note that some community housing providers already set rents as a proportion of the tenant's income, but it should not happen only at the discretion of providers. It needs to be a standard rule. We also need to have clear parameters on how rents are set in affordable housing if this is to be part of the Government's solutions to affordable housing. The bill will insert a new section 4.72 into the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act and make relevant amendments to the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021 and housing SEPP to ensure that renting an affordable housing property remains below 30 per cent of tenant income forever, not just for 15 years, which is currently the case.

The housing crisis has been decades in the making and it will take decades more to unravel the issues. Solutions that will expire in 15 years simply are not good enough. If steps are not taken to cool the overheated housing landscape during those 15 years, like building more social housing, regulating rents or removing tax concessions for big investors, we will just be kicking the can down the road and creating problems for future generations. In a report for Shelter NSW, University of Sydney planning academics Dr Catherine Gilbert and Dr Michael Zarnado stated:

If dwellings are only required to be affordable temporarily, and then revert to market-rate, the cumulative impact of the program will be smaller as dwellings are lost from the program at the same time that new affordable dwellings are produced.

This is what happened in Montgomery County, Maryland, which was one of the first United States counties to adopt mandatory inclusionary zoning. Between 1973 and 2005, the county built over 12,000 affordable dwellings, but these each had a 10-year minimum term and, by 2005, only 3,000 of those dwellings remained affordable. The housing crisis still exists. That is clearly not a satisfactory outcome, but New South Wales is heading towards the same fate unless we ensure that all housing is affordable forever. There is absolutely no monitoring of how affordable housing is captured and whether it is currently affordable. There is a need for us to be much more strict about that if it is going to be part of the housing solution.

In February 2023 before the State election, I participated in a massive meeting of the Sydney Alliance at a pre-election assembly in Westmead. Hundreds of community members gathered with organisations like the Tenants' Union of NSW, Better Renting, the Older Women's Network, and unions—such as the National Tertiary Education Union and the United Workers Union—as well as church groups, faith groups and other organisations. They were all demanding action on a range of things, including housing. At that event, I sat on stage and I watched the then Treasurer, Matt Kean, and the then shadow Treasurer, Daniel Mookhey, stand in front of that crowd at Westmead as they were asked whether they would support the idea of housing remaining affordable in perpetuity. The now Treasurer Daniel Mookhey promised that his party would ensure that all affordable homes built in New South Wales would remain in perpetuity. Matt Kean, the then Treasurer, to everyone's surprise, gave the same commitment and said that he also supported those houses remaining affordable in perpetuity.

Despite the fact that we have multipartisan support across this House to ensure that housing remains affordable in perpetuity, one year on from the election and NSW Labor has failed to act on its promise. The Greens bill is seeking to deliver that promise to the people who attended the Sydney Alliance forum in Westmead and people across the State who want to make sure that affordable housing remains in perpetuity. Let us remember that developers are getting bonuses because they are delivering affordable housing. In 15 years time, the developers' bonuses and extra profits do not disappear. They do not return those to the State and the public interest, yet we lose the benefit of affordable housing after 15 years when it should stay in perpetuity.

Under the new transport oriented development [TOD] SEPP, 2 per cent, which is laughable, of mid- to high-density developments near 37 transit hubs and local centres will need to be affordable housing. Leaving aside that 2 per cent is a miniscule percentage, we welcome that at least it appears that the Government is committed to ensuring that this will be affordable housing in perpetuity. It is a move in the right direction. But what about the affordable housing built elsewhere in the State? New section 4.72 of the bill will ensure the same for all affordable housing statewide, regardless of whether it is built in a designated TOD precinct. That would ensure that when private developers get a bonus for an additional storey or floor space for including affordable housing in the development, the public benefit of affordable housing lasts forever—in perpetuity—just as the private development benefits of more height and density last for the developer in perpetuity.

The third and final effect of the bill is to create a statewide affordable housing register. That will be maintained by the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces by inserting a new section 4.73 into the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act [EPAA]. Currently, because affordable housing is approved by a range of consent authorities and we have no centralised tracking or database, it is impossible to get an accurate picture of where, and how much, affordable housing exists in New South Wales. I do not think anyone could tell us that information. That is of huge concern given that the legislation for affordable housing can expire within 15 years. One hundred affordable housing units could be due to expire and return to the private rental market tomorrow, when we are in the middle of a housing crisis, and nobody would know about it. We could not move to extend that term for five

or 10 years because we genuinely do not know where the affordable housing is because the information is not recorded in any systematic way.

New section 4.73 requires consent authorities to notify the Minister within 14 days of issuing an occupation certificate for any development that includes affordable housing and to include in the register the following information: first, the street address of the development; secondly, the number of affordable housing dwellings in the development; thirdly, the number of bedrooms in each affordable housing dwelling; fourthly, the disability access for each affordable housing dwelling; and fifthly, the name and contact details of the registered community housing provider [CHP] that will manage the affordable housing dwellings. The register will enable policymakers to accurately track affordable housing across the State and assess whether it is meeting community needs and plan strategically for where and how to build more, as well as where there is demand or the need to address other housing crises.

Many in this place and beyond talk about key worker housing and recognise the importance of having workers who are able to offer services to communities in an area. A register would help map out where affordable housing currently exists and where it needs to be built to ensure that workers can afford to live a reasonable distance from their place of work, whether that is a school, a health precinct, a refuge or crisis accommodation. In drafting this section, The Greens deliberately chose the issuing of an occupation certificate rather than the granting of a development consent as the trigger that requires the Minister to be notified. The average lag time between a development approval and construction completion is two years. The Greens do not want developments that are approved but not yet built to artificially inflate the numbers and paint an inaccurate picture of affordable housing levels. Accurate data is needed to make informed decisions about this commonsense addition to the EPAA.

The Greens want to see three changes through this bill: a rent cap of 30 per cent of tenant income, a perpetuity requirement and the creation of an affordable housing register as soon as possible. The Greens are absolutely committed to working with the Government to deliver these reforms so that we can ensure that any affordable housing delivered in this State is genuinely affordable. I give our commitment to continuing to work constructively with members on all sides of this House to deliver housing reform for this State. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

## **RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES AMENDMENT (PROHIBITING NO GROUNDS EVICTIONS) BILL 2024**

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 9 May 2024.**

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (10:41):** I continue my contribution to the debate on the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Prohibiting No Grounds Evictions) Bill 2023, which was brought to the House by the member for Newtown on behalf of The Greens. I only spoke for 60 seconds last time. I was quoting the member for Newtown at the time. I will not reflect on the entire quote, but I pick out the section that I wish to focus on. In her second reading speech, the member for Newtown said:

We have all heard stories ... older people booted out of homes that they have lived in for years because their landlords want to sell ...  
I focus on those legitimate words and concerns. It is topical at the moment.

**Mr Richie Williamson:** It sounds like Albo.

**Mr STEPHEN BALI:** It is probably the wrong part of the quote to start with, given the Prime Minister's circumstances, but they are legitimate concerns that a landlord may have when they wish to sell their property. I know it was not the full intention of The Greens to say that landlords cannot sell their houses, but the importance of the debate is in the wording of the second reading speech. In the eyes of the law, that is almost as important as the legislation itself: What is the intention? The bill highlights the challenges in getting the right wording to make sure that we present cohesive laws that do not massively impact on the market.

The members who have contributed to the debate so far have not overly focused on the landlords' predicaments. Landlords have the right to sell their properties with whatever change of circumstances may take place. We have to make sure that the market itself can sustain the changes that we make. Whilst I concur with the member's statements, if a landlord wants to sell their property, they should have the right to sell it. Evictions may not be able to be avoided unless the new purchaser is also an investor. Investors make up about one-third of the market, so there is at least a 30 per cent chance that whoever is purchasing the property will also rent it out.

I draw attention to what other members have said during the debate, particularly the member for Willoughby, who led for the Opposition. He seems slightly confused about his role in this Parliament. He presented an argumentative and confused attack on the Government that lacked any economic rigour. He has a mantra these days where, on the one hand, he says, "Just get on with it and introduce new laws," but, on the other hand, he says, "Make sure you consult with everyone." I remind the member that Labor has only been in government for about 15 months. The Minister, in his contribution, talked about extensive consultation, including the 16,000-person survey and the different stakeholders he has been talking to. Each one of them has different views about no-grounds evictions, and the Government is working through that.

The member for Willoughby seems confused about bringing in laws to correct the anomalies created by the former Liberal-Nationals Government over 12 years of not looking at no-grounds evictions. He is now saying, "Fix the law today." Whilst the Government is trying to fix all of the problems that the Liberals and Nationals created over the past decade or so, it may take us a year or two to correct those things. The member also claimed victory by using statistics from 2021-22, during the height of COVID, and used that as a benchmark for when rent increases were not massive. That is a low benchmark. During the COVID years, it was a tenant's market. No-one would have called for a no-grounds eviction because no-one was allowed to move during that time. He is claiming victory in a pandemic, when the rental market was subdued and rents were going down.

The member for Kellyville is another member trying to find his relevance. He seems to be angry all the time. He did not once mention the words "landlord" or "tenant". He has a warped idea that land supply issues are all the new Government's fault. He talked about land supply, but also said that there is a lot of vacant land out there right now; therefore, there are development applications on them, but our Government should make sure that every one of them gets a house built on it right now. That is interesting coming from a party that does not want red tape and wants minimal government involvement. Those opposite are now saying that because the Government owns a bit of land, it must put a house on it straightaway.

The member for Kellyville also talked about the \$40,000 to \$60,000 increase in building costs due to changes in BASIX. I highlight to the member for Kellyville that those are his numbers. The industry does not totally agree with that. It may have increased the cost of the house by \$40,000, but in the past three years, property prices across the Sydney Basin have increased by \$80,000 a year on average. If you give up six months of a house price increase, you now have a house that is cooler, more environmentally friendly, cheaper to run et cetera. It does not make sense. There will be cost increases in building the house to better environmental standards but, at the same time, there are savings on running costs, and the value of the house is improved because it is environmentally friendly. The price of the house will recover itself in a short period of time. The member for Newtown said in her second reading speech:

Data from NSW Fair Trading reveals that across the State one tenant is evicted every 18 minutes. The Tenants' Union of NSW eviction map tells us that in 2023 landlords made 13,011 eviction applications through the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT], painting a grim picture of a desperate precarity that more than two million renters in this State now face.

Let us unpack that. One tenant being evicted every 18 minutes means that there are 29,200 evictions annually, for all causes, not just one. Based on there being two million renters in the State, 29,000 equates to 1.5 per cent of tenants. [*Extension of time*]

The 13,000 eviction applications through NCAT represent only 0.6 of 1 per cent of the State's renters. So, if we are going to make changes, we have to make sure we do not impact the rest of the tenancy market. The member for Newtown further stated:

... 47 per cent of landlords said that the tenancy laws are completely unimportant—in other words, insignificant—in considering whether they would sell their investment property.

So 47 per cent of landlords would not really care if we introduced a prohibition on no-grounds evictions. The fact that only 1.5 per cent of tenants are evicted suggests that most landlords are good-natured and prefer to hold on to a long-term tenant. Essentially, although 47 per cent of landlords will not make a decision to sell their investment property based on changes to tenancy laws, the other 53 per cent might consider it. That is one million properties in the rental market that we do not want to impact unnecessarily by bringing in laws that make it tougher for landlords. It may reduce supply and, therefore, increase rents. The member for Newtown also said:

In the midst of deeply entwined and entrenched housing and cost-of-living crises, thousands of people in New South Wales are at risk of being evicted from their homes for absolutely no reason.

I completely understand the well-intentioned words of the member for Newtown. This morning she also spoke passionately on an affordable housing bill. I want to focus on the cost-of-living crisis. Yes, we have identified that tenants are facing a cost-of-living crisis, but at the same time many landlords are mum-and-dad investors who own one or two properties. The average investment property loan in New South Wales is currently \$785,000, at 7.39 per cent interest, with repayments of \$5,430 per month over 20 years. Three years ago, when interest rates



were 2.5 per cent, the monthly repayment on that loan amount was \$3,102. So in the past three years the cost of the average investment property loan has gone up \$2,328 per month, or \$582 per week. I notice that a group of school students has entered the gallery. Some of them may be tenants, with their parents as landlords.

We need to consider how the introduction of a prohibition on no-grounds evictions will impact the residential tenancy market. The member for Newtown said further:

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

The Greens and the crossbench have been working with the Government to provide appropriate laws, but the Liberal Party and The Nationals seem to have lost the ability to negotiate. They rush laws into this Chamber, as we have seen with domestic violence prevention laws and other things. Rather than negotiating and talking, they come here and say, "This is all our idea." The Greens hold Labor to account. Our parties have similar constituencies. But while The Greens arguably act as our moral conscience, pushing the limits of boundaries, we need to bring forward appropriate laws that actually work in the marketplace. The Greens seek a prohibition on no-grounds evictions and the reinstatement of a residential tenancy agreement where a tenant has been wrongfully evicted. I have concerns about this bill, but I commend The Greens for bringing it to the Parliament. Hopefully we can negotiate for a better outcome.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (10:55):** I support the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Prohibiting No Grounds Evictions) Bill. Safe, secure, affordable housing is a fundamental human right, and crucial to ensuring people can engage in education, employment, relationships and community life. But our housing system is broken and the number of people in housing stress is escalating, with far-reaching impacts on their health, wellbeing and quality of life. We have an enormous social housing waiting list that leaves tens of thousands of people at risk of homelessness. We have a private rental housing market that sees brutal competition amongst renters, rent rises so high they are beyond the affordability of even medium-income earners and very poor security of tenure. The vulnerability in the community is unprecedented and could lead to disadvantage for generations.

Too much focus in the policy response to the housing affordability crisis has been on private rental housing supply. Low supply is certainly part of the cause driving up prices, but building new homes will take time when relief is needed now. There are also many factors outside the Government's control that make relying solely on an increase in private supply risky, including labour and product shortages, and developer profits favouring land banking, staging the release of housing supply and prioritising luxury development. What governments can do now is make renting fairer and more secure by removing the option for no-cause evictions. Any other reform that gives renters more rights and protections will always be limited if a landlord can evict a tenant for no reason. No-grounds evictions give landlords a reliable free pass from fulfilling their obligations. Landlords can impose excessive rent increases, refuse to do basic repairs and maintenance, or ban companion animals, for example, because if their tenants try to dispute the action, they can just evict them and claim that the eviction was for no reason. While evictions in retaliation to a tenant exercising their rights are unlawful, the provision of no-cause evictions provides a loophole.

I understand that the Government is working through how to best prohibit no-grounds evictions, but the need for reform is urgent and we know what needs to be done. All renters, regardless of whether they are on a fixed or periodic lease, should not live under the threat of being evicted for no reason. The law should provide a comprehensive list of lawful reasons for evicting a tenant; that is what the bill does, including if a close family member intends to live in the property, if renovations or repairs are required, or any other reason prescribed by regulation. There is always a reason for evicting a tenant. The bill will ensure that landlords can only evict a tenant for a lawful reason.

My electorate has the highest proportion of renters in the State. Because it is close to jobs, services and entertainment, my constituents pay among the highest rents in the country. Many live in very small homes, including studio and one-bedroom apartments, with no balcony, no private laundry facilities and no lift access. I regularly hear from constituents who have received substantial rent increases—in excess of \$200 per week in many cases—but are too afraid to challenge or make a counteroffer because it could result in eviction. I hear from tenants living in substandard homes that have not received the basic maintenance works needed, whose efforts to request works have resulted in no-grounds eviction notices. The status quo cannot continue. More people are renting for longer, and they need security of tenure. Owning an investment residential property comes with responsibilities that must align with the need to protect housing security in the community. The New South Wales rental market is currently a landlord's market, and I thank the member for Newtown for introducing the bill and giving the Parliament an opportunity to restore balance and fairness. I commend the bill to the House.

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

*Members*

**MEMBER FOR TERRIGAL**

**MEMBER FOR GOSFORD**

**MEMBER FOR SUMMER HILL**

**The SPEAKER:** I wish the member for Terrigal a happy birthday. I wonder whether the Manager of Opposition Business will allow him to take question time off. I also wish the member for Gosford and the member for Summer Hill all the best for their upcoming birthdays.

*Visitors*

**VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I extend a warm welcome to guests from the New Zealand Parliament who are visiting Australia as a part of the Australian Political Exchange Council program. Welcome Rima Nakhle, Greg Fleming, Cushla Tangaere-Manuel and Reuben Davidson. I look forward to meeting with you later. I also welcome to the gallery the guest of the member for Wollondilly, Jim Rasaiah; guests of the member for Leppington, students from William Carey Christian School in Prestons; and guests of the member for Upper Hunter from the Gloucester Evening Country Women's Association. On behalf of the member for Newcastle, I acknowledge that students from Newcastle High School and Merewether High School also join us. They are part of the Secondary Schools Student Leadership Program conducted by Parliamentary Education and Engagement. I acknowledge all the students joining us as part of that fantastic program. I welcome guests of the member for Charlestown, Violet Roumeliotis, AM, the CEO of Settlement Services International, and her team. Finally, I acknowledge the visitors of the member for Tweed, students from Kingscliff High School and Banora Point High School.

*Members*

**REPRESENTATION OF MINISTERS ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS**

**Mr RON HOENIG:** On behalf of Mr Chris Minns: I inform the House that the Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government will answer questions today in the absence of the Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport.

*Question Time*

**STATE TAXES**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (11:07):** My question is directed to the Attorney General representing the Minister for Finance. Will the Government honour its election promise of no new taxes?

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (11:08):** That is a matter for the Minister for Finance and the Treasurer. Members will see the state of the budget when it comes out. That is all the question is about. We could reword it as, "Will the Attorney General tell us what is going to be in the budget?" The answer is no. When the Treasurer stands here later in the year, members will find out what is in the budget. That is the answer to the question.

**NUCLEAR ENERGY**

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (11:08):** My question is addressed to the Premier. Is the Premier aware of any plans to repeal the Uranium Mining and Nuclear Facilities (Prohibitions) Act 1986?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:08):** The Government will not be repealing that Act in New South Wales and will stop all attempts to repeal the ban on uranium use for energy in New South Wales. We are relying on the chief scientist's paper delivered to the previous Government in 2020, which said:

The skills and experience required to build, operate and maintain a nuclear power reactor and its complete fuel supply chain are substantial and must be built up over many decades.

...

Realistically, Australia will be starting from scratch ...

By way of comparison, direct skilled employment in the nuclear industry in Canada is 30,000 and in France 125,000.

...

It is useful to look at a current example - Hinkley Point C (UK) ...

This should be the easiest of circumstances - an established reactor delivered by arguably the most experienced nuclear plant construction company in the world ...

But I can inform the House the cost of that plant is now \$40 billion. It was approved in 2008 and its construction should be finished in 2026. I am aware of certain moves among some members of Parliament—mainly from the Coalition—to remove the moratorium on nuclear power in the State. I must say that it has prompted a radioactive debate among the Coalition. The fallout will be felt for many years. The Leader of the Opposition said, "If there is a ban at the moment"—and there is—"that ban should be lifted." The member for Wahroonga said, "A lot of the modular nuclear reactors in Europe are in suburban areas. You could easily put them"—

**Mr Matt Kean:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Hornsby rises on a point of order. I warn the member that he must take a point of order, not make a statement.

**Mr Matt Kean:** My point of order is about relevance, taken under Standing Order 129. There are no prohibitions on the use of nuclear in New South Wales.

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

**Mr Matt Kean:** That is a Federal prohibition. It is a prohibition on mining.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Hornsby will be removed from the Chamber if he continues. I call the member for Hornsby to order for the first time.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** The member for Willoughby said:

I will continue to make the case for nuclear energy in NSW.

Scott Farlow said:

I implore my Federal colleagues to revisit the moratorium on nuclear power in Australia.

The award-winning member for Epping said, "I'm certainly open to it." The Liberal Party will stop us from building three-storey walk-up apartments, but it will put a nuclear reactor in the same place. That is all we are dealing with. But it has been taken one step further by Wes Fang, who, in response to a question from Labor, said:

I said that I would have a nuclear reactor in my backyard if it was one of the small modular reactors. I would have no problem with that ... It is a shame that the Labor Party will not get on with it as well.

If we have to put a nuclear reactor anywhere, it may as well be in Wes Fang's backyard. [*Extension of time*]

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** You have to feel for Wes Fang's neighbours, because, even if we stop nuclear power in Australia, they will still have to live next door to Wes Fang—which of course is a huge problem. The member for Holsworthy said:

Lucas Heights is an example of the ability to operate nuclear reactors which are safe for surrounding communities.

She said, "We have a lot to learn from ANSTO. They're a wonderful example of having nuclear in the suburbs."

**Mrs Tina Ayyad:** They are.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Holsworthy will not fall into the trap.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** We had a look at what the chief scientist said about that. She said:

While Australia has skills in the ANSTO facility, it must be recognised that this is a 'zero-power' pool reactor where the complexities of high pressure, high power, high radiation environments do not exist.

I know that the member for Holsworthy wants to build pools, but I presume they are not nuclear reactor pools. Now I come to someone who will stand up to this mess, someone who has been in the mix, who has to suddenly, subtly and discreetly tell his colleagues he is not on board with all of this nuclear reactor stuff. That is the member for Hornsby. He solved that problem by writing 14 tweets and two op-eds, and appearing on *Q+A*. That is how he got the message across. But he is up against Dr Oppenheimer, the member for Dubbo and Leader of The Nationals, who is intent on pursuing nuclear power in this State. Can I let the House in on a little secret? I suspect he will be opposed by the future leader of the National Party, the member for Bathurst. At the end of the day, the Coalition has tried to split the atom but instead it has split the party. Only Labor can be trusted when it comes to energy policy in New South Wales.

**BAIL LAWS**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (11:14):** My question is directed to the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. The Minister's joint media release on Tuesday said that new bail laws would "ensure weekend bail decisions are made by magistrates". But this has been quietly left out of the bill and the second reading speech. Does the Minister support this omission?

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (11:15):** I thank the member for Miranda for her question and for her colours today, recognising that today is the day to wear orange for the SES. I appreciate the work the emergency services do. What a great Minister we have. Turning to the question, I point out to the member for Miranda that there is no need to put that into legislation.

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

**Ms JODIE HARRISON:** We are absolutely committed to doing that. We do not need legislation to do it, and we are working through those issues. The Attorney General has the lead on that. I totally back in what has already been said in that media release and in this place. I have no doubt whatsoever about the fact that in this place we are going to keep women and children safe and hold perpetrators to account.

**NSW POLICE FORCE**

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (11:16):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. Will the Minister update the House on how the Government is taking action to address some of the challenges facing our NSW Police Force?

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Miranda to order for the first time. I warn the member for Keira that he will be called to order if he continues to interject. Members will calm down. The Minister has the call.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (11:17):** I thank the member for Heathcote for her question. She is very supportive of police officers in her area, and I thank her very much for that. Yesterday I stood alongside the Premier, the New South Wales police commissioner and the New South Wales Police Association to announce our latest commitments to backing our cops in New South Wales. That "unfinished business" mob opposite left us more than 1,500 officers short.

**Mr Paul Scully:** Shameful.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** Absolutely. We were left to clean up that mess. Yesterday we announced two brand-new recruitment projects. Those initiatives are aimed at attracting more experienced police to New South Wales and regional recruits as well to the NSW Police Force. The Professional Mobility Program will enable officers from other Australian States and Territories to join the NSW Police Force while keeping their ranks and coming in at their ranks in New South Wales. We will end up having very experienced police officers here, and they will undergo rigorous training as well.

Mr Speaker, join me in saying a big kia ora to our neighbours across the Tasman Sea. They are welcome, but they might not like what they hear because the doors are open for police officers to come from New Zealand. They will now be able to join the New South Wales police at their existing ranks, up to senior constable. It has caused quite a stir across the ditch. Yesterday I was interviewed on New Zealand radio and was asked, "Do you feel guilty for stealing our cops?" Of course I replied, "No, not at all."

Even Christopher Luxon, the Prime Minister of New Zealand, has weighed in. He said, "It's up to each individual police officer to make their decision, but I'd like to say to you that we are wanting to build a country where police officers choose to stay here." I respect that, but he knows that New Zealand cops will be queueing at the airport to come to New South Wales. He also admitted that he cannot match our pay. I invite any Kiwi cops who are watching to make the decision to come to New South Wales and join the best police force in the world. We will look after them, just as we look after the magnificent police in the NSW Police Force. The Government is delivering what those opposite could not deliver. What was said at the Police Association of New South Wales conference in 2022? [*Extension of time*]

Mr Morton said, "We're missing out on quality potential police officers in this State." He went on to say, "As a result, we're staring down the barrel of a serious police shortage in this State in the very near future." That was absolutely true. What did the member for Bathurst do? He did nothing. I will address the offensive comments made by a colleague in the other place last night. That was nothing other than an attack on the hardworking NSW Police Force, and I will not stand for it. Our cops work tirelessly, day and night, to keep the public safe. They are not political. They do not take sides. They are there to keep the peace and protect public safety no matter what a person's political persuasion is. To say otherwise is dangerous for our democracy.

The police are hardworking people who do their job to put food on the table, pay their mortgage and look after their family. They are like every other worker in this State, but they put themselves at extreme risk for the safety of the people of New South Wales. Few members of Parliament would have the physical courage to perform the duties that the police do. They refer to it as a duty—their duty to the public and to the people of New South Wales. I will not stand for attacks on the NSW Police Force. It makes my blood boil. To imply that the commissioner of the NSW Police Force is anything less than a fine police officer and a public servant of the highest possible integrity is disgraceful. I will not cop it. The police do a great job. It is a job that many of us would not do ourselves, but they do it around the clock and they have the support of this Parliament every day of the week.

#### SNOWY VALLEYS COUNCIL

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (11:22):** My question is directed to the Minister for Local Government. The communities of the Snowy Valleys have been fighting the destructive effects of forced council mergers for eight years. Will the Minister outline for those communities the pathways they can now follow and the support available to pursue demergers?

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (11:23):** I thank the member for Wagga Wagga for the question. He has been a persistent and ferocious advocate for the Snowy Valleys Council and the people of that council area. I know how desperate they are to effect a demerger. The Snowy Valleys Council was one of the 20 councils that were caught up in the failed experimental amalgamation proposal by the former Government. Like many of those councils, it has had financial sustainability problems ever since. I have repeatedly expressed my views in this House about council amalgamations. I have been extremely critical, not only in the House but also privately to previous local government Ministers. The amalgamation of councils always ends in tears.

Snowy Valleys Council is one of the merged councils that was effectively set up to fail. I pay tribute to the mayor and deputy mayor, whom I have met several times, along with the member for Wagga Wagga—once in Sydney and then subsequently on my recent visit to Tumut. They have made an enormous effort to try to rescue the council since the last local government election, having to restructure and change staff even at a senior level. I know that they are struggling. I know the people of Tumbarumba are desperate to have their own council. They have proceeded in accordance with section 218CC of the Local Government Act by submitting a business case to the boundaries commission. There has since been a change of legislation. Once royal assent is given to the bill that has passed this Parliament, the council will need to proceed in accordance with new section 218CD of the Local Government Act.

The boundaries commission publicly announced the new process for councils when it dealt with the Inner West Council demerger proposal. Councils need to prepare an implementation plan, together with a submission to the boundaries commission. The Snowy Valleys Council will need to follow that process. If a demerger is recommended by the boundaries commission, the next step in the process is a referendum for a compulsory vote for the whole council area. [*Extension of time*]

If all residents of the council area vote in a compulsory ballot for a demerger, the next process will be that the councils can be demerged. It is also open to them, under that legislation, to apply to the Government for a grant not exceeding \$5 million and/or a loan from TCorp at a rate determined by the Treasurer. That is the legislative process councils need to follow. I have received a request from the mayor of Snowy Valleys Council to defer the local council elections. I indicated that I am not mindful to delay the democratic process of the local government election due in September. The mayor, Ian Chaffey, is an experienced public servant in local government. I will be meeting with him again this afternoon. I assume that he will make the same request again, and I will give him the same answer.

The council needs to go through the process. It should also be clear that a council cannot demerge unless both those entities will be financially sustainable. Councils cannot use, as an example, the process that applied to Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council. That is a different statutory process that I implemented to give effect to my predecessor's decision. Councils will now need to proceed in accordance with the Act, and they need to be financially sustainable. Looking at the financial figures, even as a merged council, Snowy Valleys Council is struggling to be financially sustainable right now.

#### PUBLIC SECTOR WAGES

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (11:28):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Industrial Relations. Will the Minister please update the House on the impact of scrapping the former Liberal-Nationals Government's wages cap policy?

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (11:28):** I acknowledge the member for The Entrance and the fantastic job he does for the people he represents. He is very strong advocate for the essential workers who were ripped off by those opposite. The wages cap was a disaster and those opposite should be embarrassed. Only a few months ago the Opposition voted against the industrial relations reform. The people of New South Wales voted for the Labor Government to change, reform and rip up the wages cap. What did Opposition members do? They voted against it. Members opposite wanted to keep the wages cap. They claim to be the free marketeers and innovators, but they are actually the deadlockers because they closed the cupboard in 2011. There was no award reform.

**Mr Matt Kean:** There was real wage growth.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** "Real wage growth", from the former Treasurer. That is an absolute joke.

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

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** All the Opposition offered was 2½ per cent, and they kept it for a dozen years. If you worked hard, did you get more than 2½ per cent?

**Government members:** No!

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** If you showed initiative or any innovation, did you get more than 2½ per cent?

**Government members:** No!

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** Was any productivity put on the table for bargaining?

**Government members:** No!

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** Absolutely not, and what did the frontline COVID heroes get? They got zero, after 12 years of the members opposite capping the wages of essential workers. We heard from the police Minister today and from the education Minister, and Deputy Premier yesterday about the gaps that were left because the previous Government did not have a workforce plan, and we heard that we have issues with recruitment and retention. We are trying to fix their problems. The Minister for Health well knows that there is a lot of award reform to do in the health sector, and members opposite did nothing. There are more than 36 awards in the health sector, more than 18 determinations, over 800 classifications, over 1,100 different pay rates and 136 separate allowances. Members opposite, who think they are reformers, made no reforms to the allowances, some of which we know are outdated. There is a geriatric allowance. [*Extension of time*]

There is a smoke box allowance, a sorting of incinerators allowance, a handling nauseous linen allowance and an offensive work allowance. Members opposite did absolutely nothing for 12 years, and we have had to come in and clean up the mess. Members opposite did not support our bill last year, but we are working systematically with our essential workers. An Opposition member asked a silly question of the Deputy Premier yesterday about support staff, and we found out that 95 per cent of them are women who now have a permanent job for the first time in 12 years. They can go to the bank and get a loan. They can have security for their bond when they pay the rent. They can also plan for their family. Members opposite did not care about our essential workers. The previous Government's wages cap caused an absence of any practical way to address those issues. We are addressing those issues. Last year paramedics and teachers got their very important pay rises.

**Mr Matt Kean:** It was 26 per cent.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** Yes. That is great. For 12 years the former Government did absolutely nothing to value the work that they do. The demands on public services have changed. Look at what has happened with our caseworkers. The members opposite left children in hotels with labour hire workers because they got rid of \$1 billion in community services in 2011. They are a disgrace.

#### **THE HON. ANTHONY D'ADAM**

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (11:33):** My question is directed to the Premier. In budget estimates the Premier said that sacking the Parliamentary Secretary for Emergency Services, the Hon. Anthony D'Adam, would "potentially provide a platform for even more views from Mr D'Adam". Last night, in the other place, the Hon. Anthony D'Adam said, "The approach of the Public Order and Riot Squad at many Palestinian protests makes a liar of the commissioner." Will the Premier now sack the Hon. Anthony D'Adam as the Parliamentary Secretary?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:34):** Obviously, the member did not hear the police Minister moments ago slamming those comments and comprehensively backing the New South Wales police.

[*Opposition members interjected.*]

Am I not allowed to speak to the question that has been asked?

**The SPEAKER:** Members will come to order. The Premier has the call.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** The Minister said, comprehensively, that the New South Wales Government backs the police and the police commissioner. As an aside, being a New South Wales police officer, particularly right now in the most difficult circumstances imaginable, is far harder than issuing a speech in the middle of the night in the Legislative Council. I thought those comments were absolutely reprehensible, and I completely disassociate myself from them. We do not want to make a martyr of anyone in this set of circumstances, and I thought the comments of the member were completely outrageous.

### HEALTHCARE SERVICES

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (11:35):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Health. Will the Minister update the House on the New South Wales Government's commitment to implement safe staffing levels in New South Wales public hospitals?

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (11:35):** I thank the member for Leppington for his ongoing advocacy for the people of south-western Sydney, particularly in relation to health care and services. Today is a day I thought I would never see but, for the first time, we are rolling out a ratio-based model of health care in New South Wales hospitals. The single biggest reform in the way our hospitals are staffed is now underway. It will commence in two very busy emergency departments: in Liverpool Hospital, as the member for Leppington, and the member for Liverpool and her colleagues, would know, and in Royal North Shore Hospital. They are two big emergency departments that are under critical pressure right now in growing communities. Each of those hospitals will have 35 new nurses in its emergency department. Over the next three years, that single biggest reform to hospital staffing will pump about 2,480 additional nurses into a system that desperately needs them.

Since this time last year, the number of nurses in our health system has gone up by over 2,000. We need to roll out this reform as quickly as possible. Health is working with the team at the Nurses and Midwives' Association. I acknowledge Shaye Candish—and her predecessor Brett Holmes—and Michael Whaites for their long-time advocacy on behalf of our nurses and midwives, the largest staffing component in the healthcare system. As important as this reform is, it is going to take time and I say clearly to members that there will be challenges along the way for all of us in our local hospitals. As we roll out the reform, members will see big improvements to their local emergency departments when we start at levels five and six. We have to work closely with the association, because this reform is critical to patients, to their families, and to attracting and retaining the important healthcare professionals that we need and deserve. [*Extension of time*]

As we roll it out, we will begin to see ratios of one to three in our emergency departments. That will change the way we care for patients in New South Wales. Every day when I am out and about in hospitals—and it was the same when, as shadow health Minister, I started this journey with the association four years ago—three things about this reform strike me as important: Firstly, it is absolutely about delivering better patient care and safer care for our communities; secondly, it is about attracting the next wave of nursing and midwifery professionals into our system; and, thirdly, it is about retaining the health professionals and nurses that we have.

This morning I had an opportunity to meet with Mary, who is a nurse unit manager at Royal North Shore. She commenced in 1975 and has been there for close to five decades. She said to me that she has never seen a change and reform like the one this Government is embarking on. Mary has nearly 50 years of experience, and she recognised the significance of today's commitment and this reform. I also had an opportunity to speak to two nurses at the other end, Laura and Danica, who are commencing their roles. Shaye Candish said to them, "You are very lucky because you will only know a system that is built around ratios." I thank the Nurses and Midwives' Association and the advocates across nursing and their communities. I thank their patients, their families and their carers who have been tremendous advocates for this reform.

### NSW POLICE FORCE

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst) (11:40):** My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism—it is a simple question, so she will not need any notes for it.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Is that your question?

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will resume her seat. She will not behave in that manner again. Members will come to order. The Attorney General will come to order. The member for Bathurst will ask his question without commentary.

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** New South Wales will receive \$1.9 billion less than forecast in GST payments for this year alone.

**The SPEAKER:** Government frontbench members will come to order. Does the member for Bathurst want me to read the question for him?

**Mr PAUL TOOLE:** No, Mr Speaker. The Minister knows that our police need continued support and resources to keep our community safe. Will the Minister rule out cutting expenditure in her portfolio or delaying infrastructure rollouts to make up for any budget black holes?

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (11:43):** The biggest threat to the New South Wales police is the former police Minister. What did the former police Minister do about retention? He did absolutely nothing. Last month we saw his brilliant idea to help police: the Optional Disengagement Scheme. It is a disengagement program. We lost hundreds of police last month—thank you very much for that one! The member for Bathurst talked about police funding and a government that supports the police. Look no further than the front benches of the Labor Government. You call it unfinished business, but I think that is being a bit polite. You were derelict in your duty as a Minister.

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

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

**Mr Alister Henskens:** The Minister should direct her comments through the Chair. She is pointing across the Chamber at a member of Parliament, which is contrary to the standing orders.

**The SPEAKER:** I uphold the point of order. However, I point out that the Minister complies with that standing order more often than most other members. Her general demeanour is better than that of most other members in this place.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** I am happy to oblige. There is a bit of relevance deprivation going on because we do not have to hear the voice of the member for Wahroonga very often—thank goodness. I will go back to the member for Bathurst. One of his greatest traits to help the police out was sitting around the Cabinet table and agreeing to send their wages backwards. That is what he did. He sat there. He did not stand up for them; he did not say anything. Did he ever say—

**Mrs Wendy Tuckerman:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Goulburn rises on a point of order.

**Mrs Wendy Tuckerman:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The question was about the budget and whether the Minister will rule out any cuts to funding in the next budget.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister is making introductory comments, but she keeps being interrupted. The Minister has the call.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** At any stage while sitting around the Cabinet table, did you say, "No, the police need a pay rise. You have to stop sending their wages backwards"? Did you ever stand up for them? Have you ever stood up for them? No, you have not. You do not stand up for them and they cannot stand you, that is for sure.

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

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

**Mr Alister Henskens:** It is the same point of order. Mr Speaker, the Minister continues to do what you ruled that she should not. She should direct her remarks through the Chair.

**The SPEAKER:** I do not uphold the point of order. I upheld it previously, but the Minister is now directing her comments through the Chair.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** There are three important elements to being a police Minister in this State. The first is supporting the New South Wales police. The second is making sure that their wellbeing is looked after, and part of that is ensuring that they have the workforce that they need to do their job. The third is making sure that we retain them. In New South Wales those elements are being delivered by the Labor Government only. All three elements were absolutely ignored under the previous Government. It was a dereliction by the previous Government, sitting around the Cabinet table, and the Minister himself. It was a dereliction of duty not looking after those important components.



**Mr Paul Toole:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The Minister has been speaking for 2½ minutes and has not answered the simple question as to whether there will be cuts to infrastructure spending. The Minister knows the Optional Disengagement Scheme—

**The SPEAKER:** The point of order relates to direct relevance. There is no need for extra commentary.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** The member for Bathurst cannot tell me that retention— [*Time expired.*]

### TEACHER WORKFORCE

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (11:47):** 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 providing more support to schools that are dealing with chronic shortages of teachers?

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (11:48):** I thank the member for Wallsend for her important question. She is a former public school teacher herself. There are a number of incredible young leaders in the public gallery watching this question time—my apologies. They would agree with me, I am sure—because they are experiencing it right now in our school system—that the single most important resource in our schools is our teachers. I say that every day but it is worth repeating. The students in the gallery are nodding, but it is not just because their teachers are sitting behind them; it is because they agree.

Members who need convincing should visit Holroyd High School to see the work those teachers do, particularly in the intensive English centre. They are literally changing lives. The member for Prospect knows that. They are giving children the opportunity to learn English and make a good go of it for their future. That is what teachers do in our public schools each and every day. It is unacceptable that this Government inherited a chronic teacher shortage. There were 10,000 merged and cancelled classes every day. That resulted in lost learning for our students. It is all variations on the same theme. We just heard the police Minister talk about the chronic police shortage. We heard the Minister for Health talk about the nurses who were about to be sacked. The common thread for all those committed public service workers was that their wages were suppressed under the previous Government. That is why the Government was so proud to deliver teachers the biggest pay rise in a generation.

The Liberals and The Nationals continue to oppose those pay rises. They go to schools, talk to secondary school leaders and take photos with principals and teachers, but never tell them that they oppose the teachers' wage increase. They visit schools and then release media statements saying the Government should not give teachers a pay rise. That is a disgrace. This Government is doing everything possible to address the teacher shortage in this State. [*Extension of time*]

The Government is doing everything possible to fill teacher vacancies in the State of New South Wales. We not only gave teachers a historic pay rise but also are making more and more teachers permanent. Today we announced that we are adding more and more schools onto the priority recruitment program to ensure they get individualised support in hard-to-staff schools. That includes recruitment bonuses for teachers who move to hard-to-staff areas and relocation payments for teachers who need to relocate themselves or their families, particularly to rural, regional and remote schools that have particular problems with staffing. This is a long-term problem that was built over 12 years of government.

**Ms Kellie Sloane:** It's getting worse under Labor.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Vacluse to order for the first time. The member for Goulburn will come to order. The member for Terrigal will come to order.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** The member for Vacluse is wrong. Teacher vacancies are trending downward. We have so much work to do but we are heading in the right direction. We are making progress. It is going to take time because a problem 12 years in the making cannot be eradicated in 12 months. We have started the year with a 20 per cent drop in vacancies compared with the previous year. There were record vacancies under the previous Government. Now the teachers of New South Wales have a government that is hell-bent on getting rid of the teacher shortage. We respect the profession. We pay the profession. Members opposite are constantly writing to me about the teacher shortage, asking what we can do. We need to pay teachers fairly. We need to respect them. We need to listen to them. We need a strategy to end the teacher shortage.

### SCHOOLING RESOURCE STANDARD

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (11:53):** My question is directed to the Minister for Education and Early Learning. Will the Government stand by its pre-election commitment to fill any funding shortfall for public schools to reach 100 per cent of the Schooling Resource Standard if the Federal Labor Government does not?

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (11:53):** Can I just say that the very robust debate we are having with the Commonwealth Government presently about the Schooling Resource Standard is one we will continue to prosecute for this reason. The children attending our public schools cannot achieve their best if we do not fully fund our public schools in New South Wales. The Labor Government has made record investment in our public schools. We have received an offer from the Commonwealth Government. We have gone back privately and publicly to say, "We need you to increase that." The Commonwealth Government has a broader opportunity to raise revenue. We believe the Labor Government in Canberra has its heart in the right place.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the first time. I call the member for Hornsby to order for the second time. I call the member for Goulburn to order for the first time.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** This issue may be funny to the Liberals and Nationals, but it is not funny to members on this side of the House. The funding of our public schools is not a joke. Members opposite should say it is funny to the child I met last week from Elizabeth Macarthur High School who got a Public Education Foundation scholarship so he could print his homework. Members opposite should talk to some of the students attending public schools in New South Wales who do not get a good start because their schools are not fully funded.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Terrigal to order for the first time.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** We cannot seriously look students, parents and teachers in the eyes and say it is fair that we are not fully funding public schools in New South Wales. This Government continues to make that argument to the Commonwealth. We are working towards, and believe we will come to, a resolution. Public schools in New South Wales need to be fully funded. There is no world where members opposite have any credibility to talk about fully funding public schools. They made a mess in the public education sector when they were in government.

**Ms Kellie Sloane:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister will resume her seat while I hear from the member for Vacluse. What is the point of order?

**Ms Kellie Sloane:** The Minister is misleading the House. Day after day, the Minister misleads the House on an abysmal record under Labor—

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order. The member for Vacluse will resume her seat.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** I accept that the member for Vacluse is new, but she needs to do some research into what her party did to public education. She needs to give up making videos with Taylor Swift fans and actually do her job.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Coffs Harbour to order for the first time.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The Minister is not being directly relevant. Will the Minister keep her promise?

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order. The time for the answer has expired. Members will come to order.

### EMERGENCY FOSTER CARERS

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (11:57):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Families and Communities. Will the Minister please update the House on the Government's progress to recruit more emergency foster carers and what benefits this is having for vulnerable children and young people in need of emergency care and protection?

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion) (11:57):** I thank the member for Granville for this important question about foster carers and vulnerable children in out-of-home care. As members know, this Government inherited a child protection and foster care system that was spiralling out of control. The system was reliant on using hotels, motels and caravan parks for vulnerable children. It did not have enough foster carers. It did not have enough child protection caseworkers. It is the same story as in education and health. There is a definitive caseworker vacancy issue. We also inherited a system that was entirely outsourced to non-government providers. The Department of Communities and Justice [DCJ] was left with very little visibility or control, while hundreds of millions of dollars were paid to for-profit private providers.

Since I was sworn in as Minister, I have been very open and honest about the challenges we are facing with the child protection system that we inherited. It is critically important for the community to know and

understand the pressures and challenges we are facing because the solutions can be found in every community. If people do not know there is a problem, they cannot be part of the solution. Right now, we just do not have enough foster carers. There is a range of contributing factors to that issue, including the changing demographics of carers, a lack of appropriate housing, the increasing complexities in raising children and the cost-of-living pressures. But those issues have been compounded by the former Government's decision 10 years ago to stop the department from recruiting its own foster carers. The view at that time was that non-government providers would provide foster care and the department would only provide relative and kinship care.

Sadly, that decision has turned out to be an unmitigated disaster. Since then, thousands of children have been placed in high-cost emergency arrangements because foster care placements could not be found. Over the past 12 months, our Government has been taking urgent action to address that issue, and I am pleased to inform the House that DCJ has now recruited 189 emergency foster care households across the State, with a further 145 carer households in the pipeline. Whilst those numbers may not sound terribly big, their impact is enormous because it means 674 children have been placed in stable, loving homes instead of high-cost emergency arrangements like hotels, motels and caravan parks. Alongside the significant reduction the Government has already pushed for in high-cost emergency arrangements, which I spoke about last week, that measure shows that we are starting to turn the ship around. [*Extension of time*]

The fact that DCJ has been able to recruit 189 emergency foster carers in such a short time shows that people out there are willing and able to care for those vulnerable children. It is important to know that foster carers can come in all shapes and sizes and from all walks of life. They can be single or partnered, young or old, in or out of the workforce. Emergency foster carers can look after a child in need for a couple of days, a couple of weeks or a couple of months while the department works on finding other, more permanent options for those children. Permanent foster carers can take in a child and care for them until they are 18, and sometimes well beyond. It is so important that the community knows that there are options when it comes to foster caring and that they can be part of the solution by providing stable, loving homes to vulnerable kids.

Over the past 12 months I have been having fairly up-front conversations with our non-government providers, many of whom do incredible and important work with vulnerable children and families and all of whom have dedicated, passionate and skilled workers. However, the system the Government inherited is simply not sustainable. To clearly demonstrate the issues it is facing, over the past 12-month period, 1,811 children entered the out-of-home care system. But here is the awful figure: Only 119 of those children were able to be placed immediately into a foster care home. That is a difference of nearly 1,700 kids.

Many of those children ended up in high-cost emergency arrangements for long periods, and we all know they are not appropriate places for kids. The fully outsourced system is clearly not working and significant reform is necessary to ensure that those vulnerable children have somewhere safe to call home. The Government is currently looking at all options to fix the broken system that it inherited. But as we progress towards reform, I encourage all members of this place to help address the issue by speaking to their local communities about the benefits of foster caring. The Government is doing everything it can to turn that broken system around.

### WATER BUYBACKS

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (12:02):** My question is directed to the Premier. Economists from New South Wales dairy and rice industries estimate that the Federal Government's 450-gigalitre water buyback will cost the New South Wales economy a staggering \$20 billion a year. That is just two agricultural commodities. Every dollar circulated in rural communities has a multiplier of seven. Has Treasury conducted similar modelling for all agricultural industries? If not, why not?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:03):** I thank the member for Murray for her question. The New South Wales Government has conducted modelling on the impact of water buybacks in New South Wales, particularly on the primary industries in the State's south. We commissioned Aither to model the socio-economic impact of water purchasing, and the details of that report were released publicly. It talks about the scaled impact of the hit to the economy as a result of different variations of water buybacks—for example, the impact on the economy if the Government executed a single buyback in the first 24 months.

It is staggering—\$20 billion. I would just say that, given that the value of the rice industry in New South Wales is about \$250 million, I find it hard to believe that it is a \$20 billion impact. When it comes to the dairy industry, it is worth about half a billion dollars a year. It is big and I am not suggesting otherwise; it would have a massive impact on that region. But that is for the whole State and for the whole industry, not just the Murray system. But I stand to be corrected if there is another report out there. I make the point, however, that the New South Wales Government does not support buybacks. The Government has made it really clear to the Commonwealth Government, in both word and deed, that it has a big socio-economic impact on regional communities. It can hurt the—

[An Opposition member interjected.]

Sorry, what was that? I thought The Nationals had chipped in there. It can hurt regional economies.

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** Happy to if you need a hand.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** No, they did not. I was mistaken; they were completely silent. I do not think we have had any questions on water from The Nationals since we were elected to government, so their interest in the issue is precisely none.

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** But the member for Murray is clearly interested in it. Government members do not support buybacks; we have made that very clear to the Commonwealth Government. I know the Victorian Government is concerned about it as well, and we are happy to work across the Murray River to have a joint position from New South Wales and Victoria against it. We have been encouraging the Commonwealth Government to fund environmental programs that can deliver sustainable water back to the system without taking productive primary industry water from the economy, particularly in the State's south.

### HOUSING SUPPLY

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (12:06):** My question is addressed to the vibrant Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. Will the Minister update the House on how the New South Wales Government is delivering new homes in mid-rise buildings to create vibrant communities close to transport, jobs and services?

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (12:06):** It is always good to get a question from the Parliamentary Secretary for Planning and Public Spaces, particularly about vibrancy, after it has been such a vibrant question time. It would be great to end on something that is bipartisan and has not been controversial, such as confronting the housing crisis in New South Wales. Sadly, that has divided people, and I will come to that later.

I remember when I was growing up there was an old Pantene shampoo commercial. Some other members may remember it. It said that it would not happen overnight, but it would happen. That is exactly what happened under the New South Wales Liberal Party and The Nationals. The housing crisis did not happen overnight, but they did let it happen. For years they let pressures build up in the system, and the result was that Sydney became one of the most unaffordable places on the planet and regional house prices have risen rapidly. It is a city and a State divided between the housing haves and the housing have-nots, and people have been leaving the State.

Recently I was with a group of about 50 or so people in their twenties, and I asked if any of them thought they would be able to get a house. Sadly, not one of them did. That is a disgraceful reflection on the record of members opposite when it comes to providing housing for young families, for young people or for anyone in this State. Members opposite are happy at various times to refer people to the bank of mum and dad for help or to hope that somehow people will win the housing lottery, but the Minns Labor Government is taking a different approach to confronting the housing crisis. Since coming to office, we are reforming things to create homes in well-located areas, close to transport, jobs and vibrant communities—the sorts of places people want to live in. We are allowing greater density around transport hubs. We will bring back terraces, townhouses, dual occupancies and small apartment buildings—the sorts of places that were part of our housing past and that people want to live in.

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

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** We are increasing the amount of affordable and market housing, to be delivered through bonuses and mandates for affordable housing. We have made that new housing more energy efficient and thermal efficient by increasing the standards that new homes will have to subscribe to. That will reduce the pressure on bills well into the future. We have provided faster pathways for Homes NSW and Landcom. We reformed infrastructure contributions. We have included special entertainment precincts as part and parcel of our accelerated Transport Oriented Development precincts to make sure that they are vibrant and fun areas in which people want to live. We are amending planning legislation so that councils are required to take the Government's vibrancy agenda into account when assessing the trading hours on food and drink outlets nearby, not just banning them for a little bit of noise, and we have made outdoor dining permanent on private land as exempt development. We are bringing back the fun.

**Mr Stephen Bali:** I seek additional information.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Blacktown was lacking some vibrancy in his request, but he achieved it late.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** I thank the member for Blacktown for that vibrant request. We have members opposite who are trying to block some of this. They absolutely oppose housing. They are happy to have small modular nuclear reactors in their suburbs, but they just do not want houses. Right on cue, the member for Wahroonga is having a Fukushima-like meltdown at the suggestion he does not like houses. Well, you don't, mate. You don't.

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

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** Members opposite ask for health workers in their communities, but they just do not want to live near them. They ask for more police, but they just do not want those police officers to live anywhere near them. They want more teachers, but they do not want those teachers to live anywhere near them. They want to block housing at every opportunity. The member for Wahroonga, who was the architect of that great tactic yesterday on the bail laws, is the architect and tactical genius behind wanting small nuclear reactors in the suburbs but no houses. Government members are confronting the housing crisis and we stand in stark contrast to members opposite, who are happy to run misinformation and scare campaigns.

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

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** The consequences of Opposition policies are pretty clear. They mean higher prices for houses. They mean fewer houses will be available for young families, for downsizers and for individuals.

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

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** They mean higher rents into the future. That is the real outcome of what members opposite are subscribing to when it comes to confronting the housing crisis. This Labor Government will not stand for that. But it is not as if Opposition members have not been warned about the division they are creating.

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

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** They just could not manage it when they were in office, and everyone is paying the price.

**The SPEAKER:** I welcome to the gallery Mr Ben Thompson, husband of the member for Myall Lakes.

#### *Business of the House*

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

**Mr RON HOENIG:** I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to permit the moving forthwith of a motion, of which notice has not been given, to establish a select committee on essential worker housing.

**Motion agreed to.**

#### *Committees*

### **LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESSENTIAL WORKER HOUSING**

#### **Establishment and Membership**

**Mr RON HOENIG:** I move:

- (1) That a select committee to be known as the Legislative Assembly Select Committee on Essential Worker Housing be appointed.
- (2) That the committee inquire into and report on options for essential worker housing in New South Wales, specifically:
  - (a) establishing an appropriate definition for "essential worker housing" for the New South Wales Government to adopt, including criteria for prioritising worker cohorts in geographical areas; and
  - (b) identifying options to increase housing supply for essential workers, including but not limited to:
    - (i) planning tools and reforms;
    - (ii) incentives for developments on privately owned land;
    - (iii) opportunities within developments on government-owned land;
    - (iv) investigate reforms that promote fiscal sustainability, innovation and essential worker housing in perpetuity; and
    - (v) other related matters.
  - (c) The committee shall consist of five members, comprising:
    - (i) three Government members, being Mr Stephen Bali, Mrs Sally Quinnell and Ms Liza Butler;

- (ii) one Opposition member; and
- (iii) one crossbench member, being Mr Alex Greenwich.
- (d) That the Opposition member be nominated in writing by the Opposition Whip to the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly by 23 May 2024.
- (e) Mr Alex Greenwich shall be the chair of the committee.
- (f) The committee have leave to sit during the sitting or any adjournment of the House.
- (g) The committee have leave to make visits of inspection within the State of New South Wales and other States and Territories of Australia.
- (h) The committee shall report by 7 March 2025.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Business of the House*

**SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: SITTING DAYS 2024**

**Mr RON HOENIG:** I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to permit the moving of a motion, of which notice has not been given, relating to amending the resolution of the House setting out sitting days for 2024 and amending the routine of business for sitting Wednesdays and to establish a routine of business for sitting Fridays.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Motions*

**SITTING DAYS 2024**

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (12:15):** I move:

That:

- (1) The resolution of the House of 19 October 2023 setting out the sitting days for 2024 be amended by including the following dates: 21 June, 9 August, 20 September, 18 October, 15 November and 22 November. (Additionally, the House is to sit during the reserve week of 26 November, 27 November and 28 November).
- (2) The routine of business for the Wednesday sitting days of 19 June, 7 August, 18 September, 16 October, 13 November, and 20 November be amended by removing item 15 (take note of committee reports for up to 30 minutes).

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Point of order: The Leader of the House is now reading a number of dates that are inconsistent with the document that was provided to my staff. I ask him to check whether we have been misled by the document we were given, or he is now changing the dates that were previously given to us.

**The SPEAKER:** I will take that as a point of clarification, rather than a point of order. We will seek clarification from the Leader of the House.

**Mr RON HOENIG:** I will finish moving the motion and then I will explain. The motion continues:

- (3) The routine of business for Friday sitting days in 2024 be:
  - (a) Speaker to take the chair at 10.00 a.m.;
  - (b) giving of general business notices of motions (general notices) for up to 15 minutes;
  - (c) general business notices of motions for bills for up to 40 minutes;
  - (d) committee reports—take-note debates for up to 40 minutes;
  - (e) petitions debate (allowing for such number of debates as the House may determine);
  - (f) Government business, with Speaker to then leave the chair;
  - (g) at 1.30 p.m., the Speaker resumes the chair;
  - (h) community recognition statements for up to 20 minutes;
  - (i) private members' statements; and
  - (j) adjournment without motion until the next sitting day at 4.00 p.m. or at the conclusion of private members' statements if concluded prior to 4.00 p.m.

I have amended part of the motion on the run because the wording that I proposed did not meet the calendar that I sent to the Opposition. In effect, the changes make the third sitting week in November, which is a reserve week, a formal sitting week. Until I checked with the Clerk during question time, I did not know that the House had resolved that it be a reserve week. That is why those changes have occurred. The purpose of the motion is to effectively provide more time for Opposition business and to provide time for Government business and prevent

the late sitting nights that we have had on a number of occasions. Those late nights are not fair. Members may sign up for those late nights, but its impact upon the staff of the Parliament—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Miranda will come to order. The member for Hawkesbury will come to order. I do not have a copy of the motion, so I need to hear the Leader of the House. The Leader of the House has the call.

**Mr RON HOENIG:** It will prevent those late nights. It will prevent the House having to sit until the early hours of the morning waiting for the Legislative Council to conclude its review functions. Members will remember being here until 6.00 a.m. waiting for that to happen. That will not occur with Friday sitting days. The House will be able to return on a Friday. It will also aid the Government by allowing debate on Government business on a Friday, rather than keeping the House back late. Most importantly, the purpose of establishing Friday sitting days is at the request of crossbench members, who wanted far more time for private members' business. The Opposition is now discovering, as we discovered over a 12-year period, that there is not a great deal of opportunity for private members to have their say in this House and to represent their electorates. They do not have much time for private members' business, other than short periods on Thursday.

There is no reason that people who go to the trouble of signing 10,000-signature or 20,000-signature petitions should have to wait weeks for a petition debate when two or three petitions can be dealt with on a particular day. Fridays can be used for that. There is no reason for Government business to be interrupted during the week—for example, for taking note of committee reports. There should be plenty of time for that on a Friday. Most significantly, there is a demand from private members, who want additional time and do not wish to be here late at night hanging around for private members' statements. They want to have a vehicle to put their electorate's view, and the best way to do that is extend those periods. Effectively, the Friday sitting is at the request of the crossbench and for private members.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (12:22):** I say from the outset that the Opposition supports more sitting days this year, but the usual process for doing that is to present a proposal to the Standing Orders and Procedure Committee and allow members to discuss it. We heard from the member for Sydney yesterday about the importance of consultation. Nobody consulted with the Opposition about this. I was handed a version of the motion during question time, and then the Leader of the House changed it on the run and added new dates and other matters without any consultation. It is an appalling state of affairs. The hypocrisy between some of the things that were said yesterday and the way the motion has been brought forward today is quite extraordinary. The Opposition will move an amendment to the motion. I move:

That the motion be amended by:

- (1) Omitting paragraph (2).
- (2) Omitting paragraph (3) (d) and inserting instead:
  - (d) at 11.00 a.m., question time;
  - (e) general business orders of the day for bills for up to 40 minutes.

Paragraph (2) seeks to change the routine of business on Wednesdays to take out the very important 30 minutes of debate on committee reports and substitute it with Government business. The Opposition seeks to delete it and retain the committee take-note debate on Wednesdays, as currently occurs. There will be Friday sittings in those weeks. The Opposition also seeks to amend the proposed routine of business. As the member for Sydney and other members of the crossbench asked yesterday, what would be important to include in the routine of business on a Friday sitting day? Should we have question time? The Opposition proposes that paragraph (3) include question time at 11.00 a.m. The Opposition wants question time—which is a hallmark of western democracy and Executive accountability to the people of our State—included in the routine of business.

One might think it would be desirable for a minority government to allow for more private members' time and that the routine of business would reflect that. Unfortunately, there is not one extra minute for debating private members' bills in the proposed changes to the standing orders. The routine of business in paragraph (3) (c) allows 20 minutes for second reading speeches on private members' bills. Those bills then hit a wall because they cannot be debated or voted on. That is a great democratic suggestion by the Leader of the House! The Opposition proposes that the 40 minutes for committee reports suggested in paragraph (3) (d) actually be for general business orders of the day (for bills) so that we can debate and vote on the private members' bills that the crossbench and the Opposition want. Those are the amendments that the Opposition proposes. Unfortunately, no-one—crossbench members or others—has consulted with the Opposition, whose members constitute a large portion of the House.

I also point out that there are no additional sitting dates proposed for the Legislative Council. Where is all the Government business that the House is overwhelmed with going to go—the miscellaneous provisions bills and minor amendments when the Government splits miscellaneous bills between the upper House and the lower

House because there is so little Government business? It is very important to add in more Government business. The Opposition suggests that Government business be taken out of paragraph (3) (f) for additional Fridays because those opposite do not have any Government business and there are no extra Legislative Council sitting days when the House could send Government business to the other place. The Opposition proposes the deletion of paragraph (3) (f).

**Mr Clayton Barr:** You're just making it up as you talk now.

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

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** I am surprised that the often-overlooked member for Cessnock interjected then. His talent is well recognised, which is why he is on the backbench. With those changes, the Opposition supports the idea that there be more sitting days, but a far more sensible order of business could be proposed for the additional sitting Fridays. We are somewhat disappointed that the first we heard of the final version of the motion was when the Leader of the House moved it. He was given as much notice as possible of our motion for the suspension of standing orders yesterday after the introduction of the bill because we could not bring it until there was a motion to read the bill. There is a very big difference, but I have no doubt that the crossbench will still support the Government's lack of consultation and lack of usual process for this to go through the Standing Orders and Procedure Committee. We heard yesterday that they love consultation—some of them. Most of the crossbench worked with us yesterday and supported our motion for the suspension of standing orders. But no doubt even some of the crossbench who love consultation will still support the Government's suggestion and proposed standing order, despite the lack of it.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (12:30):** I appreciate the lecture on consultation from the Manager of Opposition Business, who then sought to deny me the opportunity to speak on this motion and to respond to him. I think we again saw his true colours. I want to make a few points. One, it is important to note that the Legislative Assembly is not able to dictate the schedule of the Legislative Council. It is a separate House of Parliament that determines its own sitting days and calendar. It is important that people know that. Two, I am a strong supporter of all sorts of consultation. There is a difference between a proposal to increase sitting days and detailed bail legislation. I would hope that the Opposition knows that.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** This is longer than their bail bill.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH:** I know that the member for Wahroonga did not want me to speak, but I want to seek some commitments around consultation from the Government on the increased sitting calendar. By the way, the Opposition has gone to the crossbench to seek additional sitting weeks and sitting times. The crossbench has raised it consistently with the Government. This proposal should not be seen as a surprise or something new; members across the Parliament have been seeking it for some time. It will not come into effect until the second week in June. This motion from the Leader of the House is important because it puts us all on notice that we will be sitting on Fridays from June onwards.

I seek clarification from the Leader of the House that he is open to discussing the structure of that day and to receiving any feedback from the Standing Orders and Procedure Committee. It has been my experience—whether it has been on Opposition bills, as we saw last week, or crossbench bills—that the Government is always open to amending the calendar to address the priorities of the crossbench, other members and, indeed, the priorities of the community. I ask the Government to confirm in reply that it is open to being flexible and that we can have discussions before this change comes into effect in the second week in June.

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (12:32):** I speak on behalf of all regional members of Parliament, who are a little taken aback that there was no consultation about this proposal with those who it will impact the most. Regional members make up about a third of this Parliament.

**Mrs Helen Dalton:** Didn't you want more sitting days?

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS:** We are more than comfortable with having more sitting days, but this is about constructing weeks around sitting days, Tuesday to Thursday. If it is also going to be Friday, the Government should do the right thing and have a proper sitting day when there is question time. If it is going to be a parliamentary day, why not do that? What is the reason for not doing that? Why keep us for another day for pretend business if it is not going to benefit the Parliament and benefit all of us? As I said, about one-third of us have to be away from home—mums and dads who will miss out on the opportunity to see their family for an extra night.

Why would the Government not at least give us some time to think about it and talk about what a better way forward might be? Consultation would help, as opposed to the Leader of the House, who does not live in a regional area, just telling everyone what must be agreed to. There are regional members on both sides of this



House. If the Government has consulted with its regional members, that is great, but why would it not consult with us? Why would the Government not take it to the Standing Orders and Procedure Committee, which is there to discuss these things?

*[A Government member interjected.]*

Don't patronise me. It's unfair. You understand what it's like to be a regional member.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Yes, and I know what you did when I was over on that side. Sorry, but I don't have much empathy for you.

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS:** That has nothing to do with anything. As a Minister, you should do better than that. That is a pathetic way of approaching things. We have regional members who deserve to be consulted and considered better than what has happened in this process. We are happy to work with the Government. We have said to the crossbench that we think there should be more sitting days. The Government can introduce more sitting weeks, from Tuesday to Thursday, so we can plan around them. But do not just lob a Friday on the end of a sitting week, and without question time—a time when the Government can be held accountable for the things it is or is not doing. Let us be honest: The only reason this House has sat late has been for private members' bills. It has not been for any Government bills that required priority, that I can think of, because the Government will not bring any of those forward. So why do we need an extra sitting day for Government business? There is no Government business. Work with us and we can try to find a way forward, but trying to rush this through today is a silly idea and a mistake that absolutely disadvantages regional people.

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (12:35):** I hold considerable concern about this motion. I add to the debate the voice of someone who has been in a minority in this place for a very long time. I was elected as the seventy-fourth woman to serve in the Legislative Assembly. This Parliament has taken a lot of strides to try to make this a workplace that is more friendly to women and families. I have been pregnant twice while serving in this place. I have waddled into this Chamber for divisions at midnight. I have had two babies since being elected to Parliament. I have breastfed in this very building and had to disconnect from my pump in order to run down here for a division.

**Mrs Helen Dalton:** You live on the North Shore.

**Ms FELICITY WILSON:** Please don't be rude about the community that I represent. You are a mother as well. The Standing Orders and Procedure Committee exists for a reason. For the Parliament to be a workplace that respects the people who work in it—not just members but also our staff and the parliamentary staff—it must enable us to organise our lives. I am the mother of a school-age child and a child younger than school age. This change, made on the hop, means that I have mere weeks to try to organise care arrangements for both of my small children. I am a single parent. The change means I will lose the one opportunity in a sitting week to pick my children up and have a meal with them, after having not seen them for those multiple days I am in the Parliament until late at night. The Labor Party says it is the party for workers. In any other workplace in this country, Labor would give consideration to the individuals who have to turn up to work every single day—not just the environment they work in but also their work-life balance.

I resent the fact that we were not considered or consulted. Those are the appropriate processes of this House. I do not believe those opposite intended to have this type of effect and consequence on us. I respect the idea that we need to have more sitting days. I am very happy to attend them, and I know that I am fortunate to live incredibly close to the Parliament. But I have circumstances, like many other parents of school-age children in this House, that do not allow me to make changes to my schedule on the fly. But, beyond that, we also want to spend time with our families. This job taxes every single person in this place—not just the members of Parliament, but all of the staff. It takes us away from our families, constantly. The Government should at least have the conversation with us about the way that we manage that so that we can have some kind of work-life balance with the people who are most important to us: our families. They come before our communities.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (12:38):** I contribute to debate on the change to the routine of business. I confirm the point of the member for Sydney that the crossbench wrote to the Government in unanimous support of additional sitting days. I acknowledge your role in that, Mr Speaker. We recognised the fact that there is a much larger crossbench, and the limits of private members' days was of concern. We have seen that play out with continual suspensions to extend bill discussions and debates, and attempts to find other ways to do things, including during lunch breaks. I appreciate that it does not work. On behalf of the member for Balmain and the member for Ballina, I say that The Greens support more sitting days. Whether it is additional weeks or Fridays, we support sitting in Parliament and having those discussions.

That said, we have serious concerns about who has been involved in the discussions to date. We just heard from the member for North Shore that Friday is the only day she can pick up her children from school. It is

similarly my only day. I recognise that is a privilege in this place, because some members do not get back home in time to do that. I schedule my calendar such that I have no appointments after 2.45 p.m. on a Friday afternoon. It is the only day of the week I can pick up my daughter. This suspension has been moved without consultation with, or consideration of, anyone with school-age children. Given members' care responsibilities, especially those of regional members, it is also important to recognise that it is almost impossible to secure more child care in this State on such short notice. I again congratulate the Government on having more women in this Parliament than ever before, but our time needs to be managed well. Sadly, there is still gender inequity in this State, this country and this world, which means that women have a higher share of unpaid care responsibilities. The additional mental load that has just been placed onto a lot of members needs to be considered.

That said, we are elected representatives. We will be here on Fridays if that is the will. However, if we are here on Fridays, The Greens request consultation on the potential impacts. We are very willing to be here on Fridays. We recognise that the intention of the Leader of the House was to give everyone as much notice as possible about the extra Friday sittings. But we ask that the program and timing of those Fridays be determined by further consultation, with regard to the need for a family-friendly Parliament. We talk about that in theory, but it does not happen in practice. Therefore, The Greens wish to amend paragraph (2). I move:

That the amendment be amended by omitting paragraph (3) and inserting instead:

- (3) That the routine of business for Friday sitting days in 2024 be determined in consultation with members of Parliament, with particular regard to ensuring a family-friendly Parliament.

Obviously my needs as an inner-city member who can get an Uber and be home in 15 minutes are very different to the needs and requirements of regional MPs. But we must make this House work in a way that allows us to connect with our families and communities. I note the harsh statistics relating to MPs—that is, once elected to Parliament their relationships break down as a result of the demands of work and time. We owe it to not only members of this Chamber and our constituents but also our families, who support us and go above and beyond in the responsibilities of family life, to give our commitment the time it deserves. We support the extra sitting days, but we believe that we can put our heads together in the weeks between now and the first sitting Friday to ensure that the change does not further harm our families, who already do a lot of heavy lifting, or stop us from connecting more with community.

**Mr Adam Crouch:** Mr Speaker—

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** I move:

That the question be now put.

**The SPEAKER:** The Manager of Opposition Business has moved an amendment to the motion, to which the member for Newtown has moved a further amendment. We will proceed in a collegial manner.

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** Mr Speaker—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Canterbury will resume her seat. As the Leader of the House rose to move that the question be now put, the member for Terrigal sought the call. I call the member for Terrigal.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (12:46):** I appreciate the indulgence of the House, despite the Leader of the House trying to gag debate. As a member of the Standing Orders and Procedure Committee, along with the Leader of the House, the Manager of Opposition Business, members of the crossbench and members of The Nationals, it has been common courtesy that issues about the way in which this House runs are brought to that committee. It has always been done in a collegial and bipartisan way. That allows every facet and all potential impacts of these sorts of major changes to be discussed in advance, by everybody.

I note the contributions of the member for Newtown and the member for North Shore about the potential impacts that the change will have on their families. Sadly, it is very disrespectful for the Leader of the House to ignore the Standing Orders and Procedure Committee that he sits on. As you know, Mr Speaker, we meet regularly with you to discuss issues such as this one. In those committee meetings we have always worked in a bipartisan way to decide what is best for all members in this Parliament—not just a select one or two. Sadly, today we have seen a lack of respect for the committee that you chair, Mr Speaker. It is important that we treat that committee with respect and dignity because we always canvass our broad opinions to enable us to reach a consensus on what we do.

On behalf of my regional colleagues and The Nationals, I note that these sorts of changes impact on day-to-day events. Those members are not five, 10, 15, 20 or 45 minutes from their offices. The member for Barwon is in the Chamber. His electorate is one-third the size of New South Wales. Has he been consulted? Such questions have not been asked or answered. It is very disappointing that the Government moved this motion with no notice. The Leader of the House was making amendments to the motion during question time, which shows

that the Government has done it on the fly. This Government also installed the fewest number of sitting days in the Parliament this year. We were happy to work with the Government, as is everybody in this place, to come up with a good mix of sitting days for everybody.

The member for North Shore and the member for Newtown clearly articulated the pressures of this job. When we are elected to this place, we take on the awesome responsibility of being the voices of the thousands of people who vote for us. Today the Government tried to make a change on the fly, with no consultation with members. They had every opportunity to bring it to the next standing orders committee meeting, which was scheduled not long ago. The Leader of the House knows exactly when that meeting is because he attends them, along with Government members, the Deputy Government and National Party Whips, and the crossbench. That is how we have traditionally done things, because it is respectful and inclusive and takes into account everybody's perspective. Whether you are on the North Shore or in Nowra or Coffs Harbour—

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** Narromine.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** —or Narromine, it does not matter. We think about the consequences of the decisions we collectively make as a Parliament. I say to the Leader of the House that it is disappointing. He has thumbed his nose at what we do together in those committee meetings. I thought he was a better person than that. It is disappointing that the Government thinks this is an appropriate way to conduct the business of government. The member for Cootamundra has an electorate bigger than Sweden, I think. There was no consultation with any of the regional members about the effect it will have on them.

The Government does not even have the guts to add in a question time. Bringing everyone back on the spur of the moment without even having the Government held to account on that day is a complete travesty. If the Government wants to do this, it should do it properly and in consultation with everybody. I note the contributions of the member for North Shore and the member for Newtown—especially that of the member for North Shore, who talked about the Labor Party being the party of the worker. Labor has, effectively, cut out more than half of the members in this Chamber today without any consultation. If that is how the Government wants to run, it is an indictment on Government members that they are not prepared to talk to their colleagues about how we work this to everybody's advantage rather than disadvantage.

I congratulate the member for South Coast, who will get to enjoy this, as well. The member for Lismore works incredible long hours. I do not know whether she was consulted. And we sit on the same committee, with the Leader of the House. I am not sure if he has discussed it with the Government Whip and the Deputy Government Whip or whether they were involved. The member for Lismore travels huge distances, as does the member for Tweed and the member for Kiama. There has been zero consultation on this. It is disappointing to see the Government trying to ram it through on Thursday, hoping no-one would pay any attention, and making it up on the fly.

**Mr Mark Coure:** No question time holding the Government to account.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH:** The Government is trying to dodge having a question time. I do not need the help of the member for Oatley, but I acknowledge his interjection. Hopefully, my speech has allowed the Clerks time to prepare the necessary amendments moved today. I thank the Speaker for his indulgence on my birthday to allow me this extra contribution. What is particularly sad is that the offered bipartisanship of the standing orders committee has been completely ignored, if not held in contempt. Mr Speaker, you head that committee. You do it effectively, in a completely nonpartisan way. You sat on that committee when the Coalition was in government, and every one of those meetings has been collegial and cooperative, with sharing of information to make sure that no member is deliberately or inadvertently disadvantaged by the decisions that we collectively make. What we have seen today is, sadly, a complete failure of that. The Leader of the House needs to let it go and meet with the committee and discuss it in a proper, mature way.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** Mr Speaker—

**The SPEAKER:** I will call the member for Kiama—

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** Mr Speaker, I put the question.

**The SPEAKER:** I am speaking.

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** I sought the call previously.

**The SPEAKER:** You did. But I will make a short statement that may assist the House. This is probably not the biggest disaster that New South Wales could suffer on a given day. However, it is probably one of the most difficult situations that I have been placed in during my time in the chair and one of the most difficult to resolve. The matter has become quite complicated. Before a motion is moved that would force a resolution one

way or another, I ask whether the House will consent to suspending consideration of the motion at this time to allow for discussions to proceed outside the Chamber to decide some matters. We can then resume consideration at 3.40 p.m., when hopefully we will have an agreed position. I look to the Leader of the House for an indication as to whether we can proceed in that manner. Is the Leader of the House prepared to do that?

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (12:53):** In reply: First, Mr Speaker, as you know—because you chair it—the Standing Orders and Procedures Committee has been asking for a long time for a resolution to avoid late-night sittings. Secondly, the Manager of Opposition Business, when he pulled the stunt a few weeks ago and produced his own calendar, did not go through the committee. He pulled a political stunt.

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

**Mr RON HOENIG:** So I do not accept that the Opposition is in any way genuine.

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

**Mr RON HOENIG:** I do know that the Opposition has a copy of the letter the crossbenchers read to the Premier. The Government is prepared to adhere to the request of the member for Sydney to have the matter go back to the Standing Orders and Procedures committee. But unless we resolve these extra days, it will never happen. It has been talked about now for six months. You, Mr Speaker, and the other crossbenchers have been raising it with me repeatedly and with the Premier repeatedly.

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

**Mr RON HOENIG:** We need the days. If the committee wants to review the routine of business for Fridays, I am happy for it to do so. It is all about giving private members more time in this House. That is what it is about.

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

**Mr RON HOENIG:** I said at the time that, with six weeks worth of estimates a year, and then adding school holidays, the time frames for issuing weeks are limited.

**The SPEAKER:** Members will come to order. The Leader of the House is speaking to all members, including me, and I cannot hear him.

**Mr RON HOENIG:** The other issue is that it is far more economically efficient for members from regional New South Wales to extend their stay by a day rather than come back for an extra three full sitting weeks. I am prepared to adhere to the request of the member for Sydney. But the House needs to carry the resolution. It needs to fix the days. If changes are needed to the routine of business, they can be made via a report to the House in the first week in June, before the first Friday has effect.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** Mr Speaker—

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** Mr Speaker—

**The SPEAKER:** I will resolve the matter in the most collegial way. It will not be easy. I apologise to the member for Kiama but the member for Canterbury has sought the call a number of times. I call the member for Canterbury.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** I move:

That the question be now put.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....48  
Noes .....35  
Majority.....13

AYES

Aitchison, J  
Atalla, E  
Bali, S  
Barr, C  
Butler, L  
Butler, R  
Car, P

Doyle, T  
Finn, J  
Greenwich, A  
Hagarty, N (teller)  
Harris, D  
Harrison, J  
Haylen, J

Mehan, D  
O'Neill, M  
Park, R  
Quinnell, S  
Saffin, J (teller)  
Saliba, D  
Scully, P

## AYES

Catley, Y  
 Chanthivong, A  
 Cotsis, S  
 Crakanthorp, T  
 Daley, M  
 Dalton, H  
 Davis, D  
 Dib, J  
 Donato, P

Hoenig, R  
 Holland, M  
 Hornery, S  
 Kaliyanda, C  
 Kirby, W  
 Leong, J  
 Li, J  
 McDermott, H  
 McKeown, K

Shetty, K  
 Smith, T  
 Stuart, M  
 Tesch, L  
 Vo, T  
 Voltz, L  
 Washington, K  
 Whan, S  
 Wilkinson, K

## NOES

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

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

Saunders, D  
 Singh, G (teller)  
 Sloane, K  
 Speakman, M  
 Thompson, T  
 Toole, P  
 Tuckerman, W  
 Ward, G  
 Williams, R  
 Williamson, R  
 Wilson, F

## PAIRS

Kamper, S  
 Minns, C  
 Warren, G  
 Watson, A

Williams, L  
 Taylor, M  
 Cross, M  
 Roberts, A

**Motion agreed to.**

**The SPEAKER:** The Leader of the House has moved a motion, to which the member for Wahroonga moved an amendment, to which the member for Newtown moved a further amendment. The question is that the amendment of the member for Newtown to the amendment of the member for Wahroonga be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....39  
 Noes .....44  
 Majority.....5

## AYES

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

Hodges, M  
 James, T  
 Kean, M  
 Kemp, M  
 Lane, J  
 Layzell, D  
 Leong, J  
 McGirr, J  
 Perrottet, D  
 Petinos, E  
 Preston, R  
 Provest, G  
 Regan, M

Saunders, D  
 Shetty, K  
 Singh, G (teller)  
 Sloane, K  
 Smith, T  
 Speakman, M  
 Thompson, T  
 Toole, P  
 Tuckerman, W  
 Ward, G  
 Williams, R  
 Williamson, R  
 Wilson, F

## NOES

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

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

Mehan, D  
O'Neill, M  
Park, R  
Quinnell, S  
Saffin, J (teller)  
Saliba, D  
Scully, P  
Stuart, M  
Tesch, L  
Vo, T  
Voltz, L  
Washington, K  
Whan, S  
Wilkinson, K

## PAIRS

Cross, M  
Roberts, A  
Taylor, M  
Williams, L

Warren, G  
Watson, A  
Minns, C  
Kamper, S

**Amendment of the member for Newtown to the amendment of the member for Wahroonga negated.**

**The SPEAKER:** The question now is that the amendment of the member for Wahroonga be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....33  
Noes .....49  
Majority.....16

## AYES

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

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

Saunders, D  
Singh, G (teller)  
Sloane, K  
Speakman, M  
Thompson, T  
Toole, P  
Tuckerman, W  
Ward, G  
Williams, R  
Williamson, R  
Wilson, F

## NOES

Aitchison, J  
Atalla, E  
Bali, S  
Barr, C  
Butler, L  
Butler, R  
Car, P  
Catley, Y  
Chanthivong, A  
Cotsis, S  
Crakanthorp, T

Finn, J  
Greenwich, A  
Hagarty, N (teller)  
Harris, D  
Harrison, J  
Haylen, J  
Hoenig, R  
Holland, M  
Hornery, S  
Kaliyanda, C  
Kirby, W

Mehan, D  
O'Neill, M  
Park, R  
Quinnell, S  
Saffin, J (teller)  
Saliba, D  
Scully, P  
Shetty, K  
Smith, T  
Stuart, M  
Tesch, L

## NOES

Daley, M  
Dalton, H  
Davis, D  
Dib, J  
Donato, P  
Doyle, T

Leong, J  
Li, J  
McDermott, H  
McGirr, J  
McKeown, K

Vo, T  
Voltz, L  
Washington, K  
Whan, S  
Wilkinson, K

## PAIRS

Cross, M  
Roberts, A  
Taylor, M  
Williams, L

Kamper, S  
Warren, G  
Minns, C  
Watson, A

**Amendment of the member for Wahroonga negatived.**

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

**Motion agreed to.**

*Business of the House***WITHDRAWAL OF BUSINESS**

**Mr ROY BUTLER:** I withdraw general business notice of motion (for bills) No. 6 [Electricity Infrastructure Investment Amendment (Tender Moratorium) Bill 2024].

*Bills***RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES AMENDMENT (PROHIBITING NO GROUNDS EVICTIONS) BILL 2024****Second Reading Debate**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (13:19):** I make a contribution to the debate on the Residential Tenancies Agreement (Prohibiting No Grounds Evictions) Bill 2023. I have commented in this place on many occasions about the state of housing affordability and the rental crisis in New South Wales. Sometimes I sound like a broken record. Members well know that I am a renter, and I know of a number of other renters in this building. My community has one of the highest levels of renters across the State—almost half of my community rents. After the attainment of higher education, renting is the largest single demographic factor that unites people in my community. That must mean a lot of people with higher education also rent.

All members consider the concerns, interests, needs and challenges facing their communities. In my metropolitan electorate, when I consider housing affordability; increasing cost-of-living pressures; the increasing inability to buy a home, particularly for first home buyers; the increasing inability to find an available rental property, let alone afford it; the increasing costs of rent; and the increasing prohibitions on what renters can do in those properties—for instance, keeping a pet—I can see that the member for Newtown's bill has significant merit. It concerns me that both major parties in this House have so far opposed passing this legislation.

The challenges faced by renters are significant and time-sensitive. I have said for many years that we need to take action. The Labor Government was elected more than a year ago on the time-sensitive need to fix, solve and manage the rental crisis. It is almost June; we have not yet had a single piece of legislation from those opposite to address the rental crisis in New South Wales. No-grounds evictions disproportionately impact vulnerable groups in our communities. Today we woke to the news that, in this cost-of-living crisis, even the Prime Minister is ruthlessly evicting a small business owner from their home just days after his Government announced it was trying to help renters. How is it that the Minns Labor Government can allow a state in which even the Prime Minister of Australia can evict a small business owner from their home without any reasonable grounds? It is an abhorrent situation, and I call on this House to introduce reasonable grounds for all evictions.

There is far too much rhetoric from those opposite, at the State and Federal levels, about what they would do, what they will do, how challenging it is for renters and how challenging the market is, but it seems to me that they are not able to do much. They do not have the political will. Maybe they do not have the capacity to put legislation in place to address the issue in New South Wales. All they do is kick renters when they are down. We need that legislation, and we need a government that says it will do it. The Minns Labor Government needs to

step up to the plate and introduce reasonable ground evictions that will provide clarity and surety for both renters and landlords across New South Wales.

I note that in the United Kingdom the Conservative Government has introduced legislation to enable reasonable grounds evictions, which shows that even conservative parties and governments can support similar legislation. In this place there is often a sense that it is those within the Labor Party and Labor-voting communities who rent, and it is those within the Labor Party and the Labor-voting communities who care about renters. At the end of the day, that is a furphy. Every day this Government abrogates its duties and responsibilities to the very people that it thinks are voting for it.

**Ms Charishma Kaliyanda:** What did you do in government?

**Ms FELICITY WILSON:** I acknowledge the interjection from the member for Liverpool, who I understand is voting against the legislation. I say to the member for Liverpool that I am voting for the legislation. I am voting to protect the renters of my community and I call on her to do the same. If she ever wants to call me out in this place, feel free to do it. I will put my money where my mouth is, and my community knows I will. The issue of renters and landlords is viewed as a dichotomy between renters and landlords in that if we back renters, we are somehow opposing landlords. That is a ridiculous proposition because the market always requires the equilibrium of both renters and landlords to provide supply and to take up that supply. Any landlord that is putting their property on the market is doing so because they require that rental income to be able to afford and fund their investment property.

Some people are able to leave properties vacant and not collect rent, which is horrible for housing supply, if they chose to. There is no prevention from that. But if individual landlords are putting their properties on the market, they want renters. They need renters—and they want good renters. Under the current system, bad renters can be evicted. That will not change in the legislation proposed by the member for Newtown. Those bad renters can still be evicted. If they damage a property, breach strata by-laws, run a meth laboratory or do abhorrent things, they can still be evicted. The member for Newtown has introduced other reasonable grounds to be considered for evictions to be reasonable in New South Wales.

The problem with the current system is that sometimes there are also bad landlords. While the overwhelming majority of landlords are good, decent people who want to make sure that they are getting a return on their investment to set themselves up for retirement—often mum-and-dad landlords—sometimes there are egregious landlords as well. There are landlords who, at short notice—like the Prime Minister of Australia—will say that they are considering putting their property on the market one day. Then they kick out a tenant of four years standing, a small business owner who will no longer have a home in 90 days time. That is a bad landlord.

If a landlord wants reasonable grounds to evict somebody from their property, they can do so. I say to the Prime Minister of Australia that if the legislation was in place today, he would still have a pathway to terminate the lease for that individual who lives in his property, but he could do so in a way that respected that individual. If a landlord wanted to sell a property—if the lease is a month-to-month lease—that tenant could be removed from the property if the new purchaser wanted to live in it. That would be reasonable grounds under this bill. Instead, people do not currently have security of tenure of the roof over their heads. The vast majority of renters and landlords are good. The vast majority of renters look after the property that they live in and pay their rent on time. Introducing reasonable grounds evictions ensures that renters will have more protections when it comes to having a roof over their heads.

Polling undertaken by Ipsos shows that the landlord community is overwhelmingly in support of introducing proposed reforms to ensure reasonable grounds evictions—more than 70 per cent of those landlord respondents supported it. In addition, 84 per cent of people agree that if a renter is being told to leave their home then they should at least be given a reason. I do not understand why a landlord is not required to give a reason when they tell their tenant that they have 90 days to leave their home. Further, 75 per cent of respondents also believe that the New South Wales Government should act now to reduce unfair evictions as a cost-of-living measure.

We hear the rhetoric in this place and in Canberra all the time when Labor talks about the cost-of-living crisis. This is an opportunity to do something about it. Before the last election, we on this side of the House—and it is sad that we are no longer on the other side—committed to introducing reasonable grounds evictions. We did that as Liberals and Nationals who cared about renters in this State. We know that we must introduce greater protection and support for renters. I say to those opposite trying to heckle me—they are all first-term members; they have never been in opposition—that if they do not want to do it, we will. If they do not want to be in government and introduce their own bill, we will.



We are happy to go back to the government benches and introduce our own legislation. Instead, those opposite are carping and moaning because the member for Newtown is doing a better job at governing than they are. We will take back their seats and form a government that will do it. Those opposite carp, moan and complain, but at the end of the day they will vote against the rights of renters. I hope people in their communities look them in the eyes and say, "Thank you for kicking me out of my home." That is what they are doing. I say to them, as someone who has been re-elected twice, that they do not yet realise but in three years time they will need the voters that they are taking for granted. Good luck to them.

When we consider the legislation that Labor committed to introduce at the last election, the proposed reforms included moving to a reasonable grounds model for evictions during periodic leases. [*Extension of time*]

The Opposition committed to extend notice periods for the end of fixed-term leases from 30 to 45 days, allowing a tenant more time to find a new home. Crucially, we also committed to introduce new optional standard lease agreements with three- and five-year fixed terms to improve uptake of long-term leases and the ability of tenants to make a home. Members of this place who do not rent or do not understand renting—which, sadly, is too many of them—may not realise that the only real protection renters in New South Wales have is fixed-term leases. A tenant on a 12-month lease cannot get a rent increase or be evicted during that period. Tenants with longer-term leases have higher levels of protection to remain in their homes. We need to introduce longer-term leases.

Those commitments were in addition to the reforms the former Government put in place, including prohibiting solicited rent bidding. We cannot talk about rent bidding too much; it is a very sensitive topic for Labor. The Minister had real issues with his only attempt at any rental reforms. That is probably why he is so skittish about even attempting to do anything further. But the former Government did prohibit solicited rent bidding. It also introduced the First Home Buyer Choice initiative. That reform was crucial to allow people to get on the property ladder and buy a home. While people should have the right to rent, particularly if they cannot afford to buy a home, people also have the right to aspire to own a home. Too many first home buyers are shut out of the market.

But Labor scrapped that initiative. The current Government abolished the opportunity for first home buyers to opt out of stamp duty. Labor has imposed a regressive tax on every first home buyer in New South Wales. It forces them to pay \$60,000 to \$70,000 or more in stamp duty. That has a huge impact on first home buyers entering the market. Members of this place have a moral obligation to introduce legislation that allows for evictions on reasonable grounds and provides clarity and surety for renters and landlords alike. It is bitterly disappointing that the Labor Government has let us down every step of the way when it comes to protecting renters' rights in New South Wales.

The failure of the Minns Labor Government to end no-grounds evictions is a glaring example of its inability to protect the interests of renters in New South Wales. It is also a glaring example of its failure to protect the interest of landlords. It is not a battle between landlords and renters. We need to protect renters from bad landlords and protect landlords from bad renters. The Government has failed to do the difficult work of consulting with industry, communities, representatives of strata and representatives of renters to work on the challenging policy development to get this legislation right. The Government is sitting on its hands. When other crises arise, the Government is able to respond. For example, this week two pieces of legislation were introduced to the House to deal with knife wandering and bail reforms. Sometimes the Government will look at the pressure points and do something. It only took the Government a few weeks to introduce the bail reforms. It was not as prompt as the Coalition, but it did eventually pick up its slack and introduce the legislation.

The Government should look at the legislation introduced by the member for Newtown as a little kick to encourage it to put forward its own legislation. The Government made a promise to the people of New South Wales and it has let them down. It is time for the Government to heed the calls for reform, take action and end no-grounds evictions. The security and stability of renters and landlords across New South Wales depends on it.

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (13:33):** I contribute to debate on the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Prohibiting No Grounds Evictions) Bill 2024. This State is facing a cost-of-living crisis across various sectors of day-to-day life. After years of Federal and State Liberal-controlled governments, home ownership has become out of reach for most people in middle- and low-income families. This Government knows that fixing the housing crisis and delivering rental reforms is critical to reduce cost-of-living pressures. Renters find themselves in a tight market. Currently in the electorate of Riverstone many suburbs are inhabited by people experiencing rental stress. In Riverstone almost 30 per cent of people are experiencing rental stress. In Schofields 25 per cent of people are experiencing rental stress. In Quakers Hill 24 per cent of people are experiencing rental stress. In affluent suburbs such as Kellyville Ridge and The Ponds, almost 22 per cent of people are experiencing rental stress.

"Rental stress" is a term used to identify householders in low- and middle-income brackets that are spending more than 30 per cent of their gross household income on rent. I acknowledge the need for rental reforms and commend The Greens and the member for Newtown for her work on this bill and her advocacy on this issue. However, I cannot support the bill in its current form. This legislation needs to be very carefully considered to ensure it does not create a negative impact on the tenancy situation. I empathise with those whose lives have been put into disarray by forced evictions. Despite my privileged status, good wage and stable employment as a member of Parliament, I have been forced to find a new home twice in only the past year. I have spent weekends trudging from house to house with scores of other people, trying to find somewhere to live. I have seen anguish and stress on renters' faces as they try to find somewhere for their families to live that is close to schools and shops and within their price range.

I have met many people who are trying to secure a lease of more than six months so they can have some security in their lives. The Government is committed to ensuring that renters in New South Wales are protected by a fair and equitable system. This commitment was affirmed with the appointment of the State's first Rental Commissioner, Trina Jones. The Government is working to remove no-grounds evictions, make it easier for renters to have pets, introduce new data protection requirements for real estate agents when handling renters' personal info, and implement a portable bond scheme. Under the Government's housing reform agenda, it will ensure that rental reform is considered with adequate consultation.

We seek to improve renters' rights, ease pressures within the rental market and increase the stock of housing supply. The housing and rental matter is complex. Bandaid solutions can spark unwarranted consequences. The Government passed legislation to extend the ban on rent bidding and laid the foundations for a portable bond scheme. The Labor Government is taking strides to deliver robust housing and rental reforms to make houses more affordable. Apart from delivering holistic rental reforms, the Government is listening to the voices of parties that will be affected by changes to legislation.

The Government recently completed public consultation on improving New South Wales rental laws, which asked for feedback on various rental reforms. Proposed changes included ending no-grounds evictions by imposing requirements on owners to provide a good reason to end a lease. We received more than 400 submissions and 16,000 survey responses from industry, renter advocacy groups and the public. Earlier, the member for North Shore said the Government had not consulted. That is demonstrably untrue. We have broken records when it comes to public consultation on this matter. That goes to show how important these reforms are to the people of New South Wales. This Government will honour the value placed on rental reforms by the people of New South Wales by delivering legislation that is sensible and pragmatic. We are determined to get the reforms right, including for no-grounds evictions.

Recently someone I know was approached by a real estate agent who promised to sell their property for well above market value to an off-market buyer. The owner told the tenant they were selling the house and the renter moved out. The owner then discovered there was no buyer. The owner was forced to hold an auction, but it did not meet the reserve. It went to auction again, and the house got turned in once again. Not only did the renter have to find another place to live, but also the landlord found themselves without a tenant for six months and unable to sell the house. Those kinds of practices must stop, and we need legislation that is robust enough to cope with that kind of situation. We will take the time to learn the lessons from other jurisdictions and hear the voices of those affected by the matter at hand.

The Government will continue working with stakeholders to ensure that the stability of the rental market is preserved. Ensuring that the people of New South Wales have access to an equitable housing market is crucial for the Minns Labor Government. The planning Minister has demonstrated that through multiple reforms to the types of housing that are being made available, through transport oriented development applications and through the various means that are being used to increase supply into the market while at the same time taking a measured approach to legislation that will protect renters and landlords alike. That means that buyers and renters should be able to explore the market and achieve housing that suits them and their needs.

People should have the choice whether to move into the rental market. When I bought my very first house in the 1990s, the average house was around five times the average wage in New South Wales. The average house is now somewhere near 14 to 15 times the average wage, and that means that more people are forced into renting with no choice at all. They can no sooner afford to buy a house than they can to fly to the moon, so they must go into the rental market. That gives a disproportionate level of power to landlords to force people into short-term leasing and impose rent increases of \$50 or \$100 a week when the lease expires—or, as is routinely the case in the Riverstone electorate, rent increases of \$150 a week.

I have spoken to real estate agents in the local area who are devastated by the fact that they are having to evict people who we went to school with because the rental market is becoming out of control and beyond the reach of their incomes. People cannot afford to buy a home, and now they can no longer afford to rent in the place

that they called home, sometimes for generations. There should never be any place for unscrupulous behaviour during times like these, especially in the rental sector.

The Government is clear in its intention to create a fairer and more modern rental market. I commend the member for Newtown for her work on the bill, and I hope that Government members can work with her and use some of her work in our rental reforms. Our implementation of no-grounds eviction reform will be sensible and pragmatic because we are committed to delivering affordable and stable housing for the people of New South Wales. It is one of our top priorities.

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (13:42):** I contribute to debate on the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Prohibiting No Grounds Evictions) Bill 2024. As the member for Riverstone mentioned, it is incredibly important to acknowledge the level of work the member for Newtown has done and her advocacy in this space. I thank and appreciate her for that. I have spoken many times in this place about the housing issues faced by my community, especially those who are renting. Like a surprising number of members in this place, I too am a renter.

**Ms Jenny Leong:** Welcome.

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA:** Thank you. I note the comments of the member for North Shore earlier comparing the member for Newtown to the Leader of the Opposition, but I think the member for Newtown is doing a much better job than the Leader of the Opposition. This is just one bill that she has introduced to advocate for the people of New South Wales, amongst many across a whole range of issues. Meanwhile, we have the shenanigans of Opposition members over the course of this week, when they have been found to have not done their research, not consulted and not promoted the best interests of the people of New South Wales by putting forward opposing ideas or alternative ideas.

The Government opposes the bill because we have a longstanding commitment to introduce reasonable grounds to end a tenancy. It is important to note that Government members understand 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 homes without ever knowing why. Given the current housing and cost-of-living crises, I have spoken with many constituents who are faced with applying for property after property against immense competition. We have all seen video footage across social media and news media showing the extent of the issue. Sometimes lines can extend hundreds of metres, if not kilometres, and can snake down multiple floors of apartment buildings just for the opportunity to view a place, let alone put in an application to rent it.

Our Government has made the commitment to amend rental laws to end no-grounds terminations in New South Wales, and we stand by that commitment. However, it is important that we get such a critical change right. The Government supports increasing transparency and fairness in the owner-renter relationship, but any amendments to do so must be grounded in an understanding of the impacts that they could have on all parties involved so that we can have sustainable and meaningful reform in this space over the long term. Given the tightness of the rental market, the increase in the number of people who are renting and how long they are renting for, we are doing due diligence to ensure that we do not cause unintended detriment to renters, owners or the overall rental market when we remove no-grounds evictions.

Some people seem to have the impression that that change will be easy because it has been made elsewhere in other jurisdictions in Australia and overseas, but the reality is that there is no one agreed model on how best to end no-grounds terminations. There is no uniform or consistent approach even to what constitutes a valid reason to end a lease. For example, 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 a lease and no further reason is required. However, 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; just stating that the full term of the agreement has passed is not sufficient. I note, however, that the changes in South Australia are yet to commence. The Government has been observing what is happening in those other jurisdictions and those learnings will be applied, which is sensible and proper. Members must also keep in mind that New South Wales, as the largest rental market in the country, has its own unique market and its own challenges. The Government's reforms will be some of the biggest changes to the rental market seen in recent memory.

I pick up on a point that the member for North Shore raised. She implied that the housing crisis, the needs of renters and the issues created by no-grounds evictions have just fallen out of the sky and become apparent in the past 12 months. That is not the case. The situation has evolved with the inaction of governments basically

ignoring the needs and rights of renters for many years, which is very unfortunate. However, it would be remiss of me to simply copy and paste the approach of another State or jurisdiction into the New South Wales context without looking at the unique features and nuances of our market. We do not want to rush the policy approach, and that is why we are taking the time to compile a suite of rental reforms that we hope will be accepted by owners, renters and other stakeholders.

One of the first things we did upon forming government was to undertake substantial consultation with a broad range of stakeholders in the space, because we want to get it right. We know from the Government's consultation last year that there are very different views when it comes to ending no-grounds evictions. As I said, ending no-grounds terminations will be the most significant change in New South Wales rental policy in decades. I take a minute to highlight the features of the public consultation on rental reforms. There were more than 16,000 survey responses and more than 400 submissions about the upcoming changes to rental laws. About 57 per cent of those respondents were renters and 34 per cent were owners.

The survey was available in seven languages, ensuring that voices across the community were heard. That is a really important point to seize on because often when it comes to consultation or engagement that various levels of government undertake, not all of the available stakeholders and people who should be consulted are consulted, and language can be an important determinant of that disincentive. This will change the paradigm of how owners and renters interact in the property market, as it should, because the challenges faced by our community today should motivate and shape the policy framework and the response from the Government going forward. We need to take the time to ensure we deliver a package that can provide broad certainty and longevity and that balances the challenges faced by owners and renters.

In addition to the survey and the submissions, we are also considering feedback from engagements led by the NSW Rental Commissioner, who has had in-depth consultations including round tables and one-on-one engagements across more than 50 sessions with over 65 organisations. I was privileged to attend one of those engagements at the Hunts Inn in Casula at the end of last year. I saw the interest and enthusiasm to participate in the solutions by bringing to the table challenges and ideas from not-for-profit organisations, renters, real estate agents and many other stakeholders. The legislation should be not only well intentioned but also well informed and thought out, with an understanding of its impact in real-world scenarios. The Government is continuing to engage with the sector to refine the approach so that when the bill is brought before this House, it offers the best possible suite of solutions.

I must also point out that there are some problems with the provisions in the bill. Firstly, the bill has a limited list of permissible reasons for ending a lease. The Government has been clear in its intention to draft fair and balanced legislation. I am afraid the bill before the House does not quite 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 a landlord or agent who gives false or misleading information. As part of the Government's consultation on rental reforms, it proposed a comprehensive list of new reasons to end a lease for renters, owners and the industry to consider, including the proposed sale of the property and the owner or a member of their immediate family moving into the property. Those reasons do not form a part of the bill before the House, suggesting that the balance between renters and owners requires a little bit more work.

The bill before the House would require a 90-day termination notice period for leases of six months or less. Unfortunately, the 90-day termination period is impractical as this notice period is over half the length of a six-month lease. For those reasons and, I am sure, a few others as outlined by my colleagues, I am afraid that I cannot support the bill, even though I appreciate and support the intentions and the work.

**Ms Jenny Leong:** We'll get there.

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA:** We will get there. We will.

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (13:52):** I speak in debate on the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Prohibiting No Grounds Evictions) Bill 2024. After more than a decade of neglect, the Government has inherited a housing crisis in New South Wales. The rental system that our Government inherited is unfair, and for over a decade the previous Government failed to ensure that vulnerable renters were protected. Almost 30 per cent of renters in the Gosford area are facing record growth in rents and lack of available housing, while our rental market remains significantly skewed against renters. I grew up as a child of renting parents, which made me very determined to buy my own home. We lived in 13 houses over 15 years. I have a pretty comprehensive understanding about the impact of instable housing on families. I cannot comprehend how my mum and dad managed in that situation, but luckily there was not a high demand for housing at that time, so we were able to stay in the same community, although I had to catch different buses to school on a very regular basis. I knew all the bus routes around Toronto High School.

Our Government is committed to reforms to make renting in New South Wales fairer and provide protection for renters. Our Government is committed to making sustainable and equitable rules to improve the rental system, ensuring that our communities can live with dignity. The Government will be opposing this bill, as it has its own comprehensive commitment to making renting fairer in New South Wales while providing more protection for renters. In doing this, we are committed to getting our reforms right, including the component of no-grounds evictions. This is not just words and promises. We have already gained substantial ground in this space. We have appointed the State's first Rental Commissioner, Trina Jones, and I thank her for her work in giving renters a voice in the Government for the first time. We have passed legislation to extend the ban on solicited rent bidding, and we have begun the process of developing a portable bond scheme. We are committed to a sensible, pragmatic approach to no-grounds eviction reform.

As we heard from previous speakers, no two States in Australia have adopted the same approach to addressing no-grounds evictions. It is critical that we take the time to get these reforms right. We must learn the lessons of other jurisdictions and forge a sensible approach for New South Wales renters. The New South Wales Government is focused on pragmatic and wideranging measures to address rental affordability and renters' rights, including measures to increase housing supply and improve oversight of construction safeguards. We look forward to bringing further reforms to the New South Wales Parliament, which will be based on comprehensive consultation and evidence-based reform measures.

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (13:55):** I speak in debate on the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Prohibiting No Grounds Evictions) Bill 2024, introduced by the member for Newtown. As we have heard, the objectives of the bill are to remove the right of a landlord to terminate residential tenancy agreements without grounds, to specify the grounds on which residential tenancy agreements may be terminated, and to make it an offence for a landlord to fail to ensure that residential premises are used in accordance with the ground on which the termination was made. Essentially, the bill aims to ensure that when people are evicted, they are given reasonable grounds and that those reasons are followed through.

On the surface, it is a good bill and its objectives are sound. However, the Government is working on its own bill. It is coming; I checked. I spoke with the Minister's staff and they are cooking away. I think all members will welcome that bill when it is introduced to the House. Government members, as well as the member for Newtown, recognise we need to make changes in the rental market. Given the state of the housing market, especially in Sydney, entire generations are being priced out of the market, which means more and more people are renting. As a result, we need to strengthen the rights of renters.

The Government is implementing commitments to make renting fairer and to provide more protection for renters. The Government appointed the Rental Commissioner, Trina Jones, who will be a voice for renters, which is very important. The Government also is moving to implement other election commitments, such as making it easier for renters to have pets, introducing new data protection requirements for real estate agents and introducing the portable bond scheme, which relieves renters of the burden of having to raise a bond while waiting for the refunding of the previous bond. That has been a burden for renters for some time. Especially in a cost-of-living crisis, it is one of the important reforms that the Government will be undertaking.

As a package, the Government's reforms will implement significant rental reforms to improve the rights of renters and ease the pressure within the rental market. The Government also is introducing measures to increase housing supply. I acknowledge the nimby members opposite. I guess it is their right to be nimbys, but it is important to ensure that we have more rental properties to create downward pressure on the cost of rent. My Leppington electorate office is situated in an area of transit-oriented development. It is not one of the Transport Oriented Development Program areas that the Minister has announced. The Camden and Liverpool councils are currently going through the process of rezoning the town centre. It will have significant housing stock once it is completed, both mixed use and high-density residential. As I have said publicly, it is a fantastic example of transit-oriented development, as is the next station down at Edmondson Park, but it should not be happening 40 to 45 kilometres from the Sydney CBD. It needs to be happening five, 10 and 15 kilometres from the Sydney CBD, which would result in more rental stock on the market and help ease the burden that renters are currently facing.

A constituent told me a story a month or two ago. He is a gentleman who has shared custody of his two kids with his former partner, so he needed a new rental property. Because of the desperation in places like Leppington, he signed an agreement before seeing the property. On the day he moved in, he noticed that there was a car parked on the property. He thought, "What's that about?" The house had a partition through the middle of it and there was another family renting the other half of the house. The owner of the house, who may or may not be in cahoots with the real estate agent, had effectively split the house in two and rented it to two families. That is not proper, and he demanded that that be rescinded. Thankfully, that has happened. That is indicative of what is happening throughout Sydney and, I assume, throughout New South Wales when it comes to the plight of

renters. That is why we need to strengthen renters' rights. The Government has done that, is doing that and will continue to do that.

The Government's fundamental belief is that renters need good owners and owners need good renters. As a result, the Government opposes the bill because it has its own commitment to ending no-grounds evictions, as I mentioned earlier. The Government recently completed public consultation on those reforms. The paper entitled *Improving NSW rental laws consultation paper* sought feedback on a variety of rental reforms, including no-grounds evictions. The public consultation was record breaking. I know from my time both as a member of Parliament and previously as a councillor that it is difficult to get the public to give feedback and to consult. When they do, it is a hot issue that needs to be addressed quickly. There were 400 submissions and 16,000 survey responses across the gamut from industry, rental advocacy groups and members of the general public.

It underlines the importance of the reforms, the need to strengthen the rights of renters and ensure a sensible, pragmatic approach to the reforms. They are complex reforms. No two States in Australia have adopted the same approach on the issue. There is not a one-size-fits-all solution. Every State has its own pressures, complexities and particulars, which means that it needs to be worked through in a methodical way. Looking at the average house price in Sydney compared to Melbourne, there is something like a \$400,000 to \$500,000 difference. It is significant.

**Ms Janelle Saffin:** It's massive.

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY:** It is huge. That is why the Government needs to take its time on this, but there is a need to deal with it in an appropriate time frame. The Government will continue to work with stakeholders to ensure that there are no unintended consequences and no detrimental impact on the rental market when no-grounds evictions are introduced. Currently, under the Residential Tenancies Act 2010 a landlord can end a tenancy for several reasons, including where the tenant breaches the rental agreement; fails to pay rent or utilities, if that is part of the agreement; causes serious damage or injury; threatens, abuses or harasses the landlord, agent or a contractor; abandons the property; or gives up possession of the property with the consent of the owner.

Other reasons in the Act include the need for vacant possession on the sale of the property or the landlord suffering financial hardship. The Act also includes an ability for the landlord to end the tenancy without needing any reason. For a periodic lease, the landlord can end the tenancy at any time without a reason, but they must give the renter at least 90 days notice. For a fixed-term lease, the landlord cannot end the tenancy during the agreed term, except in exceptional circumstances. For example, the landlord cannot generally end a 12-month lease until that 12 months has passed. If the landlord wants the renter to leave at the end of the agreed time, they must give 30 days notice. [*Extension of time*]

I need the extension of time because it is an extremely important issue and I have so much more to contribute. I know members are looking forward to that. I go back to the "have your say" survey. Some of the results are revealing. Fifty-seven per cent of the respondents were renters and 34 per cent were owners. The survey was available in seven languages, ensuring voices across the community were heard. I thank the Minister and the department for allowing multilingual submissions to be made. In my part of the world, in Leppington, there is a diverse and multicultural community. When voices in my community are not heard, it is often an oversight. It is not from a lack of wanting to be heard but from people's inability to express themselves in the language. I commend the Minister, his office and the department for enabling multilingual submissions.

As the Minister pointed out when releasing the results of the consultation in March, there were different views on key issues, such as ways to implement a ban on no-grounds evictions. That is one of the reasons we cannot rush this and one of the reasons that I will be opposing the bill. For example, 96 per cent of renters supported the owner needing a reason to end a periodic lease, but owners and real estate agents—those reputable people—did not support the proposal. Some 28 per cent of owners and 12 per cent of real estate agents were in support. Those are some of the opposing views, and that is why there is a need to consult widely to come to an agreement on the issue. Renters also strongly supported the owner needing a reason to end a fixed-term lease, while most owners and real estate agents did not support the proposal. Some 16 per cent of owners and 8 per cent of real estate agents were in support. It is important to touch on some of the statistics when it comes to renters in New South Wales. I note that the City of Sydney covers—

**Ms Jenny Leong:** Sydney, Newtown and Balmain.

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY:** Sydney, Newtown and Balmain.

**Ms Jenny Leong:** A bit of Heffron, actually. A bit of the Leader of the House's electorate.

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY:** It covers a bit of the electorate of the member for Heffron as well. Almost two-thirds, or 65 per cent, of people in the City of Sydney local government area [LGA] are renters. That is why

it is a significant issue, and the member for Newtown is leading the charge on it. In Brewarrina, home of the fascinating Brewarrina Aboriginal fish traps—those who have not heard of them should look them up—surprisingly, 52.3 per cent of the population are renters. Reading down the list of LGAs, the percentages are North Sydney, 52.3 per cent; Waverley, 49.8 per cent; Parramatta, 46.5 per cent; and Cumberland, 44.4 per cent. The point is that this impacts people right across the State. There are lots of renters and we need to be backing them. I have spoken about what this Government has done for renters, and it will continue that work.

I cannot finish without mentioning the renter statistics for the three local government areas that cover the great electorate of Leppington: Liverpool, 35.9 per cent; Campbelltown, 34.5 per cent; and Camden, 25.0 per cent. In Lismore, it is 27.7 per cent. *[Time expired.]*

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (14:11):** I contribute to debate on the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Prohibiting No Grounds Evictions) Bill 2024. The Government has made it clear that it is committed to introducing measured and sensible reform to support renters across New South Wales, and that includes a commitment to amend rental laws around no-grounds terminations. With record low vacancy rates, we acknowledge the challenges that renters across the State are experiencing in the current economic climate. Being told that your lease is ending, without a reason, understandably creates stress, uncertainty and unfairness for renters. But, as a responsible government, it is critical that any reform we introduce does not result in detrimental outcomes for the people it is intended to protect. This goes for potential impacts in the short term and further in the future.

We need to make the important reform to rental laws around no-grounds terminations, but it is essential that we get it right. That means doing the diligence required to ensure that the reform is not to the detriment of renters and that it does not lead to a lower supply within the rental market. When there is already a housing crisis, the very last thing we need is even less supply in the market. The member for Newtown has raised the point that other jurisdictions in Australia, namely the Australian Capital Territory and South Australia, have introduced laws to end no-grounds evictions for periodic and fixed-term tenancies. New South Wales has the largest rental market in the country. Any reform introduced will be one of the biggest changes to the rental market in recent history—in fact, since the Landlord and Tenant (Amendment) Act 1948. Therefore, we need our own, tailored approach. Copying and pasting the changes made in other States, without careful consideration of the unique characteristics of New South Wales's rental market, is not something a responsible government would do.

We cannot rush through a policy without having a deep understanding of the adverse effects it might have. The Government has consulted extensively on the issue, and the Minister has been working on it assiduously for 12 months to take into consideration every conceivable view. There are vastly different views. We have been doing the work that a responsible government should do: engage with the people who will be impacted by these reforms. We need to listen to renters, property owners and the wider industry. The NSW Rental Commissioner has been consulting with these groups to ensure that the reforms we bring forward benefit those who need them most. I am told there has not been broad consultation with these groups regarding the provisions of this bill. While the Government recognises the very legitimate grounds upon which the member for Newtown has introduced the bill, the Parliament should not rush through these reforms without this important consultation.

We acknowledge the genuine concerns and issues raised in the bill, but we are opposed to the provisions put forward to fix them. The Minister and other Government members have pointed out several issues with the bill, including a limited number of reasons for ending a lease to replace the existing no-grounds eviction provisions. The bill does not include evidence requirements for terminations, nor does it include offences if a landlord gives misleading or false information. They may well be critical safeguards that protect renters and owners, but they have not been incorporated in this bill. Through the Government's own consultation on this issue and wider rental reforms, we have been working to bring greater balance in the relationship between renters and owners to ensure transparency and fairness on both sides.

The bill introduced by the member for Newtown allows for additional reasons for no-grounds eviction to be modified via regulation. Those amendments would not be subject to parliamentary scrutiny by the elected members of this House. Something with such wideranging implications certainly warrants that important review. It has also been raised that the bill requires a 90-day notice period for leases of six months or less. There are several impracticalities with implementing that notice period when it represents half the length of the lease. The bill lacks some of the safeguards raised during the Government's extensive consultation that would protect renters—for example, requiring a landlord or property owner to provide evidence to a tenant that a termination is genuine. That would put the onus on property owners to demonstrate legitimate grounds for eviction, rather than on tenants to then have to challenge a termination at the tribunal.

The Government recognises the urgent need to implement reform to the rental market in New South Wales, but we need to deliver a more balanced and workable solution that supports all parties and is operationally robust. We need a considered and sensible approach to create a fairer rental market. We need to increase transparency

and ensure that it is afforded to renters and owners. The Government does not consider that the bill, in its current form, will achieve that. For that reason, I move an amendment. I move:

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

- (1) The bill be referred forthwith to a select committee for consideration and report for the purpose of inquiring and seeking public input into:
  - (a) the provisions of the bill, with particular reference to:
    - (i) the grounds on which an eviction is reasonable;
    - (ii) the appropriateness of evidence requirements to support reasonable grounds or a penalty scheme for those who falsely claim a reasonable ground; and
    - (iii) any unintended consequences, including on housing affordability and availability, for renters and owners.
  - (b) a jurisdictional comparison of no-grounds eviction policies.
- (2) The committee consist of five members, comprising:
  - (a) three Government members, being Ms Donna Davis, Mr Clayton Barr and Ms Trish Doyle;
  - (b) one Opposition member; and
  - (c) one crossbench member, being Ms Jenny Leong.
- (3) The Opposition member be nominated in writing by the Opposition Whip to the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly by 23 May 2024.
- (4) Ms Jenny Leong shall be the chair of the committee.
- (5) The committee have leave to sit during the sittings or any adjournment of the House.
- (6) The committee have leave to make visits of inspection within the State of New South Wales and other States and Territories of Australia.
- (7) The committee shall report to the House by 20 September 2024.
- (8) The committee shall be able to table a report out of session with the Clerk.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (14:20):** In reply: I thank the Government and support its proposed way forward to progress the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Prohibiting No Grounds Evictions) Bill 2023. I acknowledge that the Minister and the Rental Commissioner have engaged in broad consultation with the community and key stakeholders on this reform. I acknowledge that we are in the rarest of circumstances where we have multi-partisan support across the Chamber to end no-grounds evictions in New South Wales. We need to navigate through some of the details, but I look forward to working with members of all parties so that the Government can deliver its election commitment to the people of New South Wales to end no-grounds evictions.

I have been committed to this reform since before I was elected to Parliament. I genuinely want to see it happen and believe it can happen before the end of the year. I thank the Government and the Minister for recognising the benefits of working collaboratively through a committee process to try to nut out the finer details. The last thing the two million renters in New South Wales need is for us to play politics with a reform that we all agree to. If we can get this reform through before the end of the year, it will be a massive relief to many people.

It is wonderful to have the member for Parramatta, the member for Cessnock and the member for Blue Mountains on the committee. It sticks in my mind that the member for Parramatta is in one of the most marginal electorates in the State but also has a very high number of renters. I recognise the efforts of many Opposition backbench members who have a lot of renters in their areas and acknowledge the pressure on them to support the no-grounds evictions reform. It is a good sign that means we can move forward. I thank all members who have contributed to debate on the bill to date. We will continue that debate. In the meantime, let us leave this adversarial place and head towards the committee process to help steer us towards getting this reform through the Parliament.

**Business interrupted.**

*Business of the House*

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

**Mr RON HOENIG:** I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to provide that:

- (1) The question on the amendment to the motion that this bill [Residential Tenancies Amendment (Prohibiting No Grounds Evictions) Bill 2023] be read a second time be put forthwith.
- (2) The resumption of the debate on the second reading of the bill be restored to the Business Paper on the tabling of the report of the select committee.



- (3) The lapsing date be extended until 25 October 2024.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Bills*

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

**Second Reading Debate**

**Business resumed.**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** The member for Newtown has moved a motion, to which the member for Heffron has moved an amendment. The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

**Amendment agreed to.**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** The question is that the motion as amended be agreed to.

**Motion as amended agreed to.**

**INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION AMENDMENT (MINISTERIAL DIARY  
DISCLOSURE) BILL 2024**

**Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 14 March 2024.**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (14:24):** On behalf of the Government I oppose the Independent Commission Against Corruption Amendment (Ministerial Diary Disclosure) Bill 2024. At the outset I put on record that the New South Wales Government is committed to ensuring the highest standards of integrity across government and that all decisions are made in the public interest. This Government is proud of the work that it has done, and that it will continue to do, to improve integrity and accountability in the public sector to ensure that New South Wales public institutions remain strong and effective. Transparency is a key principle of that work and is critical to ensuring that public trust in public institutions remains high.

Before I outline the reasons the Government will not support the bill, I provide an overview of the bill. If made, the bill would amend the Independent Commission Against Corruption Regulation 2017 to require, under the New South Wales ministerial code of conduct, the publication of information relating to certain meetings involving Ministers or Parliamentary Secretaries and external persons. The bill would require Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries to disclose all "relevant meetings", which means a meeting attended by the Minister or Parliamentary Secretary and a person other than a Minister, their staff, MPs' staff, a government official or another person representing or engaged by the State or another jurisdiction. The meeting must be concerning any matter that may be considered, whether formally or informally, by the Minister, in the Minister's role as a portfolio Minister or as a member of Cabinet, or by a Parliamentary Secretary, in their role as a Parliamentary Secretary.

Quarterly summaries of disclosures would be required to be published on the website of the Cabinet Office one month after the end of each quarter, containing details of the purpose of the meeting, the details of parties who attended the meeting and in what capacity they attended the meeting. The bill does not require the disclosure of meetings where only personal, electorate or party political discussions occur; social or public functions or events where a relevant meeting does not occur; meetings held overseas; or meetings for which there is an overriding public interest against disclosure under the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009.

Ministers are already required to publish quarterly summaries of their diaries. Under Premier's Memorandum *M2015-05 Publication of Ministerial Diaries and Release of Overseas Travel Information*, or the Premier's memorandum, Ministers are already required to publish quarterly summaries of their diaries, which are available on the website of the Cabinet Office, including all scheduled meetings involving the discussion of a matter that may be considered by the Minister, whether formally or informally, in their role as portfolio Minister or as a member of Cabinet. Members can find those summaries on the Cabinet Office website.

The bill pre-empts the Government's response to the ICAC's lobbying investigation. The member for Kiama addressed the Independent Commission Against Corruption's report known as Operation Eclipse in his second reading speech, and I put on record the Government's position on that matter. We are committed to ensuring that the lobbying of New South Wales Government officials is appropriately regulated. The Government is carefully considering the recommendations of the ICAC in its June 2021 Operation Eclipse report. Currently, the Lobbying of Government Officials Act 2011 applies the NSW Lobbyists Code of Conduct to all individuals and bodies who lobby New South Wales Government officials, imposing ethical obligations such as requiring

lobbyists to disclose the nature of the matter to be discussed before a meeting, not engaging in misleading, dishonest or corrupt conduct, and using reasonable endeavours to satisfy themselves of the truth and accuracy of all material information.

The Act establishes the NSW Electoral Commission as the independent regulator of lobbyists, which has functions including enforcing compliance with the lobbying Act or code, and may place lobbyists on the lobbyists watchlist. The Act also bans "success fees", where the amount of money paid to the lobbyists is contingent on the outcome of lobbying, with criminal offences applying to both the lobbyist and the person paying, or agreeing to pay, the success fee. It also prohibits former Ministers or Parliamentary Secretaries from lobbying a government official for 18 months on an official matter that was dealt with by the former Minister or Parliamentary Secretary in the last 18 months of carrying out portfolio responsibilities. In addition to the obligations imposed on all lobbyists, third-party lobbyists must disclose to the government officials they lobby that they are third-party lobbyists and provide information, including the names of foreign principals who have retained the lobbyists to provide lobbying services; be registered on the Lobbyists Register maintained by the NSW Electoral Commission—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** The time for orders of the day (for bills) has expired. The House will now consider general business notices of motions (general motions). I set down resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a later time.

### *Motions*

### **PALLIATIVE CARE**

#### **Debate resumed from 9 May 2024.**

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (14:31):** I speak to the motion of the member for Goulburn in relation to palliative care, and I move:

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

- (1) Recognises the Government's record funding of more than \$1.7 billion over four years for palliative care in the 2023-2024 budget.
- (2) Acknowledges that Government funding to palliative care has risen \$338 million last financial year (2022-2023) to \$361 million this financial year (2023-2024).
- (3) Notes that the Government is delivering significant year-on-year funding increases to palliative care budgets for all local health districts, specialist health networks and NSW Ambulance.

That is the crux of the matter. This Government has delivered the largest palliative care budget ever delivered in New South Wales. It is delivering palliative care where it is needed. It is increasing palliative care capacity. I know because Auburn Hospital has just opened a new palliative care unit. It is a purpose-built facility for the people of Auburn, for our large families. That is being replicated across the State. The member for Terrigal talked about the new, state-of-the-art facilities in Gosford. He said there are 400 palliative care patients every year and that will not change. Yesterday members heard about the facilities in the new Shoalhaven Hospital. The reality is that palliative care needs state-of-the-art facilities staffed by the best health workers under the best conditions. This Government has delivered the largest palliative care budget the State has ever seen.

But it is not just that. This Government was left with the problem of 1,200 unfunded nursing positions. Members on the other side of the Chamber talk about what they will do, but they do not talk about what they did, which was to leave 1,200 nursing positions unfunded. Without all those nurses in the system, how do we deliver palliative care? It is impossible. How do we deliver palliative when nurses are not paid proper wages? Unfortunately, members opposite, when they were in government, did not pay nurses properly. This Government continues to make sure that palliative care is delivered where it is needed and under the conditions that are needed.

Next year the budget will see an 8 per cent increase in funding for the delivery of palliative care, which is another huge increase. Members opposite have not addressed what they were going to do about the 1,200 nurses they were not delivering. If they want to talk about palliative care, they should talk about the facts. We are delivering more than has been delivered in the past. The member for Goulburn said, "Goulburn constituents are aged primarily between 65 and 84." If 22 per cent of the area's population is aged 65 or over, everyone in the area is not aged primarily between 65 and 84. Those figures are consistent with the figures for the electorates of Blue Mountains, Castle Hill, Wollongong and The Entrance. The figures those opposite have— [*Time expired.*]

**Mr JORDAN LANE:** I seek leave to make a contribution to debate.

**Leave not granted.**

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON:** I seek leave to make a contribution to debate.

**Leave not granted.**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (14:35):** In reply: It is disappointing that Government members do not want to hear from local members about palliative care issues in their electorates. That is just unbelievable. It is heartless and it is incredible. I just do not get it, honestly. The cuts are real. There is no doubt about it; the maths is simple. The Coalition provided \$650 million to boost palliative care over the five years to 2027. When the Coalition made the announcement, Chris Minns said it was welcome and important. Local health districts began to spend that money and made detailed plans for future spending. We have copies of those plans. The 2023-24 budget later reduced the funding from \$650 million to \$401 million—a cut of a quarter of a billion dollars. Labor refuses to admit the cuts. Health Minister Ryan Park said more than once that the Government is not cutting palliative care. However, its documents clearly indicate the reduction in funding. In budget estimates hearings in February this year, health officials admitted that there was a revised funding envelope. Translated, that means a cut.

**Ms Lynda Voltz:** No. That is just your made-up stuff.

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN:** It is not. It is fact, in black and white.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** Members will come to order.

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN:** Local health district plans indicate significant current unmet need for palliative care even before the funding cut. Some health districts indicated that unmet demand was around 38 per cent. That is enormous. Palliative Care Australia expects demand for palliative care to grow each year until 2030. Local health district plans for the full \$650 million included increases in staff numbers, bed capacity and services to meet that unmet demand. The true impact of the cuts on staffing levels and service capacity is unknown, and questions remain unanswered.

Palliative care is care for the dying. Local health districts already report that they cannot meet demand. Now Labor has cut their funding. That means that care for the dying will be cut. Each local health district has been advised of funding cuts. However, we still do not know where those cuts will be and how many nurses, doctors, beds or other services will be cut. We do know that the cuts include a 50 per cent reduction in the forward estimates for paediatric palliative care, even though the number of children requiring palliative care is increasing globally. How members on the other side of the House can accept that is absolutely beyond me. Answers from the Minister for Women indicate that no thought has been given to the impacts the funding cuts will have on women and carers. Who else will have to step up and fill the gaps in care? When asked to guarantee there will be no further cuts to palliative care in the 2024-25 budget, health Minister Ryan Park refused to rule them out.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** Members will come to order.

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN:** Let us be very clear: We are facing a crisis in this State and the Labor Government needs to ensure that money is reinstated to care for the sick and the dying. If Labor members have hearts, they should be walking up to the Minister for Health right now and telling him it needs to be reinstated.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** The member for Goulburn has moved a motion, to which the member for Auburn has moved an amendment. The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....43

Noes .....24

Majority.....19

**AYES**

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

Hannan, J  
Harris, D  
Harrison, J  
Haylen, J  
Hoenig, R  
Holland, M  
Kaliyanda, C  
Leong, J  
Li, J  
McDermott, H  
McKeown, K  
Mehan, D

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

## AYES

Finn, J  
Greenwich, A  
Hagarty, N (teller)

O'Neill, M  
Park, R

Whan, S  
Wilkinson, K

## NOES

Anderson, K  
Clancy, J  
Cooke, S  
Coure, M  
Crouch, A (teller)  
Di Pasqua, S  
Griffin, J  
Henskens, A

Hodges, M  
Kemp, M  
Lane, J  
Layzell, D  
McGirr, J  
Perrottet, D  
Preston, R  
Provest, G

Saunders, D  
Singh, G (teller)  
Sloane, K  
Speakman, M  
Taylor, M  
Tuckerman, W  
Williams, R  
Williamson, R

## PAIRS

Car, P  
Kamper, S  
Kirby, W  
Minns, C  
Warren, G  
Watson, A

Kean, M  
Williams, L  
Amon, R  
Toole, P  
Cross, M  
Roberts, A

**Amendment agreed to.**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** The question is that the motion as amended be agreed to.

**Motion as amended agreed to.****NATIONAL ENERGY BILL RELIEF FUND**

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (14:49):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Condemns the previous Government for its record on privatising essential State-owned energy assets, which has put pressure on New South Wales families struggling with the cost of living.
- (2) Commends the Government for its joint \$966 million investment with the Commonwealth Government in the National Energy Bill Relief fund.
- (3) Notes that 10,210 households in the Blue Mountains are each eligible to receive \$500 and eligible small businesses will each receive \$650 this financial year as a result of the fund.

First up, I will talk about the previous Government and its record on privatisation. I remind the House of what I said nine years ago. On 28 May 2015 I said:

I denounce the Baird Liberal Government's privatisation agenda and I oppose the Electricity Network Assets (Authorised Transactions) Bill 2015 and the Electricity Retained Interest Corporations Bill 2015. I do so not just because I am stridently and ideologically opposed to the conservatives' obsessive, compulsive privatisation of public assets, but because I am acutely aware of the lie that underpins the Liberal Party's dogma against publicly owned assets. Private enterprise is not uniformly more efficient, more effective or superior in delivering basic services to the people of this State. Private enterprise cannot be expected to deliver equity and fairness when its overarching motive is to turn a profit from its customers. Private enterprise will always weigh up its capacity to pay a dividend to its shareholders versus any impact its business might have on the environment. When private enterprise is driven by a profit motive it will look to reduce its labour costs—through wage cuts, winding back workplace conditions or safety standards, and redundancies.

To put these abstract arguments in context, let us consider the impact of the Baird Liberal Government's privatisation of electricity networks. Prices will increase and services will deteriorate.

Here we are, almost a decade later. I remember members opposite laughing at me, shouting and jeering when I stood up and said that nine years ago, when the then Opposition—now the Government—pointed out that the privatisation of State-owned energy assets would mean that the cost rises. Let us turn to the cost-of-living pressure on families. This Government understands the cost-of-living pressures that households and small businesses are facing. The Minns Government was elected to deliver real cost-of-living relief to the people of New South Wales, and it will do that. We know that this is the number one thing on people's minds right now. We are delivering

measures to bring relief, from energy bills to tolls. We made an election commitment to provide \$485 million in targeted, temporary energy bill relief to eligible New South Wales households and small businesses, and that is what we have delivered. We are now well into the process of delivering on that commitment.

By partnering with the Commonwealth we are delivering the joint \$966 million National Energy Bill Relief fund. The fund is delivering electricity bill relief to around 1.6 million eligible New South Wales households and around 300,000 eligible New South Wales small businesses in this financial year. That is \$500 for households and \$650 for small businesses. Eligible low-income households, pensioners, self-funded retirees, families and carers have already been receiving quarterly payments of \$125 off their electricity bill since July last year; as, too, have small businesses, most of which will receive this relief automatically on their bill.

In my electorate of the Blue Mountains this is delivering meaningful relief to over 10,000 households and many more small businesses. That is on top of the Government's existing annual energy rebates and its crisis support scheme. We deliver six energy rebates annually to low-income households, eligible families, seniors and those with additional energy needs for medical treatment. With the support of the National Energy Bill Relief fund to bolster these, eligible low-income households will receive a total of \$885 in this financial year through their existing energy rebate and the one-off bill relief. That is almost \$900 off their energy bill. The rebates provide consistent and much-needed support quarterly throughout the year. For people in exceptional circumstances who are overdue on their bills, we also provide a crisis support scheme. We have increased the limit of the scheme to \$500 for this financial year.

It is important that we understand how we got here. Why is the essential service of energy not in the control of government? As this motion states, the previous Government had a record of privatising essential State-owned energy assets. That has made the energy transition in New South Wales much harder and it means that we are in the hands of private companies to deliver energy to our households and businesses. The previous Government sold at least \$72 billion worth of public assets. In the energy sector alone, the previous Liberal Government privatised three electricity network businesses and six coal-fired power stations in just four years. First, it privatised Eraring, Mount Piper and Wallerawang power stations in 2013, followed by Liddell and Bayswater power stations in 2014 and Vales Point Power Station in 2015; that is six power stations from 2013 to 2015. As a result, New South Wales customers are paying inflated profits to privatised network businesses.

That has put enormous pressure on families who are struggling with the cost of living. Government members know that keeping public assets in the public's hands is actually a good thing for the budget. Given the situation we were left with by those opposite, we need to support families and small businesses with energy bill relief, and that is what we will do.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (14:56):** I make a contribution to debate on the motion, and I acknowledge the contribution of the member for Blue Mountains. It is fitting that I do so, given her trip down memory lane and acknowledgment of my predecessor, the good Mike Baird—who, I am sure, logs on from time to time to see what is going on in the House. He may be watching now. If we must go on a trip down memory lane, then we will. The facts are that energy bills under both the Federal Labor Government and the current State Government have gone one way, and that is up.

For two years now Federal Labor has been promising to lower energy bills by \$275. When you make a promise—as these Labor members of Parliament will find out—you should keep it. Since Federal Labor came to power, homes have experienced a 37 per cent increase in energy costs, and small businesses have been hit hard, with bills soaring up to \$2,000. There are stories behind these numbers. The energy retailer says that over 116,000 people have been placed in hardship due to their skyrocketing energy bills and that a staggering almost 200,000 people are now in energy debt. That is hardly worth celebrating; it is a result of the dysfunction of the Federal Labor Government when it comes to energy policy.

If we must look backwards, as this Government is so keen to do, we must also note that voters and stakeholder groups in the energy space are not looking for self-congratulatory missives from this Labor Government. They want ideas and they want solutions. Increasingly, they are asking questions. Why are members of this Government—this so-called Government—obsessed with the former Government instead of getting on with the job at hand? They have had over a year. Are they really so bereft of vision and ideas that they must constantly look in the rear-vision mirror, dreaming all day of their long, dark, dangerous years in opposition? At this rate, they will be back there in no time.

Let us have a look back. After the election Labor left out nearly half the State when it dumped the Coalition's \$250 electricity energy rebate. Half of all New South Wales households now receive no energy bill relief as a result of this Labor Government dumping the \$250 rebate offered by the previous Government. In real numbers it means around 1.5 million households will get absolutely nothing. As part of the agreement with the Albanese Government to impose a coal cap in New South Wales, the Commonwealth agreed to match the energy

rebates in New South Wales. It is a shame that it will not do the same with the GST battle that is going on at the moment. We would love to see that \$1.6 billion or \$1.9 billion come back into the coffers of New South Wales, but the phone line between Mookhey and his Federal counterparts will not connect.

Even worse, today we learned that one of the biggest energy retailers and generators will penalise homes for putting solar back into the grid. This new policy by a company that owns poles and wires that cover two million residents and small businesses in New South Wales, including Sydney, the Central Coast, Newcastle and the Hunter, will penalise solar panel owners who do not own a home battery to store the energy that they produce. The energy rebate that not even half the State gets is nothing more than a sugar hit. This Government should get on with the job of delivering innovative, forward-looking ideas on energy policy that will reward people for having rooftop solar. During the election it announced a \$1 billion-plus State-owned energy corporation. It does not even have a website. There might be one person sitting behind a desk in a building somewhere; I am not sure. But we have heard nothing more of it. It is a demonstration of how far off the rails this Government is on energy policy.

Members opposite should hold on tight, because in the coming weeks and days it is likely that this Government will make an announcement that it will sling buckets of taxpayers' money over the fence to the owners of Eraring to keep a coal-fired power station open in this State. I know full well that for years members opposite have given heartfelt speeches in this place on policies about the environment. They believe in ensuring that this State transitions to a clean, green renewable future. They will have a decision to make soon. Will they be comfortable setting aside their convictions, beliefs and the commitments they took to the community in their election campaigns, and say they are happy to subsidise a coal-fired power station? Or, as the environmental and stakeholder groups are looking very closely, will a Government member raise their hand in the party room and say, "You know what, I am not comfortable with this. There has to be a better way"?

The cold, hard reality of the decision to keep Eraring open will hit soon. This Government can blame the previous Government all it wants, but the fact is that voters do not care about what has happened previously. They care only about what this Government will do in the future because this Government is driving the bus now. During the election campaign Government members were telling their communities that they support a transition to renewable energy. They have a big decision to make soon and the voters will come for them. I know full well that members opposite believe it and are passionate about it.

**Ms Donna Davis:** The benefits of bill relief is what you are supposed to be talking about.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN:** Bill relief is related to this because the Government has a decision to make about how much money it is going to use to keep Eraring going. I know that environment groups are disappointed already. They are red hot and ready to go when this decision comes. It is all well and good, and I appreciate full well the passion of the member for Blue Mountains and the effort she puts into caring for her community, but the energy bill rebates from the Federal Labor Government are nothing to celebrate.

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (15:02):** This Government understands that addressing the current cost of living is the number one priority for our communities across New South Wales. This Government was elected on 25 March 2023 with a very clear mandate to deliver real cost-of-living relief to the people of this State. That is why the Minns Labor Government is delivering relief across the board, from fee relief for preschool, to toll caps, to energy bill relief. The Minns Labor Government has delivered an enhanced \$1.6 billion package of preschool fee relief. We are also delivering a long-overdue toll relief with a \$615 million program, including a \$60 weekly toll cap for two years from January 2024, that is benefiting 700,000 motorists. It is disappointing that some members are not in the Chamber, because they could focus on the number of people in their electorates who are benefiting from the cost-of-living relief that comes from the weekly \$60 toll rebate. Baulkham Hills, Castle Hill, Kellyville, West Pennant Hills and Seven Hills are in the top 20 suburbs that benefit most from the weekly \$60 toll rebate.

**Mr Jordan Lane:** Point of order: My point of order relates to relevance. The motion relates to energy policy. We are now on the fourth or fifth reference to tolls. I ask that the member be brought back to the original motion.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** The member for Parramatta will return to the leave of the motion.

**Ms DONNA DAVIS:** In relation to the benefits of bill relief, the toll cap is one of the measures that the Minns Labor Government has implemented to support the people of New South Wales as they struggle with cost-of-living pressures as a direct result of the former Coalition Government's poor policy decisions in this State. This Government has delivered its energy bill relief comprising six annual energy rebates and a crisis support scheme to provide bill relief to more than a million eligible households every year. I am more than happy to repeat

that for the member for Ryde—a million eligible households per year will benefit from a Minns Labor Government initiative that assists with energy bill relief.

In addition to our annual rebates, this year we are delivering the National Energy Bill Relief with the Commonwealth. Labor knows that households are doing it tough, which is why we are delivering \$966 million in targeted temporary energy bill relief to eligible New South Wales households and small businesses. We know energy bills have put significant pressure on households and that is why I am proud that, through partnering with the Commonwealth, we are supporting 1.6 million eligible New South Wales households and around 300,000 eligible New South Wales small businesses. Thanks to this rebate, 9,340 households in my electorate of Parramatta are eligible to save on their electricity bill. That is 9,340 households that will now have some relief on their cost-of-living pressures and daily budgets, not to mention the assistance that we are providing to small businesses through a constructive \$650 rebate. The bill relief provides meaningful support to those in our electorates who need it the most and it is part of a comprehensive approach across government to deliver support after a failing Coalition Government.

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (15:07):** I speak in favour of the motion and thank the Hon. Penny Sharpe from the other place for bringing this important issue to the attention of the House. Government members have made a commitment to bring transparency and honesty to the people of New South Wales. We believe members on the opposite side of the House should be held accountable for their record of selling off essential State assets. The previous Government sold at least \$72 billion worth of public assets—ports, toll roads, electricity networks and power stations. That was done without transparency. Our Government made a commitment to the people of New South Wales that it would release the contracts which spell out the details about the privatisation of Port Kembla, Port Botany, the Port of Newcastle and the sale of five power stations.

The Treasurer in the other House tabled boxes of contracts to provide honesty and transparency to the people of New South Wales. It should not have taken a change of government for the public to know the full terms of the sale of its assets. We know that between 2013 and 2015 the previous Government sold off six coal-fired power stations: Eraring Power Station sold for \$657 million, Mount Piper Power Station and Wallerawang Power Station sold for \$475 million, Bayswater Power Station and Liddell Power Station sold for \$1.5 billion, Colongra Power Station sold for \$233 million and Vales Point Power Station sold for \$21.3 million. That represents the majority of energy generation in this State and we know that 70 per cent of New South Wales electricity supply comes from coal-fired power. They are now private companies. They answer to shareholders rather than to the public. The number one reason for the dramatic increase in our power bills has been the privatisation of those power stations.

Members on this side of the House are committed to getting more renewable energy into the grid to drive down prices over the long term, but that task has been made infinitely harder by the former Government's obsession with privatising electricity assets. The Coalition gave away control of some of the companies that are the most critical to achieving an orderly transition of our energy sector. It has left New South Wales customers paying for the inflated profits of privatised network businesses. Those companies include Transgrid, which was 100 per cent handed over on a 99-year lease for \$10.27 billion. Ausgrid was handed over on a 50.4 per cent lease for 99 years for \$16.2 billion. Endeavour Energy is on a 50.4 per cent lease for \$7.62 billion.

Despite privatising those assets, the former Government still left New South Wales with a budget crisis and the biggest debt ever recorded—a whopping \$187 billion debt. The Minns Labor Government is committed to the transition to renewable energy and to driving down costs for consumers. We are getting on with the job. I commend the motion to the House.

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (15:10):** Once again Opposition members have failed to turn up to debate a very important issue. When it comes to the cost-of-living crisis—

**Mr Edmond Atalla:** They've given up.

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY:** The member for Mount Druitt is right—they have given up. When it comes to supporting the people of New South Wales during a cost-of-living crisis, Opposition members have given up. They did not show up to debate a previous motion moved by the member for Blue Mountains because they do not care about essential workers. Now they clearly do not care about the cost-of-living crisis. Opposition members do not care about bringing energy bills down because, if they did, they would be in the Chamber for this debate. I commend the member for Blue Mountains for moving this motion. It highlights the stark difference between those on this side of the Chamber and those opposite. We are trying to fix their problems and fix the cost-of-living crisis in this State.

Of course, bringing down energy bills and fixing that problem is not something the New South Wales Government can do on its own; it involves all levels of government. We are working with the Federal Government.

The motion mentions the joint \$966 million investment with the Commonwealth Government in the National Energy Bill Relief fund. Many people in my electorate have thanked me and thanked the Government for that relief. They know that only one party will tackle a cost-of-living crisis: the Labor Party. Just under one million households are receiving rebates. I encourage anyone who has not yet applied for the rebate to do so now. This is an important rebate and it will help.

It comes on top of the existing rebates. Some 1.6 million households are getting \$500 in support. It is not just households—300,000 small businesses will get \$650. All in all, there is a total spend of just under \$1 billion. It means that families, in particular, can save that money and perhaps put it towards the kids' soccer fees, netball fees or tutoring. It will help families get ahead. The cost-of-living crisis is biting right across the State, but it is particularly biting in my electorate of Leppington. Residents have a high amount of mortgage stress—and let us not forget the tolls; we have to pay a lot of tolls. Not only did those opposite privatise our essential State-owned energy assets; they privatised the tolls. But in the same way we are fixing the cost-of-living crisis by bringing down energy bills, we are also helping with tolls. I encourage people to also apply for the toll rebate.

There is a theme emerging: Opposition members do not turn up. They do not care. The Government is providing the rebates and bringing down the cost of living. I will finish on this note. When it comes to bringing down the cost of living—when it comes to tackling the issues in this State—there is only one side that will do it, and it is this side. For those who are fans of hip-hop, I will quote the words of its modern-day saviour and prophet, Mr Kendrick Lamar, who said, "They not like us." When it comes to the cost of living, they not like us. When it comes to tackling tolls, they not like us. When it comes to bringing down energy costs, they not like us.

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (15:14):** I make a very brief contribution to debate on the motion. I thank the member for Blue Mountains for moving the motion, although I have been disappointed with the tone of the debate. As the member for Manly said, it has been very reactive. The vision of Government members is fixated on the rear-view mirror. There are ample opportunities for Government members to talk about the future and what they are going to do for the cost of living, for energy. Yet the member for Manly gave a laundry list of the Government's broken promises and its inability to deliver. Over-promising and underdelivering is typical of this Labor Government.

I invite additional speakers to come forward with a plan. They should give us an initiative and talk to us about what they are going to do for the future, instead of squabbling amongst themselves about tolls and things that are irrelevant to the substance of the motion. I challenge members to speak not about unrelated issues, but about the real cost-of-living and energy-related matters in the motion that the member for Blue Mountains has brought to this Chamber. I invite members to speak about those things because that is what we are here to do. I ask members not to spend the time of this House on unrelated matters.

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA:** I seek leave to make a contribution to the debate.

**Leave not granted.**

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (15:16):** In reply: I thank the member for Manly who, apart from that little interjection from the member for Ryde, was the only Opposition member brave enough to stand up and use his time to talk about the past. I thank the member for Parramatta, the member for South Coast and the member for Leppington. As I said, the member for Ryde also jumped in. I thank the member for Liverpool for trying to make a contribution. People from every electorate talk to members about the assistance that they require from their governments because of cost-of-living pressures. I am proud to be part of a Labor government that has joined the Commonwealth Government in an investment of \$966 million to provide bill relief.

As the member for Leppington pointed out, many people in his electorate have expressed their gratitude that the Minns Labor Government has stepped into this space and that the Albanese Government has recognised that people are hurting. What will take the edge off that hurt is some actual bill relief. The member for Parramatta noted that cost-of-living relief for those who are doing it tough comes in a number of forms, including preschool fee relief and toll relief, as well as the energy bill relief that this motion is concerned with. The member for South Coast talked about—as we should, I remind the member for Manly—the impacts of privatising the energy sector. A few years ago some of us in this place were debating that issue. Fast-forward to the present and we are dealing with the impacts. The member for Ryde pointed out that Government members need to focus on what we are doing.

**Mr Jordan Lane:** The future.

**Ms TRISH DOYLE:** We are looking to the future. The promise to provide relief is looking to the future. Investigating renewable energy and moving away from coal-fired power stations is about looking to the future. I will finish where I started and recall the time nine years ago when we challenged the then Baird Liberal Government. We said we would not be fooled by that Government privatising our poles and wires. We pointed



out that it would not end with the poles and wires in our electricity sector; they would come after TAFE next, and they would privatise every road built. That hurts our communities as well. I note that the three Opposition members in the Chamber are hanging their heads at the moment, and so they should. In 2015 I said:

The Blue Mountains electorate voted against the privatisation of poles and wires. We suffered catastrophic bushfires in 2013 in part because of downed powerlines in Springwood and Winmalee. More than 200 homes burnt to the ground. We know that our region needs more investment in our electricity networks, not less.

I said that in 2015; that is what we all said from the opposition benches. And here we are now with a Minns Labor Government that is supporting families under cost-of-living pressures in many ways. One of those ways is through the National Energy Bill Relief fund, and I am proud of it.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** The question is that the motion be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....48  
Noes .....32  
Majority.....16

#### AYES

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

Greenwich, A  
Hagarty, N (teller)  
Hannan, J  
Harris, D  
Harrison, J  
Haylen, J  
Hoenig, R  
Holland, M  
Kaliyanda, C  
Kirby, W  
Leong, J  
Li, J  
McDermott, H  
McGirr, J  
McKeown, K  
Mehan, D

O'Neill, M  
Park, R  
Piper, G  
Quinnell, S  
Saffin, J (teller)  
Saliba, D  
Scully, P  
Shetty, K  
Smith, T  
Stuart, M  
Tesch, L  
Vo, T  
Voltz, L  
Washington, K  
Whan, S  
Wilkinson, K

#### NOES

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

James, T  
Kemp, M  
Lane, J  
Layzell, D  
Perrottet, D  
Petinos, E  
Preston, R  
Provest, G  
Regan, M  
Saunders, D  
Singh, G (teller)

Sloane, K  
Speakman, M  
Taylor, M  
Thompson, T  
Toole, P  
Tuckerman, W  
Ward, G  
Williams, R  
Williamson, R  
Wilson, F

#### PAIRS

Car, P  
Kamper, S  
Minns, C  
Warren, G  
Watson, A

Kean, M  
Williams, L  
Amon, R  
Cross, M  
Roberts, A

**Motion agreed to.**

*Business of the House***POSTPONEMENT OF BUSINESS**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** On behalf of Mr Richie Williamson: I postpone general business notice of motion (general notice) No. 1238 [Rebuilding Broadwater Public School].

*Motions***EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT TASKFORCE**

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (15:30):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Condemns the previous Government for under-resourcing the emergency department at Blacktown and Mount Druitt Hospital.
- (2) Commends the Government for setting up the Emergency Department Taskforce.
- (3) Welcomes the Government's focus on health and thanks local residents for their understanding and support for local hospitals.

I note that the member for Winston Hills popped in and popped out but that other members from the Blacktown City area are in the Chamber. They are the member for Mount Druitt, the member for Riverstone and the member for Prospect—all the Labor members. I look forward to hearing the Coalition's response to the motion. First, I reflect on the facts and the data, and focus on the triage category 2 [T2] statistics. An emergency patient triaged as a T2 patient must be seen within 10 minutes. In March 2011, when there was a change of government, 85 per cent of the T2 patients at Blacktown hospital were seen on time. At Mount Druitt hospital it was 85.7 per cent of patients—a little more than Blacktown. To compare the northern suburbs with Western Sydney, 83 per cent of T2 patients at Hornsby were seen on time. So the figures for Blacktown and Mount Druitt Hospital were marginally higher than that of Hornsby at the time. When there was a change in government in March 2023, the percentage of T2 patients who were seen on time at Blacktown hospital had dropped to 16.5 per cent. One in eight patients were seen—

**Mr Ray Williams:** What was the lousy member doing all that time?

**Mr STEPHEN BALI:** That was 12 years under the Liberals. Mount Druitt hospital fell to 23 per cent—only one in four patients were seen on time—yet Hornsby stayed at 84 per cent. We could jump for joy that that statistic has increased slightly to 23 per cent since this Government was elected. We could play with the numbers. But back in 2011 Blacktown and Mount Druitt Hospital had about 15,000 patients per quarter and 60,000 across the year. Today it has almost 26,000 patients per quarter and over 100,000 per annum. The Liberals will probably say that they delivered \$700 million for the revamp of Blacktown hospital, which is fine. In a debate on the topic in this place in 2019, I said, "It is nice having a shiny, new building but we need staff." The Liberals may say, "Isn't this wonderful? It was initiated under Labor but it was designed and delivered by the Liberals, both stage one and two."

I give those opposite credit for that. But imagine a hospital that has 100,000 patients going through emergency every year but one of the smallest waiting rooms in the State. Back in 2011 did the previous Government not think Blacktown would grow? During the 12 years of Liberal Government close to 100,000 people moved into the City of Blacktown. Those people use both Blacktown and Mount Druitt and Hospital campuses. The member for Kellyville is in the Chamber. He often talks about Rouse Hill hospital and says even when he was first elected to this Parliament he advocated for that hospital. When the Liberals were elected to government in 2011, its members visited the Rouse Hill hospital site lots of times with shovels—

**Dr Hugh McDermott:** Were there plans?

**Mr STEPHEN BALI:** There were no plans. They are now before the planning department. At the time of the 2023 election Liberal Party members turned up with shovels in their hands. What did they get approval for? They got approval for a cable to be laid. Just before the election they went to the Hills Shire Council and got approval to lay a cable because they were not allowed on the actual site—that was illegal. Nothing else was approved; it is still before Planning.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** So what are you doing about it?

**Mr STEPHEN BALI:** Labor will deliver the hospital because the Liberals could not. It is important that a local government area whose population will surpass that of Tasmania by 2035 and have more than 620,000 people by 2041 gets an emergency department to support its massive, growing population. At the beginning of the Liberal Government's term 84 per cent of the patients in Hornsby were seen on time as were

85 per cent in Blacktown and Mount Druitt Hospital. In 2023 the figure was 86 per cent in Hornsby but suddenly below 20 per cent in Mount Druitt and Blacktown—only one in eight people. That is absolutely disgusting.

This motion is also about hope. The Labor Government has injected \$120 million to get more nurses into our hospitals and 89 per cent of people who present at our hospitals are satisfied with the treatment they receive—although they might be upset about the long wait. The Better Foundation, which I chair, is holding a fundraiser on 31 May to raise money for Blacktown and Mount Druitt Hospital. Most members in this Chamber will be attending, although I have not heard from the member for Kellyville. I invite him to come along and bring all his colleagues. We are here to deliver for our people and for our hospital. We condemn the Liberals for failing the people of Blacktown.

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (15:38):** I oppose the motion. I say to the member for Blacktown that I take umbrage at a motion that seeks to condemn the former Government but contains no alternative suggestions or proposals. That is particularly egregious from a member who sits on the Government benches. I invite future speakers for the Government to put forward plans, initiatives and ideas rather than focus on the rear-vision mirror. Governments are here to deliver for the future, not focus on the past. That is what people in all electorates expect—they do in mine. Condemnation followed by self-aggrandisement followed by platitude is no way to occupy the time of the House. This Government has demonstrated time and again that it does not have an agenda of its own so it seeks to fill in time with reviews, virtue signalling and an abundance of minor amendments to legislation. That is what we have had to sit through.

Since the election I have been underwhelmed by the Government's lack of vision. This motion discusses under-resourcing. I will address that, but members opposite should remember who built the Blacktown and Mount Druitt Hospital. If members opposite want to talk about under-resourcing, they first need to talk about delivering buildings. It was not the Labor Party or the Labor Government that delivered that hospital; it was the former Liberal-Nationals Government. The redevelopment of the hospital included two very significant stages. I did some research into this redevelopment. It included \$700 million over two stages. Stage one invested \$300 million. The Blacktown and Mount Druitt Hospital redevelopment was the first stage of major upgrades to those hospital campuses.

**Dr Hugh McDermott:** It was an upgrade; it wasn't built by you.

**Mr JORDAN LANE:** The member for Prospect should say thank you instead of coming into the Chamber to condemn the former Government. The redevelopment project transformed the Blacktown campus from a community hospital that served the local area for many years into a major metropolitan health facility to service the growing north-western suburbs of Sydney. I appreciate that. I represent a growth community and investments in infrastructure projects and new hospitals are important. The redevelopment included an acute service building, an inpatient building—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** It being 3.40 p.m., debate is interrupted. I set down resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a later time.

#### *Bills*

### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT (EMPLOYMENT ARRANGEMENTS) BILL 2024**

#### **Returned**

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

#### *Budget*

### **BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS 2023-2024**

#### **Debate resumed from 9 May 2024.**

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (15:41):** It is great to talk about the budget. The Auburn electorate has changed significantly since the last election. The Auburn electorate used to cover Sydney Olympic Park, the peninsula, Auburn and South Granville. It now covers from the M4 all the way across to the Hume Highway. That change has made a significant difference. The former Auburn electorate had a lot of new infrastructure centred around Sydney Olympic Park and older infrastructure in the Auburn to South Granville region. Now it includes newer suburbs that have significant infrastructure problems.

Despite tens of thousands of people living on the peninsula, it did not even have a high school. That was a fundamental failure. For a whole decade the community waited for a high school. The previous Government decided to move 15,000 people into half a square kilometre on Carter Street. It was the densest part of Sydney—

it had double the density of Potts Point and Woolloomooloo. But the former Government never committed to put a public school on Carter Street. It said it would do it in 2026, well after all the houses were built. At that point Newington Public School was already at capacity. It is great that we absolutely committed to those projects—Wentworth Point High School and Carter Street Public School—in this budget. They have line items.

Upgrades to schools in newer parts of the electorate, including Birrong and Yagoona, are fundamentally important. We have been talking about this issue for more than a decade. In fact, in 2018 during budget estimates, while I was a member of the other place, I asked then Minister Stokes about high school upgrades, particularly for Birrong Boys High School and Birrong Girls High School. The former Minister said, "Yes, we are doing that." We heard that line every year for five years. This budget finally delivered investment to Birrong Boys and Birrong Girls high schools. It is long overdue, but it is fundamentally important. As members know, every dad wants his daughter to attend a girls' school and every mum wants her son to attend a co-education school. Very few parents want their sons to attend a boys' school.

Unfortunately, back in the 1950s when the Bankstown to Canterbury train line was built and the corresponding schools were constructed, nearly all of the schools were home science schools for girls and trades schools for boys. That is evident at Canterbury Boys High School, Canterbury Girls High School, Birrong Boys High School, Birrong Girls High School, the former Bankstown Boys High School, Bankstown Girls High School, Punchbowl Boys' High School, Liverpool Boys High School and Liverpool Girls High School. Those schools were and are falling over. We need investment for a shake up for a whole generation of boys who we do not want to be left behind.

The Government's investment will build state-of-the-art science classrooms at Birrong Boys High School. The new complex will be three storeys high, and the entrance will be moved to Cooper Road. At long last, Birrong Girls High School will get a new school hall. It has the same school hall that was there when I attended Birrong Girls High School and the same school hall that was there when my Auntie Pat attended Birrong Girls High School the year it opened. Today the school has double the capacity of when I attended and probably triple the capacity of when Auntie Pat attended. No-one ever got round to giving the girls the school hall that they need. This Government is delivering those very important outcomes for our community.

The Government is delivering more than schools. For decades, Chester Hill Station, which is the busiest station on the T2 and T3 lines, had no lift. The former Government built lots of lifts and refurbished lots of wharfs in the eastern suburbs. But in the western suburbs, where 50 per cent of the population is unemployed because they are either very young or very elderly, there were very few lifts. Finally, the Minister for Transport fought with the Treasurer to get the extra money for lifts for stations that were completely ignored by the previous Government.

This budget delivers in a range of areas. It delivers \$3.6 billion to fix essential services. It delivers \$9.8 billion to build and upgrade schools and TAFE. It delivers \$2.2 billion for a housing and infrastructure plan. It delivers \$2.5 billion to recruit and retain health workers. That investment is fundamentally important. Nurses were leaving in droves across regional New South Wales, Western Sydney and the CBD because they could get a better deal somewhere else. If nurses are offered better deals in other towns with cheaper accommodation, they are going to take them. This Government is committed to ensuring that our nurses, teachers and police officers are the best paid in this country. That is the only way to fix the problem.

The actions of the former Government were disgraceful. I was a member of the other place when the former Government put on the wages cap, ripped the guts out of the workers compensation system and got rid of 50,000 public servants. One of the largest rallies I have ever seen took place out the back of this Parliament against those cuts. The former Government ignored it. When a government rips the guts out of essential services, the system starts to fall over. The former Government continued to outsource, bring in private contractors and reduce public service numbers. The Department of Communities and Justice cannot look after children without staff. It needs staff to go around and recruit the foster carers. It needs experienced staff to deal with families' complex problems. Kids ended up sitting in hotels. That is a serious, serious problem because those issues escalate further down the track. The homelessness problem grows. The workforce becomes disconnected. The public sector becomes so overwhelmed it cannot function. This Government is committed to putting in the hard yards to get those services back in order. At a fundamental level children need to be the priority of the department.

The other thing the Government has been able to do in the budget is have a surplus in 2024-25. Obviously the GST will halve the surplus this year, which is a problem. Members on both sides of the Chamber appreciate the huge problem of money flowing out of New South Wales. Western Sydney has one-tenth of the population of Australia, but I reckon our suburbs get about 1/100 of the investment. Yet, as everybody knows, everything stopped when Western Sydney had lockdowns during COVID. Construction cannot be done without Western Sydney. Hospitals, schools and a lot of other services cannot be run without Western Sydney.

The other good thing about Western Sydney is that it is a driving force of small businesses, mainly owned by women. One good thing in the Federal budget was that there was some investment into small business for electricity. Small businesses drive the economy, and the State Government would obviously like to do a lot more to help small businesses. But Western Australia has huge surpluses and large amounts of money coming in, and everybody in Western Australia has been given \$1,800 in energy rebates over the past four years. They just got another \$300 on top of that from the Federal Government. If the Government has that kind of money to give away, New South Wales should not be getting such an unfair deal on the money it receives.

New South Wales is happy to help smaller States, but the amount that Western Australia has to spend on infrastructure raises the question: Why are we taking the most dense suburbs and putting as many people as possible in the smallest configurations we can, while Western Australia is building new railway lines to make its suburbs sprawl further and further away? The Federal Government needs to get back to those fundamental questions of equity for New South Wales.

I congratulate the Treasurer on starting to deliver the things that the Auburn electorate needs, particularly Birrong Boys and Birrong Girls high schools. I will be back to advocate for Auburn Girls High School, which needs a new school hall, but I will not be too pushy because it has one. With the chaos that is being caused by the tolls congesting all our roads, I will also advocate for new lifts and the transport study for Wellington Road and Mona Street, in particular. We need other vital infrastructure and we need the Federal Government to come to the table and start delivering on it. At the end of the day, with the budget that was left to us and the GST revenue that we are losing, it will be very difficult to deliver the projects that will transform our city into a living city.

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (15:52):** Budgets are about the priorities that the Government sets. The priorities of this budget are frontline workers, the public service, working to get children who are in care out of hotels, housing, making sure that the basics are in place and creating an environment where business can thrive. Particularly in regional areas, small business is the lifeblood of many communities. We depend on our local regional economies.

Debates about budgets are now about what each person will get out of it, and the little things that are often really important but should come out of programs, instead of the budget being about the priorities for the State and making sure that we have sound economic settings et cetera. Members get the pre-budget submissions and I recall the Business NSW submission in February 2023, which was a month before the State election. One of its key findings was that business confidence was weak throughout New South Wales and across all industries. I acknowledge that we had COVID over those few years and that caused some of that. Another key finding was:

Close to 30% of businesses consider themselves to not have enough business activity to survive 2023. The rising cost of doing business is regarded as the biggest barrier to operating at full potential.

There is more, which I will go through, but they were the findings across all of our electorates when we went into the March 2023 election. The employment outlook at that time saw 22 per cent of businesses expecting to cut staff in the next three months, and the budget that was handed down in September last year by Treasurer Mookhey and the Minns Government had to address those challenges. It did, and there will be a surplus for 2024-25. As the member for Auburn said in her contribution, the budget delivers for all of those frontline workers.

In the Lismore electorate, which I represent, that means at least 304 teachers and support staff becoming permanent in schools. The budget provides \$500 of fee relief per child for three-year-olds in long day care settings. I recall when I was in the Federal Parliament we had a debate about child care and preschools. The Federal Government made money available to the States to make that possible. I also recall most of the State members and Ministers acting like it was theirs, but that happens frequently—I have a long memory and I have seen it. The point I am making is that it was good that it happened. The safe staffing levels will also be rolled out, and today in question time the Minister talked about the first ratio going out. Obviously they are going to the busy emergency departments first but, like a good local member, I have put in my bid and will keep at it. If the Minister for Health is listening—Tenterfield Hospital. Dr Holland is the Parliamentary Secretary.

**Dr Michael Holland:** Yes, make sure he follows up on that.

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN:** Every time I see the Minister I just say, "Tenterfield" for the three by three. It is one of the smaller hospitals so it is a little bit different, but I know that it will happen. Talking about Tenterfield, the four-wheel drive ambulances have been rolled out and I definitely want a four-wheel drive in Tenterfield. It is lovely to see them on the coast, and I know the Ambulance Service allocates them and decides. But it would be nice to see one in the really country part of my electorate. I will just keep talking about it. There was also a prioritisation of regional roads money, and I thank the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads for the great work that she has done on that. She not only knows every road across New South Wales; she actually drives them. She drives a lot and she has done that for years. Being a country person, she knows very well what that is like. This budget made \$14.6 million available across the Lismore electorate for a range of projects.

The thing I really want to talk about is the historic pay rise for teachers, which was really necessary. Teachers had fallen behind, and our educational standards have fallen behind. I am a trained primary school teacher—not that I ever taught primary school kids. But I have taught, and I still do from time to time. I really value education. I left school at 13 and, being deprived of education, I had to go out and get educated. I really want that for every child because education changes lives. Good teachers can teach anywhere, under all types of conditions and wages, but the recent pay rise really says to society at large that we value teachers. They are important to our lives and to everything else that happens.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** Order! 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*

**GOULBURN MULWAREE COUNCIL**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** The House will now consider the paper petition signed by 10,000 or more persons, lodged by the member for Goulburn. Before I call the member, I welcome her guests to the Chamber to watch this important debate, Keith Smith and Kim Gann, who represent the Goulburn Ratepayers Action Group.

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

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (16:00):** I also acknowledge the Goulburn Ratepayers Action Group in the gallery, particularly for the number of kilometres they have travelled to witness the petition being debated before the House. The petition was developed in response to Goulburn Mulwaree Council's proposed special rate variation [SRV] in September 2023. This was a proposal of a 51.2 per cent increase in the 2024-25 and the 2025-26 budgets. In response to this news, several community members made public statements and assessments in the media and across public forums in October and November. In December 2023 these like-minded people united and formed a group to advocate on behalf of businessowners, farmers and all residents within the Goulburn Mulwaree Council area, opposing the council's application for the special rate variation.

The Goulburn Ratepayers Action Group then proceeded on a campaign to advocate for the withdrawal of the proposed 51.2 per cent rate increase. Keith Smith and Kim Gann were an essential part of that group. I also recognise Nina Dillon for her efforts in ensuring that the community was aware of the proposed increases. The group was formed to represent the ratepayers' views at council meetings and at State and Federal government-level meetings. They hosted meetings and liaised with me and the Hon. Angus Taylor, MP, as their State and Federal representatives. The aims of the group were to promote the return of local government to local control by monitoring and scrutinising council decisions, actions, operations and performance, and to disseminate information on issues, processes, policies, projects and performance related to the local government operations affecting ratepayers within the region of Goulburn Mulwaree.

But the core activity of the group was to advocate for the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART] to refuse Goulburn Mulwaree Council's proposal for the 40 per cent to 51.2 per cent special rate variation. That is the subject of the petition we debate today. The application by Goulburn Mulwaree Council to IPART was made in February this year. Earlier this week IPART delivered its decision on the council's SRV application. It is unfortunate we were not able to debate this petition earlier. IPART has not approved the council's proposed rate increase. Instead, IPART has approved a one-year permanent special variation of 22.5 per cent in 2024-25 and a minimum rate for business ratepayers of \$722 from 2024-25.

The bottom line is that the application of the 51.2 per cent rate increase was rejected. Instead, IPART approved a partial increase, with the increase capped for future years. IPART deemed the impact of the approved one-year special rate variation of 22.5 per cent on ratepayers as reasonable and that, even with this increase, the council's average residential rates will remain lower than neighbouring councils. IPART detailed that the council's application broadly met the financial need criteria, but it failed to meet the second, third and fifth criteria of community awareness, the impact on ratepayers, and productivity and cost containment strategies. The council demonstrated that while there is a financial need for a special rate variation to address the operating deficit that it forecast over the next 10 years, it failed to show the requirement of 51.2 per cent special rate variation as proposed and that there was not an investigation into alternatives, such as service level reductions.

I conclude by offering a very big thank you to the ratepayers group for their advocacy in this area, for holding the council to account and for being right in their advocacy. IPART's report detailed very well that it was the right way to go and that the council did not sufficiently address the concerns raised. I thank the group. It may not have been the outcome that the group wanted, but it certainly falls short of the outcome that the council wanted.

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (16:06):** I acknowledge the petition lodged by the member for Goulburn on behalf of her constituents, who raised concerns about Goulburn Mulwaree Council's application to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART] for a special rate variation. The council applied to IPART for this variation to increase its general income on both residential and business rates. The Government is very keenly aware that across the State communities are facing cost-of-living pressures. I acknowledge that some of the constituents of the member for Goulburn are present in the public gallery today and I thank them for being here. I appreciate that the member's constituents are concerned that increases in council rates will further stretch their tight budgets. I also acknowledge the Goulburn branch of the Labor Party for its advocacy on the issue and for highlighting the community's concerns.

On Tuesday IPART released its decision on special rate variations, including partially accepting Goulburn Mulwaree Council's application. As the member for Goulburn mentioned, although the decision is not exactly what the residents applied for, it is a significant improvement on what was requested by the council. Many members of this House are former councillors; indeed, I am completing my term on the Liverpool City Council. We are aware that councils go through a robust process to prepare a special variation application that is based on the strategic direction and decisions the council adopted in its Integrated Planning and Reporting [IPR] documentation. Using the IPR framework, councils are required to consult with the community about important decisions like service levels, infrastructure needs and funding priorities for a sustainable future, which can all inform a decision to apply for a special variation.

Importantly, this framework ensures that the governing body of a council makes decisions to meet the needs of their communities. The former councillors in this House know that these are not decisions that are taken lightly. The purpose of the proposed variation was to cover the rising expenses that are exceeding revenue and growth, and to maintain the provision of services and assets that meet the growing needs of a regional city. Unfortunately, under the previous Government, there was an extensive issue of cost-shifting onto local government. Indeed, in my more than seven years in local government, I saw that impact on many constituents, especially in a growing community like Liverpool. Importantly, another factor taken into account by IPART to assess a council's application is the impact on ratepayers. The council is required to show that the impact is reasonable considering current rates, the community's capacity to pay and the proposed purpose of the special variation.

I note that IPART received 799 responses to its feedback form and 132 submissions from community members, who mostly opposed the proposal. The community raised concerns about affordability, consultation, financial management, spending priorities and service levels. Given the current cost-of-living crisis, that is unsurprising and is to be expected. I empathise with the many residents who are unlikely to be able to afford the increase in rates. In making its determination IPART noted that the council did not demonstrate that the community knew why the council was applying for an increase and how much the rates would rise. To satisfy the IPART assessment, councils have to show that they require the extra revenue, ensure that they have involved the community and informed it about the planned changes, and prove that they have assessed other potential strategies to increase income and decrease costs.

IPART also considers each council's long-term financial plan, the impact of the proposed increase on ratepayers and any submissions made by interested parties. It is clear that the council did not satisfactorily meet those criteria, causing IPART to only partially approve its special variation application. It is an important lesson for council in its consultation with residents, its engagement with community members—who will be the most impacted by those things—its overall responsiveness to the community and the increases in its own costs going forward.

I assure the residents of Goulburn Mulwaree Council that the Government is committed to ensuring the financial sustainability of local councils. That should be accomplished without imposing excessive costs on ratepayers. The Minister for Local Government, listening to the concerns of councils and communities alike, has met a commitment made to the electorate and referred the issue of council financial sustainability to the other place for consideration by the Standing Committee on State Development. Once again I thank the member for Goulburn and the petitioners for bringing their concerns to the attention of the Government. I reiterate NSW Labor's support for the Goulburn community.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (16:11):** I start by thanking the visitors in the gallery for making the trip to Sydney to see their petition debated in Parliament. I acknowledge the thousands of people in Goulburn who are logged in online to watch the debate. I also highlight the great work done by the member for Goulburn in bringing the petition to the Chamber. To get 10,000 written signatures on a petition is no small feat, and the people who signed it should be congratulated. It goes to show the level of community frustration and anger when the community is not listened to by a governing body. The numbers are quite staggering.

I congratulate the Goulburn Ratepayers Action Group on its fierce advocacy and on working side by side with the member for Goulburn, who has vast experience in the local government sphere as the former Minister for Local Government and as an administrator. I had the pleasure of working with her in that role with my own recalcitrant councils. There is no-one better to look at how to deal with an issue such as a sneaky special rate variation. It is interesting; SRV sounds so innocuous, but when we start attaching dollars to it and see the impact it has on communities, it is enormous. I went through a similar situation a number of years ago when Gosford and Wyong councils voluntarily amalgamated. Both of those councils applied for special rate variations with zero consultation with the community. That was 17 per cent and 18 per cent; it was nothing like the 51.2 per cent that Goulburn council was looking to squeeze out of ratepayers.

Ratepayers are sick and tired of picking up the slack for poor governance and overspending. Councils are blowing through taxpayers' money, and there need to be higher levels of accountability. It is a credit to those who signed the petition that there are 10,000 signatures. Even more importantly, the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART] took notice of the detailed submission. IPART is the independent arbitrator. Admittedly, a 22.5 per cent variation is not ideal, but it is a massive improvement on what the council was trying to squeeze out of the ratepayers of the Goulburn region. Again, I know that the member for Goulburn has been a fierce advocate for the removal of the ridiculous 51.2 per cent rate variation that the council was trying to squeeze out of ratepayers.

IPART's determination said it all. There was a complete lack of consultation and no clarity about how the money was going to be spent. Councils need to be held to account. The former Minister for Local Government, the member for Goulburn, and her predecessor visited the Central Coast when we had a council that racked up half a billion dollars in debt without telling anybody. That council thought it was the right thing to do, and it racked up the worst financial debt of any council anywhere in the country. Sadly we saw the Labor mayor at the time run out with a piece of paper saying, "Don't worry. We'll fix it in 100 days." The council was busy blowing through ratepayers' money, and it had no idea what it was doing. It had gone through \$238 million of restricted funds, which the former Minister was well aware of. There was a public inquiry into those councillors, and they were sacked, quite appropriately. They were on a spendathon with our money.

The time has come. The public is saying, "We want accountability, transparency and honesty in local government because it is our money that is being played with." They want to know that their money is being used on infrastructure, whether it be water, sewerage, footpaths, local roads or playgrounds. That is what councils should be focusing on, not petitioning against or boycotting another country. The community expects councillors to get on with the job that they are elected to do. In the lead-up to the upcoming round of council elections, it is interesting how energised councillors are getting about certain issues that have no relationship to their electorate. We see chest-beating and pontification leading up to the election. I am sure that the Goulburn Ratepayers Action Group will be holding councillors to account come the election in September and will remember who thought it was a good idea and who thought it was a bad idea. The public always gets it right. The people of Goulburn will do the right thing in the upcoming election.

I again congratulate the Goulburn Ratepayers Action Group on steadfastly holding its ground and doing the right thing for residents. I thank the member for Goulburn for bringing the petition to this Parliament. She always has her community's back. She will continue to fight for her community, especially when it comes to recalcitrant council behaviour. I again congratulate everyone involved in bringing the 10,000-signature petition to this place. It is a privilege and a pleasure to be able to speak in support of the great work that they have done in holding the Goulburn council to account.

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (16:16):** I, too, acknowledge the concerns of the petitioners within the Goulburn Mulwaree Council local government area. Any increase in council rates is a serious matter and should be considered carefully. A balance must be struck between the ability of councils to provide services and the community's capacity to pay their rates. Remembering the age-old principle of no taxation without representation, it is critical to acknowledge the important role of councillors in any process to seek a change in rates. Councillors have been democratically elected to make decisions on behalf of their local community. The decision to apply for an increase to rates, to understand the impact it may have on individuals and to balance that with the broader need for services in the community is best made by elected officials.

As with the decisions of any elected body, I recognise that some council decisions may not have unanimous support in the community. As the chosen representatives of that community, councillors are the most appropriate people to make that decision, but they also need an independent verification process. Since 2005 the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART] has provided independent and impartial assessment of both the rate peg and requests for special variations. On Tuesday, after extensive consideration, IPART released its decision on the proposal by Goulburn Mulwaree Council to apply a special rate variation. IPART's process of assessment included receiving community views on the proposed rate rise, noting that a significant number of Goulburn Mulwaree



residents and ratepayers voiced their concerns, with hundreds of feedback forms and submissions received. The feedback informed IPART's decision to approve a lower increase than originally sought.

The residents and ratepayers of Goulburn Mulwaree Council should be proud that their feedback directly impacted the decision made by IPART. I hope that the residents of New South Wales are also encouraged to see the value that their voices have in such matters. It is a robust system, with locally elected councillors at the heart of the community determining the needs of the council and an independent body, at arm's length to government, assessing the request based on the criteria set by the Office of Local Government. For some of our more vulnerable residents, any increase may be incredibly difficult to meet. I encourage anyone in this situation to reach out to council to discuss their options.

I acknowledge the initiative of the Minister for Local Government in seeking an inquiry into the ability of local governments to fund infrastructure and services. Many councils are reporting that they are finding it difficult to fund the infrastructure and services their communities need and deserve. The Government's inquiry, being undertaken by the Legislative Council Standing Committee on State Development, will examine what councils need to serve their communities, how they are to be financially sustainable, as well as how the rate peg model compares to that of other comparable jurisdictions. I look forward to the outcome of this inquiry.

I commend the petitioners of the Goulburn electorate for bringing their concerns to Parliament. I commend the councillors of Goulburn Mulwaree Council for their consideration and deliberation in applying for this special rate variation. I commend the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal for its impartial and constructive assessment of council's application. Finally, I commend the Minister for Local Government, who is in the House, for his determination to strengthen the local government sector for the future.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (16:20):** I support the member for Goulburn and thank her community for this petition and their efforts, in particular those in the gallery today from the Goulburn Ratepayers Action Group. Special rate variations cause enormous stress and anxiety in our communities, not only for ratepayers but also for local councils, and during a cost-of-living crisis that is exacerbated. There is a way to ease the pain of councils having to go cap in hand to their community so that they can make up the funding shortfall to provide the services their community needs, wants and expects. The Minister can avoid the laborious process that councils have to go through to apply for a special rate variation, which costs several hundreds of thousands of dollars. It is ridiculous that, when a council is cash-strapped and trying to save its ratepayers' money, it has to spend several thousand on a rate variation application to satisfy the Government's criteria. When councils are forced to apply for and then inform their communities of that hip-pocket pain in a cost-of-living crisis, it creates enormous conflict that could be avoided.

The member for Liverpool and the member for Mount Druitt have each spoken this afternoon and commended the Minister for Local Government for yet another inquiry. The Government is inquiring into everything, so as to kick issues further down the road. This inquiry is into the financial sustainability of councils. We could short-circuit that inquiry, because the answers are already on the Minister's desk; he just needs to action them. The Minister should have a conversation with local governments and communities to agree what is appropriate, rather than the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal and the Minister telling local government areas what is good for them. That would alleviate the need for LGAs and communities to self-determine. Communities need to keep progressing to remain sustainable, but it is taking a terrible toll when they have to suffer financial pain to go through this process.

In addition to a conversation with communities, the Minister needs to stand side by side with local government to push the Commonwealth to reinstate the Financial Assistance Grants to 1 per cent of taxation revenue. The rate is currently 0.51 per cent, and that was last looked at in 1996. The reinstatement to 1 per cent is what the State association and the Australian Local Government Association have been advocating for. They were given a promise by the Federal Government that there would be fair increases to Financial Assistance Grants, and that has not eventuated. The member for Liverpool and the member for Mount Druitt are in the Chamber. The local government Minister is sitting in between them. They should tap him on the shoulder and tell him that the message is clear: stand with local government in advocating for the restoration of Financial Assistance Grants to 1 per cent of taxation revenue.

For Tamworth Regional Council that would be about \$7 million a year, which would almost negate the need for a special rate variation and alleviate the pain our communities are going through at this time. Tamworth Regional Council's special rate variation is 18.5 per cent for 2024-25, and then a further 15 per cent in 2025-26. That will raise an additional \$14 million a year after the second year. The Minister must stand up to the Federal Government and get it to reinstate Financial Assistance Grants to 1 per cent of taxation revenue to support New South Wales.

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (16:24):** In response: The Prime Minister is screaming at the New South Wales Government for its criticism of the Federal Government and its budget. That is well known. I acknowledge the petition lodged by the member for Goulburn on behalf of her constituents and their concerns about Goulburn Mulwaree Council's application to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART] for a special rate variation. The council applied to IPART for that variation to increase its general income by more than the capped increase set by the rate peg. Any decision by a council to seek more rates from its community is one that should not be taken lightly. Communities are facing cost-of-living pressures. I hope the Goulburn Mulwaree councillors were concerned with the capacity of the community to pay increased rates.

I note that IPART released its independent decision on the council's application. It found that there was insufficient justification to grant approval to the council for the full rate variation sought. IPART did approve a one-year permanent increase in council's income of 22.5 per cent in 2024-25, instead of the council's proposed special rate variation of 51 per cent over three years. I assure the residents of that council area that across government there is a shared responsibility to correct the financial sustainability issues faced by councils. The New South Wales Government, councils, councillors, and our colleagues in the Federal Government must all come to the table for councils to financially succeed without adding undue burden to ratepayers.

That is why I have asked the Legislative Council Standing Committee on State Development to conduct an inquiry into the ability of local government to fund infrastructure and services. For 46 years rate pegging has ultimately caused councils to be cut to the bone and unable to fund their services. I do not suggest that this is a mechanism to allow large rate increases, but there needs to be an understanding of what the impact of that half-a-century policy has been. The committee has received submissions from interested stakeholders and the first hearing is scheduled for tomorrow. Electors will have the opportunity to judge decisions made by the councillors in that council area at the ballot box in September. I am sure the effective work that has been done by the member for Goulburn and the petitioners will ensure that the action of councillors in endeavouring to obtain this significant rate increase will be brought to account then.

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (16:27):** In reply: I acknowledge Ken Halliday in the gallery, who has travelled from Goulburn to witness the take-note debate on this important petition. I thank the member for Liverpool for her contribution. It was interesting that she noted the Goulburn Labor Party's support. Even more interesting to note is that Labor Party councillor Jason Shepherd voted to not have the special rate variation. I thank the member for Terrigal for outlining some of the local history with regard to the council in his area. I acknowledge the member for Tamworth, in particular his words around the Federal Government and the importance of ensuring that councils are getting their fair share of revenue. That is a whole nother conversation. Unfortunately, we did not see an increase in Financial Assistance Grants in the recent Federal budget, which is a great shame.

But there is certainly a question for the Federal Government about when we can look at funding councils for a more sustainable future. I thank the member for Mount Druitt for taking the time to address the petition. I also thank the Minister for Local Government for making the effort to be in the Chamber. It is important to my constituents that their voices are heard. It is important to debate the financial sustainability of councils and to ensure that all councils are doing their due diligence in managing their budgets, their finances and the services they deliver to their communities. Again, I thank the Goulburn Ratepayers Action Group for the enormous amount of work that went into the petition and for making sure the community was informed. I am disappointed that there was an increase, but they certainly made a difference through their petition and their work.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** I thank the guests in the gallery who came to Parliament to listen to the debate.

**Petition noted.**

#### *Community Recognition Statements*

#### **BRITT HARGREAVES**

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (16:30):** The Coffs Coast community is fortunate to have a small army of State Emergency Service volunteers ready to respond when they are needed most. A proud moment came recently for Britt Hargreaves when she was named Corindi-Woolgoolga SES Unit Volunteer of the Year in recognition of her consistent and excellent performance. Britt is one of the unit's newest members, joining in May last year. She has trained hard and been involved in activities ranging from boat and chainsaw operations to search and rescue, and storm and water damage operations. Britt has also produced excellent articles for publication in the areas of community engagement and education. The Corindi-Woolgoolga Unit has 27 active members and serves the northern beaches area from Emerald Beach to Red Rock and west to Glenreagh. I thank each of them

for helping to keep our community safe, and I congratulate unit commander Dona Powell on her leadership of this outstanding team.

#### **CAMDEN ART PRIZE**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (16:31):** Last Friday I had the privilege of attending the Camden Art Prize, a prestigious annual competition, exhibition and sale of art now in its forty-sixth year. The event plays an important role in promoting visual arts within the Camden local government area and the broader Macarthur region. The Camden Art Prize has a longstanding tradition of promoting and appreciating art, especially Australian works. For 46 years it has provided a platform for artists across Australia to showcase and engage with the community. The event is more than just a celebration of local and national talent; it enriches the cultural fabric of our region. I encourage everyone to take the time to explore the incredible artworks on display, including one dedicated to the Minister for the Environment in relation to brumbies—a very controversial piece. I also encourage everyone to support the talented artists who make this event possible.

#### **WAHROONGA ELECTORATE PUBLIC SPEAKING COMPETITION**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (16:32):** Each year in Parliament I host a public speaking competition for local public schools in the Wahroonga electorate. Students from Gordon West, Normanhurst, Pymble, Thornleigh West, Turramurra, Wahroonga, Waitara, Warrawee and West Pymble public schools were asked in the last competition to prepare speeches answering the question, "What does it mean to be a creative country in a world increasingly challenged by artificial intelligence?" Each student prepared a unique speech, debating the positive and negative aspects of artificial intelligence in our world. Students were then asked to prepare impromptu speeches with the prompt, "I should have listened." The students rose to the challenge, and each put their own spin on the prompt. Some told stories of the times they wished they had listened to their parents or teachers before going on to make a mistake, while others highlighted the importance of listening to those around us in order to make a real change in the world. The students were insightful, and the judges had an incredibly difficult job deciding the winner. I look forward to hosting the competition again this year.

#### **FANGMIN "JACK" WU**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (16:33):** For the past month anyone who visited the Liverpool electorate office was welcomed by the delightful works of Fangmin "Jack" Wu. Jack is a Sydney-based artist who emigrated from China to Australia in 1990 and held his first solo art exhibition in 1997. A common inspiration for Jack's pieces is the Australian countryside. He hopes that his landscapes are more than just a reproduction of nature but works with personality, passion and a new perspective. When I was elected, I believed the electorate office should reflect the wonderful community I have the honour of representing and be a warm and comfortable space for all those who visit. I also wanted to disrupt the stereotype that Western Sydney does not appreciate or value art. I have partnered with Liverpool Art Society to host a rotating art gallery in my office foyer. Local artists and talent are spotlighted for all residents and visitors who stop by. Jack's work does exactly that. I thank Jack for generously allowing me to be the custodian of his work and acknowledge Chris Hunter and Liverpool Art Society for working with me to realise this important initiative.

#### **FRED FRENDO**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek) (16:34):** I congratulate Orchard Hills local Mr Fred Frendo on winning the champion fancy pigeon event at this year's Sydney Royal Easter Show. Mr Frendo's achievement is even more incredible considering that he was showing a specific breed for the first time: the Australian showpen homer pigeon. The award is just the latest in a long list of achievements, proving he is Australia's best at pigeon showing. At the 100th show there were 1,700 pigeons, and he won best bird of the show. Mr Frendo also had the amazing experience of judging a show in England that had 2,400 pigeons. He is also the president of the Pigeon Fanciers Society of New South Wales. I was pleased to learn that Mr Frendo seeks to get others involved in the sphere. Mr Frendo intends to go to the nationals in Melbourne in July, where there will be a big show with approximately 2,000 pigeons. I congratulate Mr Frendo on his success and thank him for doing our region proud. I wish him success at the nationals in Melbourne and beyond.

#### **TYLER WRIGHT**

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (16:35):** I recognise and celebrate the remarkable achievement of Shoalhaven's own Tyler Wright, who has officially qualified for the Olympic Games in surfing. As a two-time world champion, Tyler continues to elevate the sport of surfing on the global stage, while proudly continuing her family's Olympic legacy following the historic medal at the Tokyo Olympics of her brother, Owen. Tyler's passion for surfing and dedication to excellence have led her to this moment, when she will compete at the iconic Teahupo'o waves in Tahiti. Known for her courageous and respectful approach to the sport, Tyler embodies the spirit of both a champion and a humble athlete who respects the formidable power of nature. As Tyler prepares to

take on one of the world's most challenging waves, let us acknowledge Tyler Wright's contributions to our community and the sport of surfing. On behalf of the residents of the Shoalhaven, I wish Tyler success and safe waves at the Paris games.

#### **MARGIE COLLINS**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (16:36):** I acknowledge Margie Collins as she retires from her incredible nursing career. Margie's dedication to nursing for 48 years is truly remarkable. Her commitment to serving as a breast care nurse for 21 years speaks volumes about her passion for supporting patients. As we know, breast care nurses play an invaluable role in our community, specialising in the care and support of women diagnosed with breast cancer. Margie has certainly had a profound impact on the lives of her patients and their families. Her combination of skill, knowledge, enthusiasm and dedication undoubtedly brought comfort and support to all the patients she has cared for. Margie has also been a significant contributor to Pink Angels Inc, a Dubbo charity born from the desire to support local breast cancer patients. I thank Margie for her incredible years of dedication to the health service. Her legacy of compassionate care will certainly be cherished by all who were fortunate enough to experience it and work with her during her career. I wish her all the very best in her retirement.

#### **ISAAC BEACROFT**

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (16:37):** I congratulate Isaac Beacroft on his significant athletic achievement. Isaac is a 16-year-old race walking protégé, who trains at the mighty Quakers Hill Little Athletics Centre. Isaac became the under-20 world champion in this year's 10-kilometre race walking event in Turkey—the youngest ever winner—smashing the Australian national record. Isaac has been a part of Quakers Hill Little Athletics since the age of four. Coached by his father, David, Isaac has claimed the State Little Athletics walking champion title every year since the under-10s, also winning multiple State and national running titles along the way. Aside from sporting success, Isaac is a leader at his athletics club, becoming the inaugural club captain during the 2021-22 season. He always takes the time to help others with their training. A big thanks goes to Quakers Hill Little Athletics for the great work it does in paving the way for our young sports stars. That would not be possible without the hardworking volunteers, committee members and executives. Once again I congratulate Isaac. I look forward to watching his journey in the years to come.

#### **PICTON HIGH SCHOOL**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (16:38):** There is an old saying that Independents cannot achieve anything. I am so pleased to have the Picton High School hall refurbishment back on track, thanks to advocacy from the teachers and students. I was delighted to have Premier Chris Minns visit the school in April, following the visit by Deputy Premier Prue Car to Picton High School in early November 2023. The Premier visited Picton High School to announce onsite that the remaining work on the multipurpose hall would be completed by day one of term 3, subject to weather conditions. An exact date for completion and handover will be shared with the community once the builder has finalised the works program. The construction of the Picton High School hall, which had been left incomplete, is now underway. A new builder has been engaged and a detailed works program will soon be finalised. The site will be prepared for construction to restart in the coming weeks. The long-awaited and much-needed hall will be welcomed by the students, teachers and school staff, and I look forward to seeing the project reach completion.

#### **ASSYRIAN NEW YEAR FESTIVAL**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (16:39):** I had the pleasure of attending the Assyrian New Year Festival at Fairfield Showground on 24 March. The event, organised by the Assyrian National Council - Australia and the Young Assyrians, was a vibrant celebration that draws together Assyrians and others from various cultural and religious backgrounds from all over Sydney. The event included live music from Assyrian artists, dance, food stalls, variety booths, games and fun rides for the kids. Stalls showcased clothing, jewellery, and art and artefacts that highlight Assyrian history and heritage, which stretches back millennia. Assyrian youth groups performed a dramatic depiction of ancient New Year celebrations, and the events carried on well into the night, with families enjoying music, dancing and some amazing fireworks.

#### **CASTLE HILL ELECTORATE STUDENTS**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill) (16:40):** I recognise students from the Castle Hill electorate who attended the Secondary Schools Student Leadership Program at Parliament House this week. It was an honour to speak in the theatre to outstanding school leaders from all schools. I especially recognise my electorate's school leaders who attended, including Zac Danckert and Heidi Wilkinson from Castle Hill High School, Savannah Moubarak and Alex Palmer from Gilroy Catholic College, and Denise Dogan and Christa-Maria Inaty from Hills Grammar School. A great leader must be willing to serve others, take responsibility and inspire others to make positive changes. Great leaders have something in common with each other: a purpose and vision that inspires

others with direction and hope. I thank each of the young leaders from my electorate for their commitment and service to their school communities. I am proud to serve the Castle Hill electorate, alongside our young school leaders.

#### **PARA ARCHERY CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (16:41):** The 2024 Australia Para National Archery Championship and World Archery Oceania 2024 Para Championship Grand Prix at Sydney Olympic Park was a great event. There were participants from South Korea, Mongolia, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, India, Hong Kong and, of course, the host nation, Australia. Hosted over five days, the events reaffirm the progress and interest in sporting achievement amongst the disability community and the broader Australian landscape, and sporting inclusion at its best. I thank CEO of Archery Australia Rick Hastie, president Tracey Hansford and secretary Gloria Tse, along with an array of volunteers for coordinating this successful event. It was a coup to attend as the local MP, not to mention the opportunity to hone my archery skills. The championship brought people together in the spirit of the Olympic movement and international competition. Former Parramatta resident Ameera has achieved amazing results as a para-archer thus far and has big aspirations. I wish the best of luck to Ameera and all our para-archers as they prepare for the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games.

#### **GLAM PLUS**

**Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (16:42):** Today I recognise GLAM Plus, a diverse group of queer young people who connect on the Northern Beaches. Run by the incredible Melissa Spencer and Lee Amber, GLAM Plus is a vital platform for dynamic young people to find social connection, the health and wellbeing benefits of which cannot be overstated. I also commend the advocacy efforts and initiatives of GLAM Plus member Ben Kioko. Ben is a high school student who has impressed me and our community with his passion and dedication to causes that mean a lot to him. Recently he delivered a powerful speech to the council, which highlighted how important GLAM Plus is to our community. The next chapter for GLAM Plus has been uncertain. Ben's proactive advocacy and Mel's and Lee's unwavering dedication to supporting these young people is incredibly moving. I cannot wait to see what is next in store for these huge local legends.

#### **TRIBUTE TO FELICITY DAVIS RAFFERTY**

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (16:43):** It is with great sadness that I pay tribute to Felicity Davis Rafferty, who passed away recently after a battle with illness. I extend my deepest condolences to Felicity's husband, Greg, her children and her family. Her children went to outstanding local school St Patrick's College Strathfield and Santa Sabina College. Affectionately known as Flick to friends and colleagues, Felicity was an educator, community advocate and, along with Greg, a committed Labor volunteer and member. It was always uplifting to see the dynamic duo of Felicity and Greg, out campaigning for the Australian Labor Party for the Voice referendum, at polling booths, or simply being there for others. Felicity believed in an egalitarian Australia, in the value of education and a fair go for all. Vale, Felicity. We miss her and thank her for her service and dedication to the ALP, the inner west community and beyond.

#### **NOEL GOGERLY**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes) (16:44):** I acknowledge local fisherman Noel Gogerly, who is the recipient of the 2024 Star of the Sea award at the Seafood Excellence Awards. The prestigious award is given in recognition to an individual who serves as an ambassador for the seafood industry and has made significant contributions to the development of the seafood industry in New South Wales. Noel, a fourth-generation fisherman following on from his father, Lionel, has been an active fisherman for 53 years. Throughout these decades, Noel has truly lived for the industry and been an integral part of the fishing community. As a passionate member of the Wallis Lake Fishermen's Co-op, Noel served as chairman for 25 years and as a board member for 34 years. Outside of the co-op, Noel has been especially key to the development of the lobster sector in New South Wales, working alongside researchers and fisheries for the improvement of the industry. I congratulate Noel on this very well-deserved recognition. His commitment to the industry and our local community is incredible.

#### **GEORGES RIVER GRAMMAR SCHOOL ANZAC DAY EVENT**

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (16:45):** I thank Georges River Grammar School for inviting me to its Anzac Day event last month, honouring the brave men and women who have served our country. The event was organised by year 11 students Emily Eagle, Sol Martinez and William Olivotto, who also played important roles on the day, reading poetry and raising and lowering the Australian flag. I thank all the students involved in the service, including secondary school captains Adam Calicetto and Jasmine Tran, and primary school captains Harry Cordingley and Audrey Webb. I was highly impressed by the musical talents of Elijah Diab, who did an amazing job of playing the trumpet; Sam Cordingley on the bagpipes; and Imogen Collis singing the national

anthem. I thank also the principal, Ben Haeusler, and staff for facilitating this service commemorating our fallen soldiers. It is admirable to see young people pay tribute, honouring our commitment to remember them for generations to come. Lest we forget.

#### TRYP CONSULTANCY

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (16:46):** Today I acknowledge a great community collaboration in Glebe. TRYP Consultancy—short for "to reach your potential"—is an initiative of Uncle Col Watego, OAM, who works with Scarred Tree Indigenous Ministries at St John's Anglican church in Glebe, Uncle Ray and Aunty Sharon Minniecon, and youth and children's minister Colin Watego Jr, in a community partnership that sees an Indigenous organisation working with an Indigenous church and ministry to provide Indigenous-led solutions for Indigenous people in our community. They are well supported by acting senior minister Andrew Hudson and the entire church congregation. For the past six years this collaboration has also taken in Glebe Public School and Gawura School, offering local First Nations kids some wonderful opportunities to experience and celebrate culture, develop leadership skills and become our next generation of fantastic local role models. I thank them for all their great work.

#### RONNIE MOORE

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (16:47):** I recognise an admirable Cabramatta-born figure, Mr Ronnie Moore, vice-president of Cabra-Vale Diggers Club. Ronnie's grandfather served in the First World War and his father in the Second World War. His family, especially his mother, provided shelter for the first Vietnamese refugees in the 1970s, offering enormous assistance to female refugees. Ronnie's upbringing, intertwined with his family's traditions and the enduring bond with the respectable Cabramatta-based former Prime Minister the Hon. Gough Whitlam, has profoundly influenced his way of being. Ronnie is proud to be a Cabramatta man and proud to serve the people of Cabramatta. His dedication and tireless advocacy for Cabramatta has indeed helped the local area, made up of hardworking people of diverse cultures and backgrounds, who have thrived on adversities to build Cabramatta into what it is today: a vibrant multicultural melting pot within our State. I am honoured and proud to have Ronnie among us. On behalf of my electorate I thank Ronnie for his invaluable contribution to Cabramatta.

#### PASTICCERIA PAPA

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne) (16:48):** I sincerely congratulate Pasticceria Papa on its outstanding double win at the Inner West Local Business Awards. Pasticceria Papa was crowned the best Bakery/Cake Business and the Business of the Year. This well-deserved recognition is a testament to its unwavering dedication to excellence and passion for delivering exceptional Italian food to our community. This family-run business has become a beloved institution in the inner west and, indeed, all over Sydney, renowned for its delicious pastries, cakes, savoury goods and gelato. It was the one that put the beloved ricotta cake on the map. I am so proud to see Papa grow in success, and I acknowledge Mr Salvatore Papa; his wife, Josie; his children; his brother, Alex and Alex's wife, Lucrezia; and the entire Papa family. Salvatore is a shining example of the value of passion and entrepreneurial spirit as an Italian migrant. I congratulate the entire Pasticceria Papa team.

#### CENTRAL COAST MARINERS

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (16:49):** Go the mighty Mariners! I am so excited to see the stunning rise of the Mariners this season. I congratulate the team on making it to the semifinals. The Mariners secured both the A-League Men's premiership and the Asian Football Confederation Cup, and they continue to soar. It has been an incredible season, which is a reflection of their relentless determination, hard work and unwavering spirit. It also reflects the passionate ownership of Richard Peil, and Mark "Jacko" Jackson's magic coaching. The Mariners break myths such as the one that young players are not good enough. They serve as huge role models to my community and communities across Australia, demonstrating that success is absolutely possible. Their engagement with fans and the community shows the power of unity across the Central Coast. I absolutely love going to a stadium filled with cheering fans supporting and motivating our players. There is a true team spirit across the Central Coast. I invite people to join the Mariners this Saturday as they smash Sydney FC. I congratulate both the men's and women's Mariners teams and thank them for being a huge inspiration for all of us on the Central Coast. Go the Mariners!

#### KAREN HODGES

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (16:50):** NSW Rural Fire Service Superintendent Karen Hodges, AFSM, was awarded a Commissioner's Unit Citation for Service medal at the St Florian Day ceremony on 4 May 2024 in Dubbo. Superintendent Hodges is based in Hawkesbury and was awarded the citation for her leadership, skills and utmost dedication as a Section 44 Incident Controller during the 2019-20 Black Summer bushfire season. I witnessed firsthand her calm, measured and tactical approach during that devastating time. It was

unprecedented and extreme, with fires burning through regions on a scale not seen in Australia's recorded history. I congratulate Superintendent Hodges, AFSM, and thank her for her service to Hawkesbury and the NSW Rural Fire Service.

#### **ALBERT PARK BASEBALL AND SOFTBALL COMPLEX**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (16:51):** Last weekend Lismore played host to some of the world's best female baseball players alongside emerging Australian talent in double-header events at the recently upgraded Albert Park baseball and softball complex. The Australian Women's Baseball Showcase and Australian Little League Girls' Division Championships featured the Brisbane Bandits, Victorian Aces and Adelaide Giants in a four-day professional tournament supported by the New South Wales Government. Emeralds stars, emerging Australian talent and World Cup players from Canada, Japan and the United States competed. Hosting the showcase represented yet another major sporting coup for the city. It was embraced by sports-loving residents across the Northern Rivers region. Albert Park has always been a great nursery for producing top baseballers and houses the best grounds that allow for competition at the regional, national and international level. I am sure the Little League games, featuring girls 13 years and under, were just as fiercely contested as the elite tournament. The national championships auger well for the future of baseball.

#### **AUSTRALIAN ARAB CULTURAL FESTIVAL**

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy) (16:52):** On Sunday 28 April 2024 I attended the second annual Australian Arab Cultural Festival held at the Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre. Led by Dr Amira Issa, the founder and president of the forum, and emceed by May Jouni, the event included a traditional Arabic breakfast, a Dabke performance, a traditional Abaya show and a performance by the Pacifica dance group. There were also several learning workshops for the attendees. The festival was a vibrant celebration of cultural diversity and community spirit, bringing together people from all walks of life to experience the rich heritage of the Australian-Arab community. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to Dr Amira Issa and the organisers on their remarkable efforts. I look forward to seeing the festival grow in the coming years.

#### **VESAK FESTIVALS**

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (16:53):** Earlier this month I had the pleasure of attending two Vesak festivals to celebrate the birth, enlightenment and passing of Gautama Buddha, the founder of Buddhism. Witnessing the festivities firsthand was an honour and a testament to the dedication of the Australian Buddhist communities in fostering a bridge between cultures. This sacred festival is a time of reflection, spiritual growth and compassion. The festivities were a wonderful opportunity for people of all backgrounds to come together, learn about Buddhist traditions and appreciate the rich cultural diversity of south-western Sydney. I thank both the Australian Chinese Buddhist Society and the Buddhist Federation of Australasia for welcoming me to their festivals in Cabramatta and Canley Vale respectively. I take this opportunity to wish Buddhists worldwide a blessed Vesak Day.

#### **NUTRIEN AG SOLUTIONS**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (16:54):** Today I recognise Nutrien Ag Solutions in Deniliquin for its remarkable fundraising efforts during the Do It For Dolly Day breakfast. The event, which was initially planned for three hours, was extended to five hours due to the overwhelming turnout. The team managed to serve over 500 bacon and egg rolls despite the unexpected rain. Nutrien did not do it all alone. Local business Deniliquin Party Hire provided the marquee, and new business owner John Allitt of Mokanger Butcher provided all the bacon and eggs for the day. Thanks in part to a generous \$1,000 donation from the Deniliquin Rodeo Committee, over \$11,000 was raised for Dolly's Dream, a foundation dedicated to combating bullying and its devastating impacts. The foundation not only honours the memory of Dolly Everett but also actively supports the mission to provide education and direct support to young people and families affected by bullying, anxiety, depression and youth suicide. I again thank all those involved in the fundraiser for their hard work. I look forward to hearing about next year's fundraising success.

#### **PADSTOW COMBINED PROBUS CLUB**

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (16:55):** I congratulate the Padstow Combined Probus Club on its twentieth anniversary and acknowledge the celebration luncheon that I was unable to attend earlier this month. My local Probus club provides a great opportunity for community members to make friends and experience new things in retirement. Commencing in 2004 the Padstow Combined Probus Club now has almost 100 members. Probus embodies friendship, fellowship and fun in retirement, and the Padstow combined club is no different. Organisers plan activities to promote healthy and active minds and bodies, such as playing barefoot bowls and touring the new airport. Many members have also travelled extensively in Australia and overseas. They visit local restaurants together and meet regularly to hear from interesting speakers. I congratulate president Warren

Cormack, secretary Val Isaacs, and members of the Padstow Combined Probus Club. I look forward to catching up with members at one of the meetings, and wish the club all the best for its travel and adventures in 2024. Happy twentieth anniversary.

### **HAMMONDVILLE PARK SYNTHETIC PITCH**

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy) (16:56):** On 20 April 2024 Liverpool City Council officially cut the ribbon on the new synthetic soccer pitch at the Hammondville Park sporting precinct. This is a fantastic piece of community infrastructure that ensures year-round sporting action, regardless of the weather conditions. I commend the advocacy of Moorebank Soccer Club president, Daniel Flego, and Moorebank "Sporties" in supporting the development. I also commend Mayor Ned Mannoun and Deputy Mayor Fiona Macnaught for working hard to get this project over the line. The synthetic pitch is an extremely valuable asset for our community, where our young athletes can hone their skills, families can gather to cheer on their loved ones and the spirit of community can thrive. Progress is being made to make our local sporting precincts even better.

### **JOHN DEAN**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (16:57):** I recognise Mr John Dean, president of Mounties Group. John was born and raised in south-west Sydney before going on to study electronic engineering and then electrical engineering. He has spent more than 50 years volunteering in the local community around Fairfield, Liverpool and Cabramatta. For the past 26 years he has been a board member of Mounties Group and held positions such as sports director, treasurer, vice-president and, currently, president. During his time in leadership positions for Mounties Group, the club has grown from 20,000 to more than 250,000 members. Its venues have grown from one venue to eight across three areas of Greater Sydney, and now employ 1,300 local people. Mounties Group has always been a profit-for-purpose business, and for more than 60 years its board members have all been volunteers, using the profits to improve the lives of local people. Since John became president, Mounties Group now offers general practice medicine, home care nursing, wheelchairs, mobility aids and allied health services to make the lives of local people more independent. I thank John Dean for his wonderful work.

### **KYNAN BONANNO**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek) (16:58):** I congratulate St Clair local Mr Kynan Bonanno on being chosen to represent Australia at WorldSkills Lyon 2024, the forty-seventh WorldSkills competition, which is scheduled to take place in September. Kynan's selection is a result of his talent in the automotive industry, which was showcased at the WorldSkills Australia National Championships. His performance at the national championships was so extraordinary that he was selected to represent Australia in Lyon. It was an extraordinary achievement for Kynan to earn the opportunity to showcase his skills on the world stage, all the way from Western Sydney. I congratulate Kynan and wish him success at this prestigious event and in all his future endeavours. As one of Australia's greatest young talents in the automotive industry, there is no doubt that Kynan has a bright future ahead of him in which he will continue to make an outstanding contribution to our community and our State.

### **KHMER NEW YEAR FESTIVAL**

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (16:59):** Last month I had the pleasure of joining the Khmer Community of NSW Inc. for its Khmer New Year Festival in Bonnyrigg. The Khmer people are an ethnic group native to Cambodia, and the Khmer New Year Festival marks the start of the Cambodian new year. The event was a celebration of traditional music, dance, food and religious ceremony. Families and friends came together to partake in the rich cultural history, language and customs of the Cambodian people. I commend the Khmer Community of NSW Inc. for the services and support it provides to the Khmer community, its commitment to building connections with the wider Australian community, and its preservation of the Khmer culture. I take this opportunity to wish the Khmer community a happy and prosperous new year. Sursedey chnam thmey.

### **TRACTOR 828 CAFE**

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (17:00):** Tractor 828 is an iconic cafe on Sackville Road, Ebenezer. I have visited the cafe, which attracts a broad following of locals and out-of-towners. Like many local businesses and residents, owner Mark Fiorentino has raised the issue of the ongoing disruptions to the ferry services and its impact on trade. Transport for NSW needs to understand that the changes to ferry schedules and lack of certainty are a brake on visitation and cause incalculable inconvenience to residents. Tractor 828 provides great coffee and freshly cooked meals. It is pet-friendly and caters to BYO. It also sells local produce including honey, flowers, pot plants, bottled beetroot, cucumber and relish. It is a favourite destination for touring motorcycle and classic car groups. I thank Mark Fiorentino for his ongoing commitment to Hawkesbury as a small business operator, employer and promoter of the region.



*Private Members' Statements***LAND TAX**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek) (17:01):** I bring to the Parliament's attention a significant issue that is unfairly and drastically impacting numerous landowners in my electorate. There is a failure by the Valuer General to accurately and fairly value rezoned lands surrounding the Western Sydney Aerotropolis and a failure to determine land tax in a way that takes into account the fact that the lands in question are not yet permitted to be developed according to their rezoning. While the Valuer General's assessed value of rezoned lands has increased exponentially, those valuations and assessments do not take into consideration the fact that the landowners do not currently see any benefit from the zoning changes. Landowners do not yet have approval to develop their properties. Approvals may be many years away in some precincts, so the landowners continue to use the land as they have always done.

Yet they are burdened with exploding rates and taxes which, in many instances, are forcing them off their lands. In those circumstances, the assessment of land value is causing land tax and council rates to soar, and landowners are now liable to pay taxes on land that cannot even be used for the purpose that it is valued at, leaving them without any hope of being able to fund those exorbitant amounts. I call on the New South Wales Government to critically examine this issue and ensure that the land tax is proportionate to the current value and allowable use of land and is not based solely on the current zoning status. The planning department claims that precinct two within the aerotropolis will be at least 10 years away from even being considered for development, yet at least one family in that precinct has notified me that their land tax and council rates are skyrocketing alongside other land which just happens to be now getting developed and serviced.

I have been advised that dealing with the Valuer General is a lengthy and time-consuming process and, in the meantime, the taxes for affected landowners continue accumulating. The issue has been ongoing for several years and all stakeholders are aware, but the problem is yet to be resolved. Revenue NSW has recognised the issue but has stated that it is out of its hands and is with the Valuer General. To maximise the potential of the opportunities arising from the Western Sydney international airport, we need the landowners surrounding the aerotropolis, who are the fabric of our community and who run and own businesses within our community, to remain an integral part of the future of our region. We must plan in a way that takes into consideration their value and role in the area. To do so we must deal with the challenges and bureaucratic gaps that arise from the creation of the airport and aerotropolis, which currently unfairly impact and disadvantage landowners.

If this matter is not resolved, landowners who are faced with annual land tax bills in the hundreds of thousands of dollars will have no choice but to sell and leave. In advance of the opening of an airport that will connect us to the world, it will be a tragic loss for our region if residents and business owners who, along with their families, have been a part of the fabric here for generations by serving the region in a variety of ways were to close their businesses, many of which are cultural and unique to the area. Businesses such as the Luddenham Raceway are under enormous strain because of this specific anomaly and problem. Since facing exorbitant annual land taxes, property owners like the Sydney Society of Model Engineers Inc at Luddenham have been looking to sell. That is the oldest model engineering club in Australia, and the oldest continuously operating model engineering club in the world. The aim of the society is to promote all forms of model engineering. That irreplaceable club has sold its property, and activities at that site will cease next year—what a travesty.

Land taxes being paid by the landowners should reflect the way that the land is valued and can be used at the current time. It is a matter of fairness, common sense and practicality. Exorbitant land valuations that flow into ever-increasing land tax and council rate calculations should only ever be applied to the land when development of that land is possible, whether that development is by government or the private sector.

**TRIBUTE TO SARAH ANN DALY**

**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) (17:05):** I pay tribute to my dear friend Mrs Sarah Ann Daly, otherwise known as Ann Daly—or, as I would often affectionately call her, my favourite Glaswegian. Ann was a long-time Labor Party member, a fierce supporter of the labour movement and a dedicated community volunteer. Ann was my very dear friend. I spoke with her only about two weeks ago. I also tried to drop in to see her in Pembroke Lodge on my way home last Friday but, unfortunately, she had been admitted to hospital. Of course, knowing Ann's kindness and big heart, she was a dear friend to many, not just to me. Sadly, Ann passed away this week, and her family and friends are mourning her loss.

Originally from Glasgow in Scotland, Ann was a resident of Macquarie Fields for close to 50 years. Ann and her husband, Michael, were both rock-solid Labor supporters. Together they raised three boys in Macquarie

Fields: John, Michael and Matthew. Her husband, Michael, passed away in 2002, but the ever-stoic Ann continued her selfless volunteer work in the community. Ann was a regular at the Glenquarie Neighbourhood Centre, helping with food parcels and electricity vouchers and taking on the role of secretary for many years. Her generosity and belief that everyone deserves a fair go drove Ann's passion for helping others. Ann's idea of family extended well beyond her own direct family. I am told that she took a young man under her wing when his own mother passed, and they were like mother and son right to the end. That man is now an adult, but Ann is still very much mum to him.

When I think about what people will remember most about Ann, it is the unconditional love she had for people, the love that she had for the Macquarie Fields community, the love that she had for family and friends, and the love that she had for the Australian Labor Party. I, for one, will always be grateful for Ann's support and friendship. Since I was first elected in 2015, Ann has had my back. Ann was salt-of-the-earth, loyal and caring. She was a true believer in every sense. She would ring me to wish me luck, give me encouragement when the going got tough, and be one of the first to support my many community campaigns. Ann joined me many times on the platform at Macquarie Fields Station in support of our long and hard-fought community campaign for an upgrade and for lifts at the station. I am told that Ann was pleased to see a photo of herself in my latest community newsletter forming part of a time line of our campaign for our fair share. Ann was thrilled that Macquarie Fields Station was finally getting its lifts, and I am sorry and saddened that she will not be there to share in the success once the lifts are delivered in around 18 months. It is people like Ann who make community campaigns so worthwhile.

A stalwart of traditional Labor values, Ann believed wholeheartedly that everyone deserves a fair go. She embraced the idea that everyone, regardless of their postcode or their circumstances, should have the same opportunities as everybody else. As a woman from the tough streets of Glasgow, Ann valued her life in Australia and the opportunities it presented to her and her family. Ann was certainly a very special lady with an extremely big heart. I have it on very good authority that Ann's hand-knitted blankets were added free of charge to the orders of farmers and people in remote parts of Australia through the business of her son Matthew. The blankets were a small act of kindness but were always warmly received. Matthew told me that Ann would always want to know the look on people's faces when they opened their parcels. Bringing joy to others brought Ann the greatest happiness. She was a selfless and generous spirit. I will dearly miss my friend.

At the age of 82 Ann's Scottish accent was stronger than ever. Once when we caught up, she told me that during her trip back to Glasgow four years earlier her fellow Glaswegians all thought she sounded very Australian. You can take the woman out of Scotland but you cannot take Scotland out of the woman. May my dear friend Sarah Ann Daly rest in peace. I offer my sincere condolences to Ann's family—her children John, Michael and Matthew, and her five grandchildren—and to her many close friends, for whom Ann was always extended family. May all those who miss Ann be comforted in the knowledge that she was a greatly respected and greatly valued member of our community. It is only fitting that I farewell Ann, my favourite Glaswegian, with some words attributed to the national poet of Scotland, Mr Robert Burns:

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,  
And never brought to mind?  
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,  
And auld lang syne!  
For auld lang syne, my Dear  
For auld lang syne,  
We'll take a cup o' kindness yet,  
For auld lang syne.

Rest in peace, Ann.

## DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (17:11):** One in four women over the age of 15 experience domestic and family violence and, tragically, one woman is killed by her partner every single week in Australia. I acknowledge those victims and survivors and all those in our communities impacted by domestic and family violence. I know too well the impact in my community of East Hills, having helped set up the Biyani House Revesby Women's Shelter. While I commend the work of refuges and other support services in New South Wales, it is apparent that, as a government, we need to do more. We just cannot tolerate any more women dying at the hands of their partners.

That is why NSW Labor's emergency package will enhance support for victim-survivors of domestic, family and sexual violence. We want to ensure that, in future, families and women at risk have the support that they need. Over four years we will invest \$230 million in not only crisis response but also a coordinated preventive approach to stop the cycle of violence. The package includes investment in improving the justice system, early intervention, primary prevention, funding for workforce training and the peak body for specialist services in New

South Wales. In addition to the 200 domestic violence workers funded by Federal Labor, NSW Labor is also bringing in more specialist domestic violence workers. We will fund research into effective interventions for perpetrators. We will start by recognising the risk that offenders pose to their partners and mitigating that risk through bail reforms. Everyone deserves to live in safety and peace without having to look over their shoulder waiting for the inevitable to happen. NSW Labor will bring in bail reforms to make it harder for alleged perpetrators to get bail and harass victim-survivors when on bail.

Often we can see the warning signs. If those signs are left unaddressed, violent men—men who have strangled, stalked and coercively controlled their partners, and committed other serious red-flag offences—could likely add to that horrific death toll of one woman a week. This Parliament has a chance to address those foreseeable risks. It has a chance to protect the lives of women in our communities and ensure that they are survivors of the scourge of domestic violence in our communities. Under the reforms the offenders will either be held on remand or electronically monitored.

Domestic violence has run rampant through our communities, unaddressed by the previous Government for over a decade. Under the previous Government women's refuges were decimated and funds were cut. They were forced to compete with homelessness services, and out of 40 women's refuges only 16 have survived. It was up to communities to put those services back in. I know that because my community had to do it. One of the things that I am most proud of, prior to taking on the role of the member for East Hills, is my contribution to setting up the Biyani House Revesby Women's Shelter. It opened in January 2022, and in just over two years the shelter has housed or supported over 100 women and their families who were in desperate situations. The impact is very real. The shelter is finally getting some of the investment that it has desperately needed and that it urged government to provide for so long.

I thank the domestic violence experts and victim-survivors who have informed this suite of reforms and services. They have provided valuable insight into the interventions that can lessen the rates and the devastating impacts of domestic violence. Domestic violence has destroyed too many lives in New South Wales, including in the East Hills electorate. For women in my community and across New South Wales, the package means a coordinated approach to maximising safety for victim-survivors of family and domestic violence as well as funding and research to reduce domestic violence. I am proud to be part of a Labor government that is committed to undertaking further long-term reform to prevent domestic, sexual and family violence in New South Wales. It is a scourge in our community and we all need to work together to eliminate it from our society.

#### **MYALL LAKES ELECTORATE HEALTH SERVICES**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes) (17:15):** I speak on healthcare services within my electorate of Myall Lakes. I am a new member in this place, but I strongly believe there are three things in which politics has no place: education, roads and health. Health remains a top priority for me in not only ensuring the wellbeing of my constituents but also supporting the amazing frontline staff at the Manning Hospital who, for far too long, have been working under the pump with limited resources and in a less-than-acceptable building that desperately needs redevelopment. Access to quality health care is a fundamental right for all. Better health in the Myall Lakes includes stages two and three of the redevelopment of the Manning Hospital, a reinstatement of funding for Forster hospital and a much-needed multipurpose service in Bulahdelah.

Under the previous Coalition Government the new Forster hospital was due to be delivered in 2025. However, the change in government meant the \$20 million allocated was pulled from the budget. The people of the Great Lakes region are left in healthcare limbo yet again and the staff of Manning Hospital are left to continue to bear the brunt of assisting the entire electorate with health emergencies and medical care. I have requested extra funding for stage two and stage three of the redevelopment of Manning Hospital and for the new Forster public hospital funding to be reinstated. I will continue to push for government investment until it is delivered for my community. Living in regional New South Wales should not result in poorer health outcomes. Regardless of their post code, each person deserves the highest standard of health care. I will continue to fight for a public hospital in Forster, a multipurpose service facility in Bulahdelah and the redevelopment of Manning Hospital. I will ensure our community has the healthcare services they desperately need and rightfully deserve.

#### **NORTH WEST COMMUNITY SERVICES**

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (17:20):** I celebrate Neighbourhood Centre Week and recognise the vital role community hubs play across our nation. Neighbourhood centres are the beating hearts of their communities. They foster connections, social support and shared experiences. They create a welcoming atmosphere where everyone feels heard and valued through collaborative projects, inclusive programs and shared spaces. These centres empower residents to contribute their unique stories and talents, strengthening the fabric of communities. Ultimately, community centres play a critical role in fostering social connections and keeping people rooted in their local areas.

In the rapidly growing Riverstone electorate, North West Community Services is a shining example of the resilience and dedication of those vital institutions. Founded in 1977 by a group of community-focused local women, led by the formidable Dawn Cassell, the centre weathered a major flood only a month after its inception. Despite the flood the centre provided critical assistance to hundreds of affected families, showcasing its unwavering commitment to the community. That commitment is a legacy that the neighbourhood centre continues to uphold to this day. Fuelled by dedicated volunteers, North West Community Services took root. The tireless efforts of volunteers paved the way for part-time staff, allowing the centre to offer essential services like a minibus for healthcare access and shopping trips for seniors and those feeling isolated.

As grants, donations and government funding became a steady stream, North West Community Services blossomed and its services expanded to enrich the lives of the entire community. I personally benefited from the centre when I was a troubled and wayward teen in the 1980s. The path to securing funding was not without hurdles. Like many neighbourhood centres nationwide, North West Community Services grappled with access to limited resources, competing priorities and bureaucratic red tape. However, the unwavering commitment and perseverance of the centre's staff, volunteers and supporters proved instrumental in overcoming those challenges. Their dedication ensured the centre's operations continued and its services expanded. Their work is a testament to the resilience and determination of the centre and is reflective of the community it serves.

Since the centre's humble beginning in 1977 the population of Riverstone and the surrounding area served by North West Community Services has exploded. The population of Riverstone and Schofields has grown from approximately 10,000 residents when the neighbourhood centre was formed to approximately 200,000 people in 2023, a massive increase by any measure. The influx of diverse populations, including migrants and young families, creates a complex tapestry of needs for North West Community Services to address. In addition to the host of services provided the centre acts as a catalyst and empowers newcomers to rebuild their lives and become integrated community members.

Building a cohesive community where new residents feel welcome and existing residents feel supported is paramount. North West Community Services is a crucial partner in achieving this. A dynamic landscape of community needs requires community centres such as North West Community Services to be adequately funded. It is the role of government at all levels to invest in community centres. Only through adequate funding can community centres become more efficient and accessible. Research suggests that providing migrant settlement services through one-stop shop neighbourhood centres, such as North West Community Services, fosters community building while promoting cost-effectiveness. Unlike models where multiple services compete for resources, these centres share facilities and staff expertise and utilise their resources to assist more people.

North West Community Services is more than just a service provider; it is a beacon of hope for many people in my electorate. The centre is a lifeline for our community. It offers a range of crucial services, including support for families and communities. It has specialised programs for people with disabilities, Indigenous Australians, youth and seniors. It offered support during the repeated disasters our area has experienced, with compassionate and expert assistance in complex cases. By intervening early with holistic support, the centre's staff and volunteers make a significant difference in the lives they touch. Their impact is profound. Their work is our community's strength and their emphasis on inclusivity and comprehensive integrated services exemplifies the spirit of Neighbourhood Centre Week.

As we acknowledge the importance of community hubs during Neighbourhood Centre Week, it is vital to recognise the need for sufficient funding to support their initiatives. The commitment shown by North West Community Services to serve the area's diverse population underscores the necessity of investment in neighbourhood centres. We must ensure it has the resources to continue its invaluable work in fostering connected and empowered communities. The dedication and expertise of North West Community Services make it a pleasure to collaborate with in serving my community.

### MARINE ESTATE MANAGEMENT

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (17:25):** My constituents and the wider community want their elected representatives to preserve the marine environment for future generations. Global fish and marine life are declining, with mass extinctions being a serious threat, including in this State. New South Wales has a unique ocean landscape, where tropical and temperate waters meet. The State includes six bioregions that support unique species such as the weedy sea dragon and corals. But the health of the marine environment is at risk from a range of threats, including climate change, shipping, pollution, foreshore development, introduced species and sea life extraction. To survive in the face of such threats, fish stocks need to be at strong levels. The Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences 2022 fisheries status report classified more than one-third of the 102 fish stocks it assessed as either overfished or uncertain. While the former Government included strong marine biodiversity advocates, its policies took New South Wales marine protections backwards.

In 12 years not a single new marine park or aquatic reserve was established, while 36 sanctuary zones were downgraded. We now urgently need a new approach to marine management that is underpinned by science. Last year I helped launch a new report entitled *Creating a world class Marine Protected Area system: Getting New South Wales back on track* by Professor David J. Booth and Giglia Beretta. The report provides a pathway for New South Wales to safeguard the future of our oceans and the life they support. The Booth and Beretta report confirms the scientific case for a comprehensive, adequate and representative marine park network with sanctuary zones where fish extraction is not permitted. Sanctuary zones have been identified as critical to local marine biodiversity and fish populations, with strong evidence demonstrating increased biodiversity when compared to lesser protected areas.

Sanctuary zones increase the abundance and size of exploited species and enhance larval export and the spillover of adult fish into adjacent fishing areas. Sanctuary zones provide ecosystem resilience and help reduce stress on the marine environment at a time when pressure on our waters is mounting. Sanctuary zones have additional benefits for swimmers, divers and snorkelers because they help beautiful natural marine environments flourish, making them popular tourist destinations. Only an approximate 7 per cent of the New South Wales marine environment is conserved through sanctuary zones. We need to protect 30 per cent by 2030 to meet global commitments and safeguard the marine environment for the future. There are massive holes in protection. The Hawkesbury Shelf marine bioregion and Twofold Shelf marine bioregion have no protection at all. Other bioregions have minimal protection.

In the past some communities have expressed fear over marine park and sanctuary zone proposals, concerned about impacts on fishing and tourism industries. The Government needs to conduct education programs to show these communities the evidence of fishing and tourism benefits and the importance of sanctuary zones for fish populations. A win-win outcome is possible, but it can only happen if coastal communities are listened to, given scientific information and supported. As a first step the Government needs to reinstate the sanctuary zones that were repealed.

It then needs to establish a genuine scientific and consultative process on the way forward to achieve a comprehensive, adequate and representative network of marine protection, with at least 30 per cent no-take protections. The establishment and management of marine parks must be moved to the Environment and Heritage office, which is responsible for environmental protection. The move to the Department of Primary Industries, whose role is to support industries that profit from fishing, was inappropriate and has failed to produce any environmental benefit. We need to give marine parks and sanctuary zones greater status. Revocations should be limited to transparent, accountable pathways, based on science and with parliamentary oversight.

If we manage the New South Wales marine environment in a more sustainable manner, fish populations will have the opportunity to replenish, and recreational and commercial fishers will benefit from increased catch. We should not sacrifice our oceans' future for short-term outcomes. If we delay protections any further, we increase the risks of disastrous marine biodiversity collapse and we delay reaping the benefits of sustainable fish stocks. I call on the Government to make marine protection a priority in this term to ensure that we protect ocean environments from collapse, ensure fish stocks are sustainable and safeguard community marine activities for future generations.

#### CENTRAL COAST MARINERS WOMEN'S TEAM

**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) (17:30):** How good is it to have the Central Coast Mariners Women's team back in the Premier A-League competition this year after a long break. We were there for the first season and unfortunately were not able to continue. The team have come back this year for their second year in the competition and have had outstanding results. They over-performed; many people predicted they would finish in last position, but instead they made the semifinals and were one game—and one goal—short of making the grand final. It has been an absolutely outstanding effort. It has really energised women's football on the Central Coast. The figures from Central Coast Football show record registrations of girls: 3,961 women registered, which is a 19.6 per cent increase, and 2,088 MiniRoos girls registered, which is a 27 per cent increase. Those local heroes are setting a great example for our younger women and girls and giving them a pathway into the top leagues. Hopefully one day they will be playing for the Matildas or heading overseas.

Coach Emily Husband was named the A-League Coach of the Year, and she was also named the assistant coach for the All-Stars, who will be playing Arsenal in Victoria in the coming weeks. Isabel Gomez and Peta Trimis have been selected in the under-20s Australian team, and Kyah Simon has been selected for the All-Stars, so it was a really outstanding season for the girls. In the annual awards ceremony, Isabel Gomez was named Players' Player, Coaches' Player and the Supporters Club Player of the Year. Bianca Galic received the 2024 Mariners Medal and also scored the Goal of the Season. The Fans' Player and Golden Boot winner was

Wurigumula, who scored eight goals. She plays for the Chinese national team and stayed in Australia after the Women's World Cup. She has been a great player for the Mariners. The Newcomer of the Year was Peta Trimis.

The Mariners scored six wins, three draws and five losses. They finished fifth out of the 12 teams, scoring 31 goals and having 24 goals scored against them. But the most important thing is that they played an exciting brand of football. That was reflected in the number of people who watched the women's games, me included. I attended six games this season, some home and some away. One of the highlights was when they beat arch rivals the Newcastle Jets 3-1 in Newcastle. It was a gritty performance from the girls. I could go through the whole list of who is in the team, but I particularly mention Casey Dumont, who was an absolute hero in the quarterfinal penalty shootout and made several saves to get the Mariners through to the semifinal against Sydney FC. Sydney went on to win the final, so I would say that proves that we finished third overall. Getting beaten by the eventual winners shows that they performed very well.

There were some sad things along the way: The captain, Taren King, had an anterior cruciate ligament injury that put her out for most of the season. But she was a significant presence on the sideline, supporting everything that the girls have done. We were lucky to have Jazmin Wardlow join the team from the United States; young Jazmin performed particularly well. I said to Emily Husband that you could see that development, not just as individuals but also how they played as a team—how they interacted, supported each other and enjoyed their football. They played the round-ball game the way that we enjoy it the most. They played it hard, they played it tough, but most of all they played it fairly. At the end of each game when they walked off the field—win, lose or draw—we knew they had put in a 110 per cent effort. That was certainly reflected in the growing support they received from Central Coast people. I wish them luck for next season. Hopefully we can go one game further and make the grand final. Go the Mariners Women in 2024-25.

#### **SYDNEY HILLS LOCAL BUSINESS AWARDS**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill) (17:35):** Last night I attended the Sydney Hills Local Business Awards, which were held at the Castle Hill RSL Club in my electorate. It was a pleasure to join with Hills district councillors and the local business community to celebrate and acknowledge our local businesses. I know each business recognised during the Sydney Hills Local Business Awards is extremely proud. The awards recognise local businesses but are also a wonderful opportunity to shine the spotlight on some amazing finalists. The Local Business Awards aim to pay tribute to and reward the local community's best businesses. The awards aim to develop and strengthen the bonds between business and the community, thereby improving the standards of our local businesses. The awards promote businesses in the local community and provide recognition and motivation to some wonderful businesses and their fantastic staff.

There were 33 categories and I acknowledge each winner: for antiques, arts and crafts, Lyn's Fine Needlework; for bakeries, Franky and Co, Grove Square; for Beauty Services, Hills Laser and Beauty; for cafes, ELS Cafe and Bar, Winston Hills Mall; for early childhood, Discover My World Early Learning Centre; for education, Guide and Grow; for fashion, Hills Shire Hire, Castle Hill; for fast food and takeaway, KB Chicken, Grove Square; for the Fitness First Award, Anytime Fitness, North Kellyville; for florists, Petals and Leaves, Grove Square; and for fresh food, Bonello Produce, Kenthurst—a wonderful business run by Jamie Bonello.

Further winners included, for hairdressers, K&Co Hairdressing; for health improvement services, Spectrum Therapy; for interior design, MyPad Property Styling; for jewellery, The Ritz Jewellery, Norwest Marketown; for most inclusive employer, Pizza Pasta Please, Rouse Hill; for new business, Swing City; for performing arts, Dancing with Maree, West Pennant Hills; for pet care, Sydney Petlands; for pharmacy, Friendly Pharmacy, The Village Green; for professional services, Katz Recruitment; for real estate, Auswide Buyers Agency; for restaurants, Osso, Rouse Hill; for service and trade, Ruby Homes; for sole operators, Kellyville Car Seat Installations; for specialised business, Bridgestone Select, Castle Hill; for specialised retail, Sydney Plant Market; and for travel agencies, Atour Travel Service.

The Youth Award went to Colin Van-Zanten from Precision Pipes. The Disability Inclusion Award went to Wick Coffee, with a "highly commended" to World of Minecraft. There were also two major award winners last night: The Businessperson of the Year was Amanda Elias from Greenleaf Legal, and the Business of the Year was Dancing with Maree. I will say a few words concerning the major award winners, beginning with Amanda Elias from Greenleaf Legal. Amanda is the principal solicitor for Greenleaf Legal. Based in Norwest, Greenleaf Legal was established in 2019.

The firm provides family law services to members of the community. Amanda's own story is truly inspirational. About seven years ago Amanda's husband left the marriage, and at that stage Amanda had a five-year-old and a six-week-old baby. Amanda is a legal practitioner and was practising civil litigation at the time. In the past three years, Amanda went through a personal journey to retrain in family law. She set up Greenleaf Legal as a major family law practice. She is now practising in Norwest and has five employees. What

Amanda has done is rather remarkable and inspirational—to use her own knowledge and suffering to help others in the community. The Business of the Year, Dancing with Maree, is a local family-based business at West Pennant Hills. The director, Maree Khoury, found a passion for dancing at a young age. She also found that she loved teaching, and so she was lucky enough to be able to combine her love for dancing with her love for teaching. The business, as I said, was the Business of the Year.

The awards evening was a wonderful opportunity to recognise local businesses within the Hills district. Those businesses are made up of incredibly hardworking members of the community, and the contribution of those local businesses and their employees drives our community. I congratulate the organiser of the awards, Precedent Productions, and the sponsors. The publicity generated by the local business awards provides local businesses with wonderful exposure in the community. I often see signs from the business awards proudly displayed on the various businesses. Finally, I thank Steve Lowe, the managing director of Precedent Productions, for helping small businesses shine and grow through local business awards events such as the Sydney Hills Local Business Awards.

### CENTRAL COAST COUNCIL

**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) (17:39):** This evening I speak about a serious matter: the upcoming council elections in September. Anyone who knows about Central Coast Council will be aware that it has been in administration for a number of years and that the previous council was dismissed after serious financial issues. The council literally went broke and could not pay staff. I caution the people of the Central Coast to choose very carefully when deciding where they are going to put their vote. Having a functional council that operates with cooperation and is focused on improving things for the community should be everyone's main aim when supporting particular candidates. I would be seriously asking any candidates that were previously councillors and are running again whether they have learnt the lessons of their previous tenure.

Unfortunately, I fear that may not be the case. Many of them sought to blame anyone but themselves. I draw the House's attention to the *Central Coast Council Public Inquiry Report* by Roslyn McCulloch dated February 2022. She made some interesting comments in that report. She quoted the former CEO, Mr Murphy, who was the CEO from 2018-2020. The report says:

He described the culture of the councillors as suspicious and sceptical of staff and between themselves, even those of the same political affiliation. He referred to bitter exchanges between councillors, numerous points of order about councillor behaviour, a high number of notices of motion, frequent amendments to staff recommendations and an inordinate number of councillor requests and questions on notice. In late 2019 he engaged an industrial psychologist firm, Elton Consulting, to try to improve the relationships between the councillors themselves and between the councillors and the ELT.

That is pretty telling. Anyone who watched those council meetings would understand that the toxic relationships between councillors meant their focus was not on the job. That is probably one of the key reasons that the council got into financial difficulties. The report goes on to say:

The key findings in relation to relationships and capabilities were more concerning. A key issue for councillors was the lack of respectful and collaborative efforts between councillors. Greater enforcement of behavioural and procedural expectations between councillors was suggested. However, most councillors had no confidence that relationships between councillors could be improved.

In relation to systems and processes the report identified concerns amongst councillors about unbalanced competencies in formal debate practice, unequal councillor preparation for meetings and attendance at briefings and frustration at late notices of motion.

The report talks more about those toxic relationships. One could suggest that those councillors should not get support leading into the election. Another key finding of the report was that councillors claimed they were unaware of the financial situation, leading to the council to go broke. Roslyn McCulloch said:

The repeated deficit budgets and outcomes were a significant factor in the deterioration of the financial position of CCC. The councillors could have observed that actual results year on year were much worse than budgeted for. Instead of reining in subsequent budgets, the deficits of subsequent budgets were increased. The absence of any rational reaction to the IPART determination in May 2019 permitted the deficit of that budget to balloon. The promised budget adjustments to take account of the decreased revenue from the determination never happened.

The report clearly says that those councillors were told there was deficit after deficit after deficit and things were getting worse, yet they took no action to correct the situation. I think all of those councillors should disqualify themselves from running again. I ask the community to think really carefully. If they are considering supporting someone who was previously on the council, they should do the work, scrutinise, read the reports and understand that those councillors did not do their job. They should not be supported in the upcoming council elections.

### HEALTH TECH ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAM

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (17:44):** Earlier today I met with Robin Schuck and Dr Zoe Terpening from UNSW regarding their \$700,000 investment in the Liverpool Health Tech Entrepreneurship Program to foster the next generation of entrepreneurs and innovators in south-west Sydney. UNSW has had a presence in Liverpool for 35 years since locating the South West Sydney Clinical Campus of the Faculty of Medicine and Health at Liverpool Hospital. In more recent years, UNSW is a founding member of the Ingham Institute for Applied Medical Research at Liverpool, which opened following a \$35 million investment by the Federal Labor Government in 2012. It is also a founding member of the Liverpool Innovation Precinct, which brings together a range of stakeholders to build on the incredible foundation of medical research, clinical practice and health infrastructure in Liverpool.

I have had the pleasure of speaking in this House about the Liverpool Innovation Precinct previously, and I know the impact that the collaborative initiative will have on not only our young people but also our community more broadly in the years to come. That is why I am pleased to hear Robin and Zoe describe Liverpool as the "spiritual home" of UNSW, with Zoe herself being a south-west Sydney girl. It is a little-known fact that the postcode with the most UNSW students is 2170. The Liverpool local government area is in the top three LGAs engaged with UNSW. Who would have thought a university in the east of our often highly regionalised city could have such a huge representation of kids from the south-west?

UNSW has identified Liverpool as the front line of its investment and activity in south-west Sydney. The commitment of \$700,000 in the Health Tech Entrepreneurship Program to support south-west Sydney based researchers, entrepreneurs and innovators in starting and scaling their ventures is a reflection of that sentiment. Based in Liverpool, the program is an expansion of UNSW Founders, a dedicated entrepreneurship unit supporting UNSW students, staff and alumni to build entrepreneurship skills and to found and create companies. Currently, the pathways to cultivate the next generation of entrepreneurs is in a fledgling state, and this investment will have a specific focus on supporting unmet needs in the region.

One of the aims of the new program is to encourage women and founders from culturally and linguistically diverse [CALD] backgrounds into entrepreneurship. Programs tailored to facilitate that include the New Wave program for female founders and Impact X for those from a CALD background. The program will dovetail nicely with the University of Wollongong's iAccelerate program, which has provided significant engagement and support to female entrepreneurs, especially those from CALD backgrounds, in Liverpool over the past 12 months. The investment is supported by a \$25,000 grant from Investment NSW that was matched with \$25,000 from the Liverpool Innovation Precinct.

The significance to the local community of UNSW's investment in the health entrepreneurship hub cannot be underestimated. Health and social assistance is the largest employer in the region, which is also rich in cultural diversity and under-represented groups. They will be the primary beneficiaries of the exciting initiative, being able to tap into the UNSW Founders expertise locally to create new businesses, create new jobs where they live and contribute directly to the economic development of south-west Sydney. The recent release of unemployment statistics showed that south-west Sydney, including the LGAs of Liverpool and Fairfield, has an unemployment rate of 5.3 per cent on an annual average basis compared with 1.9 per cent in the northern beaches and 2.2 per cent in Sutherland. It is of primary importance that we look at ways to create jobs on our doorstep so that our community can access them and change their own lives and the lives of those around them.

In its first year, the Health Tech Entrepreneurship Program will offer a breakfast workshop series, a pitch competition, a New Wave program, an Impact X program and more. The events aim to promote discussions and partnerships that drive meaningful progress in healthcare innovation. We have the opportunity to ensure that we not only foster innovation in our healthcare system and in meeting the needs of our community members but also develop our local economy, create jobs, address unemployment and create a future pathway for the many young people who live in our region. I am very excited to share this news with the House, and I look forward to the impact it will have in coming years.

### TRIBUTE TO MAURICE DESMOND FULLER

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley) (17:49):** If life was a race, Maurice Desmond Fuller—or "Maurie" as I knew him—would always take first place. He was an engine that never stopped motoring. He knew when to shift the gears and hit the gas. He never put the brakes on, and he certainly drove fast towards his dreams and those of our community. Today I farewell Maurie, whose legacy is fuelled by a passion and determination to see motorsports thrive within the Macleay Valley. Over five decades, Maurie worked tirelessly as a volunteer to bring the Kempsey Macleay Off Road Club from a small bolt of an idea, taking it full throttle to the finish line. Today it stands as a proud organisation catering to thousands of members, young and old, while bringing motoring enthusiasts into our rural towns.



Maurie's love for motorsports began when he purchased his first car. Not long after that he became the foundation member of the Macleay District Motorcycle Club in 1964. From dirt track events at the Greenhill Speedway to competing with a sidecar for 10 years, Maurie held numerous positions over the years. He was a brave and daring competitor, an enthusiastic organiser and a fierce advocate, even taking on the roles of CAMS NSW Off Road Advisory Panel Chair and member of the national Off Road Commission, just to name a few. In 1976 Maurie added landowner to that impressive repertoire by purchasing a parcel of land at Dondingalong, and had it approved as a motorsports complex. It paved the way for open motorcross events and brought elite riders from across the nation to our backyard.

From 1981 until recently the Macleay 1000 off road car event has been held at Temagog. It was an event like no other, galvanizing interest in off road racing, especially as it catered to a low budget. The year after its inception, the Macleay Off Road Club was formed, with Maurie at the helm as a foundation member. The club worked tirelessly to bring the Dondingalong circuit to life. It soon captured statewide interest and events have run there annually ever since. Those achievements were in conjunction with a loving wife who stood beside Maurie the entire way. Robyn Fuller is every bit a part of the legend in our parts. From event secretary and chief timekeeper to various roles in the canteen, Robyn formed part of the dynamic duo who built the life and heart into our club.

From 2007 the honours started rolling in, with Maurie achieving numerous awards of the highest order. That year he was inducted into the NSW Off Road Racing Hall of Fame, as Robyn was 10 years later. In 2017 the couple were awarded service awards at the CAMS NSW motorsport awards night. But it was not until 2018 that Maurie's hard work and horsepower reached national recognition. Maurie was awarded the Order of Australia for his service to motorsport and the community of Kempsey and the Macleay. It is important to note that Maurie's love extended not only to motorsports but also to saving the lives of our community. Since 1958 Maurie has been an active patrol member of the Kempsey Crescent Head Surf Life Saving Club and served as secretary until 2005. In 2006, with more than five decades of commitment under his belt, he was made a life member and received the Australia Day gong for his never-waning devotion to our community.

Maurie was also a former president of the Rotary Club of Kempsey West and a dedicated member between 1982 and 2017. As we bid farewell to Maurie, let us reflect on the generosity, integrity and enthusiasm that underpins his legacy. We thank him for a lifetime of commitment to the motoring world in all capacities. We thank him for his efforts at the Kempsey Crescent Head Surf Life Saving Club and the Rotary Club of Kempsey West. But mainly we thank Maurie for his friendship—for an unmistakable smile, a smart comment or two on how to take the next bends, and the little secrets he knew of the circuits. Whether we are facing sharp turns or barrelling down the straights, Maurie taught us that every obstacle is an opportunity to accelerate towards success. I farewell Maurie. He will always be our Kempsey Macleay champion.

### WAKEHURST ELECTORATE VOLUNTEERS

**Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (17:54):** Next week is National Volunteer Week. I take this opportunity to give a shout-out to all the volunteers in Wakehurst. One of the best parts of this job is meeting and getting to know everyday heroes who step up and give their time to help others, for free, by volunteering in the community. I am thinking of all the people who patrol our beaches as members of surf lifesaving clubs, who keep our bushfire fighting response ready to deploy at our rural bushfire brigades, who pull on SES uniforms and help those impacted by natural disasters at all hours, who maintain and regenerate our public bushland reserves, and who drive EasyLink Community Transport so older people can get out and about. I am thinking of the many parents who coach sports teams and work in school canteen, and all those—I cannot possibly name them all—who participate in many civic-minded organisations, unite people and connect them to a cause bigger than themselves, not just in Wakehurst but indeed across the State.

It is true that volunteers should be praised for their selflessness. But from my experience engaging with many volunteers over the years, the profound personal benefits to those volunteers are clear. They understand the paradox that true abundance often comes from giving, not taking. The academic research on the health and wellbeing benefits of volunteering supports that observation, with studies showing that the generosity of spirit invoked by volunteering leads to greater personal happiness. Experts have confirmed that helping others triggers a biochemical reward pathway in our brains, releasing feel-good neurotransmitters including oxytocin. They call it "the helper's high". It creates a feel-good cycle. Oxytocin makes us more likely to be generous. Being generous produces more oxytocin, which makes us more likely to continue being generous. Sign me up.

Unfortunately, a decreasing number of people are experiencing the joy and satisfaction of volunteering, as the number of volunteers across the country steadily declines. The general social survey of the Australian Bureau of Statistics shows that the number of people who volunteered in the previous 12 months fell from 34 per cent in 2006 to just 25 per cent in 2020. I worry that rates of volunteering are another casualty of ever-increasing

cost-of-living pressures, as people have less time to dedicate to non-paid endeavours. But even amongst the busyness of life, volunteering is worth prioritising.

I particularly recognise a group of women who have prioritised making a significant volunteering contribution to our community on the northern beaches by establishing Fight on the Beaches. In 2014 eight women from the northern beaches, all touched by cancer, joined forces with a common goal—funding a cure for cancer. Fight on the Beaches was born—a volunteer organisation dedicated to supporting Australian cancer researchers in their quest for scientific breakthroughs in cancer treatment. Over the past 10 years, the largely volunteer-based charity has raised \$2.78 million and funded 12 years of research, much of which shows promising early results. Fight on the Beaches rolled out early detection programs for northern beaches locals, providing 12 free cancer screening clinics for both men and women. It also co-funded a clinical trials administrator at Northern Beaches Hospital.

In 2024, its tenth anniversary year, Fight on the Beaches continues its impactful work, sponsoring Dr Colby Stevenson at the Kolling Institute for his oesophageal cancer research. It has also launched its cancer care pack initiative, which provides support and care packs to patients undergoing treatment at Northern Beaches Hospital. The key annual Fight on the Beaches fundraising event is its upcoming charity ball, which will be held at Miramare Gardens in Terrey Hills on 26 July. I encourage everyone to buy a ticket and attend or, even better, offer to volunteer on the night. I thank the current committee for Fight on the Beaches and congratulate everyone involved over the past decade. The current committee includes Rebecca Coulson, Kelly Evans, Meghann Parker, Rachel Sadler, Ajita Tynan and Ali Warman. I congratulate them on building such a successful organisation. I encourage everyone, like those women, to look for opportunities to volunteer time and energy to a cause that speaks to them.

The Northern Beaches Council website provides detailed role descriptions and contact details for volunteer opportunities in community organisations, from delivering toys to help run the local toy library to nurturing native plants at our local Stony Range Regional Botanic Garden or helping a frail aged person do the shopping with MWP Care—and many more. This Volunteer Week, I encourage people to take a look and give something a go, to help build the social capital we all benefit from as well as for the richness and purpose it can bring to their lives.

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (17:59):** I acknowledge the always outstanding contributions from the member for Wakehurst, a man of incredible decency and integrity, who recognises the importance of giving back to others. It takes a special person to acknowledge the efforts of people in their community. I am especially moved by that. As the good member said, volunteers do it for a cause bigger than themselves. We all encounter volunteers. In my portfolio I am blessed to have people who volunteer with the RFS, the SES, the Volunteer Rescue Association, Marine Rescue and Surf Life Saving NSW. We are doing work particularly around volunteering because we share that concern. The volunteering pool might be shrinking, but the need for volunteering is increasing. Sometimes people have a go at youngsters and say they do not volunteer as much. But they still volunteer—just in different ways. We need to adapt to that. I thank the good member for making such a great private member's statement. New South Wales thanks everyone who volunteers.

### **SOUTH COAST ELECTORATE ROAD PROJECTS**

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (18:00):** Today I talk about roads—an extremely important issue to the people of the South Coast. Recently I have seen many news stories and social media posts where the content is not quite right. So tonight I use my private member's statement to give an update regarding South Coast roads. I thank the Federal member for Gilmore, Fiona Phillips, for her continued advocacy for funding road projects in the South Coast electorate. We have seen the start of the Jervis Bay intersection, a \$164 million project, with funding shared between the Federal and State governments—\$100 million and \$64 million respectively. This project is now well underway and is an important upgrade to an intersection that is the gateway to not only Jervis Bay but also the entire far South Coast.

The member for Gilmore is advocating to have \$97 million of Federal funds allocated to the planning of the much-needed Nowra bypass upgrade. The New South Wales Government has allocated \$8 million to the planning, and we are now nearly halfway through the three-year process. Transport for NSW has today advised me that it is currently undertaking preliminary environmental investigations to better understand the potential issues and constraints in the study area and is undertaking traffic modelling. That modelling includes existing and planned population and housing changes and new and planned roads such as Bannada Way and the Far North Collector Road. It is planning to publish the consultation report, which summarises its recent community consultation.

I have seen commentary on social media that says we should just get on with building the bypass, but it must be planned to ensure we get it right. Imagine what would happen if we failed to undertake due diligence and delivered public transport that was not fit for purpose. We would get Spanish trains that did not fit our tracks and

ferries that did not fit under our bridges. That is what happens when we rush, and fail to properly plan. We are getting on with the job and ensuring that when the bypass is built—and it will be built—it will be fit for purpose and deliver the design that is appropriate for our future.

That brings me to the Milton-Ulladulla bypass. Following the infrastructure reviews, funding for the bypass has been confirmed. New South Wales is funding it to the tune of \$188 million and the Federal Government to the tune of \$752 million, for a total commitment of \$940 million. I can assure members that this money is already in the budget and the project is moving ahead. On my request, Transport for NSW is considering a local access strategy so that we can balance changes that the project might introduce to the local road network against other important aspects, such as changes to travel routes for residents near the new bypass, new links that might be required, property and other impacts. Transport for NSW is currently finalising a community and stakeholder consultation plan. I look forward to sharing that with the community as soon as possible. Many locals will have seen the damage on the highway caused by the unprecedented rain last week. I drive on the highway every day. Transport for NSW will repair that as soon as possible. I ask that people take care on the highway and drive to conditions while we have these areas attended to.

What a disaster local roads are. These roads are the responsibility of the council, and currently 21 per cent of the roads in the Shoalhaven are beyond repair and must be replaced. I again congratulate the member for Gilmore on her advocacy for delivering a \$40 million Federal Government roads package. This money was allocated in the 2022 Federal budget. However, since then, Shoalhaven City Council has continued to advise that it does not have the capacity to complete the works. In June last year the council endorsed a plan to commit to a program, project management and engineering partnership model to complete upgrades to several major roads with those funds. The funds will sit with Transport for NSW, which will be responsible for administering the funds. Both the member for Gilmore and I have been in constant contact with Shoalhaven City Council. The Federal Government wants clear dates for milestones to ensure that the council completes the work in a timely manner and the funds are expended and not handed back like so many other grant-funded projects in our area.

#### **FATHER SEBASTIAN SAVARIMUTHU**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne) (18:05):** I recognise Father Sebastian Savarimuthu, parish priest of All Hallows parish in Five Dock. Last month our community joined together to celebrate and recognise Father Sebastian's silver jubilee—25 years of service as a Catholic priest. This is a remarkable milestone for a devoted parish priest, who is highly respected. It was a pleasure to join in the festivities for this occasion, which included a mass at All Hallows with the Most Reverend Anthony Fisher, OP, Archbishop of Sydney; Bishop Terry Brady; and Bishop Danny Meagher, among other special guests and visiting priests.

I take this opportunity to share some words about Father Sebastian's journey in his service of the community. Father Sebastian began his studies in 1994 and studied theology and a licentiate in marriage and family at the Pontifical Lateran University in Rome. He served as a deacon at the Jubilee Church, which is regarded as the crown jewel of the Archdiocese of Rome and serves 8,000 people. He was ordained on 12 April 1999 and continued on as assistant priest. In 2001 he moved to Our Mother of Consolation parish. On the morning after Pope Benedict's election, the parish priest he was assisting received a phone call from the Vatican, asking that Father Sebastian present himself at the Vatican. The new pope had asked him to take up the role of his personal secretary. Father Sebastian had to refuse this invitation on the grounds of his health, because his ankle was troubling him, and he had applied to move to Australia. The Pope said he knew of his condition and gave him permission to leave and go to Australia.

He applied for a permit to spend one year in Australia, and the application was accepted, as our archbishop at the time knew the cardinal in Rome who had endorsed the move. Arriving in Sydney, Father Sebastian served as assistant priest at St Mary's Cathedral. He then served at Liverpool, Campsie and Bossley Park parishes before arriving at All Hallows. In the time he has served as parish priest at All Hallows, he has already won the support and hearts of his parish. I spoke to many parishioners on the day of the celebrations, and they all remarked that Father Sebastian is nurturing the religious spirit within the community. He was praised for how he interacts with parishioners, staff members, volunteers and the parish committee. It is clear to everybody who attended the celebration that his service is valued and that his guidance and dedication, as well as his passion for the community, are recognised and appreciated. I thank Ron and Maria Natoli for sharing with me a copy of the speech given during the silver jubilee celebrations, which I have used today to acknowledge Father Sebastian.

It is clear to me that All Hallows is a family-oriented church and parish, and it is wonderful to see the supportive way our community has come together to recognise the parish priest. I acknowledge everyone involved in coordinating and organising Father Sebastian's mass, including the principal and deputy principal of All Hallows Catholic Primary School and the students who were involved in the lovely celebrations. Finally, I once again sincerely congratulate Father Sebastian on his commitment to faith and service, which has made a profound impact on our community. I wish him all the very best on this joyous occasion, and always. God bless.

### NATIONAL WALK SAFELY TO SCHOOL DAY

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (18:09):** Last Friday I had the pleasure of joining the Minister for Transport and the Minister for Roads on National Walk Safely to School Day. It is an initiative led by the Pedestrian Council of Australia—chairman and CEO Harold Scruby also came to my electorate—with support from Transport for NSW. Local police from the Traffic and Highway Patrol Command were there, which was fantastic. We joined students, parents, carers and the principal, Mrs Frasca, from Canterbury South Public School.

I was very fortunate to have both Ministers come to promote some of the excellent work that the Government is doing with respect to active transport. The National Walk Safely to School Day initiative is about providing schools and the community with information and classroom resources on the importance of road safety. It was therefore wonderful to make the exciting announcement on the day that the Canterbury Bankstown council had successfully received a \$600,000 grant under the Get NSW Active program to install a raised pedestrian crossing and shared pathways around Canterbury South Public School. I attended that school as an infant and primary student. It is surrounded by the Cooks River, and Hughes Park is down the road. The location is fantastic, but we also need to improve the cycleways and the footpath. That \$600,000 grant is going to go a very long way.

I am grateful to Minister Haylen and Minister Graham for the initiative. Scores of students and their families were there on Friday. I am very excited that in just a few months' time students at Canterbury South Public School will have a new, safer crossing and wider footpaths in the surrounding streets. It is so good. We are in government—

**Mr Jihad Dib:** You're delivering.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** —and we are delivering. I am so excited. This is so good because our students need to be walking to school, and walking to school safely. As a government, we need to provide the amenity for students to walk safely to school. That is a critical message. This funding will improve safety not only for the students but also for parents, teaching staff and the entire school community. It is particularly important for Canterbury South Public School, as it is a kindergarten to year 6 school with very young students. People who are familiar with the location will know that Canterbury Road is about 300 metres away. A number of families now live in apartments there, so their mode of transport is public transport or walking to school.

The Government must make sure that it is doing everything it possibly can not only to educate, inform and increase awareness, but also to provide dollars directly to the Canterbury Bankstown council to ensure that it expands the footpath and provides the cycleways. We need to make sure that kids are cycling safely as well. That is important for the parents and carers and teachers who wish to encourage the students to become independent and confident commuters, whilst having the assurance that their journeys to and from school every day are safe. Active transport is a priority that my local community cares deeply about. Having safe, open public spaces is key to a happy and healthy lifestyle.

By enhancing our public spaces, we will encourage residents to embrace walking, exercising and active transport, and will foster greater community connections and a stronger sense of belonging. By promoting active transport options, we will reduce congestion on the road and improve overall health outcomes in my electorate. For our local area, the new paths will fill an important gap between the school gate and the Cooks River walking and cycling paths, improving the overall walking and cycling network in the community. It will contribute to a more sustainable and vibrant future for us all. Once again, I congratulate Canterbury South Public School. I thank both Ministers, and I thank Harold Scruby for his advocacy. I thank members of the local community for their advocacy as well.

### PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLIST SAFETY

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (18:14):** This evening I, like the member for Canterbury, will emphasise the critical importance of enhancing pedestrian and cycling safety amenity and accessibility throughout our city. Great minds! As a global city, Sydney and the inner west suburbs should be pioneering the development of streets designed for people, not just cars. We need shared spaces where residents can utilise alternative means of transport, reducing reliance on private vehicles. Unfortunately, that vision is far from the current reality in the electorate of Balmain. During Road Safety Week, which was last week, I reached out to residents across my electorate to identify areas where they feel unsafe walking and cycling and where they believe investment is needed to enhance safety and accessibility. I assure members that I have had no shortage of responses, with the survey receiving close to 300 replies in the past fortnight alone. People were very willing to share their experiences of dangerous intersections, poorly maintained footpaths and an overall lack of infrastructure such as dedicated bike paths.

Members will be aware of the significant changes to road infrastructure in my electorate following the construction of WestConnex and the recent opening of the Rozelle interchange. As part of that project, the Rozelle Parklands were delivered. Unfortunately, it has become clear that the infrastructure surrounding the parklands for pedestrians and cyclists was not well considered. Following the reopening of the parklands after several months of delay, many residents—particularly those with young children and those who walk their dogs in the area—have expressed serious concerns about pedestrian safety. With the new parklands, we now have two parks separated by an increasingly busy Lilyfield Road. Young children and parents with prams are attempting to make this risky crossing with nowhere safe to do so. Several residents have written to me with their concerns. One wrote:

... the crossing point is on a bend in Lilyfield Road where there [are] no traffic control measures - visibility is difficult as cars park right up to the access point and traffic is at maximum speed.

They went on to say that their "main concern is for children accessing the parkland" and that they are "genuinely worried that an incident will occur". I heard that concern echoed when I visited the park myself with my kids. Several kids at a birthday party were running back and forth across the road and it was incredibly challenging. No parent felt safe to let them do it on their own. These were kids nearing the end of primary school who should be able to have a little bit of autonomy to get around their local neighbourhoods. The overwhelming feedback was that everyone felt it was dangerous and an accident just waiting to happen. That was incredibly disappointing.

When we have new projects like the Rozelle Parklands as part of the opening of WestConnex, we need governments at all levels to ensure that pedestrian amenity and safety is at the forefront of planning decisions. While I understand that the council is undertaking master planning for the area, pedestrian crossings and other safety measures, including well-maintained footpaths, should be integral to preliminary planning and design, not added as an afterthought months later. If we want our communities to access amenities like the Rozelle Parklands safely and if we want to reduce people's reliance on cars, we need to bring our pedestrian infrastructure up to scratch.

The lack of safe pedestrian crossings in the Balmain electorate was a prominent theme. Over 50 per cent of survey respondents expressed that the lack of safe crossings impacted their decision to walk. Until recently, another notorious spot was on Victoria Road near Robert Street, where the removal of the pedestrian overpass a couple of years ago as part of the Rozelle Interchange project left residents with no safe way to get across that major arterial road. Instead, they were left to decide whether to make the risky dash across seven lanes of traffic or take an almost 10-minute detour, including crossing five additional roads, some of which involve stairs without accessible curb ramps for prams or people in wheelchairs. While I welcome the decision to install a signalised crossing at Robert Street, this issue once again demonstrates the failure to plan ahead when it comes to pedestrian and cycling infrastructure.

The survey revealed that cyclists, particularly across the inner west, do not feel much safer. One said, "As a cyclist in Sydney, you always feel vulnerable to cars, opening doors, close parking, lack of safe space at roundabouts and intersections, and deadly gaps in the cycling network." As someone who cycles around with my three kids on my cargo bike, I can attest to that. It is just not good enough. We know that the 2023 budget allocated a whopping \$72.3 billion for transport infrastructure capital works over four years, yet only \$97.9 million is earmarked for active transport. That equates to 0.13 per cent of the transport capital works budget, or \$3 per person per year for walking and cycling infrastructure across the State. Unless we make a serious investment in pedestrian and cycling safety, the issues I have shared tonight will persist. Our communities deserve safe shared spaces for people, not just cars.

### SURGERY WAIT TIMES

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (18:19):** We can all agree that reducing planned surgery waitlist times is critical. That is why one of the first things the New South Wales Labor Government did via the Premier Chris Minns and the Minister for Health was establish the Surgical Care Governance Taskforce in March 2023. By April 2024 the New South Wales overdue planned surgery waitlist had been slashed by 85 per cent, with over 12,000 fewer people waiting for overdue procedures. In my electorate of Fairfield, both Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital and Fairfield Hospital have seen 100 per cent reductions in overdue surgeries since the taskforce was established.

In Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital the number of locals waiting longer than clinically recommended for surgery decreased from 348 to zero as at the December 2023 quarter. In Fairfield Hospital the number of locals waiting longer than clinically recommended for surgery decreased from 170 to zero as at the December 2023 quarter. One of the ways the taskforce was able to achieve those results was by expanding the category of procedures eligible for same-day surgery. Those include hernia repair, gall bladder removal, tonsil removal, deviated septum surgery and sinus surgery. None of that would be possible without the efforts of our healthcare

workers and associated staff. I thank them for their commitment and dedication. We are not stopping here. We will continue to deliver better healthcare outcomes for the people of New South Wales.

### LISMORE ELECTORATE EVENTS

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (18:21):** I note a few events happening across my electorate of Lismore, starting with the Secondary Schools Student Leadership Program held in the theatre here at Parliament today. Unfortunately, I could not attend, but I acknowledge the students and schools from my electorate who were here, including Madison Fleming and Korban Newton from Woodenbong Central School; Erin Laurie and Chloe James from Bonalbo Central School; Sarah Prikulis and Giselle Thenet from Nimbin Central School; Frankie Vasta and Bridie Makejev from Tenterfield High School; Katie Johnson and Jethro Bolliger from The Rivers Secondary College Lismore High Campus; Natalia Hickling and Aaron Everson from The Rivers Secondary College Richmond River High Campus; Riley Harlow and Chloe Allen from The Rivers Secondary College Kadina High Campus; Felicity Duley and Kaelan Harley from Kyogle High School; and Elise Lang and Nara Coleman from Murwillumbah Learning Community High School.

It is fantastic to have so many of those students come to Parliament. As I said, it is unfortunate I could not get there due to duties here. It is the first one I have missed. They are leaders at school and the leaders of the future. Speaking of young people, I put a call-out to young people across the electorate about making their voices heard. We all know that the New South Wales Government's Advocate for Children and Young People has launched the "Your Voice, Our Future" survey to further engage with young people on the issues that matter to them most. I put a call-out through the media and will be doing other activities and works to make sure young people get their voices heard. Recently I attended the launch of a book called *Strong Together*. I thank Reverend Steve Hales, pastor for young adults and strategic development at the Lismore Baptist Church, and his daughter Sarita Barnett. She is a narrative therapist. She helped pull the stories in the book together. They are stories of courage and community from the 2022 Northern Rivers floods.

Whilst I could not hope to cover all the stories in that book, I will read out their headings: "Dislocated and Displaced but not Discouraged" by Marie; "Coming Together, Working Together" by Bob Watson; "Building Bridges: A Reflection" by an anonymous Northern Rivers citizen; "Smiles, Free Plants and Changing Tomorrow" by Lee; "Pop Up Farm" by Loretta and Mark; "Driving through the Nightmares" by Ray; "Paying Tribute through Art and Music" by Stephen; "When Your Soul has to Help" by Alexandria; "Generosity and Gratitude" by Ellie; "Loss and Learning to Reach Out" by Renae Green; "Caring for the Carers" by Doug; "Losing Treasures, Gaining Perspective" by Johnny Pink; "Holding Onto What Really Matters" by Peter and Luz; "When Neighbours Keep Neighbouring" by Sue; and "Help is on the Way" by Sam. The book also includes chapters "Where to get support" and "Acknowledgements", followed by "Two Years On", a poem by Deb Fisher.

It was a very emotional event but it was also a joyful event in lots of ways, as people came out of the trauma with the whole idea of "Strong Together". That leads me to the important role of our neighbourhood centres. Neighbourhood Centre Week goes from 13 to 19 May. It is when we celebrate the role of our neighbourhood and community centres across Australia. Most members have neighbourhood centres in their electorates. In Lismore there is Murwillumbah Community Centre, Resilient Lismore, Northern Rivers Community Gateway, Nimbin Neighbourhood and Information Centre, Kyogle Together, Tenterfield Social Development Committee and Women Up North Housing. Those centres do fantastic work supporting our community in general times and in times of trauma. They did fantastic work following the 2022 floods, even though many of them were flooded themselves and had to get back up and running in temporary accommodation. They did not miss a beat to make sure that local residents got the urgent support that they needed. I applaud the neighbourhood centres in my electorate and elsewhere.

### HILLS WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

**Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby) (18:26):** Recently I had the pleasure of visiting an impressive organisation in my electorate of Hornsby, the Hills Wildlife Sanctuary. For 46 years that not-for-profit organisation's dedicated volunteers have rescued and rehabilitated a wide range of native animals. The sanctuary also provides a forever home for native animals that are unable to be released. In 2007 Northholm Grammar student and Dural local Ben Dessen began volunteering at the sanctuary at the age of 15. Later, Ben and his younger brother, Sam, became live-in volunteer caretakers at the facility, with Ben becoming the sanctuary's manager, a role he has held for the past 11 years.

Ben Dessen completed an animal science and conservation biology degree and, until recently, was the manager of a local pet store. He has taken extended leave from his paid profession to focus on his passion of caring for native animals at the Hills Wildlife Sanctuary. More recently, Ben was featured on various television programs, including as the regular animal expert for *Studio 10* and *The Morning Show* and in a five-part series

called *Play School's Amazing Animals*. He has also put together a published book, *The Ultimate Pet Handbook*. Ben does an incredible job and I am very grateful for the work that he does across our community.

The sanctuary benefits from a large number of volunteers both young and old, coordinated by 22-year-old Olivia Gillespie. It includes 80-year-old David Knox from Middle Dural, who volunteers at least once a week. In addition to their small army of volunteers, the Dural wildlife sanctuary has a diverse network of skilled supporters who utilise their professional qualifications to assist with the development and maintenance of the facilities within the sanctuary. They include a sandstone quarry owner, a carpenter, a plumber and an arborist. Utilising volunteer labour, high-quality animal enclosures were erected in late 2020. Later, an impressive billabong was installed to support native water birds under the care of the sanctuary. Rehabilitation aviaries were also installed. The origins of the sanctuary go back to the 1960s when the World League for Protection of Animals established the Kangaroo Protection Committee.

An influential member of the committee was Marjorie Wilson, who was dedicated to the protection of native wildlife. She once estimated her regular contribution as a volunteer for the cause was up to 60 hours a week. Miss Wilson was particularly skilled at lobbying politicians to support her cause and she developed a special relationship with Neville Wran. When Wran was elected as the New South Wales Premier in 1976, one of the first pre-election promises that he kept was to provide a piece of Crown land for the Kangaroo Protection Committee to establish a sanctuary. Thirty-five acres of Crown land, located in Dural, was carefully selected for the sanctuary by Marjorie Wilson.

On 9 September 1977 five members of the Kangaroo Protection Committee, including Marjorie, were made trustees for a gazetted fauna and flora reserve in Carters Road, Dural. A permit to care for wildlife on the reserve was issued by the Minister for Lands. Somehow Wilson persuaded the Government to allow prisoners on day release to build a log cabin on the land. When the cabin burnt down, a new one was built, utilising the labour of TAFE students. Initially the sanctuary only cared for macropods, including rearing orphaned joeys that came into its care. Later it was expanded to look after a wide variety of Australian native fauna, including injured animals.

In 1979 Marjorie Wilson was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for her services to wildlife. Just before she passed away in September 2009, she declared the sanctuary at Dural to be the epitome of her life's work. In recent years the facility's name was changed to the Hills Wildlife Sanctuary to reflect a more local feel. In 1996 a new educational centre was built on the Dural sanctuary and it was officially opened by Jill and Neville Wran. The building is still well used today, including as a training centre for new volunteer wildlife carers.

With its extensive and protected bushland ecosystem, the Hills Wildlife Sanctuary is in a unique position to rehabilitate or rehome injured native animals and surrendered and rescued native pets, as well as animals retired from zoos or wildlife parks. To assist with the animals under the care of the sanctuary, a network of skilled and highly experienced veterinarians, zookeepers and wildlife carers are available. They are all committed to the comfort, service and survival of all Australian native wildlife in need. All of the sanctuary's resources were activated to their fullest during the devastating bushfires in 2019, as hundreds of affected animals were brought into the sanctuary.

Marjorie Wilson's story is inspirational, and the equally inspiring Ben Dessen has picked up her work. Together with the organisation's board, Ben has a bold vision of leading the Hills Wildlife Sanctuary to an exciting new level. That includes the creation of a world-class hub for biodiversity conservation, threatened species recovery and education. It also aims to construct and operate a state-of-the-art wildlife hospital with an emergency response unit capable of assisting wildlife in times of crisis. In addition, the sanctuary has set its sights on establishing onsite breeding programs for threatened and endangered species, as well as facilitating a range of educational opportunities for the local community, wildlife carers, veterinarians and emergency response personnel. I am committed to help Ben and the team at the Hills Wildlife Sanctuary achieve their goals and I look forward to seeing where it takes them.

#### LEPPINGTON ELECTORATE ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (18:31):** As I have stated in this House on many occasions, my community is witnessing a surge in growth and grappling with infrastructure challenges that require urgent intervention. Three years ago the census recorded the population of the suburb of Austral at nearly 7,000, more than doubling from the 3,000 in the previous 2016 census. Since then our community has only continued to grow apace. The Austral and Leppington North precinct was initially projected to yield about 16,000 dwellings, but current trends suggest it will reach 26,000 dwellings or more. Due to the failure of previous governments, infrastructure has failed to keep pace with not just those revised dwelling numbers but even the initial ones.

That neglect is most acutely felt on our road network. Each and every day, families in Austral are stuck in gridlock while on their way to and from work and school. The failure lies at the feet of all three levels of government. While I welcome the investment of \$1.9 billion in funding by the Federal Government for upgrades to roads in Western Sydney announced in the budget this week, I am disappointed that Fifteenth Avenue has missed out. Instead, roads around the aerotropolis such as the Eastern Ring Road in Badgerys Creek received funding. While the construction of the Eastern Ring Road has been applauded by the developers with landholdings in the aerotropolis, the area will not see significant population growth for some years to come. Given the significant population growth in Austral, the need to upgrade Fifteenth Avenue is overdue and more urgent. The Minns Government recognised that need and committed \$50 million towards the upgrade of Fifteenth Avenue in last year's budget. Twenty million of the \$50 million will go towards works to ease capacity and reduce congestion build-up on Cowpasture Road between Fifteenth Avenue and the M7. I am pleased to inform the House that investigation works have commenced.

While I, along with local residents, remain frustrated with the pace of the upgrade, unlike the previous Government, with projects like Heathcote Road and the Prospect Highway, I will not allow millions of dollars to be wasted and multiple elections to pass by before works begin. Make no mistake, Fifteenth Avenue is and will remain a major priority for me and the Government. As a testament to that, more work has been done over the past 12 months on Fifteenth Avenue than was done under the previous 12 years when members of the Opposition were in government.

While Fifteenth Avenue is the main east-west arterial through Austral, Edmondson Avenue is the main north-south arterial. As the State Government continues apace to transform Fifteenth Avenue, by contrast, the Liverpool City Council upgrade of Edmondson Avenue sadly lingers. Liverpool council was awarded \$58 million by the previous Government in 2021 to undertake work to upgrade Edmondson to a four-lane urban road. Council papers from March 2021 state:

The funding allocations require Council to sign funding agreements to deliver the Edmondson Avenue upgrade project by June 2024.

Three years later and not a single sod has been turned. Council has, however, met with me on multiple occasions requesting more funding. Our community cannot be held hostage any longer by the administrative chaos and bureaucratic paralysis that grips Liverpool council. Too many accidents and near misses have occurred on Edmondson Avenue, particularly in recent months at the intersection of Eighth and Tenth avenues. That intersection is in close proximity to local schools, retirement villages and my favourite local bowling club, Club Austral.

The safety and wellbeing of our most vulnerable residents is being put at risk each and every day so long as council continues to drag the chain. Enough is enough; we must take action. In response to the ongoing delays, I have started a petition to garner community support and demand immediate action from Liverpool council on Edmondson Avenue. I call on Liverpool City Council to finally get on with the job. The people of Austral have waited long enough. I urge the community to sign and share the petition at [nathanhagarty.com/edmondson](https://nathanhagarty.com/edmondson) to ensure that the upgrade of Edmondson Avenue begins as soon as possible and the safety of our community is given urgent priority.

### ERARING POWER STATION

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (18:36):** Lake Macquarie has been a powerhouse of energy production in New South Wales for almost 70 years. The Wangi Power Station opened in 1958 and was succeeded by Eraring in 1984. Powered by locally mined coal, Eraring currently provides around 25 per cent of the State's energy needs. Yet as the transition away from fossil fuels looms, I am very fearful that Lake Macquarie is being abandoned by this Government, as it has been neglected by numerous governments before. We must transition away from fossil fuels and we must do so as soon as possible. Managing a just economic transition away from coal is a massive task. It requires clear coordinated policies, detailed planning and dedicated resources.

We all know that the Eraring Power Station will be closing in the next few years. A closure day has been proposed for August 2025. That date may change, but it is clear that Origin is preparing for the closure in the near future. The Eraring Power Station was originally opened by the Wran Government and remained under government ownership until it was sold by the O'Farrell Government in 2013. Throughout its operational life, the coal for Eraring has been substantially mined and supplied from the Myuna Colliery. Since opening in 1982, the Myuna Colliery has only ever provided domestic coal to the Eraring Power Station. The only means of transporting coal out of the Myuna mine is via an overland conveyor directly into Eraring.

Like Eraring, the Myuna mine was originally opened and operated by the New South Wales government. Like Eraring, the mine was privatised in 2002 but this time by a Labor government. I was strongly opposed to the privatisation of both assets at the time. While the governments of the day received a sugar hit of funding from those sales, the long-term ramifications of the privatisations are now playing out. If media reports are correct, the



Government is close to announcing an arrangement to extend the life of the Eraring Power Station. Yet even if a deal is reached, likely through significant taxpayer subsidies, hundreds of highly paid mining jobs at Myuna and Mandalong mines are immediately at risk due to Centennial Coal being unable to reach a supply agreement with Origin Energy.

Since both Eraring and Myuna are now privately operated, the Government has limited control over contract negotiations between the two parties. However, if the Government is proposing to support the continued operation of Eraring through taxpayer subsidies, it would be a perverse outcome for hundreds of jobs to be lost from the captive supplier of Eraring immediately following this decision. Transition away from fossil fuels is necessary and will involve significant pain for the communities affected by the transition, including Lake Macquarie. However, while some pain is inevitable, it is the job of the Government, as far as possible, to ensure the economic transition is fair and managed in a way that provides a soft landing for the employees and communities negatively affected.

It is an issue also of economic justice. The workers and community of Lake Macquarie have powered New South Wales for many decades. The operations have provided not only power but also a direct economic benefit to the State through mining royalties and taxes. Despite the direct economic benefits that the community has provided the State, Lake Macquarie has never received a fair share of investment in infrastructure and services. We have virtually no health facilities. Our road infrastructure is severely overloaded, with projects stalled. Our transport infrastructure needs upgrades, and we are struggling to get progress on funded projects such as the sport and recreation centre at Myuna Bay. Now, at a time when the Government is considering using taxpayer money to extend the life of Eraring, it increasingly appears that the Government will not require certainty of supply contracts to protect the employment of Myuna and Mandalong workers as part of any deal.

The privatisation of Eraring and other coal-fired power stations put the taxpayers of New South Wales at the mercy of private companies for their energy security. That was a mistake, and it has come at a high cost. I urge the Government to do whatever it can for the employees of Myuna and Mandalong mines and to ensure that any deal to extend the life of the Eraring Power Station protects their employment for the life of the extension. This may come at a cost, but the economic cost of the loss of hundreds of local jobs will be much higher for both the individual employees and the Lake Macquarie and greater Hunter community. Lake Macquarie has substantially contributed to the financial coffers of New South Wales for many decades. The community should not be left to languish at this critical time of economic and energy transition.

#### LEUKEMIA PATIENT CARE

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (18:41):** I bring to the attention of the House the issues facing leukaemia patients receiving bone marrow transplants in the Sutherland shire and across New South Wales. Tonight, I share the story of one of my constituents, a woman I will call Sarah. I am not often left without words, but I was when I met Sarah. I share her story to shine a light on the issue and hope the Government will address patient care shortcomings for people such as her. In 2018 Sarah was diagnosed and received treatment for stage three triple-negative breast cancer. She underwent surgery, chemotherapy and radiation. Unfortunately, in late 2022 Sarah was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukaemia and immediately commenced treatment at St George Hospital. After further treatment and some long stints in hospital, Sarah made it to remission in 2023. However, the cancer returned earlier this year and she is awaiting another bone marrow transplant.

Following Sarah's initial 2022 treatment and discharge, she attended follow-up appointments with the transplant team at St Vincent's Hospital. The appointments initially occurred on a twice-weekly cycle but were moved to once every five to seven weeks six months post-transplant. Sarah's cancer resurfaced during one of those gaps. Sarah informed me that most transplant patients in other Australian States still have appointments every four weeks up to 18 months post-transplant. Sarah has been led to believe that the extended time frames between appointments were a result of hospitals being "so stretched, resource-wise, with waitlists for new patients that they are not able to cope with crucial existing patients' needs".

For someone with cancer, every day can make a difference in catching a relapse. If that truly is the reason for the extended gaps between appointments, it needs to change. Furthermore, Sarah has raised with me that we have a shortage of bone marrow transplant hospitals in Sydney. Waiting times at the few we do have are at least six months. That is an alarming amount of time for someone who needs to undergo urgent treatment, such as Sarah. She is currently undergoing chemotherapy treatment in an attempt to achieve remission, but this can be debilitating, and she expects to be in and out of hospital for the foreseeable future.

Sarah undergoes chemotherapy at St George Hospital in Kogarah. However, as it is not a transplant hospital, it is unable to provide her with a transplant plan or an indication of future treatment. This is sadly common for patients in southern Sydney, who do not have access to a team of haematologists and transplant doctors under the one roof available to discuss, evaluate and decide upon patient treatments. Sarah points to the experience of

patients south of the border in Victoria as an example of the approach we could adopt in New South Wales. At the Royal Melbourne Hospital, patients are treated under the one roof, "from initial leukaemia diagnosis, all the way through to transplant and potential relapse, all under the care of a long-term team of the same specialists". In closing, I read into *Hansard* the plea that Sarah makes to the health Minister in the hope that help can be offered to patients like her:

I implore the NSW Health minister to please consider opening more transplant beds and provide more staffing in existing transplant hospitals. Just as crucial, to also consider funding for creating new transplant hospitals. For example, St George hospital will be an ideal hospital to consider expanding into transplants. They already have a full haematology team and would take the burden off other Sydney transplant hospitals. It would greatly benefit St George hospital too as the process of trying to place their patients in transplant hospitals is becoming more difficult by the day. Patients all the way down the South Coast currently are fully reliant on predominantly St Vincent's, and now also RPA, Westmead, North Shore and Liverpool Hospitals.

Sarah went on to say:

I hope and pray there is some light at the end of the tunnel for Leukaemia transplant patients such as myself. I fervently hope NSW Health are able to act in a timely manner to facilitate desperately needed hospital reform and address these shortages.

To Sarah, I say you are an incredibly strong woman. My thoughts and prayers are with you, and I am sure those of the other members in this place are also with you. I wish you all the very best for your treatment. Thank you for sharing your story. I hope that the Minister for Health takes it onboard and that we see more transplant beds opened across our State.

### **EDGECLIFF COMMERCIAL CENTRE PLANNING AND URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY**

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (18:46):** I speak on the Edgecliff Commercial Centre strategy, which was recently endorsed by Woollahra council. In doing so, I congratulate councillors and council staff on the work they have done in preparing the strategy. Edgecliff is the gateway to my local community, and it deserves a coordinated vision for its future to accommodate increased uplift in the area. The Edgecliff strategy is the product of collaboration with the community—of local voices making local decisions. Opposition members recognise that it is only through working with local communities and not against them that we will deliver the housing supply that New South Wales needs.

It is part of our Liberal values to favour decentralised decision-making and to have decision-making in the hands of locals because they know their community better than backroom bureaucrats. We believe in listening at the grassroots level when it comes to designing the vision for our local communities. Development across New South Wales should not be a one-size-fits-all approach, and we will not succeed in delivering the housing that New South Wales needs by simply telling local councils to "get out of the way", as one Minister said. The Minns Labor Government has sought to bulldoze local communities when it comes to development.

In cases like Edgecliff, when the new planning reforms were introduced by the Labor Government just before Christmas, transport oriented developments [TODs] were allocated to different train stations around the city—places that could take significant uplift. Edgecliff station was excluded from becoming a TOD. Interestingly, Woollahra has planned for its own TOD. We were not allocated one; it was not forced upon us. We designed one anyway. The TOD would have 26 storeys of uplift, and it could accommodate almost 1,200 new people. That is the result of local planning and almost a decade of consultation with the community. We have done that.

I am asking members opposite, including the planning Minister, to consider that when looking at communities like ours. Two-thirds of our community is made up of apartments—really high-density living already. There is one road in and out; we do not have train transport past Edgecliff station. We do not have light rail or trains; we just have ferries, and our roads are clogged. Our community is very high density, with a high proportion of renters, and we have been carrying the burden and the opportunity of uplift for so long. We recognise that opportunity, which is why Woollahra council has consulted with the community and developed its own transport-oriented development plan.

My plea to the planning Minister, tonight and moving forward, is that in creating our own future—a future that has come through consultation with the community—we are rewarded when it comes to the implementation of the other part of the planning reforms, which is the low- and medium-rise density reforms. They are the ones we are really worried about. They will impact our community quite significantly because, as I have said, we are already a high-density population and our roads are choked. We have ageing infrastructure. Our sewage systems are the legacy of the original development in the east. We are the only place in Australia that still has raw sewage being pumped off the cliffs. It is getting fixed thanks to a Coalition Government investment, but that is the landscape we are playing with in the eastern suburbs.

When it comes to the new "reforms" that are being introduced—I use inverted commas because "reforms" would suggest they were actually positive—a one-size-fits-all approach does not necessarily work in the east or

in other high-density areas, although it might work elsewhere. But in our community, in recognition of local decisions by local planners to prepare for future uplift—26 storeys, affordable housing and a really exciting vision for our community—we should not have low- and medium-rise density reforms imposed upon us. We should be excluded from that so we can be at the heart of decision-making. We are really proud of the plans in the east—of a long history of uplift and development. We should be rewarded by being excluded from the reforms, which would be really detrimental to our community. Our community cannot cope with uplift of up to eight storeys within 800 metres of a town centre. I congratulate Woollahra council and I ask that our community be rewarded for the long, hard planning work it has done over many years and continues to do.

*Bills*

**ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT AMENDMENT (VIBRANCY REFORMS)  
BILL 2024**

**Returned**

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

**OMBUDSMAN AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2024**

**First Reading**

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

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** I order that the second reading of the bill stand as an order of the day for a later time.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 18:53 until  
Tuesday 4 June 2024 at 12:00.**

*Written Community Recognition Statements*

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

**LOCAL DOGS WIN PRIZES AT SYDNEY ROYAL EASTER SHOW 2024**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—Several Wollondilly members of the Wollondilly All Breeds Kennel Club and their four legged companions have walked away as winners in the Royal Easter Dog Show. The biggest dog show in Australia draws competitors from all over the country, taking the opportunity to show their skills and abilities in different events including agility, obedience, special breeds and best in show. Wollondilly All Breeds Kennel Club was well represented with winners including Carol Domsalla, the Kennel Club President, with her dog Jazz placing 2nd place in Dual Title Odience; Ruby Beldane and her dog Andy won 2nd place Novice Jumping and JD Title, 3rd place in Novice Tricks, and 4th Place Agility; Helen Hillman placed 2nd Excellend Gambler 300 and 3rd Place Masters Jumping 300 with her dog Frenchy; Julianne Smith and her dog Buddy placed second and Title in Novice Tricks and Amy Tombling with her dog Franklin placed 6th in Novice Tricks. The Kennel Club is run by volunteers. They meet in Bargo and welcome all breeds and abilities to join in their regular training sessions.

**SOUTH WEST SYDNEY REGIONAL ACADEMY OF SPORT NURTURING LOCAL SPORTING  
TALENT**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—As the world watches the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games later this year in Paris, there will be some young athletes in Wollondilly thinking further ahead to competing on home soil in the 2032 Brisbane Olympics. Thanks to the South West Sydney Regional Academy of Sports [RAS], for some of these athletes their sporting dreams will become a reality. South West Sydney RAS is one of eleven Regional Academies of Sport in NSW, providing the direct link for young athletes to move from club levels sports to elite levels. The RAS works to guide athletes to develop to the very best of their abilities and beyond. For some athletes this means moving on to compete within their high-performance pathway. For others returning to their local club to bring back their learned skills and leadership to inspire the next generation to compete with, rather than against their competitors to bring out the best in everyone. Sports organisations like this allow youth to reach their goals, and I am thankful that we have dedicated organisations such as the Regional Academy of Sport to guide Wollondilly youth to reach their full potential.

### WOLLONDILLY TOURISM BOOST

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—Razorback Ridge Wines were the location of the inaugural 'Wollondilly Tourism Connect' networking event, by Wollondilly Shire Council. It included guest speakers from Camden Valley Inn, Destination NSW, Service NSW Business Bureau, South West Sydney Tourism Taskforce Inc NSW, Wollondilly Tours, Wollondilly Performing Arts Centre and Visit Wollondilly. This event was an opportunity for tourism providers to connect and share, and build upon Wollondilly' tourism industry, of which some of these providers were recognised in the recent 2024 Australian Small Business Champion Awards. Previously, the Wollondilly Tourism Association ran these events with their popular After 5 event a highlight for local businesses. Wollondilly Shire Council's Tourism Connect will facilitate events in the future, building on the successful foundation that Wollondilly Tourism Association has built. Wollondilly tourism highlights the things that we love about the area, from the natural surrounds, our heritage features and small towns to food, wines and agriculture, thanks to the work promoting tourism in the area more visitors are getting to experience the beauty and uniqueness of Wollondilly.

### RYDE EISTEDDFOD COMMITTEE

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to congratulate the newly elected committee of the Ryde Eisteddfod following their Annual General Meeting. Under the guidance of returning officer Vic Tagg, President of the Eastwood Chamber of Commerce, the committee has been formed with dedicated individuals ready to uphold the Eisteddfod's esteemed tradition. Congratulations to Chairman and Senior's convenor Edna Wilde, Vice Chair and Catering Dawn Nettheim, and the entire committee comprising Secretary Suzanne Maslen, Carol Gulbin, Treasurer Robert Groves, and Assistant Treasurer John Dixon. Special recognition goes to the various convenors and committee members who will contribute their expertise across different categories. As the committee continues its work, auditions are ongoing for key positions, highlighting the organisation's inclusive spirit. With preparations underway for competitions encompassing Dance, Vocals, Choral, Instrumental, Ensembles, Speech and Drama, and Seniors divisions, the Ryde Eisteddfod promises another season of cultural enrichment. Let us extend our best wishes to the new committee as they embark on this journey, fostering artistic excellence and community engagement through the Ryde Eisteddfod.

### WORLD'S GREATEST SHAVE

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in acknowledging the tremendous contributions of our community to the World's Greatest Shave. Together, we stood in solidarity against blood cancer, demonstrating unwavering support for the 140,000 families grappling with this hidden crisis across Australia. In Ryde, the Ryde Eastwood Leagues Club hosted the Cancer Council's World's Biggest Shave event. Residents gathered as Si, the resident barber, skilfully shaved heads and beards, marking a pivotal moment in our collective effort to combat blood cancer. I must also extend special recognition to Evie, Will, and Josh from St Michael's Catholic Primary School. They each shaved their heads in support of their friend Nicholas, in a brave display of empathy and solidarity that is befitting of both their school and our community. Each participant contributed not only to practical and emotional assistance for those fighting blood cancer but also to vital research endeavours. Together, we moved one step closer to the ambitious goal of zero lives lost to blood cancer by 2035. Let us cherish the memories of this impactful event and continue to unite in support of noble causes, making a tangible difference in the lives of those in need.

### WORLD LUPUS DAY

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to recognise the significance of World Lupus Day, observed on Friday, May 10th. This global initiative unites individuals impacted by lupus and organisations worldwide to raise awareness of this debilitating autoimmune disease. Lupus Australia, a staunch supporter of the World Lupus Federation, is unwavering in its mission to educate the public about lupus symptoms and enhance the lives of patients. Despite its indiscriminate impact on people from diverse backgrounds, lupus remains one of the most underdiagnosed and underfunded diseases globally, inflicting profound hardships on individuals and families. Led by dedicated individuals like Cr Barbara Ward, Lupus Australia advocates for research, support, and awareness. The challenges the lupus community faces, including misconceptions and low public understanding, necessitate continued efforts to address this pressing health issue. With an estimated 6 million sufferers worldwide, including predominantly women, lupus demands our attention and support. Let us honour those who tirelessly advocate for lupus awareness and support, recognising their invaluable contributions to improving lives and fostering understanding.

### MICHAEL LATHLEAN RETIREMENT

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—I recognise retirement and outstanding contribution by Mr Michael Lathlean to the Hills Shire Council. He joined Council on 7 August 1990. During his service he held various roles

with his most recent role being the Manager, Asset Management, Roads, and Parks. Michael has been one of the most reliable and ever-present members of the Council. He is one of the first to arrive each morning, often arriving in the office before sunrise. Michael oversaw crucial projects within my electorate and the wider Hills Shire Council including the Castle Hill Eastern and Western ring road projects, and the construction of Bernie Mullane Sports Complex and Castle Hill Heritage Park which opened in 2003 and 2004 respectively. He was also incredibly proud to have led the relocation of the War Memorial from Castle Hill Park to Centenary of ANZAC Reserve. Further played a crucial role liaising with the NSW Government throughout the design and construction of Sydney Metro Northwest. We wish him all the best as he enjoys the next chapter of his life with his wife Julie and family. Thank you, Michael, for your exceptional service to the community.

#### **JOHN DEAN RETIREMENT**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—I acknowledge the retirement of Hills Shire Council, Group Manager of Customer and Community Services, Mr John Dean. John joined Council in January 2007 as Council's Manager of Economic Development and Marketing. Prior to joining Council, John held senior roles at Telstra, the Cairns Region Economic Development Corporation. John leads the Customer and Community Services Group which is responsible for Hills Community Care, childcare services, libraries and Waves Fitness and Aquatic Centre. John led the re-opening of the new Waves Fitness and Aquatic Centre, and he has been instrumental in driving growth in visitations and memberships. He oversaw the major upgrade of Castle Hill cemetery and transformation of the Pioneer Room into the Pioneer Theatre. He overhauled the way Council allocates sporting fields, improving relations with sporting associations and clubs, and he made it easier for people who do not live near libraries to borrow books, with the introduction of the library caddy and click and collect lockers. John will be missed by the more than 250 permanent staff and 120 casuals in his group. We wish John happiness, health, and the fulfilment that retirement offers. Thank you, John, for your exceptional service to the community.

#### **THE SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHAI'S OF THE HILLS SHIRE**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—I congratulate the Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the Hills Shire for the invitation to all members of the community to join with the Assembly to celebrate the Festival of Rivdan. The Rivdan Festival has a long history dating back to 1863, when Baha'u'llah, the founder of the Baha'is faith, spent time in the garden near the River Tigris on the outskirts of Baghdad. It was here Baha'u'llah announced to his friends gathered in the garden that he was God's messenger for the new age. The festival lasts twelve day each year and commences towards the end of April each year. For more than one hundred years Baha'is have celebrated the Prophet Baha'u'llah's messages of the oneness of faith, that diversity of religion should cease, and that differences of race should be annulled. The Festival of Rivdan was held in the Pioneer Theatre at Castle Hill on 27 April 2024. I express my deepest gratitude to Carmen Lalehzari and Farzin Heidari and to all the members of the Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the Hills Shire for a wonderful Festival of Rivdan.

#### **ELIZABETH MAHER - A WALK IN THE PARK FOR PARKINSONS**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to recognise Elizabeth Maher for organising the third annual 'A Walk in the Park for Parkinsons' event in Forster. 'A Walk in the Park' brings together thousands of individuals across Australia, including those living with Parkinson's, their families, and friends. A group of 30 people from our local community, myself included walked over the Forster Tuncurry bridge, along Tuncurry break wall, passing East 33, back over the bridge, down Little Street and finished off 10,000 steps later at Beach Bums Cafe for a delicious brunch. Among our group, most people walking had a family member affected by Parkinsons or had Parkinson's themselves. Elizabeth included - her husband was diagnosed with Parkinsons disease 7 years ago. Thank you, Elizabeth, for organising this event in our local area, and to all those who participated. I'm pleased that together we could help make a difference in the lives of those affected by Parkinsons disease.

#### **TAREE RESCUE SQUAD**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to recognise Taree Rescue Squad for their successful VRA Rescue NSW open day. Our Taree Rescue Squad plays such an important role within the Mid North Coast, providing primary and specialist rescue services in both our coastal and rural areas. Their expertise complements our other emergency services such as the RFS and the SES, working hand-in-hand to ensure our community's safety. This organisation is largely self-funded, with squad volunteers required to fundraise to keep their service available to the community. Taree Rescue Squad's \$275,000 fundraising campaign, for the upgrade of rescue capabilities and equipment was officially launched at their open day. During the launch, notable donations included InterFire Agencies (a rescue equipment distributor) presenting \$40,000 worth of hydraulic rescue equipment, which was donated by a mining company based in Western Australia, and Mr Ray Stack of Taree, donating \$5,000 to the appeal. I wish Taree Rescue Squad all the best for their fundraising efforts as they continue to ensure the safety of our community.

### WHITEHOUSE NOOK AND CAFE

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to recognise El Rattray and Liz Cole for their inaugural charity community fundraiser titled Thrift Shop to Catwalk, held at the Whitehouse Nook & Cafe. A celebration of giving pre-loved items a new lease on life, attendees wore vintage chic outfits, enjoyed high tea made by the Whitehouse Nook & Cafe, watched a thrift shop fashion parade, and listened to guest speaker Jodie Wilson from Mid North Coast Community College, ReCommunity Project. The Thrift Shop to Catwalk event promotes the values of revive, reuse and repair, supporting slow fashion and giving garments a second chance. During the event attendees had the opportunity to explore the curated thrift shop at the Nook Opshop. \$5 from every ticket sale was donated to The Great Lakes Women Shelter, supporting their important work in our community. Thank you El and Liz for creating such a fabulous event for our area, bringing the community together to create positive change, all while supporting our local women's shelter and those with disabilities.

### PRIVATE JOSEPH CHARLES ELLIOT

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden)**—Today I recognise the service of Private Joseph Charles Elliot, an Indigenous man who fought in Darwin during World War II. He was born in Sydney on the 16th of December 1909 and enlisted in the Australian Imperial and Citizen Forces on the 12th of January 1942. Private Elliot served in Darwin during the 2nd World War in the 20 Garrison Battalion. Private Elliot was discharged on February 8, 1943, after over 1 year of service. Shamefully private Elliot never received his service medals as he was an Indigenous serviceman. On Anzac Day I had the honour of presenting Private Elliot's medals to his family in a moving ceremony. While Private Elliot is no longer with us it was joyous to meet his family and learn about his story. I thank Private Joseph Charles Elliot for his service. Lest we forget.

### STEPHEN LESHONE

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden)**—I acknowledge the remarkable service of Station Officer Stephen Leshone, a resident of Gledswood Hills, who has served New South Wales as a firefighter with Fire and Rescue NSW for over 35 years, from February 24th, 1989, finishing on July 11 this year. Station Officer Leshone's dedication began with his training at the State Training College in 1989. Throughout his career, he has been located at Fairfield, City of Sydney, Chester Hill, Macquarie Fields, Cabramatta, Liverpool, Schofields, and Narellan. Station Officer Leshone's commitment has gone beyond firefighting. He was an accomplished General Land Rescue qualified firefighter ensuring the public were attended to at their worst hour. He consistently demonstrated leadership qualities, earning the respect of his peers. His dedication is reflected in the numerous awards he received, including the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal with 2 clasps, the National Medal with 1 clasp, The National Emergency Medal – 2019/20 Bushfires, a Commendation for Meritorious Service, a Commissioner's Letter of Appreciation, and the Premiers Bushfire Citation. Stephen's, leadership, courage, and unwavering commitment have made a significant contribution to the safety and security of our communities. We wish him all the best in his well-deserved retirement.

### CRICKET STAR TAKES ON INDIA

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—Rising South West Rocks cricket sensation Phoebe Laws, set off in April on an exciting voyage as she joined the under-17 India Cricket tour where for the first time in cricket history, the tour is being conducted solely for women. Through this tournament, young athletes had the unique chance to compete against foreign academies in India. The event took place over 13 days and included an awards gala dinner, 9 cricket matches and finals, T20 and T50 matches, and an international cricket academy league. Phoebe was the only player selected from a local area among the 14 players selected for the inaugural tour. Phoebe was chosen for the tour based on her performance in the NSW Women's Premier Cricket league, where she participated for the Under-18 Brewer Shield. Phoebe won the title of "Best Bowler on Tour" upon finishing the tour. I hope Phoebe has fully absorbed the experience of this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. I commend Phoebe for her dedication to the game of cricket and hope that her extraordinary achievement will lead to many more opportunities like this one. Well done Phoebe.

### SOUTH WEST ROCKS COUPLE COMPLETE THE ABBOTTS MAJORS

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—I stand today to give a big congratulations to peter and Trudi Needs of South West Rocks. In addition to recently finishing the Boston Marathon, Peter and Trudi have successfully completed their Abbots Major. The Abbott World Marathon Majors is a series of six of the largest and most renowned marathons in the world - Tokyo, Boston, London, BERLIN, Chicago, and New York City Marathon. These marathons are known for their challenging courses, elite competition, and rich history. It takes a lot of dedication and training to conquer of them all. Peter and Trudi often keep in shape for their marathons by spending their Saturday mornings participating in the Horseshoe Bay Reserve Park runs. The course of the run is 5000metres long with a mixture of tarmac paths and concrete paths. Trudi and peter are an inspiration for all, to

reach for the stars and remember no challenge is too big when you have passion and perseverance to see it through. It is a major accomplishment in the running community and something they both should be incredibly proud of.

### **BIRDS IN THE BUSH**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I wish to commend the grass-roots work being done by Birds In The Bush, a group of volunteers, pulled together by founding president Vanessa Vazquez to assist victims of domestic violence. An Orange solicitor, Ms Vazquez has a direct view of the impact of DV in our community and in 2021 rallied a proactive committee with the goal of combatting a growing scourge in the community. In its first three years, Birds In The Bush raised \$130,000 but almost doubled that in its fourth, and largest, annual event on May 4, raising \$120,000. The community responded to BITB's call for support with businesses providing donations for auction and raffles, while the function was sold out. It also drew the support of Australian tennis ace, guest speaker Jelena Dokic, who spoke of her own battle with DV. Birds in the Bush is striving to make 'the invisible visible' and provide support where and when it is desperately needed. It is people in the community actively working to help others in their patch, giving them the courage to move forward. Mr Speaker, I thank Ms Vazquez and her committee for their critical work.

### **IAN POLLET**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—Mr Speaker, I wish to recognise the outstanding milestone achieved by Orange's Ian Pollet, who has earned the rank of 10th Dan through the Goju-ryu martial arts discipline. The level of 10th Dan is regarded as the highest in many karate codes and is reached through a life of dedication to the study and principles of that code. It was in Okinawa, Japan, the spiritual home of Goju-ryu, that Hanshi Pollet passed his assessment for 10th Dan after which he thanked grand master and teacher Hanshi Kiichi Nakamoto, now in his late 90s, for his guidance. He also paid tribute to the support of his family, particularly eldest son Ben, for helping him reach this life-defining moment. Hanshi Pollet was the founder of Pollet's Martial Arts and through his schools encourages students to follow the philosophy of the Goju-ryu – do not strike others but do not allow them to strike you. The health and fitness benefits of this training are a bonus and Hanshi Pollet is a wonderful example of what can be achieved in the pursuit of knowledge. I congratulate Hanshi Pollet on this outstanding and rare achievement.

### **MICKEY FRECKMAN**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I would like to congratulate my constituent Michaela 'Mickey' Freckman on being one of 100 inductees into the NSW Australian Football League's inaugural Hall of Fame. Mudgee-born but now living in Orange, Mickey was a trailblazer for women's AFL in our state, with a playing career in Sydney spanning two decades. At the turn of the century, women's Australian Rules football was in its infancy with matches contested across fields and black plastic piping used for the goal posts but thanks to those early players, it now has a professional competition showcasing the talents of female athletes. As part of the first cohort of inductees into the Hall of Fame, Mickey joins the likes of Tony Lockett, John Longmire, Paul Kelly, Wayne Carey and fellow Central West inductee, Cowra's Geoff Day. Since moving to Orange with her partner to raise her two children, Mickey has linked with the local AFL outfit the Orange Tigers, stating 'You always find your people at a footy club'. I congratulate Mickey Freckman on being one of the first inductees into the NSW AFL Hall of Fame, which recognises the significant contribution as a pioneer of her sport.

### **MELVA BRUCE**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)**—Speaker, I rise to congratulate and extend my sincerest wishes to Melva Bruce on her 101st Birthday. Melva was born on 3 May 1923 in Kurri Kurri and lived with her family until she married her husband, James Allen Bruce. She began work at the age of 16, working at a blacksmiths' house, cleaning, washing and ironing for 10 shillings a week. Melva went on to have 4 sons with James and 15 grandchildren. Unfortunately, James passed away in a tragic accident in 1963. Melva has been a resident of the Swansea electorate for the past 60 years. She continues to live at the same property with her son and is happy sharing her scones with her close friends and neighbours. I wish Melva all the best for her 101st birthday as well as good health and prosperity.

### **VALENTINE LIONS CLUB**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)**—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Valentine Lions Club for their 50th Anniversary. The Lions Club of Valentine celebrated their 50th year of operation as they began Charter on 21st February 1974. In recognition of this remarkable accomplishment, the Club was provided an award from Lions International. Valentine Lions plays an instrumental role in the Swansea Electorate through organising events, fundraising, and implementing projects to strengthen the community. In 2022, Valentine Lions was awarded the Top Club Service Project for their ongoing commitment to supporting the local community. Through the 'Caring for the Community' project, the

Club was recognised for their collaboration with Survivors R Us to support those experiencing homelessness, domestic violence, and unemployment. The Club was then one of eight World Finalists at the Lions International Convention in Boston for Best Project. Congratulations Valentine Lions on your celebration of 50 years of service. Your hard work does not go unacknowledged, and you truly live up to your ethos of 'The Club with a Big Heart'.

#### **THE LAKES SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)**—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge The Lake Surf Life Saving Club for their incredible performance at the 2024 NSW Surf Life Saving Championships. This year, the NSW Championships encouraged thousands of competitors, spectators and volunteers to travel to the Northern Beaches to compete in a diverse range of water and land surf lifesaving activities. In the junior competition, The Lakes SLSC highlighted their skilled up-and-coming surf life savers as they took home two first places in the U9s board and U12s girl's swim team. The Club further secured second in the U12s girl's swim, U12s mixed cameron and the U14s boy's sprint, alongside a third place in the U12s board rescue. Congratulations The Lakes SLSC on your exceptional effort, you are a credit to your community, and I thank you for your continued work to enhance the safety of NSW beaches and waterways. I look forward to watching the Club compete in future competitions.

#### **PLAYERS TAKE ON BIG FREEZE**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—For the tenth consecutive year, the Big Freeze 2024 is gearing up for a bigger, better, and colder year. The West Wyalong Girral AFL and Netball Club wanted to join the fight for Motor Neurone Disease [MND] and held its own Big 'mini' Freeze. A Social Committee Member, Lily Burge, organised 14 people to participate in the fundraiser by sliding into a pool of iced water at McAlister Oval on Saturday, 04 May 2024. Each participant was asked to raise money for MND, and a combined \$5,987 has been raised. With Neale Daniher, the Co-founder and Patron of the Big Freeze, hailing from Ungarie, this event holds a special place in the hearts of many Bland Shire residents, inspiring us all to join the fight against MND. The core aim of Big Freeze is not just to generate greater awareness but to make a tangible difference but to fund world-class research and drug trials, seek an effective treatment, and ultimately find a cure for MND. Striving to provide assistive care equipment to many Australians fighting the disease. I congratulate Lily, all the organisers and the participants on a successful event.

#### **JENNIFER RICHMOND**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—Diabetes is a severe and chronic condition that can affect the entire body. While there is currently no cure, people with diabetes can still enjoy life by learning about and effectively managing the condition. Registered Nurse and Diabetes Educator Jennifer Richmond from Cowra is doing just this. Growing up in Nyngan, New South Wales, Jennifer always wanted to be a nurse. She trained in Bathurst and worked at Hornsby Hospital for ten years before moving to Orange Base Hospital, where she met her husband. Jennifer and her husband then moved to Cowra, where Jennifer took on a role in the local hospital. Stepping up to cover a sick leave placement in Primary Health Care for six weeks, Jennifer's expertise was recognised. She was asked to continue and lead the diabetes clinic. In this capacity, she initiated the Diabetes Nurse Network, a Facebook group that provides support and resources for other nurses in this field. Through Jennifer's unwavering dedication, she has not only helped numerous individuals and their families but also left a lasting impact on the communities she has served, guiding them through the complex journey of diabetes. I thank Jennifer for her ongoing contributions.

#### **TAKING STEPS TO SCHOOL**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—Children across our great state, including those from the Cootamundra Electorate, ditched their motor transport vehicles and walked to school on Friday, May 10, for the annual National Walk Safely to School Day. Now in its 25th year, the Walk Safely to School Day stands as a testament to our community's commitment to positive environmental action, with reduced car dependency and encouraging parents and carers to walk more, reducing traffic congestion around schools and encouraging a healthy lifestyle. The students from Cowra in the north of my Electorate were even more excited to walk to school and learn about road safety when they heard officers from their local Police Station would be attending their school to talk to them about key road safety messages. Local Highway Patrols and General Duties Officers from Cowra were also taking extra measures on Friday, May 10, by increasing patrols in and around school areas, making sure all road users were taking caution to protect our youngsters. Autumn is a beautiful time to be outdoors and walking to school, where possible, is a great start to the day.

#### **ST JOHN THE BAPTIST PARISH BONNYRIGG**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)**—Easter Sunday is a time to gather with friends, family and their faith communities to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ for Liverpool's Christian community.



I was fortunate to share my Easter Sunday with the wonderful Parish community at St John the Baptist Catholic Church in Bonnyrigg Heights. It was fantastic to see so many local families come out to St John the Baptist after 40 days of Lent. St John the Baptist is led by the steady hand of Father Dominic Dinh, who was born in Vietnam and came to Australia as a refugee in 1980, one of the many great Australians of refugee background. Father Dominic's sermon was reminder to us all to keep love at the centre of everything we do – which is important and timely regardless of circumstances. As one of the most diverse regions of our country, it is also a lesson we see in practice every day within our community. I wish to thank the Parish community at St John the Baptist for being so welcoming, and sharing their joy with me on this blessed day.

### **ORTHODOX EASTER WISHES**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)**—Orthodox Easter is a special time for the many Liverpool residents of the Orthodox faith. It is the most significant event in the Orthodox Christian liturgical calendar, known as the 'Feast of Feasts', and is celebrated by several cultural groups in the Liverpool electorate. I was honoured to join the congregation at St George & Prince Theodore Coptic Orthodox Church for their Holy Saturday liturgy. I saw the entire community come together to share in the special significance of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the meaning of that sacrifice for all people. I was particularly moved when the cries of 'Christos Anesti' rang out across the church. I thank Father Anthony Morgan his warm hospitality in ensuring that I understood the proceedings, and congratulate him on his continuing leadership of an active and vibrant church community. Additionally, I want to wish all those celebrating in the Liverpool electorate a Blessed Easter, including the congregations of Serbian Orthodox Church of the Apostle Luke, Sts Raphael, Nicholas and Irene Greek Orthodox Church. I hope it is filled with joy and spent with loved ones.

### **LIVERPOOL FIRE STATION OPEN DAY**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)**—Last weekend many fire stations across NSW opened their doors to the public for the annual Fire & Rescue Open Day and members of this place had the opportunity to spend time with our local firefighters. I was fortunate enough to spend time with the hard working crew at Liverpool Fire Station in Moorebank. Liverpool Fire Station is currently also home to the fantastic team from Busby Fire Station, as they await the completion of their brand new facility later this year. The rain didn't stop the fun and excitement, as community members from across the area ventured down for a sausage sizzle and a chance to meet with and thank our local fireies for all they do to keep us safe. For local children, it was a chance to meet their heroes – although many became very shy despite looking forward to the event all week! As we commend our firefighters for all their hard work, I want to take this opportunity to remind those across our communities to check their smoke alarms and take advantage of the free Safety Visit service provided by our local fireies. It could well save a life.

### **ST PAUL'S COLLEGE WALLA WALLA - OSCAR FEUERHERDT YEAR 12**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to congratulate Oscar Feuerherdt, a Year 12 student at St Pauls College, Walla Walla, for his great performance at the 2024 Sydney Royal Easter Show. Oscar's talent and knowledge saw him finish in an impressive 4th place in the NSW State Final for Beef Junior Judging out of 30 talented competitors. Oscar your strong public speaking efforts and passion for cattle has truly paid off and I am proud of your achievements. You are an inspiration, showcasing what can be achieved with perseverance and determination. Continue to inspire others with your talent. Well done Oscar!

### **LAST MAN STANDS ALBURY-WODONGA AND SHEPPARTON'S BORDER BASH 2024 EVENT**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to extend my gratitude to everyone who supported the Last Man Stands Border Bash 2024 Albury Wodonga and Shepparton fundraising event during this year's Easter long weekend. The charitable cricket event brought the Border community together to raise awareness and support for mental health and suicide prevention. This year's fundraiser collected over \$6000 for Survivors of Suicide & Friends Winter Solstice. A big shout out to the major sponsors; The Thirsty Devil Brewery, Kindred Support Pty Ltd, Chef 4 Hire, Prenter Cricket, Vanilla Pod Food & Espresso Bar Lavington for your support. Thank you to everyone who contributed, participated, and tirelessly worked to ensure the Border Bash 2024 event ran smoothly. I am so proud of those in the community that stood together for such meaningful cause, and reminded us all that we are not alone. Together we can make a difference and support one another through both the good times and the not so good times.

### **GOOD FRIDAY APPEAL - COMMUNITIES ON FIRE WITH GENEROSITY**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to extend my gratitude to our Emergency Services agencies and their volunteers, for their dedication and generosity during the recent 'Good Friday Appeal' fundraising event. Despite their busy schedules, volunteers were out in force with sirens blazing across Albury, Howlong, Corowa and surrounding towns, raising funds to support the Royal Children's Hospital. The border

community's response was truly inspiring, with locals digging deep to contribute to such an important cause. The tremendous support from both young and old highlighted the unity within our community, with Albury's final figure of \$126,131 showcasing our generosity of spirit. This year marks a significant milestone as Albury Wodonga Health will receive \$250,000 from the annual campaign to support local paediatric services. Thank you to the volunteers from RFS, NSW Fire and Rescue, SES, Albury and Border Volunteer Rescue Association, St John's Ambulance, Scouts, Rotary, and Lions for your generous efforts and to all those who work in our hospitals serving our community.

#### **DALE HUNT - CEO OF MOUNTIES GROUP**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—Dale Hunt spent his childhood on the South Coast of NSW as the child of a single mother in public housing commission. He is now a beacon of the local community in western Sydney, spanning four decades of unwavering dedication. His selfless commitment to others has manifested in myriad forms, from volunteering on local community childcare boards to coaching junior sports for three decades. Transitioning from nursing to corporate roles and eventually the Registered Club industry, Dale's imprint became indelible. As CEO of Australia's largest Registered Club, he spearheaded ground-breaking initiatives. From pioneering the first not-for-profit Intergenerational Community precinct to establishing aged care facilities and benchmark retirement villages. Under his leadership, Mounties Group got more involved in community engagement, doubling its Club Grants commitment and fostering initiatives like the SouthWest Mounties Magic netball team and philanthropic endeavours benefiting indigenous youth and at-risk communities. He also plans to inaugurate a care farm for disabled children and collaborate on constructing NSW's second palliative centre for children, ensuring families facing life-limiting conditions find solace and support within their local communities. Dale Hunt's leadership, compassion and community service enriches countless lives in my local area.

#### **ASSYRIAN NATIONAL COUNCIL – AUSTRALIA 2024 - 6,774TH ASSYRIAN NEW YEAR CELEBRATION**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—Attending the 6,774th Assyrian New Year celebration, meticulously orchestrated by the Assyrian National Council - Australia, was an absolute delight. Set against the vibrant backdrop of the Fairfield Showground, the event exuded an atmosphere of jubilation and cultural richness. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to Mr Hermiz Shahen, President of the Assyrian National Council - Australia, and Mr. David David, Vice President and Chairman of the organizing committee, for orchestrating a truly magnificent Opening Ceremony. Their tireless dedication and meticulous planning ensured a seamless and memorable experience for all attendees. Some of the Federal and State MPS in attendance included: Hon Chris Bowen, Hugh McDermott, David Saliba, Nathan Hagarty and Charishma Kaliyanda, which highlighted the support and recognition of the Assyrian community's cultural heritage and contributions. As we immersed ourselves in the festivities, adorned with traditional music, dance, and cuisine, it became evident that events like these serve as a reminder of the importance of cultural diversity and unity in our society. The Assyrian New Year celebration not only honours ancient traditions but also celebrates the resilience and vibrancy of the Assyrian Community in Australia.

#### **JASON WOOD - GENERAL MANAGER HOSPITALITY MOUNTIES GROUP**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—Mr Jason Wood's roots may lie in the regional towns of Merriwagga and Hillston, but his heart beats strongly within the vibrant Cabramatta area, where he has been an integral part of our community for over a decade. As the driving force behind Mounties Group's unwavering support for our cherished local events such as the Moon Festival, Lunar New Year, National Slovenian Day and Italian festivals, Jason embodies the spirit of unity and celebration. His collaborative efforts extend beyond cultural festivities, as he collaborates closely with the Vietnamese Community in Australia and the Australian Chinese Youth Sports Federation, fostering bonds that transcend borders and languages. Jason's dedication to education is clearly seen through his role in establishing local scholarship programs, empowering Italian and Vietnamese youth to pursue higher education and brighter futures. Representing Mounties Group across various local business chambers and community groups, Jason has played a pivotal role in transformative projects like the establishment of AVACS's first Vietnamese Australian nursing home in Smithfield, enriching the lives of countless individuals and families. Jason's story is one of dedication, bridging cultures, and nurturing a stronger and more inclusive community.

#### **DAPHNE CARSWELL, OAM**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—I wish to acknowledge the achievements and dedication of Daphne Carswell who received a Medal of the Order of Australia earlier this year for her service to the community of Wagga Wagga. Mrs Carswell has played an instrumental role in setting up the University of the Third Age in our city. The group provides affordable social learning options to seniors, encouraging them to stay active and engaged within their communities. As a Foundation Member (2015), Vice-President (2015 – 2018), and President (since 2018) of the University of the Third Age, Mrs Carswell's dedication is reflected in the success of the organisation

which now has more than 500 members. She has also been involved in the Wagga Wagga Sunset Probus Club as a member since 2012, a former vice-president and president, and is currently activities officer, helping retirees by keeping their minds active and expanding their interests while they enjoy the fellowship of new friends. A former administrator at Wagga Wagga Base Hospital, she has also raised funds for the hospital. Thank you and congratulations to Mrs Carswell for her service to the local community - a deserving winner of an OAM.

#### **SHELLHARBOUR TAFE – MINI WOOLIES**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to congratulate Shellharbour TAFE for the introduction of a new Mini Woolies store to provide hands-on retail experience and act as a stepping stone into the workplace for students with a disability. The supermarket simulation is the first of its kind for the area and will provide exciting opportunities for students. The facility will support students working towards completing nationally recognised units in a Certificate II in Retail and help successfully transition into employment. It will give students with a disability the opportunity to work in a real-life environment and gain the knowledge and the confidence to enter the workforce and become a contributing member of the community. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Shellharbour TAFE on this wonderful initiative.

#### **JAIDEN BURKE**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to congratulate Jaiden Burke, from Lake Illawarra High School, for being a young judge at the Sydney Royal Easter Show. Jaiden represented the Group 5, South Coast and Tablelands, and was awarded 1st at the Robertson Show for two Young Judging Competitions in Fruit and Vegetable as well as Grains judging, this was a fabulous achievement. This led to the two NSW state finals at the Sydney Royal Easter Show last Tuesday. The opportunity to experience this level of competition was a proud moment for Jaiden who looks forward to more local and state agricultural shows. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Jaiden on this wonderful achievement and wish him well in all his future endeavours.

#### **SIDNEY BARTLE**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to congratulate Sidney Bartle, from Corpus Christi High School, for attending the ACT Athletics Championships which were held on 16-18 February 2024 at the Woden Athletics Track in Phillip, ACT. Sidney had a very productive weekend claiming double gold and she also set a new record of 39.77m in the Hammer Throw for the ACT in her age group. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Sidney on this wonderful achievement and wish her well in all her future sporting endeavours.

#### **MANLY WARRINGAH DISTRICT CRICKET CLUB SUCCESS**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)**—The Manly Warringah District Club is flushed with success following the conclusion of the 2023-24 season. Both the men's and women's programs won their respective Club Championships in the Cricket NSW Premier cricket competitions. The men's win backed-up last year's success, and the women's side took out the championship after just seven years in the competition. Seven of the Club's Teams qualified for the Grand Finals with the Men's 4th and 5th Grades, along with the Women's 3rd Grade and Green Shield Sides all taking out their respective Premierships. The Club hosted each of their Premiership winning teams at local grounds. Club Honorary Secretary, Steve Beatty has expressed his appreciation of community support, allowing the Club to utilise three fields for the Grand Finals, when many other clubs only have one. Manly is not only about sun, surf, and sand - it boasts a rich sporting heritage as exemplified by the latest success of the Manly Warringah District Cricket Club. I congratulate all involved for an outstanding season.

#### **GRANT EASTERBY**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)**—I congratulate Mr Grant Easterby who this month celebrates a remarkable milestone of thirty years of working at Dee Why RSL Club, twenty-six of which have been spent as the club's Chief Executive Officer. In his time at Dee Why RSL, Grant has spearheaded a range of game-changing reforms and upgrades for the club and its patrons, always with a committed focus on meeting the ever-evolving community needs. His fundamental belief that a club is ultimately defined by its people has sustained Grant during his tenure and is at the heart of the success Dee Why RSL continues to enjoy, not only as a social and recreational hub but as a powerful voice for veteran communities on the Northern Beaches. Congratulations Grant on a fantastic achievement.

#### **MANLY WARRINGAH BASEBALL**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)**—A massive congratulations is due to the Manly Warringah Baseball Little League Team which won the Division 2 State Championships last month. The Manly Maroons is an 'All Stars' team, drawn from the most talented 10 and 11-year-old players on Sydney's Northern Beaches. They played

against other representative teams from around the state, including large associations, such as Ryde, Hills and Cronulla. In a dominant, 4-day performance, the Maroons outscored their opponents 57 – 2 across five games in Blacktown. The older 14-year-olds in Junior League also won their State Championship and will play in their National Tournament, later this month. The Manly Warringah District Baseball Association is now seeking sponsorship to help with costs associated with progressing to the National Finals. A GoFundMe page has also been established to help reduce the cost for families at a time when cost of living pressures are impacting family budgets. Those wanting to help can visit the GoFundMe page, 'Help Support Our State Champions', I wish the Manly Maroons every success as they take on the best in the nation.

#### **DR MUSTAFA JABBAR AND DR SHENUKA PIMANDA**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I congratulate veterinarians Dr Mustafa Jabbar and Dr Shenuka Pimanda on recently joining the team at Orchard Hills Veterinary Hospital and thank them for choosing to serve our community. Dr Jabbar recently graduated with a Doctor of Medicine from the University of Melbourne. His qualifications also include a Bachelor of Medical Science (Advanced) and a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine. Dr Pimanda graduated with a combined Bachelor of Veterinary Biology and Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree from the University of Sydney. I'm very pleased that our community now has two amazing veterinarians with such qualifications providing expert care to pets who form an important fabric of the families to which they belong to. Their qualifications are reflective not just of their knowledge and expertise, but also their passion for the field. I congratulate and thank Dr Jabbar and Dr Pimanda and wish them the very best in their roles.

#### **ERSKINE PARK HIGH SCHOOL**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I was proud to welcome students from Erskine Park High School to NSW Parliament recently and speak to them about my role as the Member for Badgerys Creek, as part of their participation in Parliament's Legal Studies and Legislature Program. It was reassuring to see their initiative and passion for learning, particularly in the fields of legal studies and Parliament. I have no doubt that these students have a bright future ahead of them and I encourage them to continue studying hard. I commend and thank the staff at Erskine Park High School for arranging and facilitating their students' visit and for their commitment and dedication to their students' learning. I also commend and thank the Parliamentary staff for running such an informative Legal Studies and Legislature Program. I wish the students the very best during their academic journey.

#### **LUDDENHAM PROGRESS ASSOCIATION**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I congratulate the Luddenham Progress Association on the historic milestone of this year marking the 100th year of the Association's ownership of the Luddenham Progress Hall. The Hall was built in 1886 by the Orange Lodge and was purchased by the Sons of Temperance lodge in 1892. In 1921, the Hall was purchased by the Luddenham Progress Association, who had borrowed money from locals, and in October 1924 they made their final loan repayment. The Association has a strong history, having been formed in November 1892, with Mr Outridge being elected as the first President, and Mr W Longley the first Secretary. The Association currently meets in the hall monthly and is active in advocating for Luddenham and its future. I commend the Luddenham Progress Association for their consistent commitment to the Luddenham area and community and wish them the very best in this milestone year and beyond.

#### **ORTHODOX EASTER**

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety)**—I would like to wish all those who celebrated a very Happy Easter. I was honoured to attend Holy Friday service of the Lamentation at The Transfiguration of our Lord in Earlwood. The service of the Lamentation includes the Epitaph Procession, which symbolises the funeral cortege and the burial of Jesus Christ. The Epitaph is walked around the block of the Church on the shoulders of priests and carried with solemnity, with parishioners following behind holding candles. I then joined the All Saints Parish in Belmore for midnight liturgy to celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. It was so lovely and humbling to stand with the community holding the Easter candle and singing the Christ is Risen hymns and join the Parish priests Father Chris and Father Dimitrios to crack red Easter eggs. I would also like to acknowledge the Hon Tony Burke MP, Member for Watson who joined me at All Saints Parish in Belmore to celebrate Easter. I would like to wish all those observing a Blessed Easter. Χριστός Ανέστη Χριστός Βοηθεύει

#### **BANGLADESH INDEPENDENCE DAY**

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety)**—The Australian-Bangladeshi community celebrated the 53rd anniversary of Bangladesh's independence and National Day on 26 March 2024. I was honoured to attend the Independence and National Day

Reception hosted by the Bangladesh Consulate General Sydney. Thanks to the Consul general of Bangladesh, Mr Md Shakhawat Hossain of his beautiful hospitality. Last month I was also very delighted to meet the Acting Bangladesh High Commissioner Dr Dewan Md. Shahriar Firoz in Lakemba. Members of the Australian-Bangladeshi community have also contributed so much to the vibrancy of my electorate. Indeed, the Bangla Hair and Beauty Studio in Lakemba, a small business run by talented female entrepreneurs, is an example of success. Not only do they provide hair and beauty services, but they support our local community by creating a wonderful network of connections, enabling migrants to feel a sense of belonging, and inspire young women to achieve their dreams. Mr Speaker, I am proud of the contributions of the amazing Australian-Bangladeshi community in my electorate. Together, we make our community a thriving place to live.

#### **ANZAC DAY COMMEMORATIONS**

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety)**—Recently I was honoured to attend Anzac Day commemorations organised by the Canterbury-Hurlstone Park RSL Club and Lakemba RSL Sub-Branch, and I was inspired by the turnout and passion of local residents who paid their respects despite the chilling weather. Well-done to Stavros Tsardoulis and Belle Buckland from Canterbury Public School, who both spoke beautifully about what Anzac Day meant to them as young Australians. Congratulations also to the many Holy Spirit Catholic College students, who proudly represented the college as flag bearers, wreath layers and respectful spectators. A student from St Therese's Catholic School Lakemba was also present. It was also wonderful to see Coach Ciraldo and the Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs team marching in support. I wish to thank the Lakemba RSL Sub-branch and Canterbury-Hurlstone Park RSL Club for inviting me to these important Anzac Day services. Thank you to all who have served to protect our country. Lest we forget.

#### **ST MARYS SALVATION ARMY COMMUNITY CONNECT**

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney)**—On Friday May 10th, I had the pleasure of joining Belinda Donovan, National Projects Manager of Employment Plus, and Salvation Army Major Paul Moulds, Team Leader of Greater West, to officially open the St Marys Salvation Army Community Connect. This remarkable project offers a plethora of Salvation Army services to the community, including Employment Plus, Greater West Salvos Community Services, Moneycare Financial Counselling and financial literacy programs, Doorways, Foundations, and the Greater West Salvos Life essentials store. This hub stands as a beacon of support and advocacy for vulnerable people in our communities, particularly amidst the challenges posed by the cost-of-living crisis. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to Belinda, Paul, and the entire Greater West Salvation Army team for their exceptional work in bringing this project together.

#### **SAMUELA SELUI-AHIA**

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney)**—I would like to recognise Samuela Selui-Ahia from Colyton High School for his outstanding leadership in all facets of school life. Samuela is to be commended for his consistent respect to staff, respect to students and encouragement for other students to achieve their best. He also represents the values of the community by helping in a crisis such as alerting staff to when there is an issue or conflict and assisting staff while they are trying to solve problems or conflicts among students. He also volunteers to help out regularly with school programs; he has been part of Perfect Presence, is on the school student leadership team and helps out staff at school events such as swimming and athletics carnivals, and year 7 camp.

#### **MRS HELEN CLARK**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise today to recognise Mrs Helen Clark. At the age of eighteen Helen joined the Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force [WAAAF] as a signals clerk. In her role as a signal clerk, she worked at the headquarters unit, whilst also having to move to different townships to get a viable phone connection. Helen used teleprinters to send signals, seeing the introduction of the American teletypes. Following World War II, Helen was seconded to work in civil aviation for a year, at which time also saw the interest of the well-being of veterans come into focus. Helen, alongside others worked tenaciously to obtain medical assistance for ex-servicewomen. It was in 1962 when the Goulburn and District Ex-Servicewomen's Association was established by Mrs Clark, seeing her tireless work come to fruition with female veterans receiving veteran entitlements. Mrs Clark also fought for those men who missed out on entitlements. I take this time to reflect upon the determined and tireless work undertaken by Mrs Clark and her significant contributions and advocacy for not only ex-servicewomen but all veterans.

### YASS ANTIQUE MOTOR CLUB

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise today to recognise the Yass Antique Motor Club. The Yass Antique Motor Club was established in 1979, now with an active membership of eighty-seven members who meet monthly, and participate in a monthly run, proudly driving their magnificently, restored veteran and classic vehicles. The Yass Antique Motor Club will be holding their monthly run this month on the 19th of May, taking place at the same time as the annual National Heritage Motoring Day. These runs provide motoring enthusiasts, the opportunity to get out their beloved vehicles from a variety of eras, countries, makes and models, celebrating Australia's rich motoring history. Yass Antique Motor Club members will have the opportunity to display their treasured vehicles in front of the Yass Court House prior to the run. I note that many of these vehicles have been brought back to their former glory through a significant amount of hard work, taking time and patience to restore them, often by the owners themselves. I take this time to recognise and congratulate all club members for their passion and work in restoring and maintaining Australia's motoring history.

### RIDE FOR BABIES

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise today to recognise the Ride for Babies in March 2024. Kat attends school in Yass and choose the truly incredible services provided by the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit [NICU] at the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children as her chosen charity for which to raise funds for. Kat's father, a keen motorbike rider, prompted Kat's idea that this may in fact be a great way to get people together to raise funds for the charity by organising her own motorbike tour. Well, from a small idea to raise funds for her chosen charity, ended up being a three-day event, supported by sponsors and friends. A Sydney motorbike storage specialist, assisted with organisation of the event, attracting riders from near and afar. The Ride for Babies not only saw Kat presenting a donation of \$8,250 to the Newborn Intensive Care Foundation but brought people together to ride through our picturesque region. I congratulate Kat on her initiative and her enthusiasm and all those who provided her with support to achieve this wonderful outcome.

### TRISH PHILLIPS - TRANGIE

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—I would like to congratulate Trish Phillips from Trangie on the success of her recent fundraiser for the Trangie Multipurpose Health Service. Trish's mum, Barbara Latham, was a beloved resident of the service. When she moved into the aged care facility Barbara spent her time drawing pictures of her precious memories of life on the land. She continued to create the beautiful artworks until her cataracts unfortunately took hold of her eyesight. When Barbara passed away, she left the sketchbooks for her family which contained the meticulous fine line drawings. Trish transformed the drawings into exquisite prints for a unique fundraising event. Those who attended the art show enjoyed the stunning showcase of artwork and indulged in delicious nibbles and drinks provided by Cafe 2823. Raising in excess of \$2000 these funds will make a significant impact towards supporting activities for the residents and enhancing the service's palliative care room. Congratulations Trish on orchestrating such a memorable and successful event. Your efforts have not only honoured the memory of your mum but also created a lasting legacy that will positively impact the Trangie community.

### DARLING STREET BUTCHER

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—I would like to acknowledge Nathan Gunter of Dubbo who was officially ranked Australia's third best butcher after competing in the Australian Butcher Wars as part of the Meatstock Festival. Nathan and his wife Julianne opened their own butchery, The Darling Street Meat House in May 2023, but Nathan has been butchering since 1997. Butcher Wars, hosted at the Sydney Showground, brings together butchers from across the Country in an epic battle to claim the title of the best! Each participant faces the challenge of crafting a visual masterpiece of meat products using half a saddle of pork and half a lamb, as their canvas. With just 30 minutes on the clock, there is no room for error as they skilfully create their creations ready to be judged on presentation, creativity, technique, and speed. Using his creativity and precision Nathan showcased his expertise and culinary artistry in the event. He used garnishes sourced from home, including the Walan Community Garden to achieve the title of third best butcher in Australia. Congratulations Nathan on your well-deserved success and I look forward to seeing your product creativity in the Darling Street Meat House!

### KAY POULTER

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—I would like to acknowledge Kay Poulter for her selection in the Over 70's Women's Masters State Hockey Team. The 2024 Hockey Australia Womens Master Championships are set to take place from 28 June to 6 July at the venues of Sydney Olympic Park Hockey Centre and Briars Hockey Club in Concord. This prestigious event will bring together talented female hockey players of all ages from across the country to show case their skill and passion for the sport on a national field. Kay's hockey journey spans an impressive four decades, showcasing her dedication, skill and passion for the sport. With over 40 years'

experience on the field, she has honed her talents to become a formidable player! Kay's journey to being selected for the team involved a rigorous process, starting with her nomination for trials and culminating in her attendance at the trials in Newcastle. There is also a requirement as part of team selection for Kay to attend all training sessions. With her unwavering commitment and willingness to put in the hard work, Kay is poised to make a significant impact and contribution on the field and to the team's efforts. Congratulations Kay!

#### **REV. ROGER KAY AND ST ANNE'S STRATHFIELD**

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield)**—In the heart of Strathfield on the corner of Homebush and Beresford roads, sits a beautiful church building that is St Anne's. But a church isn't just a building, it's a group of people. And for 4 and a half years, Reverend Roger Kay has served the church and community of Strathfield before retiring last month. As Rector he presided over weddings, funerals, the highs and the lows of people's lives. Notably, Roger took the reins of St Anne's just a few months before the first COVID lockdown hit NSW. He fulfilled an important role in our community at an unprecedented, uncertain and tumultuous time for many people in my electorate. I acknowledge Roger's service to the parishioners of St Anne's and the people of Strathfield. We wish him well in his retirement.

#### **GRAFTON LIBRARY- LIVE 'N' LOUD**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—The Clarence Valley Council's Community Development Team has successfully coordinated an engaging program in collaboration with 20 local services and community groups to honor our young people during the annual statewide, Youth Week Celebrations. A standout event was Live 'n' Loud which took place at the Grafton Library car park. The car park was transformed into a vibrant hub of music, dancing, games, and community spirit, drawing over 400 attendees to the 8th Annual Live 'n' Loud celebration. A special mention to the Youth Engagement team for their partnership with the Clarence Regional Library in creating an unforgettable experience for all. I would also like to congratulate the talented performers, dedicated stall holders and enthusiastic audience members who supported such a fabulous event. Congratulations to all involved in such a successful evening.

#### **LAWRENCE - 30TH ANNIVERSARY BIGGEST MORNING TEA**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I recently attended the annual Lawrence Biggest Morning Tea function in the beautiful 132-year-old Lawrence Hall, put on by the Lawrence Community Biggest Morning Tea Ladies group with Lorna Reeves at the helm, and well supported by the Lawrence Over Fifties Group and other local ladies. This was the 30th annual Biggest Morning Tea held in Lawrence by the committee, and they celebrated in style with Pearls. The morning was well attended by almost 100 guests with a further 25 taking advantage of a morning tea delivery service for a donation. Everyone enjoyed the cakes, goodies and tea and coffee for a door donation entry. Local businesses from Lawrence, Maclean and Grafton and individual local residents all donated many raffle and lucky door prizes. We played a game of "Tea-rivia" which was entertaining for all. Lawrence has a lovely community, and they enjoy getting together often. Congratulations on such a successful morning to all involved

#### **LAURELEA MOSS**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I would like to congratulate Ms Laurelea Moss on her remarkable achievement, being the first female finisher of the toughest one-day cycle race in the Country, the Grafton to Inverell Cycle Classic. In April 2024, the event took place along the Gwydir Highway, presenting a range of demanding landscapes, notably the Gibraltar Range, an 18km climb from the Clarence Valley to the New England Highlands, which is about twice the height of Mount Everest. It is reported that Ms Moss completed the race at a faster pace than her previous participation in 2016, achieving her personal best time on the challenging ascent up the Gibraltar Range by more than 3 minutes. Your unwavering determination and strength throughout this journey are truly commendable, well done.

#### **MALLANGANEE FIREFIGHTER RECEIVES COMMISSIONER'S COMMENDATION**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—Congratulations To Mallanganee Rural Fire Brigade Captain Neville O'Malley OAM on receiving a Commissioner's Commendation for Service (Individual) at the St Florian's Day Awards. According to the brigade's Facebook page, on Saturday 14 October 2023, Captain O'Malley and members from neighbouring brigades were fighting the Bean Creek fire near Old Bonalbo. Shortly after starting work for the day, Mallanganee Senior Deputy Captain John Holmes took ill and collapsed on the fireground. Captain O'Malley remained calm, requested assistance from firecom and alerted members working in the vicinity to the situation. He immediately started CPR, continuing until other members arrived to assist. He then coordinated with the District Duty Officer, firecom, other crews and the NSW Ambulance to ensure there was a continuous treatment plan in place until the ambulance crews arrived and took over. Captain O'Malley's composure in the moment, despite the patient being a close friend and brigade member, is commendable. Sadly, despite crews

working on Senior Deputy Captain Holmes for nearly an hour, he was unable to be revived and passed away at the scene. Captain O'Malley has since been a pillar of strength for John's family, brigade members and a grieving local community.

#### **RESILIENT LISMORE FUNDED FOR 'REPAIR TO RETURN' PROGRAM**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—Resilient Lismore will use \$5 million in funding from the NSW Reconstruction Authority to upscale its 'Repair to Return' program, formerly known as the 'Two Rooms Project'. I was pleased to advocate for this funding boost as Resilient Lismore Executive Director Elly Bird and her team have done some good home repair work for locals whose homes were badly damaged by flooding in early 2022. I also recognise and thank Resilient Lismore's partners – The Reece Foundation and Reece Plumbing, Joel Jensen Constructions, The Winsome & Lismore Soup Kitchen Incorporated and the Catholic Diocese of Lismore. 'Two Rooms' used volunteer labour to construct walls in two rooms of affected homes in Lismore, but also downstream at Coraki, Woodburn, Wardell, Bungawalbin, and other localities. Resilient Lismore now can engage qualified tradespeople to provide partial repair of homes. Services include essential plumbing; partial repair and restoration of kitchens and bathrooms; assistance with electrical work; re-sheeting walls; assistance with furniture and white goods. Ms Bird says the program assists vulnerable owner-occupiers who were living in properties at the time of the disaster and who still need to live there. This is community-led flood recovery in action.

#### **TABULAM STATE EMERGENCY SERVICES UNIT IN REBUILDING PHASE**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—Tabulam State Emergency Services [SES] is working hard to get up and operational so they can support their local community in times of need. Tabulam SES is starting from fresh after being in recess for the past two years. The unit has been under the leadership of recently retired Northern Rivers Commander Superintendent Mark Elm, Richmond Valley Cluster Local Area Commander Chief Inspector Hayden Doolan and Deputy Local Area Commander, Inspector James Thomas. As NSW Parliamentary Secretary for Disaster Recovery, I know that Mark, Hayden and James have the respect of SES personnel under their command and of local communities. Tabulam SES Unit boasts new members who have been taking up training opportunities to become job ready and they have mastered some essential skills. There are many fields of interest within the State Emergency Services and older hands are always ready to help new recruits identify where their passions may lie, and to help them develop a plan to reach their goals. If you are aged 16 years or over and are up for a challenge, training is every Wednesday, between 6pm until 8pm, at the unit on the Bruxner Highway, Tabulam.

#### **PENRITH MALAYALI KOOTTAYMA**

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith)**—Thank you to the Penrith Malayali Koottayma [PMK] Committee and the new President Dennis Devasia for the invitation and warm welcome to share in the Mothers Day celebration. It was most certainly a celebration. The local neighbourhood centre was decorated with flowers and balloons, and it was such a vibrant carnival atmosphere. There was a special program of music, song & dance all performed by the children with their Mums! The community have made this a must go to event on the local calendar. The children (and adults) were also entertained with games and prizes. I congratulate all involved for putting this celebration for Mums, Grandmothers and Carers together it was such a fabulous way to celebrate these awesome women in our community for all they do.

#### **COMMUNITY FIELD DAY AT BLACKBIRD FLAT UPPER MACLEAY**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—A Community field day was held at Blackbird Flat and was well attended by farmers from near and far from both Armidale and Kempsey Shires. There were great presentations on the day with both councils, Local Land Services, Mental Health Services, weeds officers attending and Rapid Relief Catering provided the catering for the day. An excellent presentation was supplied by Backtrack, Paws up Dogs jump demonstration, this group assist youth from 12 years who are not attending school to attend the Backtrack program and get support to further advance their education to Year 10 and assist with living independently. The dogs and their student minders worked well together. The presentation of the day was from "The Unbreakable Farmer" Wayne Davies who gave an interesting and thought-provoking talk, life as a farmer, and how we all need to make sure we look after ourselves, never be afraid of sharing your issues with someone you can trust, sharing with a trustworthy person is the way to go. A day well spent. Thanks to all involved.

#### **LEN GUY**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**—Binnaway Lions Club Member, Mr Len Guy, was recently presented with a badge for 50 years' service with the club. At the age of 107 Len is potentially the oldest Lions Club member in Australia. After joining in 1974 as a charter, Len eventually took over as president for a few years. I would like to congratulate Len on receiving the badge for 50 years of service. I also thank him for dedicating many years of



his life to the community. The lions club works to help people in their local communities and relies on dedicated volunteers like Len to be able to run effectively.

#### **DAVID BETTS**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**—Local Nymagee resident and employee Captain David Betts of the NSW Rural Fire Service has recently received a Commissioner's Certificate of Commendation for outstanding actions in relation to fire service duties. This award was presented to Mr Betts at the 2024 St Florian's Day Ceremony at the RFS Training Academy in Dubbo, where he was recognised for his contribution to the Nymagee Brigade, his leadership, and skills in responding to incidents. Captain Betts joined the Nymagee Brigade in 1982. In 2000 he became Senior Deputy Captain and in 2005 he accepted the role of Captain. I congratulate Captain Betts for receiving this outstanding certificate and thank him for his hard work and dedication in helping care for the Nymagee community and surrounds.

#### **LUMIERE SCULPTURE FESTIVAL**

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse)**—I would like to congratulate the Julian Parmegiani on the success of the inaugural Lumiere Sculpture Festival. Held at Jacob's Ladder near Gap Park, the festival gathered works from established and renowned artists alongside emerging talent from across the country. All artworks were illuminated using sustainable solar energy. The festival organisers created a successful and engaging sculpture event that celebrated diversity and fostered community connection. Congratulations to Julian and the entire Lumiere team. I look forward to the 2025 instalment.

#### **GOETHE-INSTITUT GERMAN CULTURAL DAY**

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse)**—I would like to congratulate Christoph Muecher and the Goethe-Institut Sydney for putting on a successful 2024 German Cultural Day. This is the second time the Goethe-Institut has joined together with Woollahra Council to bring together the community for an immersive experience into German culture. The festivities included a vibrant mix of food and drink, live music and performances, information, language courses and entertainment. There are more than 350 people within the Woollahra Municipality that were born in Germany. It is important to understand their culture and recognise their contribution to our multicultural society. Merzlichen Gluckwunsch to Christoph and the Goethe-Institut. I look forward to this event continuing into the future.

#### **ROYAL SYDNEY GOLF CLUB ANZAC DAY**

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse)**—I would like to congratulate President Lucy Regan and the Royal Sydney Golf Club for organising a memorable ANZAC Day Eve event. Located in Rose Bay and founded in 1893, RSGC is one of Australia's foremost sporting and social clubs. The night was a fantastic opportunity to express gratitude to those who have served in our military's uniform. Amongst members and guests were decorated servicemen and woman, marking one of the most important days on our calendar. With local Pipers from the Scots College, the evening brought together the entire community for a moment of reflection. Congratulations Lucy and RSGC.

#### **JY HIBBERT**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I congratulate Cronulla High School student Jy Hibbert, who has been selected in the under 18 Australian All Schools Tennis Team. Jy was chosen following his performances at the School Sport Australia Championship in Tasmania last week where he was part of the undefeated NSW team that won the 2024 Pizzey Cup. In the Australia Cup individual competition, Jy won through to the semi finals in the 64 player boys draw, losing in a tight battle against the top seed. In congratulating Jy, Cronulla High says this is an outstanding achievement and reflection of many years of hard work he has dedicated to his game and that Jy is a great role model for all aspiring athletes at the school. Earlier this year Jy won the open boys singles at the NSW Combined High Schools Tennis Championships, making him the top male tennis player in all NSW public schools. I join Cronulla High in recognising Jy's achievement in being named in the Australian All Schools Team.

#### **REV JOHN JEGASOTHY'S 50 YEARS OF MINISTRY IN SRI LANKA AND AUSTRALIA CELEBRATION**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—On 12 May 2024, the Tamil Uniting Church held a worship service at Northmead Uniting Church, followed by dinner in celebration of Revered John Jegasothy's 50 Years of ministry in Sri Lanka and Australia. Rev John Jegasothy served as Chair of the Human Rights Organisation in Trincomalee. He and his family sought safety in Australia after fleeing Sri Lanka's civil war in the late 1980s. He served at the Uniting Church and has continued to build a passion for justice, community development, human right, justice, advocacy and settlement of asylum seekers and refugees. Whilst providing leadership in multicultural ministry and Christian Spirituality, Rev John is also a member of The Australian Churches Refugee Taskforce supported

by the Australian National Council of Churches in Australia. Although Rev John has recently taken a step back from ministry work, he's still an active advocate and a leader in the Uniting Church, especially for the Tamil community. I was delighted to attend this event and see Rev Jegasothy's family, friends, and congregation come together to recognise his enormous service to the church, and community.

#### **FIRE AND RESCUE STATION OPEN DAY**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—A big thank you to our Fire and Rescue officers across Maitland who opened up their doors last Saturday. Fire and Rescue Open Days are a great opportunity for locals to pop in and meet the firefighters who keep our community safe. It's a chance to see first-hand that our local firefighters are everyday heroes who put service above self, often in dangerous situations, to help others and protect our community. Fire and Rescue NSW Station 374 Maitland, Fire and Rescue NSW Station 382 Morpeth, Fire and Rescue NSW Station 373 East Maitland and Fire and Rescue NSW Station 455 Rutherford all welcomed the next generation of Fireman Sam's or Firefighter Penny's. The annual day is not only an opportunity to meet the firefighters, but visitors were also able to explore the equipment, and learn important safety tips. I really enjoyed the opportunity to catch up with the crew from Fire and Rescue NSW Station 374. On behalf of those that attended the stations across Maitland, thank you.

#### **CHANELLE WILSON AND ANNA LYMBERY**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Congratulations to Maitland's own Chanelle Wilson and Anna Lymbery who will star in Hunter Drama's production of 'Love and Information'. Chanelle has been in theatre lessons for about seven years and with Hunter Drama since 2020. She has appeared previously in 'Snow White' and 'Finding Nemo' Junior productions. Anna began in 2019 and has also appeared in Musicals including 'Finding Nemo' and 'Legally Blonde'. 'Love and Information' is a captivating and thought-provoking play that delves into the complexities of human connection in the digital age, exploring the ways in which love and information intersect and shape our lives. The script doesn't dictate who says what, when, or in what order. This contemporary work, means that no production of this show is ever the same. It is a compilation of more than 100 characters with a multitude of scenes. The production runs for a week at the Civic Playhouse this month and I hope Chanelle and Anna and the rest of the crew 'break a leg'.

#### **NEIL CROMARTY OAM RECOGNISED WITH NSW COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—There is little that defines the fabric of Australia better than our willingness to salute those who served in our armed forces in active service or who were impacted by the service of another. Neil, a veteran of Vietnam, joined the East Maitland Sub-Branch of the RSL and served as sub-branch secretary from 1997 for over 23 years. He continues to serve as the Welfare Officer. Neil's efforts have been integral to the successful operation of the sub-branch including securing grants to improve facilities, organising Anzac and Remembrance Day ceremonies. His service as Welfare Officer was especially vital role during COVID-19 when our veteran community was so fragmented and isolated. Neil is a dedicated volunteer for the Royal Newcastle Aero Club, advocating for upgrades and assistance. I was thrilled to present Neil recently a NSW Government Community Service Award in recognition of his significant contribution to the community over such an extended period. Congratulations and well done.

#### **CAMDEN RSL DAWN SERVICE**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)**—I was honoured to attend the Camden RSL Anzac Day dawn service. An event that holds a profound place in the heart of our community. It symbolises deep respect and remembrance for the sacrifices made by our servicemen and women. As the first light of dawn broke over Camden, close to 5000 residents gathered in solemn unity at the Camden Bicentennial Equestrian Park to honour the legacy of the ANZACs. This poignant event commenced with the traditional dawn service, an evocative ceremony featuring the laying of wreaths, the haunting sounds of the Last Post, and a reflective minute of silence. These rituals not only pay homage to the fallen but also remind us of the enduring spirit of courage, mateship, and resilience that define our national identity. Following the service, attendees shared stories and camaraderie at the RSL club, reinforcing community bonds, fostering a deep sense of belonging and collective memory.

#### **TOBRUK VILLAGE AND ANZAC SERVICE HOST**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)**—On March 26, I had the privilege of visiting Tobruk Retirement Village in Austral for a morning tea and heartfelt conversations with its wonderful residents. It was an enriching experience to engage with such a spirited community and hear about their many stories, life experiences, interests and concerns. Continuing this special connection, I was honoured to return on April 23 as the MC for their Anzac Day memorial service. This event was deeply meaningful as we paid tribute to our brave servicemen and women. Both visits were not just memorable but also underscored the deep respect and gratitude we hold for our veterans. These moments highlight the strength and spirit of our community in Leppington.

### MULTICULTURAL EID FESTIVAL AND FAIR

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)**—On April 28, I was pleased to attend the Multicultural Eid festival and Fair at Fairfield Showground. This is the 38th year that the festival has been on, confirming the strong multicultural links and celebration in our community. The festival brings together thousands of Sydney residents from more than 35 communities across the city and is a joyous celebration following the religious holiday Eid-al-Fitr, which is an important cultural event for Muslims marking the end of the fasting month of Ramadan. The day was marked by numerous traditional folk dances, songs and plays on the central stage celebrating many cultures from our community. It was a wonderful day for families to enjoy, with delicious food, rides and various stalls, including one featuring the Members of Leppington and Liverpool. It was a true testament of multiculturalism at its best and the vibrant community of South- Western Sydney enjoying a community day out.

### CHARLESTOWN ELECTORATE SES VOLUNTEERS

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—Ahead of Wear It Orange Day, which falls on Wednesday 22 May, I want to take the opportunity to thank the many people in the Charlestown electorate who volunteer with the State Emergency Services. In fire or in flood, the people of New South Wales know that they can count on the SES—and in the Charlestown electorate, we rely mainly on the fantastic personnel of the SES Lake Macquarie unit. Whenever severe weather strikes, as it has in the Lower Hunter during recent periods of heavy rainfall, the Lake Macquarie SES step up. They have travelled to disaster zones across the state, pitching in to help wherever and whenever they are needed. Like their colleagues from units around NSW, they have demonstrated extraordinary service, courage and community spirit time and time again. Earlier this year, members of the SES in the Hunter with 915 years of service between them received a range of accolades, medals and clasps for their service, including a number of Lake Macquarie unit volunteers. The SES exemplifies the best of NSW, and once again I say thank you on behalf of the people of the Charlestown electorate.

### SONGS, STORIES AND SOUL AT WARNERS BAY THEATRE

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—Today, the Warners Bay Theatre in the Charlestown Electorate will play host to one of the first events of the fantastic Write Here Festival, Lake Macquarie's annual literary festival. The concert features the extraordinary ARIA-nominated, award-winning First Nations singer and songwriter Emma Donovan, supported by Ena Malibu. Alongside Emma's trademark soul and country songs, influenced by her family and memories of touring as part of The Donovans, "Songs, Stories and Soul from Family and Country" will showcase her new music, recorded in Gumbaynggirr and Noongar language. Emma is an artist committed to putting traditional languages on Australia's musical map. Language and music is such a key part of culture, and Emma's work to preserve and spread Gumbaynggirr and Noongar through her songs is absolutely to be applauded. I am very happy that she is bringing her music—and stories which will give her audience an understanding of Country and community—to the Charlestown electorate. Thank you, Emma, and I wish the Write Here Festival every success as it unfolds over the coming days.

### TORRIE LEWIS

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—She's done it again—Australia's fastest woman and Charlestown electorate-grown hero Torrie Lewis has smashed another record. Raised in Gateshead and trained in Glendale, Torrie became the fastest woman in Australian history this January when she achieved a truly extraordinary time of 11.10 in the 100 metres. Alongside a squad of incredible athletes, Torrie helped break the national 4x100 record—for the second time this year!—and has earned Australia a place at the 2024 Paris Olympics. With Ebony Lane, Bree Masters and Ellie Connolly, Torrie clocked an exception 42.83 seconds at the World Relays Meet in the Bahamas last week. They finished second in their heat behind Germany, more than enough to ensure these women will be saying "Bonjour, Paris!" in August. It is the first time an Australian women's 4x100 metre relay team has secured a spot at the Olympics in almost 25 years. I wish them all the best, and I cannot wait to see them compete against the best of the best from around the world—exactly where they belong. Congratulations!

### BEXLEY COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—It was an absolute honour and privilege to visit the St. Mary and St. Mina Coptic Orthodox Church in Bexley on the 22nd of March 2024. I was asked to speak at the Church's youth meeting about the invaluable role family and friends play in our lives and the importance of spiritual growth. The power of faith lies in its ability to guide us through life's ups and downs as we learn to cherish personal relationships over material achievements. The event coincided with the Lenten period, a time of significant

spiritual reflection and commitment for the Coptic Youth. The Coptic Orthodox Church hosts a wide variety of multicultural services such as prayer meetings, social events, fellowships and community support programs. Events like these serve as a testament to the value of engaging with your local community and supporting its spiritual and social endeavours. I want to thank the Bexley Coptic Orthodox Church for the wonderful work they do in shaping the lives of our youth and express my deepest appreciation for their dedication towards the importance of family, friends and faith.

#### COLETTE LAMBERTON

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I would like to congratulate and acknowledge Ms Colette Lamberton who was recently awarded The Ramsay Way Award. The award was launched in 2023 to recognise and celebrate the exceptional efforts and contributions of Ramsay Health's dedicated team members. Ms Lamberton, a clinical nurse specialist and registered midwife at St George Private Hospital, was awarded the Excellence and Innovation Award. Ms Lamberton is known to patients and colleagues as someone with unwavering passion and commitment to helping others. Colette consistently goes above and beyond to provide exceptional care for her patients. This passion and dedication led her to develop the Labour Support Chair – a unique tool designed to provide comfort and support during the first stage of labour. Throughout her nursing career, Colette has played a pivotal role in revising birth practices and policies to promote a more woman-centered approach. I want to thank Ms Lamberton for the wonderful work she does to provide a sense of comfort and support to patients and express my deepest appreciation for her continuous commitment to improving current practices in our health system.

#### SHAYNE HIGSON

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)**—Today I recognise the outstanding contribution of Shayne Higson for ensuring that people who are terminally ill have access to humane end-of-life choices. Shayne is a renowned photographic artist but following the death of her mother from brain cancer in 2012, she dedicated her time to campaigning for voluntary assisted dying laws so that others wouldn't have to suffer as her mother did. Shayne joined the Voluntary Euthanasia Party, running in six state and federal elections, Go Gentle, and Dying With Dignity where she became vice president then CEO. Shayne met with members of Parliament across the country to share stories of suffering including the deeply personal experience of her mother. Her compassion for people who are dying and their families was instrumental in achieving law reform and she continued to help people navigate our now enacted laws. Shayne is an active community member who joined the Paddington community to save the Four in Hand pub from redevelopment. As Shayne steps down as Dying With Dignity CEO for a much deserved retirement, I thank her on behalf of my electorate, people facing a terminal illness and their families, for her hard work and unwavering dedication.

#### NIC WATKINS

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I recognise the dedicated service of Nic Watkins, who has recently hung up his administration cap at the Cronulla Sutherland Water Polo Club. 'Watto' was on the committee for what turned out to be six long years that spanned the pandemic period, including President for four years and Secretary before that. The club was founded in 1963 and is one of the oldest and most successful water polo clubs in Australia and Nic has only helped enhance the club's standing during his time at the helm. While navigating the challenges of sport in a COVID-19 world, Nic also focused on the long-term sustainability of the club's operations. As President he was committed to creating and nurturing a culture of excellence, integrity and belonging amongst the club's members, and saw the Sharks move from the bottom 25% of clubs to the most successful in the Australian Water Polo League. It has been obvious that Nic has loved giving back to the club that has been a big part of his life growing up and while he is stepping back from his official duties, there is no doubt he will still be poolside cheering on the Sharks.

#### THE Y BANKSTOWN INVITE GRANDPARENTS TO ENJOY GYM FUN WITH GRANDCHILDREN

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—As part of Seniors Week, The Y Bankstown have invited local grandparents to enjoy a day full of activities in their gymnasium with their grandchildren. The special initiative gave grandparents and their grandchildren the opportunity to bond and have fun in a different way while encouraging physical activity and social development. It is fantastic to see local community centres running such initiatives to encourage our families to connect in a different atmosphere. The Y's vision behind these activities is to develop the special bonds between grandparents and their grandchildren, to make memories and have fun. Our local community prides itself on offering facilities where people can thrive regardless of their age or ability. I am proud of the Y Bankstown's incredible efforts in bringing the community together, young and old and creating opportunities for them to connect and create memories in special ways. I extend my gratitude to Sport and

Recreation Area Manager, Kristen James and her team for the work they are doing to nurture the special bond between grandparents and their grandchildren. It's fun initiatives such as these that strengthens our community.

#### **CANTERBURY BANKSTOWN BULLDOGS PROPOSE \$50 MILLION CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—Congratulations to the Canterbury Bankstown Bulldogs on their exciting proposal for a \$50 million Centre of Excellence! This significant investment demonstrates the club's dedication to enhancing their capabilities and fostering excellence in rugby league. The proposed Centre of Excellence promises to be a state-of-the-art facility, providing a cutting-edge environment for player development, training, and performance optimization. It will offer world-class amenities, including cutting-edge training equipment, medical facilities, recovery services, and video analysis technology. Moreover, the Centre of Excellence will serve as a hub for innovation and collaboration, bringing together players, coaches, and support staff to work towards common goals. This collaborative approach is essential for nurturing talent, honing skills, and achieving peak performance on the field. Additionally, the Centre of Excellence will have a positive impact beyond the rugby league community, contributing to the local economy, promoting community engagement, and inspiring future generations of athletes. Overall, the Canterbury Bankstown Bulldogs' \$50 million Centre of Excellence represents a significant milestone in the club's journey towards excellence and success. It reflects their vision, ambition, and commitment to shaping a brighter future for rugby league. A great initiative for our community.

#### **EL KHAIR FLORIST – WINNER OF AN AUSTRALIAN BUSINESS INDUSTRY AWARDS**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—I would like to acknowledge Ms Dina El Khair and her team for winning an Australian Business Industry Award under the categories of flowers and bouquets, wedding planners and coordinators. Dina and her husband Sal are local entrepreneurs who have built a strong presence in the floristry and events business. Through juggling both motherhood and business, Dina has proven that it is possible to do whatever we put our minds to. Dina's creativity and passion for weddings has grown over the years which led to the expansion of her services and products which now include event and wedding planning, styling, and decorating weddings. The wedding industry have become a very big priority for her and because of her creativity, commitment, she has developed a strong presence in the industry. She is known for providing exceptional service, and for going beyond and above the service required. Her professional reputation and that of her great team are highly recommended. I extend my congratulations and best wishes to Dina and her team for the amazing work that they offer the local community of the Bankstown electorate and beyond.

#### **WILLOUGHBY JPS CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF SERVICE**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—In the Stranger's Function Room on 17 April 2024, I was honoured to attend a ceremony to honour our Justices of the Peace [JPs] who have served us for fifty years. As volunteers, JPs provide an invaluable service to our community helping people with official documents. The role of the JP has a long history, dating back to fourteenth-century England. In NSW, our first JP was none other than Governor Arthur Phillip. The NSW Justices Association was formed in 1911 and today JPs are respected citizens entrusted by their community to take on special responsibilities. I have been a JP myself for over twenty years and it has been a pleasure for me to serve in this capacity. Today, I would like to honour Willoughby locals Mr Denis Byrne, Mr John Gavaghan, Mr Dragomir Zaknic, and Mr Emil Mackertich each for your fifty years of service as a JP. You have done your communities proud, and we are all grateful for the faithful service you have rendered to our state over so many years.

#### **HUMPTY DUMPTY FOUNDATION**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—The Humpty Dumpty Foundation is one of Australia's great healthcare charities for children. I acknowledge Founder and Chairman, Paul Francis OAM and the team at the Foundation, based in Chatswood, who are compassionate individuals, dedicated to making a difference to the young lives of infants and children. The Foundation's vision is to ensure that every Australian child has access to the healthcare they need, no matter where they live. For this reason, it has had a special focus on providing medical services to children in rural and remote communities. For more than 30 years, the Foundation has been helping hospitals and health services care for children by providing much needed medical equipment and initiatives that improve health outcomes. To date, the Foundation has provided medical equipment to paediatric wards, neonatal units, and maternity and emergency departments for around 500 hospitals across Australia. I'm proud to be a supporter of Humpty Dumpty and thank you Paul Francis for hosting me recently for a valuable meeting.

### SCOTT YOUNG – STATE REPRESENTATIVE AWARD

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—Scott Young is typical of the eclectic range of talents that abound in my community of Willoughby. On 20 April 2024, I had the pleasure of presenting Scott with two NSW Government State Representative Awards for his representation of NSW at the National Judo Championships. A local of Northbridge, Scott is a veteran of the sport, having competed in matches of the senior level. In the 2019 Australian Masters Games, Scott won Silver in the Senior Men under 81kg category. Scott again won Silver in the 2023 Judo NSW State Championships for Veteran Men under 81kg. Originating from Japan in the nineteenth-century, Judo is a popular martial art and has been an Olympic sport since 1964. It is popular in my community with the Willoughby Judo Club catering for both children and adults. The Willoughby Judo Club attracts participants of all abilities from recreational to international competitors. It is gratifying to see a local like Scott excel in this sport at such a high level and I am proud of his achievements.

### SHEDDING COMMUNITY WORKSHOP INC

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—Today I celebrate the team at Shedding Community Workshop Inc and their achievements over the past five years. The team has created an all-inclusive space for members of the community to come together, whilst fostering a passion for tools and a hub for learning. In the wake of the 2022 floods, Shedding Community Workshop Inc joined forces with the REPAIR CAFÉ in establishing a space where volunteers could work together retrieving and repairing flood affected items which diverted over 20 tonnes of waste from landfill, and delivered repaired and restored items to flood affected community members across the region. Led by director Sophie Wilksch, Shedding Community Workshop Inc continues to offer its repair services to the community, along with a host of other trauma informed programs. In a bid to spread the tools and learning far and wide, Shedding on the Road is currently popping up in locations further afield. Shedding Community Workshop Inc is a true testament to how a grassroots idea can evolve into such a vital component of our community. Well done to Sophie and the incredible team for all their extraordinary work and dedication.

### ANZAC DAY 2024 IN EPPING

**Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Epping)**—It is always pleasing to see a strong turnout for ANZAC Day services in Epping. This year I had the privilege of attending multiple services on the day in addition to the ANZAC Sunday Service at the Epping Club. ANZAC Day is perhaps the most important tradition we carry as Australians. The message of ANZAC has been an inspiration to generations since the First World War and continues to encourage us to hold firm to our common values: courage, mateship and sacrifice to name a few. Today, there are only a handful of World War II veterans still with us. What is particularly encouraging is the number of young people, including schoolchildren, who make the effort to come and pay their respects to the memory of our fallen heroes. For younger generations, Anzac Day is a call to express our gratitude and to appreciate all that our nation offers. I want to give special thanks to the great efforts of the Epping RSL Sub-Branch under Brian Swan AM who organised both the Sunday Service and the Dawn Service in Epping; and the Beecroft Rotary Club for arranging the afternoon service in Beecroft. Lest we forget.

### LEETON – PETER CLANCY

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Madam/Mister Speaker, Today I would like to recognise Peter Clancy, race horse trainer and breeder who has been the mainstay and face of racing in the Leeton area for more than 60 years. Known locally as "Mr Racing" and now in his 80's, Peter is one of the oldest full-time trainers in New South Wales. Peter began working with his father, a racehorse owner and president of the Leeton Jockey Club, first riding in races and transitioning to training in 1960. He and his wife Nerrida have been employers, mentors and guardians to 31 young apprentices over the decades, firmly teaching respect, and always concerned with their safety. They devote much of their spare time to the club, maintaining the track and surrounds. He has had races and a function room at Leeton racecourse named after him. He was recognised for his contribution to country racing with the Simon Nivison Special Achievement Award. Ardlethan Picnic Race Club honoured him with life membership. Congratulations to Peter for his long involvement in racing and his local community.

### LEETON – COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS LUNCH

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Madam/Mister Speaker, Today I would like to recognise the Committee for the Leeton Community Christmas Lunch. Christmas is not always a time for celebrating for some people. Some have no family, others are suffering from loneliness. Everyone should have somewhere to be on Christmas Day. A small group of hardworking volunteers continue to organise the lunch in Leeton, year after year. They work hard during the year raising funds to cover the cost of the two course meal which includes all of the trimmings and gifts for the recipients. Donations come from local residents, businesses and schools. The committee also has the Buster Ryan Memorial giving tree, where gifts can be donated which are then handed out

to sick children in hospital. Congratulations to the tireless members of the committee, our communities need people like you!

#### **WILLIAM KWONG**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—This statement is to recognise the recent achievements of Lithgow local William 'Bill' Kwong. Mr Kwong has dedicated the past 30 years of his life to serving some of the most delicious Chinese food to his customers at Palace Chinese Restaurant located in Lithgow. His passion for cooking has shone through in each dish he has created. He is well known by his return customers and will be sorely missed by local families and the business community. The restaurant had become a home away from home for Mr Kwong and his family where all five of his children spent their teenage years working in the restaurant with their father. Now entering retirement, Mr Kwong has passed the reins over to another local couple who have vowed to continue Mr Kwong's legacy of brilliant customer service and great food. Congratulations Mr Kwong on such a successful career and the Lithgow community wishes you all the best in your next adventure.

#### **JAY CLEARY**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—This statement is to recognise the recent achievements of Bathurst local Jay Cleary. Mr Cleary's dedication to the sport of cricket has been acknowledge through a life membership to the Bathurst City Cricket Club which he has played an integral role in the club since 1997. Mr Cleary has enjoyed over two decades of games with the club, commonly known as the Redbacks, in the first grade and now second grade teams. Whilst it is the community of mates and friendship that has kept Mr Cleary involved for so many years, a hat trick of championships in the mid-2000s stands out as a fond memory. Mr Cleary also recalls hitting two sixes in a first grade one day final in the last over to win the game. Congratulations Mr Cleary on your dedication to the sport of cricket and your triumphs both on and off the pitch. Your passion has been contagious and has played an important part in growing the club's community spirit.

#### **VASANTHA MAALAI 2024**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—I was delighted to attend the annual cultural function [STRC] organised by the Sydney Tamil Resource Centre on Sunday 7th April 2024 at the Redgum Function Centre in Wentworthville. The STRC is a community service organisation promoting the study of the Tamil language, history, literature and inter-communal and inter religious harmony to all sections of the community. Vasanthamaakai is a major fundraising initiative. The funds are used to support the initiatives of the organisation. I was delighted to watch the Tamil cultural dance performed by Gaanalayaand Fine Arts group. I commend the organisation for their commitment to preserving the world's longest surviving Tamil language. I look forward to attending any future initiatives they may have.

#### **BALMORAL SAILING CLUB WOMAN IN SAILING AWARD**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—Speaker I want to congratulate this year's Balmoral Sailing Club Woman in Sailing Award recipient, Laurie Hoffman. Last weekend, I attended the Balmoral Sailing Club Presentation Night where I was thrilled to present Laurie with her award. For the past three years, Laurie has succeeded in growing Balmoral's female Aero group from just herself to the biggest sailing club female Aero group in Australia. Laurie has nurtured the Balmoral female Aero group into becoming the tremendous success it is today, always providing advice for new female sailors and being a hands-on leader. This winter Lauries has also organised for the female laser Olympic hopefuls coach to help the new and old female aero sailors become more comfortable and skilled with their boats. It's always so fantastic to see more women in sport and more female leadership in sporting clubs. Thank you, Laurie, for all you have done for Balmoral Sailing Club, and thank you for bringing more women in sport to the north shore. And of course a special congratulations to the rest of Balmoral Sailing Club on an amazing season, and I look forward to joining with you all again soon.

#### **GIG BUDDIES CELEBRATE 9TH BIRTHDAY**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—Speaker I want to recognise a wonderful local organisation that just recently celebrated their ninth birthday, Gig Buddies. Gig Buddies is an initiative of ACL Disability Services which is a registered not for profit organisation committed to promoting the rights of people with learning disabilities to live the lifestyle of their choosing. Gig Buddies partners volunteers with an adult who experiences mild to moderate autism and/or has a learning disability who wants to make new friends and get out and do fun stuff. So how does the buddying work? The Gig Buddies team matches and pairs a volunteer with a participant based on mutual interests. These could be music tastes, sport, hobbies, but also considers other factors such as location and age. Once paired buddies go out together once a month for a year, and sometimes even longer. I was more than happy to provide Gig Buddies with funding in 2022 so they could purchase an assistance vehicle, and excitingly the new car was named at the birthday celebrations as Gigi. Happy birthday Gig Buddies, and I look forward to joining you all soon to see Gigi in action.

### **HARVEST FESTIVAL 2024 HARRIS PARK (LITTLE INDIA PRECINCT)**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—On 13 April 2024 the annual Harvest Festival 2024 hosted by Little India Australia took place at Wigram, Street Harris Park. This celebration is a testament to the rich culture tapestry of our community and gratitude for the harvest of crops. This celebration was held to celebrate Vaisakhi, which was introduced in 1699 as the festival establishing the Khalsa - the collective name given to Sikh's who have been baptised. Many Sikhs choose Vaisakhi as the day to be baptised in to the Khalsa brotherhood. The Harvest Festival hold special significance for many cultures, including the vibrant Indian community where we got to share exotic food, Indian artifacts and fashion, and cultural performances. In recognition of Little India Australia Inc's efforts and the support from City of Parramatta, this event preserves cultural traditions and fosters community spirit. This Harvest Festival is a reminder of the importance of community, gratitude, and the interconnectedness of our world with the goals to create a prosperous future. I was delighted to attend this event and take part in such a uplifting celebration.

### **MULTI-FAITH COMMUNITY IFTAR DINNER**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—On Tuesday 19th March 2024, I was delighted to attend the annual Multifaith Community Iftar Dinner, in Parramatta. Co-hosted by the Diocese of Parramatta and Columban Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations, the Iftar Dinner is an opportunity to acknowledge the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, to celebrate the breaking of the daily fast, and to share the message of peace through a common meal. It is a wonderful reflection on our multicultural and multifaith community in Western Sydney, including in our local Prospect Electorate. The Columban Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations was established in 1997 and continues to serve the message of peace and understanding between people of all faiths. This year, more than 100 representatives joined for the evening meal from across our Muslim, Christian, Jewish and Hindu community. It was inspiring to hear from Bishop Vincent Long OFM Conv, Bishop of Parramatta, Dr Mahsheed Ansari, Senior Lecturer, Centre for Islamic Studies and Civilisation, Charles Sturt University, and Rev. Dr Patrick McNerney, Director, Columban Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations. Thank you to the Diocese of Parramatta and Columban Centre for hosting this wonderful event enriching our Western Sydney community.

### **HARMON FOUNDATION**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—It was a pleasure to attend the Harmon Foundation Gala on May 10 2024, and represent the Hon. Michael Daley Attorney General. The Harmon Foundation is a local organisation providing assistance and steadfast advocacy for women and children in our community. An example of resilience, Co-Founders Maninder Singh and Harinder Kaur created the Harmon Foundation, following their family tragedy. Aiming to support those who suffer sudden loss, Maninder and Harinder have grown the Foundation into a community pillar which meets the needs of diverse victim-survivors, where they are. The Foundation offers community support services, including a 24/7 Crisis Line, support groups, Chaplaincy, bereavement services and traumatic family loss support, parenting and family harmony seminars, seniors support and Food for the Needy to give nourishment to those less fortunate. The Gala helped fundraise for the Foundation's HER House. The HER - "Harman Foundation Empowerment and Refuge" House looks like an ordinary dwelling. But it is far from ordinary. HER House offers a safe home for vulnerable mothers and children impacted by family and domestic violence. Thank you to Maninder, Harinder and the dedicated volunteers for your work to help disrupt cycles of domestic and family violence in our community.

### **NELSONS GROVE RETIREMENT VILLAGE**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—On 25th April 2024, I was honoured to attend an ANZAC Day Commemoration at the Nelsons Grove Retirement Village, Pemulwuy. On Anzac Day we commemorated that immortal day when 416,809 Australians, by their deeds and actions at Gallipoli, demonstrated that Australia was truly a nation. We remembered all those who paid the ultimate sacrifice for an ideal and a way of life. We honoured the service and sacrifice of past and current Australian Defence Force personnel and their families to protect our freedom, democracy and sovereignty. With residents of the Nelson Grove Village and their families, we assembled to honour our Anzacs. Remembering the Anzac legacy of courage, endurance and mateship at the heart of the Australian spirit, we recognised our duty to carry it forward. Thank you to Nelsons Grove residents Janice Powell and Neville Bartlett for their moving keynote speech and reflective prayers. Whilst the Great War is over, Australia will never forget its significant role in shaping our nation. Thank you to Tim Mahony, General Manager, Danny Foster Chair of the Resident Committee, Barbara Gibney Social Committee Leader and residents of Nelsons Grove Retirement Village for facilitating this thoughtful commemoration. Lest we forget.

### **ADVOCATES FOR THE OLD FIRE STATION IN GLEBE**

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)**—Today I bring to the attention of the house Cheryl Leckstrom, Laurie Murphy, Julie Brackenreg and the Glebe Community Projects Group. These upstanding members of the Glebe



community have been looking after the Old Fire Station in Glebe, ensuring it can continue to be enjoyed as a safe place for community to meet for a chat, a cuppa or a community occasion. The Old Fire Station is a heritage listed building in Glebe, owned by the NSW Government, and it has needed a lot of TLC of late. Cheryl in particular has worked tirelessly, engaging with the Land & Housing Corporation to ensure the property's upkeep, and advocating for a number of substantial repairs – some of which are now being seen to. While there is still so much work to do to make sure this wonderful old building remains available to our community, with Cheryl, Laurie, Julie and the Glebe Community Projects Group working so hard to maintain it as a community space, it is in safe hands.

#### **REVESBY FIRE STATION**

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills)**—I would like to thank the Revesby fire station for opening its doors this past weekend to allow community members to learn more about the station, its equipment, fire-fighting, fire trucks and importantly, fire safety. I was lucky to pop into the fire station on Saturday to meet some of our local firies, explore the fire trucks and learn important info about how to prevent fires at home. Our emergency services do such a fantastic job in not only responding when something goes wrong in our community, but also educating the public about how to stay safe. It can be so easy for a mishap to occur with heaters and electric blankets during the winter months, or a fire to get out of control in the hot and dry months in Australia so it is comforting to know that our firefighters are there to help. I commend the brave men and women who risk their lives to help in our local community and step in to assist with other emergencies. Thank you for all that you do in my electorate of East Hills, in NSW and around Australia.

#### **RAE'S 65TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY**

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills)**—Congratulations to longtime Panania residents, Judith and Keith Rae who recently celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary. This is such a wonderful milestone for the local couple. Judith and Keith were married in 1959 at St David's Church in Arncliffe and for the first three years of marriage, stayed with relatives, while saving money. During this time, they were also building their family home in Panania and have lived there ever since. Keith has worked as a French polisher for most of his life while Judith was a postal worker. The couple have been blessed with two sons, Neville and Trevor, two grandchildren and two step grandchildren. Judith and Keith's commitment over the last 65 years is commendable. Although Judith has recently been placed in full-time care, Keith continues to see her every day and maintains a sense of humour as to the secret of this long-lasting union - keep your mouth shut and do as you're told. A sincere congratulations again to Judith and Keith for this spectacular achievement and wishing them all the best for the future.

#### **ROCKDALE MUSICAL SOCIETY**

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport)**—I congratulate Rockdale Musical Society on celebrating their 85th birthday in 2024. Since the society's creation in 1939 it has captivated audiences with 173 famous and iconic shows, most held at our very own Rockdale Town Hall. Their recent successful productions have included Disney's 'Finding Nemo Jr', Dolly Parton's '9 to 5 - The Musical', and soon they will be bringing a revival of Andrew Lloyd Webber's 'CATS' to the Rockdale stage. In a sign of the quality of the Society's work, their production last year of Rodgers and Hammerstein's famous musical 'South Pacific' was so good that they were asked by Cunard Line to take it aboard the MS Queen Elizabeth earlier this year for a cruise from Sydney to Tokyo. This is believed to be the first time a community theatre company has been invited to perform on a major cruise ship in Australia, something usually only offered to fully professional productions. Well done to the many hard-working members of the Society, and to those who had the foresight to build it up in the decades past. I wish them much future success in the years to come.

#### **WYONG HIGH SCHOOL**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast)**—Wyang High School students and teachers came together in facing the clippers to support the Leukaemia Foundation World's Greatest Shave raising over \$6,000. School students who supported the project on school grounds, cutting and shaving their hair were Dime, Christian, Lu, Layla, Trey, and teachers involved were Mr Henry, Mr Wallis and Mr Stirling. The donations will go towards research and support for Australian's living with blood cancer. Every dollar raised will help provide families with practical and emotional support to get them through the many challenges that blood cancer can bring and powering Australia's brightest research minds. Well done to Wyong High School students and teachers who took part in making a life changing difference.

### WE CARE CONNECT

**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)**—We Care Connect charity and supporters got together for their annual Mother's Day High Tea event to raise funds in supporting vulnerable children. This year there was a significant increase raising over \$22,000 donated by the guests, sponsors, prize donors and volunteers. The funds will go towards in supporting over 7,000 disadvantaged children this year including much needed items when stocks are low, the collection, storage, distribution, and management of the community donations. During the event We Care Connect members involved themselves to help on the day with an MC and the Joy Project Choir. These events can't happen without community support and the event partners Central Coast Branches of Bendigo Bank, Wyong Rugby League Club, Finlease, Beyond Broke Wines and Vine Public Relations & Social Society. Well done to We Care Connect members and everyone involved who made this event happen with a great outcome to support the need of young families and children across the Central Coast and Hunter region.

### BEXLEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport)**—I acknowledge the achievements of Bexley Chamber of Commerce and congratulate them on their 100th anniversary, which they celebrated on 22nd March 2024. The Bexley Chamber of Commerce promotes Bexley Village as a flourishing town centre. It represents and supports the community by encouraging business development and local jobs and liaises with all levels of government to achieve benefits and improvements for the local area. Some of the Chamber's achievements include infrastructure improvements, the creation of Rathbone Place, and the opening of a community bank. Local business is the backbone of our community and I applaud the members and the leadership team of Bexley Chamber of Commerce for their drive, hard work, and efforts towards promoting Bexley as a vibrant hub. Bexley Chamber of Commerce has shown resilience, dedication, and achievement over the last 100 years, and I wish its members continued success in the future.

### JORDY LAWLER

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—Congratulations to North Narrabeen local, Jordy Lawler, on winning the 2024 World Surf League GWM Sydney Surf Pro! The Pittwater community loves surfing, and it was awesome to see a local take home the win at North Narrabeen Beach. But, it wasn't just Jordy's amazing performance on the waves that has made our community proud. After originally not qualifying for the Challenger Series this year, Jordy entered the event as a wildcard. Jordy's story from considering quitting competitive surfing to winning the Sydney Surf Pro serves as an inspiration. Jordy, thank you for reminding our community and surfing fans everywhere to never give up and always pursue your dreams. We can't wait to see what you do next and are cheering you on all the way!

### WORLD SURF LEAGUE GWM SYDNEY SURF PRO

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—Congratulations to all involved in the 2024 World Surf League GWM Sydney Surf Pro on another fantastic competition! The Pittwater community loves surfing, and it was so special to host some of the world's best surfers on our very own North Narrabeen Beach. Despite some rainy weather, North Narrabeen once again proved its status as one of Sydney's best surf breaks. Congrats to local competitors Dylan Moffat and, the ultimate men's winner, Jordy Lawler. Our community loved cheering you on and we can't wait to see your next surf stops! Thank you to Asia Pacific World Surf League President, Andrew Stark, and the whole World Surf League team for putting together such an awesome event for the Pittwater and surfing communities to enjoy. We can't wait to host the Sydney Surf Pro again!

### VALE NANCY BRETT

**Mr RORY AMON (Pittwater)**—I pay tribute to the late Nancy Brett. Nancy was a strong, courageous and beautiful lady. Nancy was committed to serving others, to making the world a better place than the one she was born into. Her service to the Rural Fire Service and the Liberal Party was unwavering and exemplary. Nancy loved to knit and enjoyed visiting the local RSL Club. Always full of life, never short of an opinion, Nancy spoke her mind and was a force of nature. She made the lives of those around her so much better. Public life can, at times, be discouraging. Any conversation with Nancy always left me feeling encouraged. Whenever we would discuss the issues of day, Nancy also left me with an indelible feeling of encouragement and a sense of duty to follow one's convictions. No doubt, Nancy has this impact on many. Nancy was taken far too soon but the impact she had on other will not be soon forgotten, if ever. My thoughts are with Nancy's husband, Allan, and all her family. Nancy, you will be missed. Vale, Nancy Brett, 1933-2024.

**MELANIE WARMAN**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I congratulate Melanie Warman, founder of Boobs on the Run, who has been named Business Person of the Year at the Inner West Local Business Awards. This achievement is a testament to her hard work, dedication, and community-driven approach. Boobs on the Run was founded in memory of Melanie's mother, who passed away from breast cancer at 52 years of age. Over the past 10 years, Melanie, through Boobs on the Run has raised over \$140,000 for the National Breast Cancer Foundation. I was in the audience when Melanie gave her acceptance speech and it was truly inspirational and humble. Melanie credited her team and community for the award, emphasising that it was a collective effort to create a supportive and empowering community for women. She also acknowledged the solidarity and support from fellow fitness businesses, recognising that everyone's success is a win for the community. Melanie embodies the strong values of community spirit and compassion. I recognise and celebrate Melanie's leadership in our community. I also thank her Boobs on the Run team for their dedication in fostering a wonderful and supportive initiative which has made a significant impact in the Inner West.

**SENTRAL YOUTH SERVICES**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises Kiama Municipal Council's SENTRAL Youth Services team. Youth Week 2024 (11th- 21st April) has been hailed a success by both local young people and their families. Hosted by Kiama Council's SENTRAL Youth Services team, Youth Week included a variety of activities and events to provide a sense of community for people aged 12-24 years. Activities included Zone Bowling, which included laser tag, arcades games and bumper rides. Other events included an outdoor movie night and gaming sessions at the SENTRAL cottages. SENTRAL also encouraged the creative side of young individuals, providing an array of workshops including 3D printing and painting. Other events fostered exploration and appreciation for our environment, such as fishing outings that provided an opportunity to connect with nature and learn about marine life and an overnight camping trip featuring kayaking and bouldering offered a chance to develop resilience. I acknowledge and thank Kiama Municipal Council's SENTRAL Youth Services team, Kiama Council's Director Environmental Services Jessica Rippon and Galavizh Ahmadi Nia, Manager Community Hubs and Communications Officer Brent Blackburn for their ongoing commitment, hard work and dedication to our community.

**KIAMA FIRE AND RESCUE**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises Fire and Rescue New South Wales and Kiama Fire Station. On Saturday 11th May 2024, I was extremely pleased and privileged to attend a Fire and Rescue NSW Community Open Day which was held at Kiama Fire Station with lots of fire trucks and equipment on display for our local community and plenty of local interest. The day was also about promoting winter fire safety messages and encouraging local Kiama residents to remember the home fire safety checklist including testing your smoke alarms to ensure that are in working order. If not, to change the batteries or replace the alarm. To meet legislation, you must have at least one working smoke alarm on each level of the home placed between bedrooms and living areas – it's the law. Fire and Rescue New South Wales also recommends having one in each bedroom. I would like to acknowledge and thank the organisers of this excellent community event. I thank Superintendent Peter Church Zone Commander Illawarra, Metropolitan South 1 Command from Fire and Rescue NSW, Kiama Fire Station Deputy Captain Brian Guillaumier and Chad Wallis from Fire and Rescue NSW.

**SOUTH COAST GROUP SEVENS**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises South Coast Group Seven Rugby League. This 2024 season marks the 111th anniversary of the South Coast Group Seven Rugby League competition which began Shoalhaven competition in 1913, South Coast in 1914, Group Seven in 1955 and South Coast Group Seven in 1980. Last weekend celebrated 'Women in League' round and this weekend is round seven and matches include: Francis Ryan Field: Regan Cup: St Georges Basin Dragons v Stingrays of Shellharbour 3.00 p.m.; Regan Cup: Mt Warrigal United Kooris v Robertson-Burrawang Spuddies 1.30 p.m. Community Field: Under 18's: Southern Highlands Storm v Kiama Knights 2.00pm. Des King Oval: 1st Grade: Albion Park-Oak Flats Eagles v Gerringong Lions 3.00 p.m.; 2nd Grade: Albion Park-Oak Flats Eagles v Gerringong Lions 1.30pm; Under 18's: Albion Park-Oak Flats Eagles v Gerringong Lions 12.00 p.m.; Regan Cup: Albion Park-Oak Flats Eagles v Culburra Dolphins 10.30 a.m.; LLT1: Albion Park-Oak Flats Eagles v Gerringong Lions 9.30 a.m.. Kevin Walsh Oval: 1st Grade: Jamberoo Superoos v Nowra-Bomaderry Jets 3.00 p.m.; 2nd Grade: Jamberoo Superoos v Nowra-Bomaderry Jets 1.30 p.m.; Regan Cup: Jamberoo Superoos v Nowra-Bomaderry Jets 12.00 p.m.; Under 18's: Jamberoo Superoos v Nowra-Bomaderry Jets 10.30 a.m.; LLT1: Jamberoo Superoos v Nowra-Bomaderry Jets 9.30 a.m.

### GLENORIE RSL SUB-BRANCH 2024 ANZAC DAY SERVICE

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury)**—Mr Speaker, I had the honour of attending the 2024 ANZAC Day afternoon service at Glenorie RSL. I congratulate RSL Sub Branch President Andy Pellizzer, Secretary Graham Bruce, Treasurer Ken Middleton and all the committee members for organising the dawn service and the afternoon service. I witnessed the later ceremony, and it was a true reflection of the spirit of ANZAC. We honoured local men and women who have served Australia and gave their lives for the freedoms we enjoy today. The Sub-branch was formed in 1952 and originally known as the Glenorie Sub-branch of the Returned Sailors', Soldiers' and Airmen's Imperial League. The Sub-branch has provided fellowship and support for veterans and their families for 72 years. I would like to acknowledge all the participants at the Glenorie RSL Sub-branch ANZAC services, pay special thanks to Donna Medway from Glenorie RSL, the school children and cadets who attended and the wonderful community of Glenorie for their presence. Thank you Mr Speaker.

### PARLIAMENT UNPACKED: THE WATCHDOGS

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury)**—Mr Speaker, On the 7th May 2024, I had the privilege of being a member of the panel at Parliament Unpacked: The Watchdogs event held in the Jubilee Room at State Parliament. The aim of this program is to promote discussion on our system of government. I was able to contribute by explaining what I do as a member of the NSW Parliament and a member of the Opposition's leadership team. There was a thoughtful discussion about the oversight bodies that are entrusted to keep government, its ministers and members of parliament accountable in a democracy. Importantly, how do we ensure the public has the information it needs to make an informed electoral choice? The audience comprised of members of the public, public servants, legal professionals and parliamentary staff. Thank you to the Parliament of NSW's Communications, Engagement and Education branch and Australasian Study of Parliament Group for organising this valuable forum. Thank you Mr Speaker.

### ETHEM MUSLU

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I recognise the creative talent of Bonnet Bay local Ethem Muslu for offering a trip down memory lane in creating a full-scale virtual model of the original 1964 Miranda Fair. By way of background, 17 year old Etham has held a deep love of the design features of our now Westfield Miranda since eight years of age. This love materialised in Etham trawling library records, maps and brochures, Sutherland Shire Council archives and even seeking information from the Westfield. As with all journeys, Etham's path wasn't free of obstacles as he was left to navigate through lost and missing pieces of design plans along the way. It is certainly a wonderful thing for our community that Etham's journey led him to create a virtual tour of both the inside and outside of our much loved shopping centre. The virtual tour created by Ethem is an incredible tribute to our now Westfield Miranda which is celebrating it's 60th anniversary this year, having opened on 16 March 1964 as the largest fully enclosed shopping centre in state at the time. I thank Etham for bringing this incredible project to life and extend my best wishes for his HSC this year.

### MC LINKED, MULGRAVE

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury)**—Mr Speaker, I recently visited the MC Linked facility at Mulgrave in Hawkesbury. MC Linked specialises in exporting Australian made goods to the Middle East, North Africa and Asia. I was impressed to see an export orientated business operating in Hawkesbury. The company CEO Mark Subaih, identified a gap in this market when he realised this type of operation was only previously available in Victoria. The business procures products on behalf of international clients and provides export consolidation services. MC Linked build their business based on acquiring quality goods from across Australia. It is a real vote of confidence in our region to now have this business based in Hawkesbury. The Mulgrave facility has frozen and dry capacity. I believe it is vital that Hawkesbury has a mix of businesses including enterprises that reach global markets. This stands us in good stead through the domestic economic cycles. This will underpin local jobs. I congratulate Mark Subaih and his team and I wish him and his colleagues the very best for the future anchoring MC Linked in Hawkesbury. Thank you Mr Speaker.

### SCHOOL LEADERSHIP ACKNOWLEDGEMENT – UNANDERRA PUBLIC SCHOOL

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast)**—I acknowledge Lachlan, Khatyia, Serena and Chase who have been named as the 2024 Unanderra Public School leadership team. Being named as a school leader after being elected by their peers is a testament to their dedication, hard work and demonstrated ability to lead by example. Each of these students works exceptionally hard and have been highly involved within their school community throughout their time at the school. I am confident that they always strive to do their best with their studies and extra curricula activities. Each of them will spend 2024 acting as role models for their peers and I have confidence that they will

carry out their new leadership roles exceptionally. I congratulate Lachlan, Khatyia, Serena and Chase on their achievement and wish them all the best for their final year at primary school.

#### **WAMBERAL SLSC AWARDS NIGHT**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—Mister Speaker, I would like to congratulate Wamberal Surf Life Saving Club who recently celebrated their Youth, Opens and Senior Presentation night on Saturday 4th May 2024. I had the pleasure of attending this great awards night, celebrating the club members with a host of awards, stories, laughs and achievements from across the season. Mister Speaker, the amazing 139 patrol members across 10 patrol teams at Wamberal Surf Life Saving Club performed 6 significant rescues, two out of patrol hours rescues for a combined total of four thousand, nine hundred and fifty patrol hours – well done everyone! These fantastic volunteers put their hand up to protect our local beaches and the results speak for themselves. I would like to say a huge thank you to all the members of Wamberal SLSC for keeping Wamberal Beach safe for everyone to enjoy and congratulate all the deserving award recipients including Patrol Person of the Year - Brad Evans and Club Person of the Year Jason Vinberg.

#### **JADE WATSON AND NARELLE FINNEY**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—Next month friends Jade Watson and Narelle Finney will take off on an adventure of a lifetime. These friends also known as Team Sparky, have entered this year's Shitbox Rally aiming to drive their bubblegum pink 1991 Mitsubishi Galant the 3,800km from Melbourne to Alice Springs to raise money for the Cancer Council. Shitbox Rally is not like other races, rather it is a challenge where entrants drive cars worth only \$1,500 across Australia in the name of charity. Jade and Narelle, both small business owners, aim to raise \$20,000 for the Cancer Council and they are already halfway there. For both Jade and Narelle, the decision to join the Shitbox Rally has been deeply personal. For Jade it was the desire to honour her mother-in-law, who tragically lost her life to skin cancer. Narelle also has been deeply influenced by supporting her mother through a challenging battle with breast cancer. Congratulations Jade and Narelle for embarking on this adventure which is for such a good cause, close to the hearts of so many people and their families affected by cancer. I know the entire Central Coast is behind Team Sparky!

#### **NELSON BAY GOLF CLUB**

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion)**—Port Stephens is the proud home of the Nelson Bay Golf Club, which attracts both locals and golf enthusiasts from afar. On the course, golfers are not only treated to stunning fairways, but often, they're joined Kangaroos relaxing on the greens, and even koalas spectating from up high. Impressively, the club has embraced their furry friends by planting 150 eucalypt trees for the Port Stephens Koala Hospital and maintaining eighty native flora gardens, fostering sustainable practices right across their grounds. In the true spirit of partnership, the club assists Port Stephens Koala Hospital volunteers to release rehabilitated koalas onto the club's land. Indeed I was fortunate to have been able to release Kate the koala beside the 9th fairway last year. So I'm delighted that the Nelson Bay Golf Club is being recognised for their environmental initiatives, becoming a finalist in the 2024 Clubs NSW Clubs and Community Awards for Environmental Sustainability. Congratulations to the Nelson Bay Golf Club, its leadership team, members and volunteers.

#### **TRACEY TANCRED**

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion)**—The quiet art of handcraft doesn't often get time in the spotlight. But at this year's Royal Easter Show, Port Stephens local Tracey Tancred, earned her time to shine. Tracey entered an exceptional handcrafted shawl in the show, but Tracey didn't just knit her stunning masterpiece, she also handspun the wool. Just think about that for a moment – she used raw merino fleece, washed it and combed it before spinning and plying it on a spinning wheel...AND THEN, she knitted her large and light shawl. But don't think for a moment that the knitting was simple. Oh no, Tracey used a traditional Estonian lace technique to knit what's known as a 'wedding ring shawl'. Which means the shawl is so fine and delicate, it's designed to pass through a wedding ring. For her exceptional craftsmanship and artistry, Tracey was awarded first place at Sydney Royal Easter Show in a category for items using handspun and plied yarns. I have no doubt Tracey's fellow members of the Port Stephens Community Arts Centre's, Spinning and Weaving group are very proud of her. Congratulations Tracey! This Parliament is very proud of you too.

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